PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

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HOUSE OF COMMONS

OFFICIAL REPORT

FIRST SESSION OF THE FIFTY-FOURTH PARLIAMENT
OF THE UNITED KINGDOM OF GREAT BRITAIN
AND NORTHERN IRELAND
FIFTY-FOURTH YEAR OF THE REIGN OF
HER MAJESTY QUEEN ELIZABETH II

SESSION 2005–06

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28 November 2005

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 28 November 2005

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

School Teachers' Review Body

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Ruth Kelly): I have received the 15th report of the School Teachers' Review Body and expect to publish this, alongside my response, on 6 December.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Farm Regulation

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Jim Knight): The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs 2004 regulation taskforce report highlighted the need for a new approach to the regulation of farming. Earlier this year, the Government renewed their commitment to regulating better and cutting bureaucratic burdens for industry, in the wake of the Better Regulation Task Force report, "Regulation—Less is More" and Sir Philip Hampton's review on inspection and enforcement.

I am therefore pleased to announce the launch today of Partners for Success, DEFRA's farm regulation and charging strategy, which is the first Government strategy to apply this new better regulation agenda to a specific sector of the economy.

The strategy heralds a new partnership between the Government and the farming industry, with a long-term vision for the future of regulation and charging.

By improving the way we regulate and enforce farm regulation, we will make it easier for farmers to comply, helping to improve the long-term sustainability of the sector: environmental, social, and economic.

The strategy commits us to cutting red tape for farmers, notably by reducing form-filling. This is part of DEFRA's commitment to reduce administrative burdens on business by 25 per cent. by 2009. It will help make regulation more efficient from the perspective of the customer, and help them to focus on getting results—on productivity, the environment, animal health and welfare, food safety, and worker health and safety.

Farmers too will need to play their part in making the strategy a reality, especially by managing the risks of their operations and reducing the unwelcome impacts of their activities.

Input from farmers, their representative bodies, wider rural interests, regulators and Government Departments has been invaluable in shaping the strategy. We will continue to work together over the next six months to develop success criteria for the strategy.

I am placing copies of the strategy and the accompanying action plan in both Libraries of the House.

HEALTH

Global Health Security Initiative

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Ms Rosie Winterton): On Friday 18 November, I attended the sixth ministerial forum of the Global Health Security Initiative (GHSI) in Rome, to agree actions to ensure a co-ordinated global response to health security issues, including preparing for an influenza pandemic.

Actions agreed at the meeting included:

A commitment to compare national flu pandemic plans to share information and expertise, and to better understand different approaches to pandemic planning;

A commitment to work with the World Health Organisation to develop and test protocols for early containment through a full range of public health interventions, including medical counter measures and equipment;

A commitment to further develop risk communication tools to ensure decision makers and health professionals have consistent information internationally to help manage an influenza pandemic and ensure the public are kept fully informed of action to take in a pandemic situation;

A commitment to develop, with WHO, approaches to improving capacity and access to vaccines; and

A commitment to work together to prepare for the Beijing pledging conference in January 2006, and to have a clear outline of prioritised action to attract the funding for implementation by multinational organisations.

The United Kingdom has played an active role in developing and taking forward several areas of the GHSI's work programme. The GHSI was launched at a meeting of international Health Ministers in Ottawa in 2001. Membership includes representatives of the UK, Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico and United States together with the WHO and the European Commission for Health. The aims of the GHSI are to develop and implement co-operative, specialised public health protection measures in the event of a terrorist or natural incident.

In partnership with the USA, the UK has played a leading role in taking work forward on pandemic influenza. In June this year, the UK hosted a workshop on modelling pandemic spread and control strategies and an international tabletop exercise on preparedness and response. This event brought together modellers from each of the eight GHSI countries (Canada, France, Germany, Italy, Japan, Mexico, the UK and the USA) to discuss potential response strategies at each stage of an emerging pandemic. Important work has also been undertaken to compare the pandemic influenza preparedness and response plans between countries to facilitate better planning and coordination.

At the meeting, Health Ministers agreed a programme of action to ensure that national pandemic planning continues to dovetail with international planning and that we communicate effectively both nationally and internationally. We recognised the importance of ensuring our populations and healthcare

professionals have the high quality, consistent international information they need to manage the consequences of an outbreak of pandemic flu.

In addition, we agreed to share information and expertise to speed up the development and production of a pandemic flu vaccine. We also agreed to work together to boost global capacity for pandemic flu vaccine.

Together with Canada, the UK has also led on work in the area of risk management and communication. A 24/7 emergency contact network for emergency communications is in place and several successful international communication exercises have been undertaken.

A copy of the final ministerial statement from the Rome conference has been placed in the Library.

TRANSPORT

Transport Innovation Fund

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): I am today announcing the names of seven local authorities which have bid successfully for funding to develop innovative schemes to tackle congestion, including work on the feasibility of road pricing.

In July, I said that the way to the long-term goal of an effective road pricing system was through local or regional pilots. To support the development of such pilots, I said that we would make funding available, through the transport innovation fund, to local authorities offering innovative local packages combining demand management and better public transport.

I announced on 5 July that up to £200 million p.a. would be available from the fund for such schemes from 2008–09 to 2014–15—more if good schemes emerge.

Development of these schemes will be a complex undertaking. We therefore announced, also in July, that we would make available £18 million of pump-priming funding between 2005–06 and 2007–08 to support the work of local authorities in developing these local demand management schemes. I invited local authorities to submit bids for this development funding.

The response to this offer was extremely positive. We received thirty-three bids, many with high quality ideas. The response to our invitation offers clear evidence that local authorities recognise that action planning to tackle congestion needs to start now.

I am today announcing pump-priming funding for seven areas to develop schemes:

Bristol City Council, Bath and North East Somerset Council, North Somerset Council, South Gloucestershire Council;

Cambridgeshire;

Durham County Council (for Durham City);

Greater Manchester;

Shropshire County Council (for Shrewsbury);

Tyne and Wear;

West Midlands conurbation.

The local authorities in all these areas will be carrying out feasibility studies on how local demand management and better public transport could together improve travelling conditions for their local people. Although no decisions have yet been taken by any of these authorities to adopt a road pricing solution to their congestion problems, all of them are planning to look at local road pricing as part of their consideration of demand management options. This work gives us the opportunity to develop practical design for road pricing schemes, within a coherent national pricing framework.

We will also be inviting officers from these authorities to work with us as members of the new Road Pricing Local Liaison Group together with others who have relevant experience of road pricing matters. This group will be responsible for taking forward thinking on those aspects of road pricing where it makes sense to have a consistent approach across all schemes, including technical standards, design and scheme appraisal. Local authorities' input will be essential to this work.

Receipt of this pump-priming funding is no guarantee that an authority will be successful in bidding for the main transport innovation fund. We will also work with other local authorities which have promising ideas for demand management, but which have not yet met the standard needed to secure development funding. We will be offering detailed feedback to all unsuccessful bidders, and currently plan to run a further round of pump priming funding in 2006. I shall keep the House informed.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 29 November 2005

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

New Opportunities and Communities Funds

The Minister for Sport and Tourism (Mr. Richard Caborn): I am pleased to inform the House that on 24 November 2005 I formally issued the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) and the Community Fund—now operating jointly under the name of the Big Lottery Fund—with policy directions to enable the fund to launch its new programmes.

The policy directions and the programmes which will be launched as a result have been subject to an unprecedented level of public consultation and input from stakeholders. Underpinning all the programmes will be the fund's mission to improve communities and the lives of people most in need.

The planned programmes include up to £155 million to support voluntary and community sector infrastructure; £155 million for children's play; up to £354 million for environmental projects; and up to £165 million for well-being programmes. These initiatives will benefit communities the length and breadth of the UK.

I have placed a copy of the policy directions in the Libraries of both Houses.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Firefighters' Pensions

The Minister for Local Government (Mr. Phil Woolas): The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has today announced new financial arrangements for firefighters' pensions.

The firefighters' pension scheme is currently financed on a pay-as-you-go system. This means that employees' contributions are paid into Fire and Rescue Authorities' operating accounts, from which pensions awards are made. At present, as part of formula grant, authorities receive funding from central Government to support pension payments.

The current system for financing firefighters' pensions can cause volatility in pension expenditure as a result of lump-sum retirement payments. It can also be difficult to establish what proportion of budget and council tax increases is the result of rising pension costs as opposed to the cost of running the service. Further, over time the forecast growth in pension costs would see pension expenditure rise as a proportion of authorities' budgets.

The new financial arrangements are based on employer contributions and are similar to those used for other unfunded public service pension schemes such as those for teachers, civil servants, NHS staff and the armed forces.

The new arrangements will mean that employee contributions and a new employer's contribution will be paid into a new local pension account, from which pensions payments will be made. Government will make up the shortfall. At the outset, appropriate adjustments will be made in the level of grant so that neither local nor national taxpayers will be disadvantaged.

The new arrangements are for both the existing and proposed new firefighter pension schemes, but have no impact on the terms and conditions of either scheme.

ODPM conducted a thorough consultation on the proposals for new financial arrangements for firefighters' pensions between 8 February 2005 and 3 May 2005. The proposals were broadly welcomed by Fire and Rescue Authorities. A formal and detailed ODPM response to the consultation can be found in the Libraries of both Houses.

Home Office Ministers, having considered responses to a parallel consultation with Police Authorities, have today announced a similar reform of the financing of police pensions.

The new financial arrangements for Fire and Rescue Authorities will be introduced in April 2006 and, subject to parliamentary approval, will take affect immediately. Fire and Rescue Authorities have been provided with detailed guidance, copies of which can also be found in the Libraries of both Houses.

Residential Boats (Security of Tenure)

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Yvette Cooper): My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister will publish for public consultation on 29 November, a paper discussing security of tenure for residential boats.

During the passage of the Bill which became the Housing Act 2004, the Government received representations that the Bill should be amended to provide similar protection for those living on boats as the Bill provided (and the Act now provides) for owners of park homes.

The Government agreed to explore possible options with stakeholders and publish a consultation paper in 2005.

In the consultation paper we have examined how residential moorings are managed particularly with regard to security of tenure; highlighted some problems that exist with these arrangements; and outlined possible solutions.

Copies of the paper are being sent to a wide range of interested parties including local authorities, trade and resident associations, and others with an interest in this issue. The closing date for responses is 21 February 2006.

Copies of the paper will also be placed in the Libraries of both Houses, and will be available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at www.odpm.gov.uk.

A summary of the responses to the consultation will be published on the ODPM website and copies of the responses will be made available for inspection through the ODPM library.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Learning and Skills Council

The Minister for Higher Education and Lifelong Learning (Bill Rammell): I would inform the House that the Learning and Skills Council for England has today published its annual report and accounts for the period to 31 March 2005. Copies have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Initial Regulatory Simplification Plan

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Jim Knight): DEFRA is today publishing an initial regulatory simplification plan.

In its March 2005 report "less is more", the Better Regulation Task Force recommended that by September 2006 all Government Departments, in consultation with stakeholders, should develop a rolling programme of simplification to identify regulations that can be repealed, reformed and/or coordinated. DEFRA's plan is a public statement against which our stakeholders can measure progress.

The plan is fully in keeping with DEFRA's strategic objectives set out in our five-year strategy. Measures in it will help to improve outcomes and compliance rates while recognising the need to protect the environment and enhance animal health and welfare.

The plan identifies some significant progress that has already been made in helping to reduce red tape and improve outcomes across a number of sectors. The whole farm approach, which goes live in 2006, will offer farmers integration in the delivery of regulation and advice so that those who sign-up will be able to reduce time spent form-filling and having inspections undertaken on their farms. It also looks forward to other simplification work, such as amending the Waste Management Licensing Regulations 1994 which, it is expected, will result in cost savings of around £10 million from June 2006.

An updated plan, which will include further information on steps that DEFRA is taking to regulate more effectively, will be formally scrutinised by a Cabinet Committee and the Better Regulation Commission in the New Year. It should be viewed as an evolving document which will be updated on a regular basis. It is a major contribution to DEFRA's aim of reducing the overall administrative burden imposed on the business sectors we cover by 25 per cent. by 2009.

Copies of the plan are available in the Libraries of both Houses.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Azerbaijan and Armenia (Arms Embargo)

The Minister for Europe (Mr. Douglas Alexander): The Government remain committed to the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe arms embargo against both Azerbaijan and Armenia, which we interpret as covering all goods and technology controlled under entries in part III of schedule 1 to the Export of Goods (Control) Order 1994 (commonly known as the military list).

In November 2005, the Government approved an export licence application for bomb disposal clothing and equipment for the special state protection service in Azerbaijan.

The decision was made in accordance with our practice occasionally to make an exemption to our interpretation of the embargo by approving exports of non-lethal military goods where it is clear that the embargo was not intended to prevent those exports. The Government believe that this export is justifiable on humanitarian grounds.

HEALTH

"Commissioning Children's and Young People's Palliative Care Services"

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Liam Byrne): I am pleased to announce that the Department is publishing a guide today entitled "Commissioning Children's and Young People's Palliative Care Services".

The provision of palliative care for children and young people has often been raised in both Houses of Parliament. We have made it clear that we want improvements in the choice and quality of services available to children with life-threatening or life-limiting conditions and their families.

Children's palliative care needs are different from those of adults. Their conditions often entail much longer-term provision, often intermittently throughout their lives, and their needs can be complex.

The new guide provides important information about the key aspects of children's palliative care which will stimulate improvements in quality of provision and commissioning. It also aims to promote choice for children, young people and their families, for example whether to receive palliative care at home, in hospital or in a hospice.

Standard eight of the national service framework for children, young people and maternity services (NSF) has set very high standards of services for disabled children and young people and those with complex health needs, including palliative care. The new guide will help primary care trusts and practice based commissioners and their local authority and voluntary sector partners to implement the NSF standards as they develop and deliver children's palliative care, bringing together a range of providers to achieve a seamless service for children with life-limiting or life-threatening conditions and their families. It promotes the choice to die at home that so many children, young people and their families want.

Copies of "Commissioning Children's and Young People's Palliative Care Services" will be placed in the Library.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Police Pensions

The Minister for Policing, Security and Community Safety (Hazel Blears): After considering the responses to the consultation document published earlier this year I am pleased to announce the introduction of a reformed system of financing police pensions with effect from 1 April 2006.

The new arrangements will cover both the existing police pension scheme and the new scheme to be introduced next April, but will not affect officers as members of those schemes. The new system of financing pensions will benefit police authorities by keeping the pension payments they make to retired officers separate from their operating costs. The new system will facilititate operational budgeting and planning based on the real cost of serving officers, including the cost of their accruing future pensions. The new arrangements will also prevent any future rises in the cost of pensions in payment, as more officers retire, from impacting directly on police operating costs thus helping to keep council tax precepts to a minimum over the coming years.

Currently the police pension scheme, which is administered locally by the police authority for the force concerned, is financed on a pay-as-you-go basis. Police authorities do not hold specific pensions accounts and officers' contributions are therefore paid into their operating accounts, from which the pensions of retired officers are paid. This means that police authorities have to meet the cost of the pensions of retired officers from the same source that funds operational policing. Although authorities currently receive an element in their police grant to support these pension payments there can be volatility from year to year in pensions expenditure, depending on the number of officers who retire, which can have an impact on operational expenditure.

In 2001, a working party from the Treasury, the Home Office and the Department of Transport, Local Government and the Regions completed a joint review of arrangements for the financing of police and fire pensions. Following the recommendations of the Joint Review, a Home Office-led working group of officials drew up the consultation document "Report of the Working Group on Police Pensions Finance Reform" which we published on 24 March. We have now considered the responses to the consultation document and the outcome is that all respondents wish the new system to be introduced next year essentially as proposed. Support for the proposals was subject to specific comments and I am placing in the Library a copy of a summary of the results of the consultation exercise and of the Home Office response.

The new arrangements for financing police pensions will be based on officers' contributions and a new employer contribution that will be paid by the police authority into a separate pensions account. Any shortfall would be made up by a central Government grant and any surplus in the account recovered by central Government. To facilitate a smooth transition adjustments will be made in the level of Government funding through the police grant to ensure that there is no disadvantage to either the local or national taxpayer as a result of the change in the financing system.

The new arrangements are similar to those currently being used by other unfunded public service pension schemes, for example those for teachers, civil servants and NHS staff. The changes are also very similar to the changes being made to the financial arrangements for firefighters' pensions, also announced today.

We are in close touch with the Association of Police Authorities and the Association of Chief Police Officers about the changes and we will shortly issue police authorities with detailed guidance on the new arrangements.

PRIME MINISTER

Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): The biennial Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting (CHOGM) took place in Valletta, Malta from 25 to 27 November.

Her Majesty The Queen attended the meeting in her role as Head of the Commonwealth. She also paid a state visit to Malta where she was most warmly welcomed by the Maltese people. The outgoing Commonwealth Chairman-in-Office, President Obasanjo of Nigeria, paid tribute on behalf of all Commonwealth members to the Queen's commitment and dedication to the Commonwealth.

This year, for the first time, Commonwealth Foreign Ministers met in advance of CHOGM to receive reports from Commonwealth bodies and to prepare the communiqué. The UK was represented by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development and my noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

Commonwealth Heads of Government last met in Abuja, Nigeria in December 2003. At Valletta, Heads reviewed developments since then.

As in 2003, Heads issued a separate statement on multilateral trade. This highlighted the contribution that international trade makes to global prosperity, poverty elimination and sustainable development. They reaffirmed their commitments to the objectives of the Doha development agenda of the World Trade Organisation and to its conclusion by the end of 2006. While they welcomed the progress achieved since 2003 they stressed their deep concern about the pace of negotiations. The Commonwealth pledged its global influence to correct this and Heads committed to inject urgency into their negotiators at the WTO, encouraging them to be flexible and place priority on a genuinely development-oriented outcome for the round.

The importance of agriculture to developing economies was highlighted, with a call for the end of export subsidies by 2010 and time-bound commitments for substantial reductions in trade distorting domestic support and significant improvements in market access.

The importance of differential treatment for developing countries was highlighted in this context. Heads of Government also called for phased adjustment and other transitional measures to help vulnerable states, including small states and those traditionally dependent on preferential market access arrangements, to meet the trade and development challenges facing them. This was noted with particular reference to the impact on some Commonwealth members as a result of the liberalisation of the EU sugar regime. The G8 initiative on "Aid for Trade" was applauded as a means for meaningful market access.

Heads discussed other development issues, including the millennium Development Goals, where there is mixed progress in the Commonwealth. Heads welcomed the G8 proposals for debt cancellation and commitments by many developed countries to achieve the 0.7 per cent. target. Heads confirmed their commitment to root out corruption. There was particular concern for vulnerable small states, which need help to diversify their economies. Some small states have been very badly affected by natural disasters. Heads endorsed a proposal from Bangladesh for the Commonwealth to develop proposals to address how it can help with disaster risk-reduction and responses.

Heads also discussed terrorism, incitement and tolerance and reaffirmed their condemnation of all acts of terrorism. They emphasised that targeting and deliberate killing of civilians through acts of terrorism cannot be justified or legitimised by any cause or grievance. They commended the various initiatives to promote dialogue, tolerance and understanding among civilisations.

Heads discussed how to use information and communications technologies to support development, reduce poverty and contribute to the attainment of the millennium Development Goals.

During the summit, I met with the leaders of sugar producing Caribbean states and a number of other leaders, including the Prime Ministers of Malta, Mauritius, Pakistan and Singapore.

The Commonwealth expressed its concern about recent developments in Uganda, including the detention of Kizza Besigye. As Secretary General McKinnon said on Sunday 27 November, Uganda knows what must happen between now and 2007 when it expects to host the next CHOGM. I also raised our concerns directly with President Museveni.

It was agreed that the United Kingdom should return to the Commonwealth Ministerial Action Group (CMAG), the body charged with monitoring Commonwealth nations' compliance with the Harare principles.

I participated in the Commonwealth sports breakfast and thanked Commonwealth leaders for supporting London's Olympic bid. Heads of Government looked forward to the Melbourne Commonwealth games in 2006 and I presented Glasgow's interest in hosting the games in 2014.

Copies of the concluding communiqué, the separate statements on trade and small states and the declaration on networking for development have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Euro-Mediterranean Summit

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): The 2005 Euro-Mediterranean Summit took place in Barcelona on 27–28 November. I co-chaired the Summit with the Spanish Prime Minister. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary also attended for the Government.

The summit delivered a five-year work plan with a substantial package of commitments towards political, economic and social reform in the southern Mediterranean region. A code of conduct on countering terrorism was also agreed. There was also agreement on a chairman's statement, reiterating the overall political commitments of the Euromed partnership. I have placed copies of these texts in the Libraries of both Houses.

The commitments agreed included:

a code of conduct on countering terrorism: this is the first time that Europe, Israel and Arab countries have agreed to condemn terrorism in all its manifestations, as well as practical commitments to act together against terrorism;

a governance facility: a substantial EU "incentive fund" to reward Mediterranean partners who make progress on good governance;

a commitment to raise standards in conduct of elections. This will be supported by EU technical assistance and observers;

agreement to liberalise trade in agriculture and services: A first wave of regional negotiations should start before the end of 2005 with the aim of concluding them before December 2006. This is a major step towards the agreed goal of establishing a Euromed free trade area by 2010;

targets on education including a commitment to ensure that all children (boys and girls) have access to quality education and to halving current illiteracy rates in the region by 2015. The EU and Mediterranean partners have committed to increasing significantly resources devoted to education; and to developing a "benchmark standard" university education qualification transferable within the EU and the region;

a commitment to develop co-operation between the EU and southern Mediterranean countries, on migration policy, including fighting illegal migration;

in addition 1 billion euros in further lending to private investment in the southern Mediterranean region was announced by the European Investment Bank.

The Government are committed to the full and early implementation of the commitments agreed at the summit. We shall also continue to work towards further economic, political and social reform in southern Mediterranean countries.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Energy Review

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Alan Johnson): The Prime Minister and I are pleased to inform the House that we have asked the Minister for Energy, the hon. Member for Croydon, North (Malcolm Wicks) to lead a review of UK energy policy and to bring forward policy proposals next year.

The review will assess progress against the four goals set by the 2003 energy White Paper:

to put ourselves on a path to cut the UK's carbon dioxide emissions—the main contributor to global warming—by some 60 per cent. by about 2050 with real progress by 2020;

to maintain the reliability of energy supplies;

to promote competitive markets in the UK and beyond, helping to raise the rate of sustainable economic growth and to improve our productivity; and

to ensure that every home is adequately and affordably heated.

The review has a broad scope and will consider aspects of both energy supply and demand focusing on medium and long-term policy measures beyond 2010. The review will consider all options including the role of current generating technologies, such as renewables, coal, gas and nuclear power, and new and emerging technologies, for example carbon, capture and storage. The review will also consider transport and the role of energy efficiency. The terms of reference for the review are annexed to this written statement.

The review will be taken forward by a cross-departmental team based in the DTI, with officials drawn from key relevant departments and the Prime Minister's strategy unit. The review team will develop energy policy proposals during 2006.

This review is part of our ongoing commitment to reviewing progress against the goals and, if necessary, taking steps to ensure we stay on track. It will be taken forward in the context of the Government's commitment to sound public finances and will take account of all short-term, medium-term and long-term costs and liabilities both to the taxpayer and energy user. The review is taking place against a background of strengthening evidence on the nature and extent of climate change and increasing concerns about the future security of UK energy supplies.

Given the substantial challenge posed by climate change, Sir Nicholas Stern has already been asked to produce a report to the Prime Minister and Chancellor by autumn 2006 on the economics of climate change. The work undertaken as part of the stern review will be closely co-ordinated with, and complementary to the energy review.

ANNEX—Energy Review Terms of Reference

The Government will review the UK's progress against the medium and long-term Energy White Paper goals and the options for further steps to achieve them. The aim will be to bring forward proposals on energy policy next year.

The review will be informed by analysis and options drawn up by a review team led by the Energy Minister. This will be a team of officials drawn from key relevant departments and the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit. In drawing up the analysis and options, the Energy Minister will undertake extensive public and stakeholder consultation. The review will be taken forward in the context of the Government's commitment to sound public finances and will take account of all short-term, medium-term and long-term costs and liabilities both to the taxpayer and energy user. The review team will report to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in early summer.

EU Telecoms Council

The Minister for Industry and the Regions (Alun Michael): I will be chairing the Telecoms Council of the UK's EU Presidency in Brussels in the afternoon of 1 December 2005.

The first item on the agenda will look at the important theme of better regulation, focusing specifically on the 2006 review of the regulatory framework for electronic communications markets and on the future of EU spectrum policy. I will chair a policy debate on these issues and we have produced a Presidency policy paper to help guide the debate. This discussion is important in the wider context of EU economic reform. I hope to achieve a steer from the Council on the key issues that need to be addressed within the 2006 review and on the role of market based mechanisms in EU spectrum management.

I will then introduce a policy debate on the i2010 Strategy which I believe can play a key role in achieving the Lisbon goals of economic growth and productivity. With the help of a Presidency paper, I will ask my colleagues to explore the key issues that need to be the focus of attention in the area of information and communication technologies over the next five years and to discuss how best to ensure that ICT policy is appropriately reflected in wider national economic discussions both at EU and national level. I also hope that as part of this agenda item, we will be able to agree the set of Council Conclusions responding to the Commission Communications on the i2010 strategy and on e-accessibility.

The third agenda item will look at the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting, focusing specifically on the spectrum gains from digital switchover and on a timetable for digital switchover in the EU. I hope that we will be able to agree the Council Conclusions responding to the Commission Communication on this issue, but I do not anticipate a substantive policy debate.

Finally, together with Viviane Reding, European Commissioner for Information Society and Media, I will report back on the outcome of the world summit on information society which took place between 14 and 18 November and parts of which I attended.

EU Energy Council

The Minister for Energy (Malcolm Wicks): I will be chairing the Energy Council of the UK's EU Presidency in Brussels in the morning of 1 December 2005. My right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Alun Michael) will occupy the UK seat.

The first item on the agenda will be better regulation: implementation and outcomes of the internal market for electricity and natural gas. This item will include presentations from Commissioner Piebalgs on the Commission's report on progress in creating the internal gas and electricity market and from Commissioner Kroes on the initial findings of the Commission's sectoral inquiry into the European gas and electricity markets. I will then chair a policy debate. In order to guide the discussion, we have prepared Presidency questions focusing on implementation, enforcement and transparency; the power of regulatory authorities; market integration; and the need for improved third party access to networks. We hope the debate will help influence the future direction of EU energy market

liberalisation within a better regulation framework and will make an effective contribution to the emerging findings of the DG Comp inquiry.

The second item will be Climate Change and Sustainable Energy, on which we hope that Ministers will adopt draft Council Conclusions. I will chair a policy debate, which aims to give impetus to the ELPs contribution to international efforts to address climate change and to promote sustainable, cost-effective energy supplies. Again, the Presidency has prepared questions to guide the debate, which will focus on the interaction between the energy, climate change and competitiveness agendas; the role of sustainable energy sources and technologies in helping to achieve climate change objectives; and, following publication of the Commission's Green Paper on energy efficiency, member state priorities for measures to be taken forward in the forthcoming EU energy efficiency action plan (EEAP) to be adopted in 2006.

These two items will take up the bulk of the Council's time.

The third and last item consists of information from the Presidency and the Commission, and comments from Ministers, on the EU's international energy relations—the EU-Russia energy dialogue, the South East Europe energy treaty, the EU-OPEC dialogue and the energy charter treaty. Although discussion may be brief, we hope it will underline the importance of this subject for the EU's security of energy supply. The UK can point to some successes in this area during our Presidency. We hosted an energy Permanent Partnership Council on 3 October, which gave impetus to the EU/Russia energy dialogue; progress on the South East Europe energy treaty was such that it was signed by Ministers in Athens on 25 October; an EU-OPEC ministerial meeting will be held on 2 December and negotiations on the transit protocol to the energy charter treaty are continuing. All these initiatives help to promote producer/consumer understanding and enhance energy transit and market opening.

TRANSPORT

Highways Agency Framework Document

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Dr. Stephen Ladyman): The Highways Agency has an important role in delivering the successful management and operation of the strategic road network. It fulfils this role on behalf of the Secretary of State and the Agency's relationship with the Department for Transport is covered by a framework document.

The framework document sets out the roles and responsibilities of the Highways Agency, its chief executive and how he will work with the Secretary of State and the Permanent Secretary of the Department for Transport. The previous framework document dated from 1999 and was due for revision.

The framework document has been revised in accordance with Cabinet Office guidelines and has been approved by the Chief Secretary to the Treasury. Today I have placed copies of the new Highways Agency framework document in the Libraries of both Houses.

British Transport Police (Funding)

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): The professionalism and dedication to duty of the British Transport Police (BTP) was illustrated to the full by their response to the terrorist attacks in London on 7 and 21 July. The Government appreciate the highly professional capability demonstrated by the BTP.

Following discussion with the chief constable and the chairman of the BTP Authority, it is clear that the BTP incurred substantial costs as a result of their response to the attacks. I have therefore agreed to make a contribution of £3.6 million to the funding of the additional costs incurred. This sum covers the costs of overtime, accommodation and other overheads. It will also contribute to the costs of CCTV viewing equipment for speedy analysis of CCTV images.

BTP have confirmed that further additional costs associated with the failed bombing attempts of 21 July and other operations directly related to the July attacks are to be absorbed within BTP's existing budget.

However, this one-off payment does not prejudice the general principle that it is the rail industry that is responsible for funding the BTP. Any future request for central funding will only be considered on the merits of the case.

Rapid Transit Scheme (South Hampshire)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Derek Twigg): In July 2004, I took the decision to withdraw funding for the South Hampshire rapid transit (SHRT) scheme because of excessive cost increases. Since then, the scheme's promoters, Portsmouth city council and Hampshire county council, have put revised proposals to the Department.

I have considered very carefully all the new information provided by the promoters. The promoters have succeeded in reducing the cost of the tram schemes below last summer's level. However, costs remain significantly higher than those the Department approved.

The latest tram proposals are still very expensive—costs are nearly 50 per cent. higher than originally planned. This is for a reduced scheme which places more of the risks with the public sector. I therefore cannot support requests to re-instate the SHRT proposal.

The scheme was given full approval in 2001 with a cap on the public sector funding of £170 million, present value terms at 2003 prices. Following receipt of bids that greatly exceeded the approved public sector cost, the promoters put forward an alternative proposal in late 2003 removing the proposed cycle shuttle and introducing revenue risk sharing. But the public sector funding remained £100 million more than we had approved.

The promoters' latest proposal requires public sector funding of £214 million in 2003 present value terms. Cost savings were achieved by removing the short loop proposed for Fareham and changing the proposed procurement, with less risk transfer to the private sector. This is a 26 per cent. increase above the previously approved amount. However, this simple comparison does not give a full picture because:

These figures are the total value in 2003 of the required public funding, at 2003 prices. In 2005, at current prices, the value would be £253 million—nearly 50 per cent. above the approved cap. And this is still a present value figure, so it understates the cost increase in cash terms over the life of the scheme.

But it is the cash costs that count. The current proposal would require £93 million of capital grant and a total of £581 million in annual payments, associated with the PFI credits, up to 2036. The original proposal required grant of £75 million, and £244 million in annual payments to 2033. The cost to Government have therefore more than doubled, from £319 million to £674 million, over 36 years.

I appreciate that the promoters have made every effort to reduce the costs of the scheme. However, it is clear that costs remain significantly higher than those that I previously approved. In the light of all the information, I cannot support requests to re-instate the SHRT proposal.

Merseytram

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Derek Twigg): On 13 June this year, I said that the £170 million Government funding that had originally been approved for Merseytram remained available if the scheme could be delivered at that cost.

Since then we have had regular discussions to secure the necessary funding commitments from the Merseyside districts, over which Merseytravel has powers to levy funds, to give confidence that the scheme would be delivered without further requests for Government funding. Unfortunately the required assurances have not been forthcoming. I have therefore decided that this scheme cannot proceed.

Merseytram Line 1 was given provisional approval in December 2002, at a public sector cost of £225 million, and with a cap of £170 million on central Government contributions. Costs subsequently increased, and Merseytravel advised the Department in May 2005 that the total public sector cost was £315 million—an increase of 40 per cent. This was for a scheme that was smaller in scope than the one we had approved.

This led to my announcement on 13 June 2005 that the Government would not increase its contribution to the project. However, our position has remained clear that the previously committed £170 million was available if the scheme could be delivered at that cost.

Since June, the Department's key concern has been to ensure that there would be no further requests for Government funding. To this end, the Department needed assurance that the districts, as the ultimate flinders of any shortfalls, had properly considered the risks, and accepted the consequences of the Government's contribution being capped. This logically meant that there should be no cap on the contribution from local sources. We made clear in July 2005 that we would need written undertakings from the Merseyside districts to this effect.

Since then, the Department has tried to help the authorities find a way forward. In September 2005 it became clear that not all of the Merseyside districts would be prepared to give such undertakings. We agreed to consider a proposition that Liverpool and Knowsley, as the principal beneficiaries of the project, would provide assurances that they between them would meet any cost overruns or funding gaps. We have also agreed to requests to extend the deadline for a decision.

We have also said that our requirements would be satisfied by an arrangement under which the two districts would enter a back-to-back agreement committing Merseytravel to take the risk above a certain level, as long as the districts' commitments to the Department were unconditional. This approach could address district concerns about the prudence or lawfulness of providing unconditional commitments to the Department, provided that they satisfied themselves that they could rely on the agreement with Merseytravel.

The Merseyside authorities have now had four months to deliver these commitments, but they have not been prepared to do so. What the districts have offered is a capped commitment, whereby Liverpool and Knowsley would bear costs up to £24 million. Above that level, they have asked us to rely on assurances from Merseytravel.

However, Liverpool city council has recently received written legal advice that it would not be prudent or lawful for Liverpool to rely on Merseytravel assurances about the risk of cost overruns without a proper independent due diligence exercise.

If Liverpool's own legal advice is that it cannot currently rely on Merseytravel assurances, then clearly it is not reasonable to expect the Department to do so.

Liverpool's advice is consistent with our view that there is nothing inherently unlawful in an unconditional district undertaking. What is preventing the districts from providing the commitment letters we have requested is that they cannot be confident in Merseytravel's assurances.

Our requirements have been clear since July. We have now had months of discussion with Merseyside. They have had plenty of time to undertake the necessary due diligence work. However, it is unfortunately clear that the districts are not prepared to give us the assurances we need; so we cannot be confident that there will be no further requests for funding. I have therefore decided that the scheme cannot proceed.

I recognise that transport investment is needed in Merseyside to support future growth in the area. We have committed over £200 million to transport improvements in Merseyside over the last five years, and we intend to continue to support good value schemes in the area. The Department stands ready to work with Merseytravel and Merseyside authorities on a package of transport improvements for Merseyside, especially improved public transport in the areas that would have been served by Merseytram. Funding will be there for the right proposals.

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 30 November 2005

CABINET OFFICE

Regulatory Impact Assessments

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Jim Murphy): The Government are committed to ensuring that regulations are necessary, give effective protection, balance cost and risk, are fair and command public confidence.

In accordance with this, we require Departments to produce and publish RIAs for all regulatory proposals likely to have an impact on business, charities or voluntary bodies.

I have today presented to Parliament a Command Paper listing RIAs published between 1 January and 30 June 2005. Copies of those listed have been placed in the Library. This is the 23rd such Command Paper.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

EU Gender Equality Council

The Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Tessa Jowell): The Informal EU Gender Equality Council hosted by the UK presidency took place in Birmingham on 8–9 November. Together with ministerial colleagues, my hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Heeley (Meg Munn) and Baroness Crawley, I chaired this meeting which included visits to innovative community projects from across the west midlands tackling the problems of gender inequality.

In addition to 15 Ministers from across Europe with responsibility for gender equality, I was delighted to welcome Rachel Mayanja, the UN Secretary General's Special Adviser on Gender Equality and the Advancement of Women, Anna Zaborska, Chair of the European Parliament's Women's Committee and Vladimir Spidla, Commissioner for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities.

On Tuesday 8 November, Ministers were divided into groups to visit community projects brought together in two venues in Birmingham. My colleague Meg Munn, visited a community arts centre called "The Custard Factory" and I hosted the other group of Ministers who visited a converted pub in Balsall Heath, now a thriving centre of education as part of South Birmingham College. At each venue we had the opportunity to talk to a number of women about their projects and to learn about good practice in the United Kingdom. The areas covered by the projects included rural enterprise, education and training, business start-ups, confidence-raising, gender equality in the business world and the promotion of technology and enterprise for young girls.

A number of Ministers commented that they found this part of the Informal to be the most innovative as it gave them a chance to speak to individual women who had experienced various forms of disadvantage and to hear their stories.

On the second day, after a short welcome speech from my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary, Ministers broke into three small groups chaired by the UK, Austria and Finland (the current and two succeeding Presidencies) for detailed discussions and an exchange of good practice. These discussions were based on questions prepared by the Presidency and sent to the Ministers in advance. The three themes flowed from the preceding Gender Equality Conference. These were:

"Breaking the Barriers", which included issues such as breaking down traditional stereotypes of women's work and occupational segregation, the kind of support needed for women entrepreneurs and using taxation and incentive policies to break employment barriers;

"Making work work" covering successful work-life balance initiative, childcare and how women can achieve economic security in retirement, and

"Getting in, getting on" covering educational initiatives aimed at inspiring girls to aim high in their professional lives, how women can update and expand their skills throughout their lives and the gender pay gap and how it can be abolished.

Discussions in these groups were lively and informative, aided in part by the smaller numbers of participants. In the subsequent Plenary session, each chair reported back on some of the key issues discussed and highlighted examples of good practice that were shared in their group. In discussion, Ministers agreed that the key issues affecting gender equality include:

The demographic challenge, meaning that people were living longer and having fewer children;

The gender pay gap;

Occupational segregation;

The need for increased involvement of men in caring responsibilities and domestic tasks;

The low status and consequent lower pay of many women's jobs;

Women's lower pensions caused by interrupted working patterns and lower pay;

Better quality and greater provision of childcare;

Flexible working patterns and reconciliation of work-life balance.

During the Ministerial meeting a number of speakers also identified the need to increase the number of women in the labour market if Europe is to increase economic growth, productivity and competitiveness. The links between this and the EU "Lisbon Strategy" were made with particular reference to retaining women in the labour market.

Ministers agreed that the opportunity to share and exchange practical examples of good practice, which worked in their Member States, with other colleagues, had been extremely useful and hoped that it could be built on in the future.

At the end of the meeting, a presidency statement was issued which will be formally presented to the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council on 8–9 December. I attach a copy to this Statement.

PRESIDENCY STATEMENT

Statement made by the UK Presidency at the Conclusion of the Ministerial Meeting on Gender Equality in Birmingham on 9 November 2005

1. Ten years ago in Beijing the United Nations drew up a Declaration and a Platform for Action that has been the template for progress on gender equality ever since. The enthusiasm and commitment of the national delegates and representatives of civil society, who worked day and night on the text, helped to inspire the development within the European Union of a strong legislative base for gender equality and innovative policies for women's empowerment.

2. Together the Luxembourg and United Kingdom Presidencies were determined to lead the EU to a strong reaffirmation of the Declaration and Platform for Action to mark their tenth anniversary. This began with a Conference and Informal Ministerial meeting in Luxembourg in February, that reviewed progress in all EU Member States towards the goals in the Platform for Action, and provided a comparative review of the institutional mechanisms for promoting gender equality within Member States. The Luxembourg Conference report provides an important basis for future comparative EU study, and the Common Ministerial Declaration (adopted by Ministers of EU Member States responsible for gender equality on 4 February) provides a strong statement of support for the Beijing Platform for Action.

3. In March the Luxembourg Presidency led a very strong EU delegation to the 49th session of the Commission on the Status of Women at the United Nations, where, in no small part due to the determination of the EU, we secured a full and universal reaffirmation of the Beijing Declaration with a renewed emphasis on the importance of gender equality for the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals. These goals were reviewed at the Millennium Review Summit in September, where the UK led the EU delegation. The Outcome Document of the Summit makes even stronger linkages between the Beijing Declaration and the MDGs, including a reference to making the goals of full and productive employment and decent work for all, including women, a central objective of relevant international policies as well as national development strategies, including those aimed at poverty reduction.

4. Education and economic empowerment are key to promoting women's advancement in all of the areas identified in the Beijing Platform for Action. An educated woman who has marketable skills and equal rights in the workplace can better resist discrimination in other arenas. Women, as 50 per cent. of the EU population offer great economic and social resources of creativity, entrepreneurship and community cohesion. But economic empowerment, and gender equality, requires an effective legislative base and a wide range of policies, at national and local levels, and in business, for success. Within the EU we now have a strong legislative base, with the conclusion of negotiations on the extension of protection against discrimination on the grounds of gender into the field of goods and services. Therefore at the UK Presidency Gender Equality Conference and Ministerial Meeting in Birmingham we concentrated on sharing our experience of practical interventions and policy initiatives that deliver economic empowerment for women and gender equality for women and men.

5. Alongside practical examples from many EU Member States, generously shared by representatives from governments, business, trade unions, academics and civil society, we also considered ideas that have been successful in the developing world. And Ministers, prior to their own very valuable discussions, visited community projects based in the West Midlands—several funded by the EU—to see how local initiatives can make a significant difference to the economic chances of disadvantaged women, particularly to those experiencing multiple discrimination. These projects working with the specific needs of Minority Ethnic women, women in business, training and education of women, young female entrepreneurs, women facing social exclusion and support for women in rural enterprise, represent a microcosm of the complexity and diversity of issues facing women in their everyday lives across Europe, and, highlight the challenges faced by policy and decision makers to achieving full gender equality.

6. We were strongly influenced in our work by the mid-term review of the EU Lisbon Strategy. This strategy recognises overtly that gender equality and the advancement of women are fundamental to the achievement of full employment, sustained economic growth and social cohesion, as well as the promotion of knowledge and innovation in Europe, the reinforcement of social protection and the eradication of poverty. We encourage all Member States to ensure that their future annual Lisbon implementation reports, (which will report on their National Reform Programmes for 2005–08), are fully mainstreamed—in particular that; any targets and data are disaggregated by gender; that the goals of women's employment and the provision of good childcare are properly resourced; and, that the Integrated Guidelines on Growth and Jobs for 2005–08, are heeded, (with particular reference to Guideline No 18 "promoting a lifecycle approach to work"). The EU Lisbon Strategy must be achieved by full acknowledgement of the importance of gender equality.

7. The EU made a firm commitment, renewed in Luxembourg in February, to continue its work on different aspects of the Beijing Platform for Action by the development and collection of helpful and relevant indicators. It was also agreed that this year no new specific indicators would be developed, so that Member States could focus on implementation of the Platform in its entirety. In 2006 this work will recommence under the leadership of the Austrian and Finnish Presidencies, including a focus on gender equality health indicators. However, in due course, this will be greatly assisted as a result of work done under Luxembourg and the UK this year on the establishment of the European Gender Institute. This, and the Recast Directive that simplifies and streamlines the existing gender equality acquis, have been the primary focus of our work in Council.

8. The Presidency is proud of the EU's record of achievements in the field of gender equality but is all too well aware of the work that remains to be done. We believe that our emphasis at the Presidency Conference and Ministerial in Birmingham, on women's economic empowerment, in the context of the Beijing Declaration and the Lisbon Strategy, is an important one, and has provided the opportunity for significant and purposeful conversations between practitioners from across the EU, and more widely We are pleased that the European Commission plans to reprise the theme of women's employment and work-life balance as the central part of its Third Annual Report to Heads of State and Government, (to be presented at the Spring Council in March 2006). This UK Presidency Statement will be presented to the Employment, Health and Social Affairs Council for consideration on 8–9 December.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Tenancy Deposit Protection

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Yvette Cooper): My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister will publish for public consultation on 30 November a paper discussing secondary legislation to implement tenancy deposit protection for tenants.

During the passage of the Bill which became the Housing Act 2004 the Government introduced tenancy deposit protection provisions to safeguard deposits paid by tenants in relation to assured shorthold tenancies.

The consultation paper examines the information requirements to be placed on landlords and the handling of deposits at the beginning and end of the tenancy.

Copies of the paper are being sent to a wide range of interested parties including local authorities, tenant representative groups, landlord and letting agent associations, and others with an interest in this issue. The closing date for responses is 1 February 2006.

Copies of the paper will also be placed in the Libraries of both Houses, and will be available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at www.odpm.gov.uk.

A summary of the responses to the consultation will be published on the ODPM website.

English Fire and Rescue Service

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (Jim Fitzpatrick): The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has today announced additional investment of the order of £125 million, under the private finance initiative, for three projects proposed by fire and rescue service authorities.

These include a joint project put forward by Lancashire, Merseyside and Cumbria fire and rescue authorities as well as individual projects from Staffordshire, and Gloucester.

These PFI projects will help fire and rescue authorities to rebuild, refurbish and relocate new community fire stations allowing them to save more lives through improved response times and by providing fire safety advice to the communities which will help to reduce the number of accidental fire deaths in the home.

The Greater London Authority

The Minister of Communities and Local Government (Mr. David Miliband): The Government are today publishing a consultation paper on proposals for additional powers and responsibilities for the Greater London Authority—the Mayor of London and the London Assembly.

We believe the time is now right to look at giving the Mayor a greater say in the planning and delivery of London's strategic services while preserving the appropriate balance of power between the Mayor, Assembly and boroughs. We are opening the door to significant decentralisation of powers from Whitehall, while ensuring the GLA remains a focused and strategic authority. We believe the GLA has proven its worth, and that the time is right to shift power from Whitehall to London. How far will depend on the response to the consultation.

The Government's consultation paper outlines a number of proposals for additional powers for the Mayor across a range of policy areas, including housing, learning and skills, planning and waste management and waste planning. It also explores options for additional powers for the London Assembly and changes in appointments to the boards of the four functional bodies in the GLA Group.

We look forward to hearing the views of Londoners and those with an interest in London during the consultation period, which will run until 22 February. After considering all the responses to this consultation exercise, the Government will announce a final package of proposals in spring 2006.

A copy of the consultation paper has been placed in the Library of the House.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

General Affairs and External Relations Council

The Minister for Europe (Mr. Douglas Alexander): The General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) was held on 21–22 November in Brussels. My right hon. Friends the Foreign Secretary, the Defence Secretary, and the International Development Secretary chaired the Council as presidency. I also represented the UK on certain agenda items.

The agenda items are as follows:

DEFENCE MINISTERS

Capabilities

The Council approved the final Requirements Catalogue 05, which identifies the EU's military capability requirements and puts renewed emphasis on rapidly deployable, sustainable and interoperable armed forces. The catalogue was validated using computer-assisted operational analysis provided by NATO. Two further battlegroups were announced (Greece-Romania-Bulgaria-Cyprus and a Czech-Slovak group), which ensured the roster was filled to the end of 2008. Progress on capability development initiatives including battlegroups, the European Gendarmerie Force and the maritime dimension was welcomed. Council Conclusions were agreed.

Civil-military co-ordination

The work of the UK presidency in improving civil-military co-ordination, notably on comprehensive planning and security sector reform, was widely welcomed as a step towards bringing all the EU's instruments into a more effective holistic response. The Commission also supported this approach. Ministers agreed that this work should be applied to comprehensive reviews of the EU's engagement in Bosnia, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan and Aceh. The Council also discussed the importance of EU support to building African peacekeeping capacity, and the EU's ability to respond rapidly to disasters.

European Defence Agency

The Council welcomed the report by the Head of the Agency and agreed guidelines for the Agency's work in 2006. Ministers exchanged views on the finalisation of Administrative Arrangements between the Agency and Norway and Turkey. The presidency undertook to consult with those countries and return to the issue at the next opportunity.

Foreign and Defence Ministers: Bosnia

The Council reviewed the EU military and police missions in Bosnia and agreed Conclusions. It agreed that a continuing EU military presence was essential, with force levels broadly unchanged for the coming year. It established a follow-on police mission refocused to support police reform and the fight against organised crime, and agreed to strengthen the EU Special Representative's role in co-ordinating EU instruments. On the tenth anniversary of the initialling of the Dayton Agreement, Ministers welcomed the progress made by Bosnia and authorised the Commission to open negotiations on a Stabilisation and Association Agreement.

FOREIGN MINISTERS

Preparation for the 15–16 December European Council

The presidency introduced a draft annotated agenda and explained that Ministers would have a chance to consider draft European Council Conclusions at the 12 December GAERC.

Financial Perspectives 2007–13

The presidency introduced this item and highlighted that it remained committed to reaching a deal in December. The presidency highlighted the need to make progress in three main areas: *(i)* the structure of EU spending; (ii) modernising the budget, including a timetable for review; and (iii) resources. Significant changes would be needed to the proposals made n June by the Luxembourg presidency. The presidency highlighted plans for a ministerial conclave on 7 December, ahead of which the presidency would table comprehensive proposals.

WTO

The Commission set out the latest developments in the Doha Round. On process, the Commission commented that they will continue to ensure transparency with Member States and would consult the Council fully at Hong Kong. short conclusions were agreed.

Middle East Peace Process (MEPP)

The presidency and High Representative Solana welcomed the agreement on the EU mission to monitor the Palestinian operation of the Rafah crossing point on the Gaza-Egypt border. The parties' acceptance of an international role was significant. Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner highlighted that Commission capacity building programmes would work hand-in-glove with the ESDP monitors. In preparation for the 25 January Palestine Legislative Council (PLC) elections, Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner said an Election Observation Mission would deploy in mid-December and would consist of 172 observers. Monitors would strictly limit their contacts to issues related to the observation of the elections. The presidency underlined the importance of the EU maintaining its position that observers should not enter into dialogue with Hamas until they renounced violence and recognised Israel. Council Conclusions were agreed.

Iraq

The Foreign Secretary briefed on his recent visit to Iraq (10–11 November), highlighting that steady progress was being made. The Foreign Secretary emphasised the importance of the December elections, where the Iraqis were keen for international observers. The Council agreed that mounting a full EU Election Observation Mission (EOM) would not be possible in the time available, but wou'd explore what additional assistance it could provide in support of the 15 December elections. The Council also agreed that the EU should be considering now how to prepare for closer relations with the new government next year. The presidency thanked the Commission for their work on the opening of a Commission Delegation in Baghdad. Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner said they were currently looking for a Head of Mission and, in addition, would shortly be submitting a draft negotiating mandate to Member States for a Trade and Co-operation Agreement with Iraq by the end of the year.

Iran

The presidency updated the Council on the 18 November International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) Report. High Representative Solana highlighted the need to work closely with Mr El-Baradei and for the international community to stay firm and united. The presidency agreed that the issue remained difficult but it was important the European side actively supported a diplomatic solution.

Migration in External Relations

The Council agreed council conclusions on migration in external relations and underlined their significance. The presidency noted the close interest taken by Heads of Government at Hampton Court on this issue. The Commission stressed the importance of better co-coordination of work between Justice and Home Affairs, External Relations and Development and of increasing partnership with countries of origin and transit on migration issues. They particularly highlighted the need to improve engagement with sub-Saharan countries and to reinforce dia'ogue with Neighbouring countries. The Commission also hoped that the reform of the financial instruments would enable them to respond more quickly and effectively to urgent migration related situations.

EU Strategy for Africa

The Council agreed conclusions on the Commission Communication on the EU-Africa Strategy: Towards a Euro-African Pact to Accelerate Africa's Development. The Communication will form an integral part of the overall EU Strategy for Africa, which should be discussed and agreed by Foreign Ministers at the December GAERC and endorsed at the December European Council.

During separate exchanges of views in preparation for the EU-Africa Strategy, Foreign and Development ministers identified the following priorities for the strategy: African ownership; mechanisms to monitor implementation of the strategy; increasing support for peace and security, including through a long term commitment to the EU's African Peace Facility; good governance; trade and regional integration; establishing an EU-Africa infrastructure facility; meeting aid volume commitments and providing more assistance for health, education and the fight against AIDS; migration; environment; human rights; and Economic Partnership Agreements.

AOB—ASEM/Burma

The presidency highlighted the issue of Burmese participation at the Asia-Europe Meeting (ASEM) meetings and agreed that officials should take work forward and revert in due course.

AOB—Cyprus

Sweden requested the presidency update Member States on plans for the Cyprus Aid regulation. The presidency highlighted the urgency of agreeing the Regulation and invited officials to take forward work before the next GAERC.

AOB—Bulgarian Medics

At the request of Bulgaria, who highlighted that the Libyan court of appeal was allowing a new hearing on the case of the Bulgarian and Palestinian medical staff at the end of January. This might herald a positive evolution. The Bulgaria Foreign Minister thanked the presidency, the Commission and the Member States for their efforts. The presidency offered continuing support to resolve this issue.

AOB—Organisation for European Cooperation and Development (OECD) Secretary General

Poland asked for support for the candidature of ex-Prime Minister Belka.

AOB—Ethiopia/Eritrea

At the request of the Netherlands, who highlighted the serious situation in the border region between these two countries and stressed the need for the EU to work closely with the UN. The presidency agreed to discuss this issue further at the December GAERC.

DEVELOPMENT MINISTERS

EU Strategy for Africa

Details of this item are set out in the paragraph above under Foreign Ministers' discussions.

The European Consensus on Development

The Council and Commission agreed "The European Consensus on Development". This will be a Joint Declaration between the Council, European Commission and European Parliament. It is divided into two parts: the first sets out common objectives and principles to guide the EU and its 25 Member States in development, focused on poverty eradication and partner country ownership; and the second sets out the revised EC Development Policy which clarifies the Community's role and added value and ensures that priority attention be given to least developed and low income countries in resource allocation; and development shall be taken into account in other policies that affect developing countries. The European Parliament is expected to formally adopt the Declaration in December.

Orientation Debate: Effectiveness of EU External Assistance

The Council held its sixth annual "Orientation Debate" on improving the effectiveness of EU external action based on a presidency discussion paper. The Council adopted Conclusions, which highlight the significant progress made by the Commission over the past five years and the concrete measures needed over the next year to improve the quality of aid and aid delivery at EU and Community levels, including: more joint multi-annual programming; lead donor arrangements at field-level; and more predictable long term funding.

Post-Tsunami Follow-up

The Council adopted the presidency progress report on the implementation of the post-Tsunami Action Plan. There was no further discussion.

Aid for Trade

The Council discussed the package of aid for trade measures proposed by the presidency, for agreement ahead of the WTO Ministerial in Hong Kong on 13–18 December. The Council welcomed the Commission's commitment at the G8 Summit in Gleneagles to increase aid for trade to 1 billion Euros annually and agreed to aim to adopt Conclusions at the 12 December GAERC, which express its collective intention to increase aid for trade within rising aid volumes.

AOB—Pakistan Earthquake

At the request of Denmark, the Council discussed the provision of aid to the victims of the recent earthquake in Pakistan. My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development reported back on the Reconstruction Conference held in Islamabad on 19 November at which he represented the presidency. The Council also discussed wider reform of the international humanitarian system.

HEALTH

Learning Disability Services

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Liam Byrne): Today I am publishing "Valuing People: Making things better" the Government's third annual report on learning disability services. The report describes progress made in implementing the programme of action set out in the

White Paper "Valuing People: A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century" (Cm 5086) and comments on the National Director for Learning Disabilities report "The Story So Far—A New Strategy for Learning Disability for the 21st Century" which was published in March this year.

Valuing People is a cross-Government strategy. In last year's annual report, "Valuing People: Moving Forward Together", we described areas where Government Departments worked with learning disabled people to ensure that they could be more fully included in society. It recorded a wide range of activity covering many aspects of daily life. In this year's annual report "Valuing People: Making things better" we have described:

the work of the Learning Disability Task Force —which has changed the way it works in order to focus on the things that are really important for people with a learning disability;

policies set up by the Department for Education and Skills such as "Every Child Matters", the Early Support programme and "Removing Barriers to Achievement" to look at how children with learning disabilities and their families can have services that meet their specific needs. Through encouraging more joined up working, DfES have also been addressing the issues faced by young people during the transition period when leaving school and becoming an adult;

issues around choice and control for people with learning disabilities and how individual budgets can help increase people's choices. In the Department of Health, the Valuing People Support team's "In Control" project has been testing out how to make individual budgets happen for certain groups of people and we aim to learn from this; and

the work being done to make people with learning disabilities' day to day lives better: such as improving transport services and, under new laws such as the Disability Discrimination Act, helping make information about transport easier to understand.

Today's report, like last year's, is written in an accessible form, using pictures and straightforward, jargon-free language. It is important that people with learning disabilities can see for themselves what is being done to improve the services they use and to increase the opportunities available to them to lead the type of life the rest of us take for granted.

Valuing People said that it would take a minimum of five years for its programme to be implemented. We are now over half way through that period and continue to make good progress. However, section three of today's report outlines where the Government acknowledge changes that still need to be made. We shall be working to address these issues in the near future.

Copies of "Valuing People: Government Annual Report on Learning Disabilities 2005—Making Things Better" have been placed in the Library.

Food Standards Agency

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Caroline Flint): The Food Standards Agency's annual report 2004–05 was laid before Parliament today. Copies will be placed in the Library.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Justice and Home Affairs Council

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): The Justice and Home Affairs Council will be held on 1–2 December in Brussels. I shall be chairing the majority of the meeting and my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs and Lord Chancellor will be chairing the items on civil justice. My noble friend Baroness Ashton of Upholland will also be representing the presidency.

One of the key issues for this Council will be counter-terrorism and the Council will be asked to recognise the significant progress which has been made during the UK presidency. This will include approving the EU Strategy on Counter-Terrorism, which is designed to complement the Counter-Terrorism Action Plan by providing a longer-term strategic direction. I am also hopeful that the Council will be able to agree the draft Strategy and Action Plan on Radicalisation and Recruitment, looking at the contributing factors involved and how they can be addressed.

Following on from the discussions by Heads of State at Hampton Court, there will be a strategic discussion at Council of the Commission's contribution to the European Council Paper on a Global Approach to Migration.

The Government have emphasised throughout the presidency, the importance that we have attached to the external dimension of Justice and Home Affairs issues. To reflect this, I hope to achieve agreement to the draft Strategy on External Relations at the Council. Linked to this, and following on from the useful discussions at the informal JHA Council I hosted in Newcastle, I hope that the Council will be able to agree draft Council Conclusions on increased EU Assistance to Combating Drugs in Afghanistan.

Another key priority for the UK presidency has been to raise the profile of EU work to tackle human trafficking. This is expected to result in the agreement to a wide ranging EU Action Plan at the Council, which I very much welcome.

On the Framework Decision on Simplifying the Exchange of Information and Intelligence Between Law Enforcement Authorities, the European Council's call for political agreement was reinforced at the July Council following the terrorist attacks on London. I hope that the Council will be able to agree to a general approach on this measure, though this will pertain solely to the text of the draft instrument and not to its annexes, allowing further time for consideration and fine-tuning of the detail.

Retention of telecommunications data is a complex dossier that has been subject to intense negotiation. Reaching a first reading deal with the European Parliament before the end of 2005 remains an ambitious but achievable goal. Subject to further progress in negotiations with the European Parliament and at Ambassador level this week there remains a good chance that the Council could reach political agreement

on draft Directive text. In that case I am hopeful that a First Reading agreement could be reached with the European Parliament during our presidency.

The European Evidence Warrant will provide a fast and effective way of obtaining evidence from another Member State based on the principle of mutual recognition. There still remain issues to be resolved at the Council, notably around the grounds for refusal contained in Article 15, but I hope to be able to deliver a compromise that all Member States can accept so that we can reach a general approach on this important dossier.

In the area of civil justice, three items of business will be discussed: the European Order for Payment, Small Claims and the Directive on Certain Aspects of Mediation in civil and commercial matters. This reflects the priority which we as a presidency have given civil justice. Our citizens live increasingly cross-border lives: they live, work, buy and sell across Europe's borders. EU co-operation in civil judicial matters can bring practical benefits to the lives of citizens across Europe.

At the Council, I hope that we can reach a general approach on the European Order for Payment. On the European Small Claims regulation, I hope to confirm the emerging consensus on the key principles of an effective European small claims procedure. Our aim is to achieve an accelerated and simplified procedure, as contemplated in the Tampere conclusions and re-stated in the Hague programme, based on the principle of proportionality. Lastly we intend to use the Council to reach a broad agreement on the text of the draft Directive on Mediation, subject to outstanding questions of scope and subsidiarity and pending the opinion of the European Parliament. Progress in these areas will provide citizens and businesses with a means to resolve disputes more efficiently and at less cost.

There will also be a state of play report on the Framework Decision on Certain Procedural Rights in Criminal Proceedings, which will set out the progress that has been made on this dossier and the areas of contention that still remain to be taken forward under the Austrian presidency.

In the margins of the Council, the Mixed Committee will also meet with the Icelandic Minister in the Chair. There will be a further brief discussion of the draft Framework Decision on Simplifying the Exchange of Information in this forum. There is also going to be a report on progress on the technical developments for the Schengen Information System II, to look at whether more needs to be done to help meet the 2007 timetable. Finally, I am expecting the Commission to make a presentation on its Communication on Enhanced Interaction Between the Visa Information System, Schengen Information System II and Eurodac.

Finally, in the margins of the Council, representatives of the Member States, meeting inter-governmentally, will be looking to agree Draft Conclusions on Common Minimum Security Standards for ID Cards. This will be important in addressing the weak link in EU travel documentation.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Harm Reduction: Drug use and HIV

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): I am placing in the Libraries of both Houses copies of the new Government paper "Harm Reduction: Tackling Drug use and HIV in the Developing world." This paper is published by DFID today in conjunction with seven other Government Departments: the Cabinet Office, the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Department of Health, HM Treasury, the Home Office and the Department for Work and Pensions.

Drug injection with contaminated needles and syringes is one of the major means of transmission of HIV and hepatitis C in Europe, Asia and Latin America. It is also driving HIV transmission in North Africa and the Middle East and is becoming an increasing problem in Africa.[1] For example, in Kenya, Nigeria and South Africa, injecting drug use appears to be higher than has previously been realised.

The paper primarily focuses on the prevention of drug-related harm, rather than the prevention of drug use per se. This includes reducing different kinds of harm whether health, social and economic. In the context of HIV and other blood borne diseases, harm reduction aims to reduce the health and social consequences of injecting drugs.

There is substantial evidence about the effectiveness of harm reduction in preventing HIV infection among Injecting Drug Users (IDUs), especially needle and syringe exchange programmes from many countries. For example in the UK and Australia HIV infection rates among Injecting Drug Users are much lower (less than 2 per cent.) than in countries without or with insufficient programmes.

Harm reduction programmes as part of a comprehensive plan for HIV prevention, treatment and care could save millions of lives every year.

The Government view harm reduction as an important part of the overall HIV prevention strategy in countries with serious HIV epidemics among Injecting Drug Users, as well as in countries without serious HIV epidemics where harm reduction helps maintain low prevalence rates. We are working across Government to address this issue and have jointly agreed next steps. These are outlined in the paper, and cover: 1) the UK Government's understanding of harm reduction in the context of HIV; 2) the international approach for harm reduction; and 3) DFID's support and approach for harm reduction in developing countries.

DFID's approach focuses on piloting, or assisting in the national implementation of harm reduction including needle and syringe programmes, safer injecting, substitution therapy, social marketing of condoms, and peer education through government partners, and international and local NGOs.

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[1] UNAIDS, Report on Global AIDS Epidemic, Geneva, Switzerland, July 2004.

In implementing the approach set out in this paper we will continue to work in partnership with developing country Governments, international agencies and donors, civil society, the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries, the broader private sector and the research community.

TRANSPORT

Integrated Kent Franchise

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): I am announcing today that Govia has been awarded the contract to run the integrated Kent rail franchise from 1 April next year.

The contract my Department has signed commits Govia to introducing the high speed commuter trains that will use the channel tunnel rail link to serve the south-east from 2009.

Journey times for passengers who wish to travel from Ramsgate and east Kent, through the Medway towns and Thames Gateway to the centre of London will be reduced. It will be the first high speed commuter service this country has seen. In 2012 Govia will provide the flagship Olympic Javelin rail service that helped London secure the Olympic games. This will link St. Pancras and Stratford in less than eight minutes.

In addition Govia has committed to improve performance, invest around £76 million in passenger and staff facilities, oversee the construction of two depots in East Kent to maintain the new and existing fleet of trains and add a number of off peak services to the current timetable. The franchise contract is for eight years with the final two years dependent on service performance achieving preset targets.

There has been significant investment in the franchise region in recent years. The taxpayer has invested more than £600 million in new rolling stock in Kent in the last three years. In addition, Kent has seen £93 million of investment in power supply, stations, depots and related infrastructure. Some £250 million will be invested in the new high speed trains.

The total subsidy for IKF is £585 million over the eight years. It is therefore justifiable for the new operator to increase fares by 3 per cent. above inflation from January 2007 for five years to ensure there is fair balance between the taxpayer and fare paying passenger.

I am satisfied that the competition for the franchise has resulted in a contract that represents very good value for taxpayer. It is a tough contract on which Govia will be expected to deliver. It will help support the new housing and economic opportunities in the Thames Gateway area and region beyond.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 1 December 2005

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Avian Influenza

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): I informed the House by written ministerial statement on 15 November, *Official Report*, column 48WS of the publication of the epidemiological report into the incident of avian influenza in a quarantine premises in Essex. The information previously available to us suggested that no consignments of birds had occupied the quarantine premises since March. It has now been established that a further set of records had been misfiled. Though this does not materially alter the position as previously reported to the House, we have now been informed that the quarantine premises in question accommodated a consignment of birds from 15 July to 18 August this year.

The consignment is documented as comprising approximately 2,000 birds from Tanzania. In accordance with normal procedures the records show that the birds were held for the quarantine period. In addition the documentation shows that there was mortality of approximately 10 per cent. during quarantine and post mortem samples from some of the dead birds were tested at the Veterinary Laboratories Agency. Samples taken from five of the dead birds and the sentinel chickens were negative for both Avian Influenza and notifiable Newcastle Disease. The samples from the dead birds were positive for paramyxovirus two which is not a notifiable disease.

There have been no reported cases of avian influenza in Tanzania.

We have brought the new information to the attention of our National Emergency Epidemiological Group. The group has concluded that there is no reason to alter the earlier conclusion drawn from its report that the likeliest source of the infection detected in October was the mesias documented as being imported from Taiwan. The epidemiological report will be updated to include the new information.

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): In my oral statement to the House on 26 October, *Official Report*, column 308, I referred to the work my Department is carrying out jointly with ornithologists to monitor wild birds for avian influenza in the UK. The results of this surveillance will be of interest, to varying degrees, to the House and general public. My Department has therefore established mechanisms for the reporting of the surveys findings according to the level of significance as follows.

We expect that a number of samples taken over the coming months will demonstrate the presence of low pathogenic non H5 or H7 avian influenza viruses. These have little significance in the epidemiology of avian influenza disease in domestic poultry. When these low pathogenic AI virus types (which are not H5 or H7) are isolated, they will be reported via the DEFRA website as will negative results: www.defra.gov.uk

In the event that low pathogenic avian influenza viruses of type H5 or H7 are isolated, my Department will ensure that Health colleagues are informed as early as possible and prepare a briefing document which gives a clear explanation of the findings. If appropriate, a press briefing or conference will be held jointly with Health colleagues which will seek to cover as many issues as possible. Information will be posted on the DEFRA website and stakeholders will be updated.

Should a highly pathogenic avian influenza virus of any type be isolated Health colleagues will be informed and an announcement to both Houses will be made. My Department will ensure the thorough communication of the facts to the public and arrange early stakeholder meetings to ensure that key messages are understood. Communications will take place regularly as the disease strain is identified and investigations reveal more information.

HEALTH

Strategic Health Authorities and Primary Care Trusts

The Secretary of State for Health (Ms Patricia Hewitt): In my statement of 18 October, *Official Report*, columns 49–50WS, I explained the need to streamline strategic health authorities (SHAs) and strengthen primary care trusts (PCTs)—all in the cause of improving services to patients. PCTs need to be able to design, plan and develop better services for all patients in their communities, to work more closely with local government, and more effectively to hold hospitals and general practitioners to account.

In my statement, I stated that SHAs had been invited to submit proposals to the Department of Health. I also explained that an external panel had been established to advise Ministers on whether the proposals for reconfiguration submitted by SHAs had adequately engaged local stakeholders and met the criteria set out in "Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS", published on 28 July.

Following consideration by the external panel and Ministers, I have agreed that all proposals for the reconfiguration of SHAs are fit to go forward for consultation on 14 December. Proposals for PCT configurations will also go forward for consultation on 14 December. The objective has been to ensure that the consultation on PCTs covers the broadest and most appropriate range of options.

John Bacon, Group Director of Health and Social Care Services Delivery in the Department of Health, has written to chief executives of SHAs to outline the proposals on which their organisations can consult. A summary of the proposals has been placed in the Library.

My noble Friend Lord Warner, the Minister of State for NHS Delivery, has written to hon. Members with constituencies in England to inform them of proposals for SHAs and PCTs in their constituencies.

All proposals will be subject to a fourteen week local consultation and I will ensure that Parliament is informed when the consultation process begins.

No decisions will be taken regarding the reconfiguration of SHAs or PCTs until the results of the local consultations have been considered and any recommendations reviewed.

NHS Finance Data

The Secretary of State for Health (Ms Patricia Hewitt): I am publishing today, for the first time, in-year financial forecasts for each National Health Service (NHS) trust, primary care trust (PCT) and strategic health authority (SHA). These figures—which, of course, have not been audited—show that half way through the financial year NHS bodies are forecasting a net deficit by year-end of around £620 million. These forecasts have been placed in the Library.

A majority of NHS organisation are successfully managing their finances as well as cutting waiting times and generally improving services. Furthermore, NHS bodies typically take a prudent approach to forecasting by including a number of risks that they effectively manage by the end of the year. At this stage last year, the equivalent forecast figure was a deficit of £499 million; however, the audited 2004–05 position shows an end year deficit of £219 million. We therefore expect—and indeed intend to ensure—that the position at the end of this year will be significantly better than these mid-year forecasts. To keep these figures in perspective: the forecast deficit amounts to less than 1 per cent. of the funding available to the NHS, and two thirds of the gross deficit is due to thirty-seven (or 7 per cent.) of organisations.

The decision to publish these unaudited financial forecasts is a major step in increasing transparency. I have made the decision to publish the data because I want to make it clear that inefficiency and poor financial management are not acceptable.

I am also announcing today a further important measure to address the problems in a minority of NHS organisations. Turnaround teams of financial and management experts are being sent to support the strategic health authorities, NHS hospital trusts and PCTs that have the biggest delivery challenges. These teams will be experienced in resolving financial problems and managing NHS organisations. They will focus on ensuring the organisations deliver the efficiency and quality improvements needed to achieve both financial balance and better care for patients.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Parades Commission

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Hain): I am pleased to announce today the appointment of Roger Poole as the new Chairman of the Parades Commission for Northern Ireland. I am also appointing six new Commissioners—David Burrows, Dr. Joseph Hendron, Donal MacKay, Anne Monaghan, Vilma Patterson, and Alison Scott-McKinley.

The appointments follow an open recruitment process based on merit. The new Chairman and six new members will take up their posts on 1 January 2006.

These appointments bring a completely new dynamic to the Parades Commission. The membership represents the interests of all the people of Northern Ireland. They come from a variety of backgrounds, with a broad skills mix and, for the first time, a gender balance.

I am particularly pleased that two people with personal experience and understanding of the Orange Order and the cultural importance of parades have been appointed to the Commission.

I am appointing this Commission with a mandate to work itself out of a job by helping to create an environment in which accommodations on parades can be made between the two communities without the need for formal determinations.

I am confident that Roger's down to earth approach and willingness to engage with people will help move parades towards a new era and that he will be ably supported by the rest of the Commission.

The vast majority of parades pass off peacefully but there remains about half a dozen which are highly controversial. The violence that we saw at Whiterock in September cost millions of pounds of taxpayers money but had an even greater cost in terms of community relations.

Northern Ireland will not be able to move into a truly stable and peaceful future whilst these issues remain unresolved.

TRANSPORT

EU Presidency: Transport Council

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): The second Transport Council of the UK presidency takes place in Brussels on 5 December. I will again be in the chair, with the Minister of State, my hon. Friend the Member for South Thanet (Dr. Ladyman) in the UK national seat.

There is a fuller agenda than in October, which will include maritime items. The main items on the agenda include: a progress report from the Commission on the recent negotiations between the European Union and USA on a comprehensive liberalised aviation agreement; revision of the directive on driving licences; and three dossiers from the third rail package.

The latest round of EU-US negotiations for an air transport agreement took place in Washington from 14 to 18 November. There will be an exchange of views following the Commissioner's report, and my summing-up will be reflected in presidency conclusions. Progress was made during the talks with the USA, but will await the outcome of a US rule-making process on ownership and control of airlines, expected sometime in the first half of 2006, before evaluating the Stage One deal on the table.

The Council will consider a draft decision authorising the Commission to open negotiations on a comprehensive aviation agreement with China. The draft mandate sets out negotiating objectives for the first

phase, primarily promoting "regulatory convergence" in competition and other fields. Negotiation of market access rights would in the main be left for later phases.

In regard to aviation security, I will present a report on progress in working group negotiations on a regulation to replace the existing regulation 2320/02. The existing regulation has proved open to divergent interpretations, has no security classification, and is subject to the full co-decision procedure with the European Parliament. This has meant that implementation across the 25 Member States has been uneven, that sensitive details of security measures are in the public domain, and that the regulation is difficult to amend quickly in response to rapidly evolving security circumstance. The new proposal would help to clarify, simplify, and further harmonise the legal requirements with the aim of enhancing the overall security in civil aviation.

Turning to land transport, we will table the draft recast directive on driving licences, with a view to political agreement. This is a compromise text that reflects the opinion of the European Parliament at its first reading and builds on the common position reached at the October 2004 Transport Council. Certain Member States have political difficulty with some of its provisions because of domestic concerns, which makes the outcome uncertain.

Three elements of the third rail package are on the agenda.

We will give Council the chance to achieve a political agreement on the liberalisation of international rail passenger services directive to amend Council Directive 91/440/EEC on the development of the Community s railways. This follows the useful exchange of views at the October Council. The proposed directive creates a presumption of open access and will extend liberalisation of the international passenger rail market to any licensed train operating company. This is currently only available to international groupings. The directive will also add the right of cabotage (carrying passengers between stations in the same country) on international services. The increased open access is, though, qualified. Member States may restrict access in particular markets which are already served by services which are the subject of a public service contract if the State's regulatory body confirms that this is strictly necessary to maintain the economic equilibrium of the public service contract. The proposal would have no significant effect on the competitive environment for Eurostar or domestic train operating companies in Great Britain. This directive is supported by a significant number of Member States, although there are some reservations which may mean an agreement is not possible.

Linked to the rail liberalisation directive is the draft Public Service Obligation (PSO) regulation for public passenger transport services by rail and by road. The Council will hear a progress report, in so far as discussions on the rail liberalisation directive have touched on the content of this proposed regulation. The draft regulation sets out to ensure harmonised rules for granting of contracts to passenger transport operators, including rail operators, to provide public services.

The second element of the third rail package in which the Council will have the chance to reach a political agreement is the draft regulation on International Rail Passengers' Rights and Obligations. The regulation provides enhanced rights for passengers making international rail journeys, building on the existing provisions in the COTEF international rail convention. The enhanced rights concern, in particular, the provision of information and tickets, compensation and assistance in the event of delay to international services, and assistance for persons of reduced mobility.

The third dossier of the third rail package is the Certification of train crews operating locomotives and trains on the Community's rail network directive. This returns to the Council for political agreement, following the European Parliament's (EP) First Reading on 28 September and the general approach which was reached at the December 2004 Transport Council. The directive proposed for agreement is not materially changed from the general approach text. It includes a provision to allow Member States to exclude from the directive's applications—for a (renewable) period of up to 10 years—train drivers who exclusively operate on the territory of that Member State if it can be demonstrated that application of the directive's provisions would not be economically worthwhile.

The maritime part of the agenda has one substantive item—Maritime Employment. The Council will be asked to agree Council Conclusions, which we have promoted, under the heading "Boosting employment prospects in the Community maritime sector and attracting young people to the seafaring profession". This will fulfil the UK promise to undertake this issue which was initiated during the Greek Presidency in 2003. This voluntary agreement, an example of better regulation, will help to build up a skills base of qualified and experienced people for the future of the shipping industry. Encouraging recruitment, especially among young people, is a vital part of that process.

The Commission will report on the current situation in the Galileo satellite navigation project. The Commission hopes to present a possible resolution for the recent delays to the project. As presidency, we will continue to stress that a continuing delay would increase the costs and risks of the proposed PPP concession for the deployment phase. We. will also recall Council's previous statements on sound financial management of the project, and the need for a robust deal which benefits the Community as a whole.

The most significant of the Any Other Business items are:

Italian Minister, Pietro Lunardi and Minister of State Stephen Ladyman will make a statement on the Verona III—Informal Ministerial Conference on road safety that was held in Verona in November.

The Commissioner will make a statement on the maritime package of seven proposals, which were published on 23 November.

The Commissioner will make a statement introducing a Communication on inland navigation.

The Commissioner will make a statement on SESAR (Single European Sky ATM Research—previously known1 as SESAME), a technical programme to facilitate implementation of the Single Sky.

The Commissioner will make a communication on the European Aviation Safety Agency.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Office for Disability Issues

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mrs. Anne McGuire): I am pleased to inform Members today of the launch of a new unit, the Office for Disability Issues (ODI), which fulfils a key recommendation of the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit report, "Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People", published in January of this year.

The Office for Disability Issues will lead cross-government work to drive forward the report's vision of substantive equality for disabled people by 2025.

Despite great advances in civil rights and services since 1997, outcomes for disabled people have remained disappointing in a range of areas including employment, income, and education. Therefore it is vital that steps are taken now to minimise the barriers presently preventing an individual's full participation in their community and the economy. All Departments committed to the 20-year agenda set out in the Life Chances report, which will be progressed through the new Office for Disability Issues.

The ODI will provide leadership as the focal point within for key partners working to promote improved outcomes for disabled individuals throughout their lives. As a cross-government unit, it will both influence and challenge from within, foster policy and programme coherence and integration across Departments. Working with key Government Departments, the ODI will ensure prompt implementation of the Life Chances set of recommendations for achieving full substantive equality for disabled people by 2025 as well as developing a broader and more inclusive strategy.

The ODI will become an exemplar in equal opportunities, a model public sector organisation in internal practices, external relations and activities. It will ensure that the views and aspirations of disabled people are at the centre of policymaking, by reaching out to organisations and individuals at every step, and bringing external expertise into the ODI itself. We will, for example, be advertising externally for a senior ODI post in the New Year. It will change the way Government communicate with disabled people and organisations, embedding stakeholder engagement in its day-to-day work. Using these networks, and analytical resources, the ODI will become a source of information and expertise on disability and support to Government Departments, and work to influence public perception and build awareness of disability issues.

A core team is already in place taking this work forward, and is engaging with a wide range of individuals and organisations, and sought views specifically on the ODI earlier this year. Feedback from this exercise informed our thinking on the role and remit of the Office, and is available on the ODI website, which is also being launched today.

While individual departments retain responsibility for delivery and outcomes, the ODI will take forward some specific recommendations from the Life Chances report. This includes facilitating the cross-departmental Ministerial and supporting Officials steering Groups (these groups were established at the beginning of this year). I am very grateful to my Ministerial colleagues for their valuable work so far on the Ministerial steering group.

The ODI will also collate and edit an annual report on progress towards the vision for substantive equality for disabled people by 2025; and will develop a set of outcome-based measures to track this progress. An independent advisory group is currently being appointed to scope out the role and remit of a National Forum for Organisations of Disabled People. The ODI will also be setting up a Task Force on Independent Living.

In addition to fulfilling recommendations in the Life Chances report, the ODI will take a broader view of disability, encompassing areas not covered in the Life Chances report. This will include supporting other Government Departments in the effective implementation of the 2005 Disability Discrimination Act's public sector duty to promote equality for disabled people. As well as being a collective resource for, the ODI will also specifically support the Minister with responsibility for disabled people.

Written Ministerial Statements

Friday 2 December 2005

TREASURY

Budget ECOFIN: 24 November 2005

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Ivan Lewis): I chaired the Economic and Financial Affairs Budget Council (Budget ECOFIN) on 24 November 2005. The Permanent Representative to the European Union, Sir John Grant, represented the UK. The trilateral meeting with the European Parliament and the Commission, designed to reach an agreement on the 2006 EC Budget, was extended until 30 November since it was not possible to reach an agreement on 24 November. This was due to European Parliament not being able to continue negotiations after midnight on 24 November.

An agreement on the 2006 EC Budget was concluded between the Council and the European Parliament on 30 November. The agreement establishes total payment levels of €111,969 million (1.0100 per cent. of EU GNI), an increase to certain co-decided programmes of €100 million, and a mobilisation of the flexibility instrument of €275 million (of which €40 million is to be spent on CFSP). Agreement was also reached on the other agenda items carried forward from 24 November.

The Council duly concluded its second reading of the 2006 EC budget as an "A" point at the JHA Council on Thursday 1 December. The European Parliament is scheduled to vote on its own second reading on 15 December in Strasbourg, after which the 2006 EC Budget will be formally adopted.

Response to Globalisation

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Gordon Brown): With companies, Governments and individuals all having to respond to the scale, speed and scope of a changing global economic environment, I am today announcing a package of measures to respond to the challenges and opportunities of globalisation.

I am today publishing a paper, "Globalisation and the UK—strength and opportunity to meet the economic challenge", that sets out Britain's policy response to the key challenges and opportunities of globalisation, in particular in skills, science, regulation, transport, and planning.

In the 2005 Budget I commissioned Sir George Cox to conduct a review into how best to apply creativity and innovation to improve UK firms' productivity and performance. His report is published today.

In the same Budget I asked Sir John Pattison to develop a 10-year strategy for UK stem cell research. He has published his report today.

Taking forward the goals from the 10-year science and innovation investment framework, I am announcing:

a new partnership with the biomedical industry, as a result of which the industry expects to grow its investment in UK medical R&D by £500 million per year in the near term rising to £1 billion in the longer term—an increase of some 30 per cent. ;

a new national institute for health research in the NHS, with around 10 major centre grants to support centres of excellence, 250 clinical academic fellowships, 100 clinical lectureship training opportunities a year, and a series of measures to streamline regulatory burdens on the research community; which my colleague, the Secretary of State for Health will build upon when she announces the new research and development strategy for the NHS in January;

a new commitment to develop the capability within the national NHS IT system to facilitate—within the bounds of patient confidentiality—9i) the recruitment of patients to clinical trials, and (ii) the gathering of data to support groundbreaking work to improve public health;

in response to Sir John Pattisson's report, an extra £50 million over the next two years to make the UK a world leader in stem cell research, to take forward the recommendations of the UK Stem Cell Initiative (UKSCI) Report. The detailed response to the UKSCI report is available at:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/StemCell/fs/en

a review into the intellectual property framework led by Andrew Gowers and reporting in Autumn 2006. While recognising that the Government believe the present UK system broadly strikes the right balance between consumers and rights' holders, it is important to examine whether improvements could be made;

publication of the Government's response to discussions with business on the development of the R&D tax credit, including major improvements to the administration of the scheme to ensure that all businesses get the full value from the R&D tax credit; and

in response to Sir George Cox's report, plans for a network of creativity and innovation centres in every region of the country to nurture emerging talent and build links between businesses and the creative sector.

Copies of the globalisation paper, the paper on discussions of the R&D tax credit and the reports of Sir George Cox and Sir John Pattison are available in the Vote Office and the Library of the House.

DEFENCE

Gulf Veterans' Illnesses

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Don Touhig): A key principle of the Government's approach to addressing the health concerns of veterans of the 1990–91 Gulf conflict is that there should be appropriate research into veterans' illnesses and factors that may have a bearing on these.

In their 2003 Review of Research into 1990–91 Gulf veterans' illnesses, the Medical Research Council included the recommendation that information from existing epidemiological and mortality studies should be linked. The Ministry of Defence subsequently commissioned a study led by Professor Macfarlane, of the University of Aberdeen. A paper reporting the results of the study is available on the website of the International Journal of Epidemiology in advance of hard-copy publication. The study examined both the longer-term mortality of Gulf veterans and, for those veterans that participated in the main epidemiological surveys of UK Gulf veterans, whether there was any

relationship between self-reported experiences during deployment or illness at the time of survey, and subsequent death. The researchers report that, 13 years after the end of the 1990–91 Gulf conflict, there is no difference in the overall mortality of Gulf veterans compared with a similar group that did not deploy. The paper also says that an increase in death associated with certain reported exposures is not statistically significant and that excess illness reported by veterans during health surveys was not related to an increased risk of death.

A summary of the findings is available on the journal website and via a link on the MOD website at: www.mod.uk/issues/gulfwar/whats_new.htm.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Local Government Pension Scheme

The Minister for Local Government (Mr. Phil Woolas): My statement to the House on 13 July made it clear that, taking account of costed assessments of the effect on the Local Government Pension Scheme (the LGPS) of reinstating the rule of 85 with effect from 1 April 2005, the Deputy Prime Minister would come forward with new regulations in the autumn to address the consequences for the scheme in time for the provisions to be in place from April 2006.

Careful consideration has been given to the representations and specialist actuarial advice received from interested parties involved with the Scheme, and to the helpful discussions involving the key stakeholders within the framework of the LGPS Tripartite Committee. The estimates provided by LGPS administering authorities of the anticipated cost pressures arising from the decision to reinstate the rule of 85 in the scheme with effect from 1 April 2005, have also been taken into account. Draft amending regulations will shortly be circulated for consultation to all LGPS interests in England and Wales and will be laid before Parliament in the New Year once they are finalised.

The combined scope of the consultation package and the subsequent regulations will secure the on-going solvency of the scheme without any additional calls on central or local government budgets. This meets the Government's intention to secure the continued affordability and long term viability of the scheme, and its acceptability to taxpayers.

Amending regulations, on which the necessary statutory consultation begins shortly, will directly contribute towards mitigating and managing the costs pressures arising from the decision to reinstate the rule of 85 in respect of pension liabilities accruing on the scheme for the period 1 April 2005 until 30 September 2006. Other amendments, based on the responses received from a previous consultation exercise carried out over the summer, will further extend the existing flexibilities in the LGPS linked to the new tax regime for occupational pension schemes already established by the Finance Act 2004.

Further scheme amendments are also necessary to implement the terms of the European Employment Directive 2000/78/EC which establishes a general framework for equal treatment in employment and occupation. To give effect to the Directive and compliance with the timetable for associated Government legislation on age discrimination and employment law being introduced by DTI, the effective date for the removal of the rule of 85 from the LGPS will be 1 October 2006. Subject to the outcome of the proposed consultation exercise, it will be necessary to put in place appropriate safeguards, which can be objectively justified, for those LGPS members closest to retirement to take effect from the same date. The statutory consultation will provide a framework for discussion between the local authority employers and the trades unions in particular about the precise terms of these safeguards, and to explore how these may be associated both with the current proposed scheme changes, and others which may be developed in the wider discussion about the future of the scheme.

Balancing the scope of such safeguards with the opportunity to develop the longer term reform of equality proofed scheme will form an integral part of the discussions and negotiations which the Tripartite Committee stakeholders have already agreed to undertake over the next six months. These will involve local authority employers, trades unions and other scheme interests in a programme of discussion and analysis to modernise and reform the scheme. These discussions will take account of wider pension policy developments, to ensure the LGPS can meet the challenges of a changing and flexible workforce, in and around local government, and deal effectively with the high incidence of part-time employees many of whom are female on lower incomes.

It is intended to consult widely on a policy discussion paper, about the proposed way forward for the LGPS in the summer of 2006 for analysis and comment. This will allow a subsequent statutory consultation to begin later in the autumn of 2006, leading to new scheme provisions for April 2007 with the ultimate objective of having a new-look LGPS in place for April 2008.

The continued affordability and viability of the scheme, as well as its acceptability to taxpayers, remains a central theme of the Government's intentions for the LGPS. So too is our commitment towards ensuring the scheme offers an equality proofed pension framework for all its increasingly diverse and part-time workforce. Delivering an effective and affordable balance between the cost of its provision to employers and tax payers on the one hand, and fairness to scheme members on the other, remains a priority, within the overall resource framework of local government and of other employers within the scheme. A flexible and attractive pension scheme for local government and employers associated with it is now required.

This statement is in effect, the beginning of a series of detailed consultations with all LGPS interests about the future of the scheme. Initially, the affordability of the existing LGPS must be established but, in doing that, it is essential to begin to move forward and begin to discuss and analyse the possible form and content of a new-look LGPS for 2008. All LGPS interests are committed to that intent and objective.

Planning Delivery Grant

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Yvette Cooper): In July 2002 my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister announced that he would be making an additional £350 million available to local authorities over the period 2003–06 to improve the delivery of planning services. Since then, we have announced that the Planning Delivery Grant (PDG) will continue, with a further £255 million being made available in the period to 2008. We have now decided the basis on which we will distribute the Development Control and Enterprise Areas allocations of the Planning Delivery Grant of £135 million in 2006–07 and will be informing recipients of their provisional allocations.

The grant is performance related. Our aim is to enhance the resourcing of the planning system in a way that drives performance improvement and ensures effective delivery of our objectives for sustainable communities. It is specifically targeted towards meeting the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Public Service Agreements (PSA) 5 and 6. PSA 5 aims to achieve a better balance between housing availability and demand. PSA 6 requires all authorities to have local development frameworks in place (in accordance with agreed Local Development Schemes) and to meet the Best Value development control targets by 31 March 2007.

I can confirm today that the development control allocation is £78 million (57.7 per cent. of the total grant), with £71 million going direct to authorities to reward their improvement towards and achievement of Best Value development control targets in the period October 2004 to June 2005. The assessment is based on three quarterly performance figures this year because the announcement of the first allocation of PDG has been brought forward. It is now in line with other announcements of grant and this will help to increase certainty in local authority budget setting processes. This allocation will be paid to local planning authorities at a district and county level, national parks, regional planning bodies, the Broads Authority and the Greater London Authority. A provisional £2.2 million is also being made available to authorities with Enterprise Areas in their boundary.

This year we have increased the incentive for authorities to meet targets by allocating three quarters of the overall development control allocation for meeting targets and a quarter for performance improvement. In addition authorities that meet all three targets will receive a bonus of £50,000. The awards will be weighted to take account of workload and performance, and the rewards for meeting the major targets, or improving in this area, will be weighted more significantly.

For the first time there will be a topslice of £7 million from this development control total, which be used to support authorities towards meeting the target. There will be a topslice from this development control total, which be used to support authorities towards meeting the target. We agreed following a review of development control carried out with the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit that up to £5 million would be made available to the Planning Advisory Service and ATLAS, the team supporting authorities dealing with large housing applications in the south east. A topslice of £2 million from this total will be used to reward and incentivise authorities that are proactive in performance management of applications, especially through the use of electronic tracking of applications, and handling of backlogs. I will make a further announcement on what this will entail, early in 2006.

As in previous years, the development control allocations are subject to an abatement related to performance on appeals. Where an authority's performance on appeal is 40 per cent. worse than the national average (32.63 per cent. of appeals upheld against the authority), 10 per cent. of their development control allocation will be abated. Where this performance is 50 per cent. worse than the average, this abatement will increase to 20 per cent. of the development control allocation. This condition underlines the continuing importance we place on quality in decision making.

Grant allocations are not ring-fenced and authorities have complete discretion in the way they spend this money. However, to encourage investment for the future, 25 per cent. of the total grant paid to any individual authority must be spent on capital. The remaining 75 per cent. can be spent by the local authority on resource or capital budgets.

The final condition imposed on authorities ensures that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has the power to act appropriately to partly withhold payment or recover part or all of grant paid where there are concerns over the accuracy or proven inaccuracies in the information on which allocations were made. I may consider withholding up to 10 per cent. of the grant allocated to authorities whose Best Value Performance Indicator 109 (BVPI 109) has been qualified by the auditor until we have established to our satisfaction the reason for the qualification and the reliability of the data on which grant was allocated. Following this I may seek to recover some or all of the monies paid to those authorities.

Today's announced allocation remains provisional and so remains subject to a final determination of grant which will occur when the second announcement is made.

The second announcement will cover all other aspects of the grant including rewards for e-planning (£5.7 million), plan-making (£20.8 million), high housing demand and growth areas (£16 million) and low demand pathfinder areas (£2.5 million). It will also include topslices for the Planning Inspectorate (£2 million), Regional Planning Bodies (£6.5 million), the GLA (£100,000) and a national initiative of planning bursaries (£1.32 million). This second announcement is expected to be made in March 2006. All theses figures, along with those for development control and enterprise areas, remain provisional and subject to final determination by Ministers with agreement by Treasury.

A table showing the provisional amounts payable is available in the Libraries of both Houses. This sets out the details of each recipient's provisional grant allocations for development control and enterprise areas and abatements for poor appeals performance.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Environment Council

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): I will chair the second Environment Council under the UK presidency on Friday 2 December October in Brussels. The Minister of State for Climate Change and Environment, will also attend, as the UK representative.

At this Council we will aim to secure partial political agreement on the LIFE + regulation, the only dedicated community financial instrument for the environment. We cannot reach a final agreement on the overall budget until the wider future financing negotiations are completed, but we want to agree the rest of the text at this meeting, to ensure that we can move as quickly as possible to adopt the Regulation before the current LIFE extension runs out at the end of 2006.

We will be discussing the Commission's recent Communication on aviation emissions, which supports the integration of aviation into the EU emissions trading scheme. We are seeking Council Conclusions to give the Commission a clear steer from Member States on the best way to tackle the impact on climate change of aviation emissions.

Council will also be asked to agree Conclusions preparing for the International Conference on Chemicals Management which will be held in Dubai in February 2006, and is scheduled to adopt the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM).

Council will debate the Thematic Strategy on Air Quality which sets out the Commission's policy on air pollution up to 2020, and the associated proposal for a new Air Quality Directive. The focus of the discussion will be how the objectives under the Thematic Strategy might be delivered, and the balance in the Directive between new measures to reduce the environmental and health impacts of air pollution, and flexibility for Member States to comply with their obligations.

Finally, Council will debate next steps on GMOs. There was a short discussion on this issue at the October Environment Council, where we undertook to enable a further debate at the December Council, focussing on member states views of which aspects of policy on GM crops and food merit further in-depth analysis and political discussion, such as the potential risks and benefits of GM technology (including the regulatory regime and the decision-making process for individual GMOs) and the need for further research.

Under "Any Other Business", points will be raised on: the Biodiversity Strategy; the Nanotechnology Action Plan; Green Public Procurement; the Importation of Wild Birds; Action for the Baltic Marine Environment; and the Clean Clever and Competitive Initiative.

Common Agricultural Policy

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer and I have today published a paper which contributes to the debate already underway on how to achieve a sustainable future for agriculture.

We have presented a vision for what a sustainable model of European agriculture might look like in the future to benefit Europe and the rest of the world.

The paper does not set out a route map for getting there. That must be the subject of inclusive debate across Europe and achieved through a carefully planned process and to a manageable timescale.

Through the modernised European agriculture policy set out in this paper, we believe we can achieve the following goals:

Society can contribute less financially to agriculture but reap much greater benefits.

Consumers can have a secure supply of cheaper, safe, high quality food.

Developing countries can achieve significant economic growth.

Farmers in Europe can become more competitive and market focused.

The rural environment can be improved.

Rural development can be boosted, particularly in some of the poorest parts of the European Union.

Copies of the paper will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

MPs' Briefing Sessions

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Jim Knight): On 20 October my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House of Commons announced a series of dates for briefing sessions on the work of Government Departments for new Members of Parliament, *Official Report*, column 63WS.

DEFRA has arranged two further sessions: Monday 12 December for Rural Affairs issues and Tuesday 10 January 2006 for Environment issues. Due to unforeseen circumstances the original briefing session on 24 January 2006 has had to be postponed. A new date will be announced as soon as possible.

Hon. Members should contact Deirdre Kennedy, Parliamentary Clerk at DEFRA on 0207 238 5455 to register an interest in attending.

TRANSPORT

Vehicle Register

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Dr. Stephen Ladyman): I will shortly be launching a review of the provisions (Regulation 27 of the Road Vehicles (Registration and Licensing) Regulation 2002 (S.I. 2002/2742) which replaced previous similar provisions), under which data is released from the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency's vehicle register. The provisions governing the release of this data have, in effect, been in place and worked effectively for over 40 years. When these provisions were originally introduced they did not envisage the introduction of electronic databases, the large number of vehicles now on the roads, or the range of bodies now requesting access.

Concerns have also recently been raised about the breadth of organisations that have access to the register. For these reasons, I will publish a consultation paper early in the New Year which will review the purpose, scope and operation of the release of data from the vehicle register.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Performance Targets

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. John Hutton): I am pleased to be able to announce today performance targets in respect of the customer-facing businesses of the Department for Work and Pensions.

In line with the Department's Public Service Agreement we are committed to improving the efficiency and effectiveness of our services. In order to demonstrate this, our businesses aim to achieve published unit cost targets.

The Child Support Agency target was published in its 2005–06 Agency Business Plan. The table below sets out our 2005–06 targets for Jobcentre Plus, the Pension Service and the Disability and Carers Service together with the published targets and actual unit costs for 2004–05.

	Definition	*2004–05 Actual £*	*2004–05 Target £*	*2005–06 Target £*
Jobcentre Plus	Benefit processing	28.07	28.18 [1]31.00	[1]28.24
	Job broking	208.02	191.49 [1]216.78	[1]217.03
The Pension Service	Cost per customer	25.07	24.00 [2]28.56	[2]25.50
Disability and Careers Service	Cost per customer contact	133.17	132.15	131.56

1. Jobcentre Plus revised the methodology of calculation for the 2005–06 target as a result of an allocation process that more accurately identifies the costs for benefit processing and job broking. The 2004–05 target has been recalculated on the same basis to enable comparison with the 2005–06. The increase from restated 2004–05 target to 2005–06 is explained by a small increase in expenditure on Employment Programmes, which is a reflection of the focus during 2005–06 on harder to help clients.
2. With improvements in management information, and a levelling off in Pension Credit load, the Pension Service decided that the methodology for calculating unit costs should be changed, removing the double counting of customers entitled to both State Pension and Pension Credit. This resulted in a lower average.

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 5 December 2005

TREASURY

Regulatory Reform Order

The Economic Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Ivan Lewis): The Treasury has today issued a consultation paper on a Regulatory Reform Order which proposes to cut unnecessary consultation by the Financial Services Authority (FSA), to make it easier for the FSA to tailor regulation to industry's needs and to improve the FSA's operational efficiency in other areas. Copies of the consultation paper have been placed in both Libraries of the House and it is accessible at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk.

Review of National Insurance Contributions

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): I have completed the annual review under section 141 of the Social Security Administration Act 1992. I propose the following changes to take effect from 6 April 2006. These rates and limits will also apply to national insurance contributions in Northern Ireland.

Employers and Employees

In line with the Social Security Contributions and Benefits Act 1992, the lower earnings limit for primary Class 1 contributions is to be raised to £84 a week. It is set at the level of the basic state pension for a single person from April 2006 and rounded down to the nearest pound.

The primary and secondary thresholds for Class 1 contributions will continue to be aligned with the weekly amount of the income tax personal allowance, which will be increased to £5,035 from April 2006. The primary and secondary thresholds will therefore be increased to £97 a week. This means that no tax or Class 1 contributions will actually be paid on earnings below this level.

The upper earnings limit for primary Class 1 contributions will be raised to £645.

The self-employed

The rate of Class 2 contributions will be frozen at £2.10 a week.

Self-employed people with earnings below the annual small earnings exception can apply to be exempted from paying Class 2 contributions. This limit will be raised by £120 to £4,465 in line with inflation.

The annual lower profits limit for liability to Class 4 contributions will increase to £5,035 a year (in line with the income tax personal allowance). The upper profits limit will increase by £780 to £33,540, to maintain the link with employees' earnings liable to Class 1 contributions.

Class 3

The rate of Class 3 voluntary contributions will be increased by 20 pence to £7.55 a week.

Share fishermen

The special rate of Class 2 contributions for share fishermen, which allows them to build entitlement to contributory Jobseeker's Allowance in addition to the other contributory benefits available to the self-employed, will be frozen at £2.75 a week.

Volunteer Development Workers

The special rate of Class 2 contributions for volunteer development workers, which entitles them to the full range of contributory benefits, will be increased by 10 pence to £4.20 in line with the statutory formula of 5 per cent. of the primary Class 1 lower earnings limit.

Treasury Grant

I need to ensure that the Fund can maintain a prudent working balance throughout the coming year. In accordance with section 2 (2) of the Social Security Act 1993, I propose to do so by prescribing that the maximum Treasury Grant which may be made available to the Fund in 2006–07 shall not exceed 2 per cent. of the estimated benefit expenditure for that year. Similar provision will be made in respect of the Northern Ireland National Insurance Fund.

I shall be laying a draft re-rating order before Parliament in due course. This will accompany a report by the Government Actuary to myself and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions which we shall jointly present to Parliament.

The following table sets out the rates, earnings limits and thresholds for National Insurance Contributions proposed for 2006–07.

National insurance contributions, proposed re-rating, April 2006

Item	*2006–07*
Lower earnings limit, primary Class 1	£84
Upper earnings limit, primary Class 1	£645
Primary threshold	£97
Secondary threshold	£97
Employees' primary Class 1 rate	11 per cent. from £97.01 to £645 plus 1 per cent. above £645
Employees' contracted out rebate	1.6 per cent.
Married women's reduced rate	4.85 per cent. from £97.01 to £645 plus 1 per cent. above £645
Employers' secondary Class 1 rate	12.8 per cent. on earnings above £97
Employers'contracted-out rebate, salary-related schemes	3.5 per cent.
Employers contracted-out rebate, money-purchase schemes	1 per cent.
Class 2 rate	£2.10
Class 2 Small earnings exception	£4,465
Special Class 2 rate for share fishermen	£2.75
Special Class 2 rate for volunteer development workers	£4.20
Class 3 rate	£7.55
Class 4 Lower profits limit	£5,035
Class 4 Upper profits limit	£33,540
Class 4 rate	8 per cent. from £5,035 to £33,540 plus 1 per cent. above £33,540

HM Revenue and Customs

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): The Child and Working Tax Credits are today benefiting over 6 million families and 10 million children. Tax credits tailor support to families' specific circumstances, providing more support when their need is greatest. They represent a more generous and inclusive system of income-based financial support than any previous system.

Over the past seven years the Government have reformed Britain's tax and benefit system to achieve three over-arching aims: to provide adequate financial incentives to work; to reduce child poverty; and to recognise the responsibilities of parenthood by supporting families with children. These reforms have helped make work pay and reduce the numbers of children in absolute poverty by one and a half million. Tax Credits have been an important part of this success and they represent the best way to continue it in the future.

In my statement of May 26 I outlined six measures to improve the administration of tax credits. These aimed to improve HMRC's communications with tax credit recipients, reduce the risk of errors and improve the procedures for recovering overpayments. Significant progress has been made in each of these areas.

Building on these improvements to the administration of the system, the Government are today announcing a package of further improvements most of which will come into effect over the next 18 months. The measures reflect the experience of the first years of operating the tax credit system and strike a balance between providing more certainty and stability of financial support for families, while maintaining flexibility to respond to changes in their income and circumstances. The measures also include clear responsibilities for claimants to report changes affecting their award.

The tax credits system is an annual one—integrated with the tax system—within which payments can be adjusted to reflect changes in a family's circumstances and income. Under an annual system, given a family's final entitlement cannot be known until the end of the year, some level of end-year adjustment will be necessary. However, for some families, especially those on lower incomes, downward adjustments to tax credit payments—to reflect changes in circumstances reported within the year or when awards are renewed—can sometimes cause difficulties. This is a particular problem where claimants had not realised their payments were too high. Better communications, which is a key part of the measures announced on 26 May, will help by improving claimants' understanding of the system.

Today's measures will improve matters further, providing greater certainty for claimants, especially those on lower incomes, through measures to reduce the need for adjustments caused by rising income and to limit the effects of adjustments. These are supported by measures to reduce the likelihood of unexpected downward adjustments resulting from inaccurate or out of date information about a family's income or circumstances.

Analysis of overpayments suggests that they result from a number of factors: income rises from one year to the next; families overestimating the extent to which their income has fallen when they seek extra support during the year; provisional payments made at the start of the tax year, which are based on out-of-date information that is subsequently updated when the award is renewed; and delays in reporting changes in families' personal circumstances to HMRC.

The improvements announced today will provide greater certainty for claimants, particularly those on lower incomes, while maintaining flexibility to respond to falls in income and changes in circumstances.

To increase the flexibility of the system, from April 2006 there will be an increase in the limit on the amount that family income can rise over the current tax year without affecting tax credit entitlement for that year. The current annual income disregard of £2,500 will increase to £25,000. This will mean that, for instance, a family where a non-working partner moves into work on average earnings will not see their increased income lead to a fall in their tax credit entitlement during that year. This will maintain the incentives for people to move into work, while removing a major cause of the overpayments seen in the first two years of the system's operation.

To provide greater certainty of award for claimants, from November 2006, automatic limits will be imposed on the extent to which tax credit payments can be reduced to recover higher payments in the earlier part of the year which could lead to an overpayment for the year as a whole. These limits will be set at the same levels at which overpayments from a previous tax year are currently recovered. This will guarantee that low- to middle-income families do not face large and sudden falls in their tax credit income, and reassure people who report changes promptly.

To tackle the problem of families overestimating falls in income, from April 2007, when claimants report a fall in expected income during the year, their tax credit payments will be adjusted for the rest of the year to reflect their new income level, but will no longer include a one-off payment for the earlier part of the year. At the end of the year, their award will be finalised when their actual income is known. If they have been underpaid, a further payment will then be made. This approach will provide a buffer against any overpayment accumulated by the family during the year, especially where their estimate of income proves to have been too low.

Today's measures will also give claimants clear responsibilities to report changes promptly and more regularly. They will be helped to keep their records up to date, including through more proactive contact by HMRC, allowing HMRC to base tax credit awards on the best possible information.

In summer 2006 the deadline for providing information to finalise and renew tax credit awards will be brought forward by one month to shorten the period during which provisional payments may be made using out-of-date information.

From November 2006, the range of changes reducing entitlement that must be reported to HMRC within three months will be expanded to include changes in work status or in the number of children for which the family can claim support. From April 2007, the time allowed to report such changes will be reduced from three months to one.

In early 2007, towards the end of the tax year, HMRC will contact key groups of claimants to obtain more up-to-date income information on which to base the next year's payments while the finalisation process is completed. And from 2008–09, the income figure used in setting provisional payments will be uprated by average earnings where up to date information has not been provided.

In line with its commitment when tax credits were announced in 2002, the Government have looked to learn from the early operation of the system and will continue to do so. Together these measures, and the six measures currently being implemented by HMRC, will lead to steady and ongoing improvements in the tax credits system, allowing it to deliver support even more effectively to millions of families. Without the changes announced today, initial estimates suggest that subsequent years' overpayments would be of broadly the same level as in 2003–04. When fully implemented, it is anticipated that today's changes will reduce the value of overpayments by around one third. I am still considering whether there is more that can be done to alert claimants about the recovery of an overpayment before HMRC starts to collect it but the scale of changes to the computer system that would be needed mean that this could not be done quickly.

I believe that these further measures will help to ensure that tax credits strike the right balance between flexibility and certainty for claimants and give clear messages about the need to report changes to HMRC. They are a positive response to the issues raised by the Ombudsman and others and will go a long way to meet the concerns they have expressed.

A case has been made for a system of fixed awards, which within the framework of the annual tax credits system, would need to be based on the previous year's income. The Government will continue to listen to the case, but believe on balance that it is preferable to maintain the current system that flexibly responds to changing circumstances.

The PBR sets out the actions the Government are taking to continue improving compliance in the tax credit system. As announced on 2 December, as part of their ongoing compliance work, HMRC have identified and stopped attempts to defraud the tax credits system by making claims through the tax credits e-portal. HMRC has closed the e-portal while it develops new checks to ensure the system remains secure. A criminal investigation is also being undertaken into the apparent false use of a number of DWP staff identities in fraudulent tax credit claims. It would not be appropriate to make any further public statement at this stage.

DWP and HMRC are carrying out an in-depth investigation into how this happened. They are also working quickly to identify the records concerned and to ensure they are corrected.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Independent Licensing Fees

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (James Purnell): I am pleased to inform the House that I have today formally published the interim report of an independent panel that has been set up to consider whether the licensing fees are set at the right level.

The panel's terms of reference are to:

- consider whether the fees cover the full cost to licensing authorities;
- identify the scale, extent and nature of any problems encountered by licensees/licence payers and licensing authorities;
- make recommendations about how the existing fee structure and levels could be developed;
- ensure best practice is being fully realised across all authorities; and
- identify how the regime could be developed to address any other issues including impact of the fees scales on sports clubs, village and community halls.

While the panel, which includes representatives of local government, local communities and industry, has collectively concluded that it is too early to take a view on the current fee levels associated with the Licensing Act 2003, it has made the following initial recommendations to the Government:

- There should be a central source of information on fees addressed to licence payers, which explains why the system has changed, what the new system does for licence payers and their duties and responsibilities, as well as what licensing authority responsibilities are to licence payers.
- An annual date should be set for the payment of the annual fee with incentives for paying it.
- Consideration should be given to simplifying the application process, particularly in relation to advertising applications and clarification of the requirement for "professionally" drawn premises plans.
- There should be no impediment to licensing authorities making their monitoring, enforcement, and administration more efficient and cost effective.

We will now fully consider the panel's recommendations.

The interim report also identifies areas that the panel will now consider further, including:

- Licensing Authority income and costs.
- Licensing Authority inspection and enforcement regimes and the variability of Licensing Authority approach.
- The model for calculating fees.
- Simplification and number of applications.
- Temporary event notices.
- Not-for-profit groups (including sports clubs and village halls) and events and circuses
- Large events and festivals.

The panel is due to publish a final report on the fee levels in the autumn of 2006. Where it is able to do so, it will make further recommendations in advance of its full report.

I can re-affirm today that costs incurred by local authorities in meeting their requirements under the new Licensing Act will (provided they have been incurred legitimately and efficiently) be fully met by fees within the national fee regime. There should therefore be no liability for the council tax payer because of the new licensing regime. My Department and the Local Government Association will work with the independent fees review panel as a matter of urgency to agree the process for verifying these costs.

Everyone involved in the new fees system can rest assured that, if evidence proves that the current system needs fine-tuning, we are fully committed to doing just that.

Copies of the report have been deposited in the Libraries of both Houses and are available at www.culture.gov.uk.

DEFENCE

Northern Ireland Battalion 1

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): As part of our normal process of keeping force levels under review, the General Officer Commanding Northern Ireland (GOC NI), in consultation with the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland and Chief Constable of the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI), has concluded that the remaining roulement battalion can be removed from his command as it is not required for routine support to the police in Northern Ireland. This follows a rundown in the requirement such that the tasks currently performed by this battalion can be delivered instead by resident battalions. Accordingly, the battalion known as Northern Ireland Battalion 1 (NIBAT 1) can be removed from the command of the GOC NI to Commander in Chief Land on the 16 January 2006.

This is a prudent measure to provide military support to the police efficiently and does not reflect the Army's ability to support the PSNI in countering the threat from terrorism and preventing potential public disorder. We will continue to keep force levels in Northern Ireland under regular review to match the support required by the PSNI.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

National Non-Domestic Rates

The Minister for Local Government (Mr. Phil Woolas): I have today presented the provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2006–07. Included in the announcement was the distributable amount of National Non-Domestic Rates in England for 2006–07 to be redistributed to local authorities, which will be £17.5 billion.

The provisional national non-domestic rating multiplier for 2006–07 is 0.433 (43.3p in the pound) and the provisional small business non-domestic rating multiplier for 2006–07 is 0.426 (42.6p in the pound).

The calculation of the distributable amount for 2006–07 is set out in the table below.

Calculation of distributable amount for 2006–07

£ million

	2002–03 Outturn	*2003–04 Provisional outturn*	*2004–05 Provisional outturn*	*2005–06 Provisional outturn*	*2006–07 Estimated contribution*
1. Income from local lists					
Multiplier *(p)*	43.7	44.4	45.6	41.5	42.6
Gross rate yield in respect of current year	17,195	17,463	17,844	19,165	20,103
(i) Reliefs					
(a) Net Transitional Relief	−182	−120	−125	−452	−300
(b) Net Small Business Rate Relief	—	—	—	−25	0
(c) Empty or partly occupied properties	−1,144	−1,219	−1,288	−1,294	−1,357
(d) Charitable	−602	−616	−645	−674	−707
(e) Rural shops and post offices	−6	−6	−6	−6	−6
(f) Community amateur sports clubs	—	—	−4	−6	−6
(g) Former agricultural premises	0	−1	−1	−1	−1
(h) Discretionary	−42	−39	−36	−39	−40
Net rate yield in respect of current year after reliefs	15,220	15,464	15,739	16,669	17,685
(ii) Collection costs and other reductions to contributions					
(a) Costs of collection	−84	−84	−84	−84	−84
(b) Losses on collection	−106	−93	−115	−113	−113
(c) City of London offset	−7	−7	0	0	0
Total contribution in respect of current year	15,024	15,280	15,540	16,473	17,489
(iii) Prior year adjustments					
(a) Interest on repayments	−59	−78	−64	−12	−6
(b) Repayments	−479	−803	−789	−342	−156
Total prior year adjustment	−538	−881	−853	−354	−162
Net rate yield from local lists	14,485	14,399	14,687	16,119	17,327
2. Income from Central list					
Net central list yield	1,044	1,029	1,037	1,102	1,000
3. Income from the former Crown list					
Contributions in lieu of rates	8	10	10	11	10
Total yield	15,537	15,438	15,734	17,231	18,337
4. Exchequer Contributions					
Exchequer contribution towards transitional relief	41	111	77	0	0
Total NNDR pool payments (= 1+2+3+4)	15,578	15,549	15,811	17,231	18,337

Calculation of distributable amount for 2006–07

£ million

	2002–03 Outturn	*2003–04 Provisional outturn*	*2004–05 Provisional outturn*	*2005–06 Provisional outturn*	*2006–07 Estimated contribution*
5. Adjustments					
Surplus brought forward	133	−915	−966	−155	−923
Combined total	15,711	14,634	14,845	17,077	17,413
Distributable amount	16,626	15,600	15,000	18,000	17,500
Surplus carried forward	−915	−966	−155	−923	−87

Notes:

The above calculation involves estimating several figures that are inherently difficult to forecast accurately, such as the gross rate yield and the prior year adjustments. The resulting figure of £17.413 billion has therefore been rounded to £17.500 billion exactly to avoid spurious accuracy.

For 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05, the amounts shown are generally those reported on the outturn (NNDR3) returns, with those for 2003–04 and 2004–05 being regarded as provisional in advance of the receipt of audited returns from all billing authorities. For 2005–06, the amounts shown are the provisional outturn for the year based upon authorities' provisional contributions to the non-domestic rating pool, largely as reported on NNDR1 and—where submitted—NNDR2 returns. For 2006–07, the estimates are based on:

1. Item 1: The gross rate yield represents the estimated effective total rateable value of non-domestic hereditaments on local rating lists multiplied by the small business non-domestic rating multiplier of 42.6p. The supplement of 0.7p that is also applied to businesses paying for the small business rate relief is not included, and neither is the small business rate relief included within the reliefs at item l(i). This reflects the fact that the income from the supplement is intended to equal the cost of the relief nationally, resulting in a zero net effect upon the Distributable Amount.
2. Item l(i)(a): the cost of the transitional reliefs in 2006–07 is estimated to be £300 million, to reflect the fact that the increase in the multiplier for 2005–06 onwards to take account of expected losses from appeals has had an impact upon the in-year revenue neutrality of the transitional arrangements. At least part of this cost will be recouped once the appeals take effect, and the power exists to adjust the multiplier in later years as necessary.
3. Item l(i)(b): net small business rate relief. This is assumed to be zero: see note 1, above.
4. Item l(i)(c): The empty properties relief includes voids and partially occupied hereditaments.
5. Item l(i)(d): Charitable rate relief.
6. Item l(i)(e): Rural Shops and Post Office relief. Figures include mandatory relief for general stores and post offices under the Local Government and Rating Act 1997.
7. Item l(i)(f): Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASCs). This is mandatory rate relief for sports clubs registered with HM Revenue and Customs (formerly Inland Revenue) as Community Amateur Sports Clubs under the Section 64 of the Local Government Act 2003, which came into effect on 1 April 2004.
8. Item l(i)(g): Discretionary relief granted to charities, non-profit making organisations and for other reasons including discretionary relief for village shops and post offices under the Local Government and Rating Act 1997.
9. Item l(ii)(a) and (b): The allowances for the costs and losses incurred by authorities in collecting non-domestic rates from ratepayers.
10. Item l(ii)(c): City of London offset—the amount which the City of London is not required to pay into the non-domestic rating pool. It has been set to zero for 2004–05 onwards.
11. Item l(iii): net adjustment in respect of appeals and other amendments to the rating list affecting liability for previous years rates settled in that year: comprising repayments and associated interest payments.
12. Item 2: a forecast of the rateable value of non-domestic hereditaments on the central rating list multiplied by the multiplier, less the net effect of transitional arrangements, and adjusted for appeals and other changes in respect of previous years.
13. Item 3: Almost all properties previously included in the Crown List are now included in the local list figures at item 1.
14. Item 4: the contribution from central government to offset the amount of the Secretary of State's estimate of income forgone as a result of transitional arrangements is assumed to be zero for 2006–07.

Planning

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Yvette Cooper): This statement concerns a package of changes to planning policy the Government are announcing today. We are consulting on draft "Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 3: Housing", draft "Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 25: Flooding" and we are publishing a new Green Belt Direction. Copies of these documents will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 3: Housing

The Government's housing policy aims to deliver a step on the housing ladder for future generations of homeowners, quality and choice for those who rent, and, sustainable, mixed and inclusive communities. To do this, we need the planning system to provide for new homes which are well-designed and built to high environmental standards, in places that are well located, with good access to jobs and key services.

Draft PPS3, which the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is publishing today, is a key component of our strategy to deliver more homes where they are needed. It provides a national policy framework for those at regional and local level responsible for developing planning policies. It advocates an evidence-based approach, including the use of sustainability appraisals, in order to ensure that development plans provide a sound framework for deciding planning applications.

Draft PPS3 introduces important changes in the approach to planning for housing. Planning needs to be more responsive to the housing market, and to take account of affordability alongside the social and environmental impacts of development. It continues the priority for brownfield sites. It attaches high importance to the design and mix of housing that is delivered in new developments to improve the quality of residential environments and contribute to the delivery of sustainable communities.

New Green Belt Direction

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is also today issuing through a circular to local authorities a new Town and Country Planning (Green Belt) Direction.

This new Direction will come into force on 3 January 2006 and will, for the first time, specifically require planning applications for inappropriate development of certain types and scale in the Green Belt which local planning authorities are minded to approve, to be referred to my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister. The Direction will ensure that the Secretary of State has the opportunity to consider whether to call in for public inquiry and his own determination the more significant and potentially most harmful development proposals in the Green Belt before they can be approved. However, the Secretary of State will continue to use his powers of intervention selectively, in line with his call-in policy.

The introduction of a new, free-standing Green Belt Direction demonstrates the continuing importance that the Government attach to the protection of the Green Belt.

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 25: Flooding

To strengthen the key role of the planning system in managing flood risk we are publishing for consultation:

A new Planning Policy Statement (PPS)25: Development and Flood Risk;

A proposal for a flooding Direction; and

A proposal to make the Environment Agency a statutory consultee for planning applications in flood risk areas.

The draft PPS25 strengthens and clarifies planning policy on development and flood risk to:

ensure flood risk is taken into account at all stages in the planning process;

avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding; and

direct development away from areas at highest risk.

The proposed flooding Direction will provide greater scrutiny for major developments proposed in flood risk areas. Where local authorities intend approve applications that the Environment Agency still objects to, ODPM could consider whether to call them in for decision by a Minister.

Making the Environment Agency a statutory consultee for planning applications in flood risk areas will reinforce implementation of PPS25 by ensuring that the agency is able to advise on all applications where flood risk is an issue.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agriculture and Fisheries Council

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): I chaired the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 22, 23 and 24 November for the agriculture items on the agenda. My hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Ben Bradshaw, represented the United Kingdom and also chaired the Council for the fisheries items. My hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary, Jim Knight, represented the United Kingdom for fisheries items. Also in attendance was the Scottish Environment and Rural Affairs Minister, Ross Finnie.

The Council reached a general approach on the reform of the common market organisation of sugar ("general approach" being the term for an agreement reached before "European Parliament" has issued its opinion). The main elements of this are as follows: a 36 per cent. price cut on white sugar over four years and de-coupled compensation for farmers at 64.2 per cent. of the price cut alongside a voluntary restructuring scheme aimed at reducing EU production by around six million tonnes in the same period.

This will bring the sugar sector into line with other major CAP reforms and put the EU in a much stronger position for the Doha round talks in Hong Kong in December. It will also enable the EU to comply with the recent WTO Panel ruling limiting subsidised exports and allow the EU to fulfil its existing commitments on preferential imports from developing countries without new restrictions.

The Council also reached a general approach on rural development strategic guidelines. The guidelines suggest the priorities areas which Member States might address when preparing their rural development programmes for 2007–13.

The Council reached unanimous political agreement on technical conservation measures for the Baltic Sea, the Belts and the Sound. The regulation establishes measures for the conservation of fishery resources and includes restrictions on nets and conditions for their use; minimum landing size; and restrictions on fishing in specified areas. The measures contribute to sustainable fisheries in the Baltic.

The Council held exchanges of views on the forthcoming proposal for quotas in the Baltic Sea for 2006; and on effort control measures associated with total allowable catches and—quotas for 2006 in advance of the December negotiations.

Under "Any Other Business", the Fisheries Commissioner gave an update on negotiations on the annual fisheries agreement between the EU and Norway.

Ireland raised the possibility of introducing inter-annual flexibility in the management of certain fish quotas, in particular mackerel.

The Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection updated the Council on the Commission's plans for revising the current safeguard measures on Avian Influenza and on international developments. He noted that the Commission would propose extending the emergency biosecurity safeguard measures currently due to lapse on 1 December, until next spring to take into account the spring migration of wild birds. As for the import restrictions on susceptible poultry, other captive birds and their products from Croatia, Romania and Turkey the Commission planned to ease the blanket restrictions and only prohibit susceptible animals and products from infected regions.

Poland drew the attention of the Council to the recent ban imposed by the Russian Federation on meat, meat products and plant products from Poland on the grounds that export certificates accompanying such goods had been found to contain irregularities. The Commission advised that Poland should hold bilateral talks with Russia as a first step to resolve the issues. The Commission also indicated that they would keep the situation under review and both the Commission and the Presidency offered to assist further if required.

The Agriculture Commissioner gave an update on the state of play of the WTO Doha Development Agenda negotiations, including the prospects for the WTO Ministerial meeting in Hong Kong.

Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania and Hungary, supported by Slovakia asked the Commission for amendments to the legislation to permit a smooth transition from their current scheme to the Single farm payment scheme. The Agriculture Commissioner indicated that she would consider the request constructively, and would come back with a response after it has been considered at technical level.

France asked the Commission to introduce safeguard measures against apple imports, under Article XIX of the GATT.

Cyprus presented to the Council a request for approval of a nationally funded aid to regularising farm debt. The Council has three months within which to give its decision.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

European Union Budget 2007–13

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): As presidency of the European Union, Her Majesty's Government is today circulating to all member states of the European Union for discussion comprehensive proposals for the European Union budget in the next financial period 2007–13 inclusive. Copies of the proposal are available in the Library of the House and in the Vote Office.

This written ministerial statement outlines the context of the proposal. These budget proposals have four policy objectives:

> The first is tough budget discipline. They are below the level proposed by the Luxembourg presidency in June and 17 per cent. below the level proposed by the Commission.
>
> Second, they help the new member states in the enlarged EU by building their economies and societies, and they more fairly distribute the costs among the better off nations. The UK is offering an extra contribution to these costs of enlargement amounting to 8 billion euros over the budget period.
>
> Third, these proposals keep the rebate. Indeed the rebate will rise, from an annual average over recent years of 5 billion euros to around 7 billion.
>
> Fourth, these proposals ensure there can be no fundamental change in the rebate without fundamental reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. All spending, including on agriculture, will be subject to a review during the coming budget period.

Let me explain in more detail.

The budget overall

Last year the Commission proposed a budget of 1,025 billion euros, or 1.24 per cent. of the total national income of all member states (GNI). We said all along that this was far too high. There would be no chance of any serious budgetary reform in specific areas without strong downward pressure overall. Given this, and the demand of the six "budget disciplinarians" [France, Germany, Sweden, Austria, Netherlands and UK], the Luxembourg presidency reduced their proposed budget to 1.06 per cent. or 871 billion euros. This latest proposal would further reduce the budget to at 847 billion euros or 1.03 per cent. [on the commitments basis] and by the end of the budget period spending will be below the 1 per cent. level the six had proposed. This would be a major achievement.

It is important to see these proposals in a longer-term context. EU spending hit 1 per cent. of GNI in 1985 and rose rapidly under Baroness Thatcher and Sir John Major as a proportion of national income, by a quarter to 1.25 per cent. by the early 1990s. and it started to come down only in 1998. These proposals would bring it down further.

Enlargement

The new member states will receive 150 billion euros in structural and cohesion funding. That is an enormous amount and would represent very large new funds. Total funding through all EU programmes to the 10 new member states is worth twice the Marshall plan which funded the reconstruction of Western Europe nearly 60 years ago [at today's prices].

And we are ensuring that these countries will be able to spend much more of what they have been allocated. This is a very important point because the record shows that year by year both the existing and new member states have not been able to spend their full allocation for many technical reasons. We have included a series of very practical changes to ensure that they are better able to do so. This means that while headline entitlements are lower by 14 billion euros than in the June proposals, we are confident that all these countries will be better able to spend what they have been allocated. And we are proposing strengthened financial management arrangements.

Under our proposals, for example, Hungary would receive 22 billion euros in structural and cohesion funding the Czech Republic 23 billion euros and Poland 56 billion euros.

Of course there are those who ask why our taxpayers in western Europe should pay for roads, railways and other reconstruction projects in the east, the answer is that all enlargements have benefited all members economically by increasing the total volume of EU trade, investment and jobs in which all have a share. British trade with the new member states has already increased by 400 per cent. since 1990, 10 times the rate of growth with the rest of the world. That is an indication of the economic potential we will be helping to unlock by making this investment in Europe's future. It is very much in Britain's national interest for the world's largest single market to grow and become more prosperous. And the benefits of enlargement are not just economic. It must be in Britain's interest to have increasingly stable societies in Eastern Europe.

The UK contribution

As I have spelt out, and as these proposals make clear, the UK Government recognises its responsibility to pay a fair contribution to the cost of enlargement—an historic project supported across the political divide. It has been a strategic objective of successive British Governments and, happily, has enjoyed very active all-party support. The Opposition parties have called for significant increases in structural and cohesion funding in Central and Eastern Europe. This budget delivers that objective. But it has to be paid for. We all prepared to pay our fair share, but no more than our fair share.

As EU spending shifts from older member states to the new, the British contribution will inevitably rise, along with the contributions of all the EU 15 member states. But the proposals tabled by the Luxembourg presidency would have left us with a bill of more than 20 billion euros over and above the 50 billion euros that would be our contribution under existing arrangements. That was not acceptable then, nor is it now. The proposal we have tabled today will take our contribution to 58 billion over the seven-year period of the budget.

This is the equivalent of halving the value of the rebate in respect of structural and cohesion funding in the 10 new member states. This could be achieved either by not applying the rebate to a proportion of structural and cohesion funding in the new member states, or by a technical route to increasing our gross contributions.

The UK will in any event continue to receive the full value of the rebate as it applies to the Europe of 15, and to all CAP spending throughout the union. And the rebate will rise, because it increases in proportion to our net contribution. The rebate will increase from an annual average of 5 billion euros in the current financial period, to around 7 billion.

The rebate was negotiated in 1984, but it did not prevent a very significant rise in the EU's take of member states' national income. Nor did it deal with the underlying problem which made the rebate necessary. And it did not prevent the UK paying twice as much as France and Italy, countries with similar sized economies. With these proposals today, Europe's spending comes down as a proportion of income. And for the first time since the UK joined 30 years ago, we would pay roughly the same as France and Italy as a share of national income.

Reform

This is a budget which seeks to invest in Europe's future, and not only through enlargement.

Our proposals provide for a comprehensive and wide ranging review, covering all aspects of revenue and expenditure, including agriculture. This will be conducted by the Commission, which will submit a report in 2008. On the basis of the review, the EU would be able to make changes in the 2007–13 financial period.

Conclusion

We have always made clear our overall aim is to secure fundamental reform of spending which would remove the underlying justification for the rebate. The mechanism we propose for a review both of revenue and expenditure undertaken by the Commission would put us on a pathway to a reformed European Union better able to compete in the global economy. The budget we have circulated today is a tough package which recognises the responsibilities of all members of the EU to both pay a fair contribution towards the future well being of the Union.

It provides a sound basis on which all our citizens can thrive in an enlarged European Union.

A bigger, more prosperous European Union means a stronger, more prosperous Britain. These are good proposals for the UK and good proposals for Europe.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Police Authorities in England and Wales (Grant Allocations)

The Minister for Policing, Security and Community Safety (Ms Hazel Blears): I have today placed in the Library a copy of the Home Secretary's proposals for allocation of police grant for England and Wales in 2006–07 and 2007–08. The Home Secretary and I intend to implement the proposals subject to consideration of any representations and to the approval of the House.

This Government have put unprecedented levels of investment into the Police Service in England and Wales in recent years. This investment has helped to expand local policing, reduce crime and help to make our communities safer. Police Officer, Police Staff and Community Support Officer numbers are all at record levels, police performance continues to improve and the police have never been better equipped with the tools and powers to respond to the needs of local communities. On a like for like basis Government grant and central spending on services for the police will have increased by 56 per cent. or almost £4.0 billion between 2000–01 and 2007–08.

Our ambitious police reform programme continues to produce real improvements but there is still more to do to ensure that the Police Service meets the challenges of the 21st century. People are safer now but we want them to feel safer too. Key elements of the reform programme are about building a responsive, accessible police service which successfully tackles local concerns about crime and anti-social behaviour. As part of this, we are committed to ensuring that every neighbourhood has a neighbourhood police team by 2008; to continuing to modernise the police workforce to ensure it is able to deliver a more responsive, citizen focused service that the public want; and to reshape the national policing landscape to ensure it is able to meet the policing challenges of the modern world. A key part of this is the reconfiguring of the service around larger strategic police forces which will have sufficient capacity and capability to provide the full range of protective services to the public alongside responsive neighbourhood policing.

The National Community Safety Plan, which incorporates the National Policing Plan 2006–09, was published on 16 November. Our key policing priorities are to reduce overall crime; bring more offenders to justice, provide dedicated, visible, accessible and responsive neighbourhood police teams, tackle serious and organised crime including improved intelligence and information sharing between partners and protect the country from both terrorism and domestic extremism. The police funding settlement for the coming two years will support the priorities outlined in the plan.

This year, for the first time, the Government are providing planning totals for two years. Total provision for policing grants and central spending in 2006–07 will be £10,570 million, an overall increase of 5.0 per cent. This includes an increase of 3.4 per cent. in general grant (including a small increase to take account of losses from Amending Reports).

Indicative figures for 2007–08 are an overall increase to £11,047 million (4.5 per cent.) with an increase of 3.7 per cent. in general grant.

In this statement, I want to outline provision for support for the Police Service in England and Wales.

The police grant settlement

We propose to distribute the settlement as set out below. The table includes funding for both local and central spending.

Table 1: Police funding settlements for 2006–07 and 2007–08 compared with 2005–06

	2005–06 £m	2006–07 £m	2007–08 £m	Year on year increase 2006–07 %	2007–08 %
1. Direct funding for police authorities:					
Home Office Police Grant	4,574	4,714	4,831	3.1	2.5
Transfers for Pensions and Dedicated Security Posts (DSPs)[1]	−498	−576	−591		
RSG/NNDR	3,044	3,229	3,397	6.1	5.2
Total General Formula Grant	7,120	7,367	7,637	3.4	3.7
Specific Grants for police authorities	559	588	840	5.2	42.9
Special Formula Grant[2]	193	193	193	0.0	0.0
Transfers for Pensions and DSPs	498	576	591	15.7	2.6
Total Specific Grants etc	1,250	1,357	1,624	8.6	19.7
2. Capital Grants and Support	362	413	370	14.1	−10.4
3. Central Spending	1,333	1,433	1,416	7.5	−1.2
Grand Total	10,065	10,570	11,047	5.0	4.5

[1] The transfer from general grant for police pensions and dedicated security are noted below.
[2] Details are set out later in the statement.

Police funding proposals within the Local Government finance system are being announced by my hon. Friend the Member for Oldham East and Saddleworth today, and by the Welsh Assembly Government.

Provisional general policing grants (ie Home Office Police Grant, Revenue Support Grant and National Non Domestic Rates) for English and Welsh police authorities in 2006–07 and 2007–08 compared with 2005–06 are given in Tables 2 and 3. The figures for 2006–07 take into account our proposed amendments to the settlements for 2004–05 and 2005–06.

With my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, we have reviewed the Police Grant formula. We have decided to use the most comprehensive and technically robust option, on which we consulted during the summer, as a basis for formula change. We have updated the existing 1995 formula that used data from the early 1990s, to bring it in line with modern conditions. At the same time, we are concerned to maintain stability of funding during a period of major structural change. We have therefore decided to apply a broadly flat rate increase for all Police Authorities for 2006–07 and 2007–08. This will be 3.2 per cent. and 3.7 per cent.

The settlement continues to take account of our commitment to improve efficiency and effectiveness in the police service. We expect the police service to build on impressive efficiency gains of £316 million (3.24 per cent.) in 2004–05 and projected gains of £360 million (3.5 per cent.) for 2005–06 through continued focus on the target of £1,069 million of cumulative gains by the end of 2007–08. Half these gains are to be cashable. The greater certainty over funding for 2007–08 should help forces and authorities plan to meet this target. The Home Office, the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) and the Association of Police Authorities (APA) will continue to work in partnership to deliver cumulative year on year improvements in the value for money to deliver the efficiency targets.

If Police Authorities deliver efficiency gains, and exercise judicious financial planning, there is no reason for them to set excessive increases in police precepts on council tax next year. The Government's policy in relation to average council tax increases of less than 5 per cent. in each year in 2006–07 and 2007–08 has been clearly set out by my hon. Friend the Minister for Local Government. The Government are prepared to take capping action if necessary.

Amending Reports

Details of the Amending Report for 2004–05, to take account of changes to ONS population data, and the Amending Report for 2005–06, chiefly to take account of changes to pensions' data from Derbyshire and Lancashire, were set out in my written statement of 31 October. The Government made clear in the Consultation Paper on formula grant distribution that they would apply the same approach to grant adjustment as they did in relation to the 2003–04 Amending Report. We have therefore adjusted 2006–07 grants to ensure that any authority owing money under the Amending Reports will be able to pay it back in 2006–07 and still be left with at least the broadly flat rate grant increase over 2005–06. The consultation period for both Amending Reports will end on the same date as the consultation on the funding settlement proposals 2006–07 and 2007–08 on 11 January 2006.

Welsh police authorities

We have for several years ensured that Welsh Police Authorities were treated in line with English Police Authorities with respect to the floor damping mechanism. In 2006–07 and 2007–08 we have adjusted the Home Office Police Grant of Welsh Police Authorities to maintain consistency with the English. The Home Secretary has provided additional support of £7.8 million in 2006–07 and £11.3 million on 2007–08 to

ensure that Dyfed-Powys Police Authority, Gwent Police Authority and North Wales Police Authority receive at least a minimum increase in grant in line with English authorities. The shortfalls are further funded by scaling police grant to South Wales Police Authority which would otherwise have received a general grant increase of around 6 per cent. but now receives the equivalent increases to a police authority in England in both years.

Metropolitan Police funding

I have changed the provision for the Metropolitan Police special payment to reflect wider formula changes. I have allocated annual formula increases of £5 million in 2006–07 and 2007–08 and £15 million is added for the higher costs of Metropolitan Police Authority civil staff pensions. At the same time I have reduced the provision by £50 million as part of the consolidation of Counter Terrorism funding and this will be included within the Metropolitan Police Service's (MPS's) allocation within the Single Consolidated Fund.

Special formula grant

Over the past five years specific grants have been a very effective tool in delivering key aims and targets and funding new policing initiatives. We have made it clear over the past few months that we wanted to give police authorities more control over specific grants. We have therefore decided to consolidate four specific grants into a single pot for each authority. Each authority will get the actual or estimated level of funding it receives from these grants. We hope that this rationalisation will enable authorities to operate more flexibly. However we will expect authorities to honour commitments and agreed policy initiatives to build on the outstanding successes that these grants have so far achieved. Totals for each Police Authority are set out in the draft Police Grant Reports 2006–07 and 2007–08. The special formula grants are:

The Rural Policing Fund (£30 million)

The Rural Policing Fund was introduced in 2000–01 to target funds specifically at forces that police the most sparsely populated areas.

Special Priority Payments (£69 million)

Special Priority Payments are an integral part of the police pay system, enshrined in regulations following the Police Negotiating Board agreement in 2002.

London and South East Allowances (£48 million)

These allowances were introduced from 2001–02, following a recommendation by the Police Negotiating Board, to address specific recruitment issues in the South East.

Forensic Grant (£46 million)

The benefits to crime detection since this grant was introduced in 2000 have been enormous. It is important that the police service maintains the capacity that has been developed for the efficient and effective collection and use of DNA material from individuals and crime scenes. Without sampling of newcomers to crime and the collection of DNA samples from crime scenes, the benefits of the previous investment in the detection of crime and the benefits of legislative changes introduced by the Government allowing the DNA sampling of persons when arrested, will be reduced. The Home Office will continue to monitor and report on the use of forensics, particularly DNA, by forces in dealing with the investigation and detection of crime. Any significant changes will be highlighted and an explanation will be sought from the forces concerned.

Specific grants for police authorities

Police Authorities will continue to receive extra funding through a number of specific grants for particular schemes. Targeted grants were introduced as a direct response to what the police service and the public told us they wanted. Total provision for specific grants in 2006–07 is £588 million and in 2007–08 is £840 million (Table 4).

The main specific grants are:

Crime Fighting Fund:

£277 million will again be made available to forces to continue to support the costs of officers recruited through the Crime Fighting Fund. This Fund has been remarkably successful in helping the police service boost its strength which is at a historically high level of more than 141,000. In response to concerns raised by both Chief Constables and Police Authorities we have relaxed the terms of the Fund this year and are willing to discuss with the service further flexibility in the use of this money from 2006–07.

Community Support Officers (CSOs):

CSOs free up police officer time, provide reassurance and have powers to deal with aspects of anti-social behaviour and low level crime. This settlement honours our undertaking given in "Neighbourhood Policing—your police; your community; our commitment" (March 2005) to provide £88 million in 2006–07 and £340 million in 2007–08 to support our target of 24,000 CSOs by 2008. Details were set out in letters to Chief Constables and Police Authorities on 7 November 2005. In addition to this, for 2006–07, we have allocated £44 million for continuing support of CSOs recruited in the first three rounds from 2002 onwards and this support will continue in 2007–08.

Basic Command Unit (BCU) Fund:

£50 million will again be provided for BCUs. These are at the forefront of local policing. The grant will again be targeted towards forces with BCUs in high crime areas to help reduce crime in partnership with Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. All forces in England and Wales will continue to receive a share of the grant. BCU Commanders will again have discretion locally to pool their allocations with the new Safer and Stronger Communities Fund.

Initial Police Learning and Development Programme (IPLDP):

We have worked with the Central Police Training and Development Authority (Centrex), to calculate the maximum savings that we believe can be transferred from their foundation training budget to IPLD programmes in forces next year and the following year. £13 million will be transferred to forces from Centrex's baseline in 2006–07, with the remaining foundation training budget becoming available in 2007–08. With this, and with funding that was removed from the Centrex baseline this year, we are able to increase substantially the funding per recruit that is available to forces for their initial police learning and development programmes. Some funding will remain with Centrex in 2006–07 so that they can continue to deliver foundation

training for the first two months of the financial year. Each force, with the exception of the MPS (whose money for training is already included in their baseline funding, and who do not currently send recruits to Centrex for training), will receive £3,000 per IPLDP recruit in 2006–07 and 2007–08. Payment will be made up to the level of recruits that each force needs to maintain their force strength at 31 March 2005. This compares with just over £1,900 per recruit that we were able to make available to forces this financial year.

Counter Terrorism funding

As a result of recent events the Government consider that policy and funding for Counter Terrorism should be more closely linked to improve effectiveness. We have therefore drawn together existing grants, including the provision for Dedicated Security Posts formerly in general grant, into a single consolidated grant for Counter Terrorism. We will be augmenting the amounts transferred from general grant for counter-terrorism and the increase will be announced shortly. Within the increase in general grant to police authorities in 2007–08 we have made provision of £25 million to enable authorities to enhance further their counter-terrorism capability.

We are currently working very closely with ACPO on this matter. We see an important role for ACPO in the management of this grant and for ensuring coherence, strategic direction and for the provision of a nationally co-ordinated response. We will work closely with ACPO to ensure that both this uplift and funding from the new consolidated Counter Terrorism grant are used to create a significant increase in the strength of the police's counter-terrorism capability.

While we have included the MPS within the scope of this grant we are all conscious of the very important contribution that the MPS provides to our counter terrorist effort—not least its anti-terrorist investigation capability—and its vital role in protecting our capital city and its citizens from the terrorist threat. On that basis we believe that we should continue to fund the service separately so that Parliament is assured that the MPS's national capabilities are effectively funded.

Both we and ACPO are committed to ensuring that the Police Service both nationally and regionally has a robust, resilient and effective Counter Terrorist capability.

Police authority capital

The Home Secretary and I intend to allocate provision of capital grant for 2006–07 and 2007–08 later this month. We propose to plan grant allocation over the two years to take into account prospective force amalgamations.

Safer and Stronger Communities Fund

The newly created Safer and Stronger Communities Fund was rolled out to all Local Authorities in England in 2005–06. It brings together existing Home Office and ODPM funding streams. This Fund will total a minimum of £220 million in 2006–07, the Home Office contributing a minimum of £70 million resource and £20 million capital. The police service, subject to the agreement of other local partners, will be able to draw upon these funds to support local crime reduction initiatives. The Home Office Crime Team within the Welsh Assembly is currently liaising with the Home Office on establishing similar arrangements for Wales.

Asset Recovery Police Incentivisation scheme

This scheme boosts asset recovery by giving forces a direct stake in the proceeds they generate from the work. The police service received £13 million in 2005–06 (one third of the total assets recovered over and above £40 million in 2004–05). This will increase to one half in 2005–06 payable in 2006–07 with the maximum benefit available to the police of £65 million. From 2006–07, under a new incentive scheme, all asset recovery agencies including the police will receive back 50 per cent. of what they recover.

Serious Organised Crime Agency

Work is on track to launch the new Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) on 1 April 2006. It is intended for the precursor agencies to begin transferring business to SOCA from January in order to ensure a smooth transition. SOCA's strategy for 2006–07 is based on a workforce strength of 4,250 staff and an initial budget of £400 million, including provisions to be made from HM Revenue and Customs and the UK Immigration Service.

National Policing Improvement Agency

We intend to establish the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) on 1 April 2007, subject to legislation. The aim of the NPIA is to introduce a radically different model of police service leadership as well as producing greater efficiency, consistency and clarity of purpose in service delivery. The NPIA will be a new organisation that rationalises several other bodies. The agency's purpose will be to drive improvement in the police service. It will replace the existing organisations Centrex and the Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO). There will also be significant implications for the work of ACPO, the Home Office and the APA. Budgets for precursor agencies will be announced by 31 January.

Pensions

With effect from April 2006 a new financial arrangement for funding police pensions will commence. This will replace the present practice whereby each police authority is responsible for paying the pensions of its former employees on a "pay-as-you-go" basis. The new system will eliminate the effect of the volatility resulting from significant fluctuations in the number of police officers retiring in any given year and consequently reduce cost pressures being passed on to council tax precepts. It will also introduce greater transparency by making clear the actual level of resources available for service delivery.

Under the new arrangements Police Authorities will continue to be responsible for paying pensions to former police employees and to receive grant funding to support the employers' contributions. Any deficits on an authority's net pension costs will be met from a central specific grant managed by the Home Office. To create this central pension pot £313 million for 2006–07 and £328 million for 2007–08 has been held back from the funding settlement. The new arrangements will be cost neutral. The aggregate amount held back will be used to reimburse authorities for their actual pension costs shortfall.

Details of the new funding arrangements were set out in my statement of 29 November.

Conclusion

We have listened very carefully to all stakeholders in determining this settlement. We have provided the investment to deliver record numbers of Police Officers, Police Staff and an expanding number of CSOs and have provided the police with new tools to tackle the crimes that concern communities most. We will continue to work closely with the police to improve their efficiency and responsiveness to local communities. Our proposals will ensure that all forces in England and Wales receive a fair share of resources in the coming two years, in a time of radical restructuring that will give the police the organisation they need to face the challenges of the future.

Table 2: Police grant allocations by English and Welsh police authority 2006–07

Police Authority	*2005–06 Adjusted Amended Allocation*[2] *£m*	*2006–07 Formula Grant Allocation*[1] *£m*	*Change on 2005–06 Adjusted Amended Allocation %*	*2004–05 Amending Report Receipts/ Payments £m*	*2005–06 Amending Report Receipt/ Payments £m*	*2006–07 Allocation Net of Amending Report Receipts/ Payments £m*	*Change on 2005–06 Adjusted Amended Allocation %*
English Shire forces							
Avon & Somerset	152.2	157.7	3.6%	0.0	−0.1	157.6	3.5%
Bedfordshire	61.6	64.0	4.0%	−0.2	−0.2	63.7	3.4%
Cambridgeshire	71.5	73.8	3.3%	0.2	0.0	74.0	3.5%
Cheshire	107.5	110.9	3.2%	0.2	0.2	111.4	3.6%
Cleveland	87.1	89.9	3.2%	0.2	0.1	90.1	3.5%
Cumbria	59.4	61.8	4.0%	−0.2	−0.2	61.4	3.2%
Derbyshire	97.8	101.1	3.4%	0.0	0.3	101.4	3.7%
Devon & Cornwall	*166.2*	*171.5*	3.2%	0.0	0.0	171.5	3.2%
Dorset	58.2	60.1	3.2%	0.0	0.0	60.1	3.2%
Durham	80.5	84.1	4.4%	−0.5	−0.5	83.1	3.2%
Essex	157.7	162.8	3.2%	0.0	0.0	162.8	3.2%
Gloucestershire	52.9	54.6	3.2%	0.0	0.0	54.6	3.2%
Hampshire	184.7	190.6	3.2%	0.0	0.0	190.6	3.2%
Hertfordshire	106.9	110.5	3.3%	0.0	0.0	110.5	3.3%
Humberside	114.2	117.9	3.2%	0.2	0.2	118.4	3.6%
Kent	170.9	176.4	3.2%	0.0	0.0	176.4	3.2%
Lancashire	181.4	187.2	3.2%	0.4	0.2	187.8	3.5%
Leicestershire	102.5	106.5	3.9%	−0.3	−0.2	105.9	3.3%
Lincolnshire	54.3	56.2	3.4%	0.0	0.0	56.2	3.4%
Norfolk	77.3	80.6	4.3%	−0.5	−0.3	79.8	3.2%
North Yorkshire	68.4	70.5	3.2%	0.0	0.0	70.5	3.2%
Northamptonshire	66.6	68.8	3.2%	0.1	0.0	68.9	3.4%
Nottinghamshire	122.8	127.9	4.1%	−0.6	−0.4	127.0	3.4%
Staffordshire	106.9	110.4	3.2%	0.0	0.0	110.4	3.2%
Suffolk	63.3	65.3	3.2%	0.0	0.0	65.3	3.2%
Surrey	90.8	93.7	3.2%	0.0	0.0	93.7	3.2%
Sussex	150.6	155.4	3.2%	0.0	0.0	155.4	3.2%
Thames Valley	211.1	218.1	3.3%	0.0	0.0	218.1	3.3%
Warwickshire	46.1	47.7	3.5%	0.0	0.0	47.7	3.4%
West Mercia	108.6	112.1	3.2%	0.0	0.0	112.1	3.2%
Wiltshire	57.9	59.9	3.5%	−0.1	−0.1	59.8	3.2%
Shires Total	3,238.0	3,347.9	3.4%	−1.1	−0.9	3,345.9	3.3%
English Metropolitan forces							
Greater Manchester	404.4	417.8	3.3%	0.8	0.3	418.9	3.6%
Merseyside	237.5	245.2	3.2%	0.5	0.5	246.3	3.7%
Northumbria	222.8	229.9	3.2%	0.5	0.2	230.6	3.5%
South Yorkshire	179.8	187.7	4.4%	−1.0	−1.1	185.6	3.2%
West Midlands	419.1	434.1	3.6%	0.8	0.0	434.8	3.7%
West Yorkshire	296.6	306.5	3.4%	0.6	0.2	307.3	3.6%
Mets Total	1,760.3	1,821.2	3.5%	2.2	0.1	1,823.5	3.6%
London forces							
GLA—Police	1,763.6	1,820.0	3.2%	4.3	1.0	1,825.3	3.5%
City of London[3]	19.5	21.8	N/A	N/A	N/A	21.8	N/A
London Total	1,783.1	1,841.8	N/A	N/A	N/A	1,847.1	N/A
English Total	6,781.3	7,010.9	3.4%	5.4	0.1	7,016.4	3.5%

Table 2: Police grant allocations by English and Welsh police authority 2006–07

Police Authority	2005–06 Adjusted Amended Allocation[2] £m	2006–07 Formula Grant Allocation[1] £m	Change on 2005–06 Adjusted Amended Allocation %	2004–05 Amending Report Receipts/ Payments £m	2005–06 Amending Report Receipt/ Payments £m	2006–07 Allocation Net of Amending Report Receipts/ Payments £m	Change on 2005–06 Adjusted Amended Allocation %
Welsh forces							
Dyfed-Powys[4]	47.4	48.9	3.2%	0.0	0.0	48.9	3.3%
Gwent[4]	73.1	76.0	4.1%	−0.3	−0.3	75.4	3.2%
North Wales[4]	70.0	72.7	3.9%	−0.2	−0.2	72.2	3.2%
South Wales[4]	161.0	166.3	3.3%	0.1	0.1	166.4	3.4%
Welsh total	351.4	363.9	3.6%	−0.4	−0.5	363.0	3.3%
TOTAL	7,132.7	7,374.8	3.4%	4.9	−0.3	7,379.4	3.5%

Notes:

[1] Rounded to the nearest £100,000. Grant as calculated under the Local Government Finance Report (England) and Local Government Finance (Police) Report (Wales). This includes the Metropolitan Police special payment, and the effects of floors and ceilings.

[2] Base positions are adjusted for the transfer of pensions and security funding.

[3] Figures for the City of London relate to Home Office Grant only as calculated in the Police Grant Report (England and Wales). Revenue Support Grant is allocated to the Common Council of the City of London as a whole in respect of all its functions. The City is grouped with education authorities for the purposes of floors.

[4] Welsh figures include Home Office floor funding.

Table 3: Police grant allocations by English and Welsh police authority 2007–08

Police Authority	2006–07 Formula Allocation[1] £m	2007–08 Formula Allocation[1] £m	Change on 2006–07 Formula Allocation %
English Shire forces			
Avon & Somerset	157.7	163.7	3.8%
Bedfordshire	64.0	66.4	3.8%
Cambridgeshire	73.8	76.6	3.7%
Cheshire	110.9	115.0	3.7%
Cleveland	89.9	93.2	3.7%
Cumbria	61.8	64.1	3.7%
Derbyshire	101.1	104.9	3.8%
Devon & Cornwall	171.5	177.9	3.7%
Dorset	60.1	62.3	3.7%
Durham	84.1	87.2	3.7%
Essex	162.8	168.8	3.7%
Gloucestershire	54.6	56.6	3.7%
Hampshire	190.6	197.6	3.7%
Hertfordshire	110.5	114.6	3.7%
Humberside	117.9	122.3	3.7%
Kent	176.4	182.9	3.7%
Lancashire	187.2	194.1	3.7%
Leicestershire	106.5	110.5	3.7%
Lincolnshire	56.2	58.3	3.8%
Norfolk	80.6	83.6	3.7%
North Yorkshire	70.5	73.2	3.7%
Northamptonshire	68.8	71.3	3.7%
Nottinghamshire	127.9	132.7	3.7%
Staffordshire	110.4	114.5	3.7%
Suffolk	65.3	67.7	3.7%
Surrey	93.7	97.2	3.7%
Sussex	155.4	161.1	3.7%
Thames Valley	218.1	226.2	3.7%
Warwickshire	47.7	49.5	3.8%
West Mercia	112.1	116.2	3.7%
Wiltshire	59.9	62.2	3.7%
Shires Total	3,347.9	3,472.2	3.7%
English Metropolitan forces			
Greater Manchester	417.8	433.3	3.7%
Merseyside	245.2	254.3	3.7%
Northumbria	229.9	238.5	3.7%
South Yorkshire	187.7	194.6	3.7%
West Midlands	434.1	450.5	3.8%
West Yorkshire	306.5	318.0	3.7%
Mets Total	1,821.2	1,889.2	3.7%
London forces			
GLA—Police	1,820.0	1,887.4	3.7%
City of London[2]	21.8	22.8	N/A
London Total	1,841.8	1,910.2	N/A
English Total	7,010.9	7,271.6	3.7%
Welsh forces			
Dyfed-Powys[3]	48.9	50.7	3.7%
Gwent[3]	76.0	78.8	3.7%
North Wales[3]	72.7	75.4	3.7%
South Wales[3]	166.3	172.5	3.7%
Welsh total	363.9	377.4	3.7%
TOTAL	7,374.8	7,649.0	3.7%

Notes:

[1] Rounded to the nearest £100,000. Grant as calculated under the Local Government Finance Report (England) and Local Government Finance (Police) Report (Wales). This includes the Metropolitan Police special payment, and the effects of floors and ceilings.

[2] Figures for the City of London relate to Home Office Grant only as calculated in the Police Grant Report (England and Wales). Revenue Support Grant is allocated to the Common Council of the City of London as a whole in respect of all its functions. The City is grouped with education authorities for the purposes of floors.

[3] Welsh figures include Home Office floor funding.

Table 4: Specific grant allocations in 2006–07 and 2007–08 compared with 2005–06

	2005–06 £m	2006–07 £m	2007–08 £m	Year on year increase 2006–07 %	2007–08 %
Crime Fighting Fund	277	277	277	0%	0%
Neighbourhood Policing Fund	37	88	340	138%	286%
Community Support Officers	42	44	47	5%	7%
Counter Terrorism (Existing provision)	99	99	99	0%	0%
Basic Command Units	50	50	50	0%	0%
Initial Police Learning and Development Programme	5	13	13	171%	0%
Other	49	17	14	−65%	−18%
Total specific grant	559	588	840	5.2%	42.9%

National DNA Database

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Andy Burnham): On transition of the Forensic Science Service (FSS) from Trading Fund status to GovCo the Government will retain control of the National DNA Database (NDNAD). It is recognised to be a world leading crime intelligence database, and a key national criminal justice asset.

The standard setting and oversight of the National DNA Database, ensuring quality and integrity of the service, will be carried out by a dedicated unit initially in the Home Office, overseen by a tripartite board composed of the Home Office, ACPO and APA. We propose to increase Human Genetics Commission representation at board meetings from one to two to strengthen lay representation. Following initial consultation regarding established bio-medical ethics committees, it has been determined that a new and dedicated ethics group is required to provide independent oversight of Board decision-making. Plans for the creation of this group are being developed with Department of Health support. These transitional arrangements have been developed to improve the strength and transparency of NDNAD oversight.

The operational delivery of database services—the loading of DNA profiles and the reporting of subsequent matches—will continue to be provided under contract by the FSS initially to ensure continuity of service to the police. The separation of operational service delivery from the governance and standard setting will enable value for money to be maximised, while the control of oversight within the public sector will be retained. Wider consultation will take place about the most effective long-term oversight of the National DNA Database and other national forensic databases, which should enhance public confidence in the safeguards and ethical controls which are being developed.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Community-based Restorative Justice

The Minister of State, Northern Ireland Office (Mr. David Hanson): The Government have today published for consultation draft guidelines setting out how community-based restorative justice schemes should work with the police and other statutory criminal justice agencies in dealing with low-level crime. The guidelines establish a framework for implementing recommendation 168 of the Review of the Criminal Justice System in Northern Ireland, which recommended that community-based restorative justice schemes could, subject to specific safeguards, have a role to play in this area. The safeguards include upholding the human rights of all participants; receiving referrals from the criminal justice system; being open to inspection by the independent Criminal Justice Inspectorate; and adhering to high standards.

The draft guidelines make clear that it is for the Police Service of Northern Ireland to investigate crime and for the Public Prosecution Service to decide how offences should be dealt with. Community-based restorative justice schemes must have an acceptable and appropriate relationship with the criminal justice system including the police, as envisaged in the Review.

I have placed a copy of the document in the Library of the House. It has been circulated to the main political parties, the Policing Board and other key stakeholders as part of a wider consultation process. Views on any aspect of the draft guidelines will be welcome, and some specific questions are posed covering human rights, the referral process, suitability of staff, complaints, and equality.

The Government will decide on the way forward after the consultation concludes on 24 February 2006 and we have had the opportunity to consider all the comments and views received.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Competitiveness Council and Space Council

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Alan Johnson): I chaired my second Competitiveness Council of the UK's presidency in Brussels on 28–29 November 2005. My noble Friend, the Minister for Science and Innovation chaired the Council for the research items. He also chaired, with German State Secretary Mr. G-W Adamowitsch representing the European Space Agency (ESA) Council, the third meeting of the Space Council on 28 November 2005. The only interventions by the UK national seat were during the Space Council.

Monday 28 November 2005—Competitiveness Council (Research items)

The Council approved, by a large majority including the UK, a partial general approach on the 7th Framework Programmes (FP7) for research and technological development, based on a presidency compromise text. The Council debate focused on supporting the participation of small and medium sized enterprises in

research projects and the implementation arrangements of the future European Research Council. This partial general approach will provide a good basis for adopting a Common Position once agreement has been reached on the financial perspectives.

The Council adopted conclusions on the recent Commission Communication "More research and innovation—investing for growth and employment". There was no substantive debate on this item.

Monday 28 November 2005—Space Council[1]

The Council adopted orientations on the Commission Communication on global monitoring for environment and security (GMES). It noted that the objective of GMES is to provide, on a sustained basis, reliable and timely information related to environmental and security issues in support of public policy makers' needs. My hon. Friend, the Minister for Competitiveness who sat in the UK national seat, intervened briefly to stress that it was important to utilise the existing capabilities of GMES alongside developing new ones. The Council also held an exchange of views on international collaboration based on a discussion paper tabled jointly by the EU and ESA presidencies. The debate focused on: the need to develop an overall cooperation strategy; EU/ES A roles and responsibilities; and the financial principles that should apply in funding. The UK intervened briefly to support the development of a collaborative approach but noted that this should pay due consideration to Community competence. Vice-President Verheugen (Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry) and ESA Director-General Dordain provided an oral report to the Council on the progress of European space policy.

Tuesday 29 November 2005—Competitiveness Council (Industry/Internal Market items)

I provided a Presidency summing-up of an exchange of views on EU industry policy and the recent Commission Communication "Implementing the Community Lisbon Programme: a policy framework to strengthen EU manufacturing—towards a more integrated approach for industrial policy" that was held over dinner on 28 November 2005. Ministers supported the Commission's approach to industrial policy—at both a sectoral and horizontal level, welcoming, in particular, the new High Level Group on Energy, Environment and Competitiveness. It was agreed that policies should focus on embracing and facilitating structural change.

The Council adopted conclusions on better regulation and recognised progress made at EU and Member State level. In particular, the conclusions welcomed recent Commission initiatives on simplification of existing legislation, screening of pending legislative proposals, impact assessment, and consultation.

The Council held a policy debate on the draft regulation for the registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals (REACH) and instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to examine the remaining outstanding issues, principally authorisation and scope, with a view to achieving political agreement at the next session of the Competitiveness Council on 13 December 2005.

[1] A joint and concomitant meeting of the Competitiveness Council and the Council of ESA at ministerial level

The Council took note of a presidency progress report on a draft decision establishing a competitiveness and innovation programme (CIP) for 2007–13 and endorsed the approach to the horizontal issues that it sets out. The Council instructed the Permanent Representatives Committee to use the report as a basis for future discussions following agreement on the financial perspectives.

Based on a presidency progress report I chaired an exchange of views over lunch and in the Council on a draft directive on services in the internal market. The questions of scope, worker protection and free movement of services were discussed in order to provide political guidance for future discussions once the European Parliament has given its opinion.

The Council adopted conclusions on European Contract Law and the Review of the Consumer Acquis. There was no debate.

The Council took note of a presidency progress report on a proposal for establishing a programme of Community action in the field of health and consumer protection for 2007–13. The Council decided to return to this issue at a future session, as the programme is dependent on the outcome of the financial perspective negotiations and discussions in the European Parliament.

There were two "any other business" items taken at the Council, on which there was no debate. Vice-President Verheugen (Commissioner for Enterprise and Industry) provided information on the progress of the re-launched Lisbon Strategy related to the National Reform Programmes. Lithuania provided information about a conference they are organising in Vilnius on 1–2 March 2006 on the development of tourism in Europe after enlargement.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Employment and Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. James Plaskitt): The Employment and Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council will be held on 8 and 9 December in Brussels. Employment and Social Policy issues will be taken on 8 December. Health and Consumer Affairs will be taken on the 9 December. The Council will be chaired by my right hon. Friend Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, apart from the agenda item on Working Time which will be chaired by my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. I will sit in the UK Seat apart from the Working Time Directive agenda item when my hon. Friend, the Minister for Employment Relations, Consumer and Fair Markets will represent the UK.

The first item is a Presidency Report from the informal meeting of Heads of State and Government, Hampton Court, 27 October.

There will be a policy debate on Demography and Human Capital. The discussion will focus on the following questions: Which steps should be taken by Member States and by the EU in order to increase the overall employment rate for people of working age? How should measures to improve human capital

support this work? What specific measures should Member States pursue in order to maximise the employment opportunities for young people, older workers and disadvantaged groups and what are the specific barriers to raising the employment rates for these groups? The background to this discussion is provided by the Commission Green Paper on Demography and the EMCO report on Human Capital.

There will be a report from the Chairman of the Employment Committee on the Examination of National Reform Programmes. These are the annual reports on each Member States' progress towards achieving the Lisbon goals outlining their focussed policy objectives.

On the Directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2003/88/EC concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time, the Presidency will be seeking political agreement on an amended proposal.

The Council will reach partial political agreement on a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity—PROGRESS. This is the EU-level spending programme for the period 2007–13, which will provide financial support for the implementation of the Community's objectives for employment and social affairs and the achievement of the Lisbon goals.

Ministers will be expected to endorse political agreement on the gender recast directive which will simplify, modernise and improve existing EU law on equal treatment between men and women.

The Commission and the Presidency will present information on the Directive on portability of supplementary pensions. This is intended to make it easier for workers with occupational pensions to move around the EU.

Under "Any Other Business" there will be four written items presented by the presidency. I do not expect any debate on these items: "Annual follow-up to the Beijing Platform", "Health and safety conference", "Round table on poverty and social exclusion", and "Corporate social responsibility".

There is one written item from the Luxembourg delegation reporting on their conferences on poverty held under the Luxembourg Presidency, and two written items from the Commission, one on their first biennial report on disability and the other on a memorandum of understanding between the European Commission and China on co-operation on employment and social affairs. None of these will generate discussion.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 6 December 2005

TREASURY

ECOFIN

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Gordon Brown): I will chair the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) on 6 December 2005. The Paymaster General will represent the UK. Items on the agenda are:

Economic Reform: Council will consider two reports from the Economic Policy Committee on responding to the challenges of Globalisation and Lisbon National Reform Programmes;

Regulatory reform: Stock-take and look ahead to 2006;

Fiscal Issues: VAT Reduced Rates; following discussion at ECOFIN in November, Ministers will consider a proposal on VAT Reduced Rates.

Fiscal Issues: Code of Conduct report; Ministers will discuss and be asked to adopt a report by the Code of Conduct Group;

Financial Services: Post-Financial Services Action Plan; Commissioner McCreevy will give a presentation on the forthcoming Commission White Paper;

Combating Terrorism: Payments Regulation on wire transfers: ECOFIN will consider its general approach based on the Commission proposal.

Combating Terrorism: Action Plan update; Council will take note of progress on the EU's Counter Terror Action Plan.

Oil market and related energy issues; Commissioner Pielbags will update the Council on the Commission's work.

DEFENCE

Reserve Forces (Iraq)

The Secretary of State for Defence (John Reid): In line with our policy of employing the Reserves as an integral component of the armed forces, and our normal pattern in Operation TELIC, we shall shortly begin mobilising approximately 700 Reservists to deploy as part of the integrated UK force package on operations in Iraq (Operation TELIC). Reservists currently deployed in Iraq carry out a range of activities including medical support, force protection duties and providing individual reinforcements to units. We anticipate that most of these tasks will continue.

We plan to issue the callout notices for reservists in phases and aim to give individuals 28 days notice of call-up (other than for those who may volunteer to be mobilised at shorter notice). As is customary, to ensure that we successfully mobilise the required number, we will need to issue a greater number of callout notices than the actual requirement. On current plans, we will be issuing around 800 callout notices.

Mobilisation will be followed by a period of training, integration into receiving units, and then a short period of pre-deployment leave. Deployment to theatre is expected to begin in May 2006. The majority of these called out can expect a deployed tour of six months and a total period of mobilisation, including post-tour leave, of around 11 months, though for a few it may be slightly longer.

I would like to emphasise that this callout is part of our routine management of UK forces deployed on Operation TELIC. We, and our Multinational Force partners, will consider, in the months ahead, the levels and dispositions of forces required in Iraq to continue to build the capability and capacity of the Iraqi Security Forces and support the Iraqi Government of Iraq up to and following the first full democratic elections in Iraq, which will be held in December.

The next major routine roulement of regular UK forces in Iraq is due to take place during April and May next year and the lead formation, currently 7 Armoured Brigade, will be provided by 20 Armoured Brigade. We will make a further announcement covering this roulement once the details have been finalised.

Votes A 2006–07 (Presentational Changes)

The Secretary of State for Defence (John Reid): Ministry of Defence Votes A seek the maximum numbers of personnel to be maintained for service in the armed forces during each financial year.

As of 1 April 2006, we are amending the presentational format. The figures for the Commonwealth troops in the United Kingdom category will no longer be reported, and the numbers of the Queens Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps and Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service will be incorporated into those of the Regular Army and Regular Air Force.

The Commonwealth Troops accounted for by the Army and RAF are members of Commonwealth Forces. The numbers are predominantly students attending courses, the remainder being those on exchange and attaché duties. The Commonwealth Troops, like those of other non-commonwealth nations, wear the uniform of and are paid and maintained by, their home nation. They are not members of the UK Armed Forces nor maintained for service with the UK Armed Forces and therefore fall outside the ambit of Votes A.

Originally the Nursing Service were not a fully integrated part of the Services—being non-combatants—however they are now fully integrated and are now regarded as a sub-specialism and as such there is no longer appropriate to record these figures separately within Votes A.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Oversight Commissioner's Report

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Shaun Woodward): I have today laid before this House a copy of the Oversight Commissioner's third statutory report for the year 2005 which was published today, in accordance with Section 68(4)(a) of the Police (Northern Ireland) Act 2000.

This is the sixth report compiled by Al Hutchinson as Oversight Commissioner and the fifteenth in the series of oversight reports published since 2001.

I met yesterday with the Oversight Commissioner and welcomed the opportunity to discuss with him the contents of this thematic report on training.

Office of the Police Ombudsman

The Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Peter Hain): The Government have received a report from the Chief Inspector of Criminal Justice in Northern Ireland on the Office of the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland (OPONI). The report has today been published.

The Government welcome this report, which recognises the good progress made by the Police Ombudsman's Office towards fulfilling its important role of providing a fair and impartial independent police complaints system. The report also makes some helpful recommendations, which the Police Ombudsman will address in striving for continuous improvement in the way that OPONI fulfils its investigatory, monitoring and accountability roles and responsibilities.

Copies of the Chief Inspector's report have been placed in the Library.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

European Union Energy Council (Brussels)

The Minister for Energy (Malcolm Wicks): I chaired, for the UK Presidency of the EU, the Energy Council in Brussels on 1 December. Alun Michael represented the UK.

The Council considered several matters of interest to the UK; chief among these were Better Regulation in the context of implementation of the EU's liberalised Electricity and Natural Gas market, Climate Change and Sustainable Energy, and EU Relations with Third Countries. There was an important and substantive debate throughout around the energy agenda discussed recently at Hampton Court, and the balance between our three key objectives of competitive markets, security of supply and tackling climate change. Member States recognised the important potential contribution from a European energy policy and supported Commission plans for taking this forward, through a Green Paper early in 2006, with a view to reporting to the 2006 December European Council.

On market liberalisation, there was broad consensus that secure electricity and gas supplies at competitive prices, delivered on open, transparent and competitive markets are crucial to Europe's competitiveness; and that full implementation of the second electricity and gas directives was crucial. The Commission report on the internal energy market and the competition inquiry into the energy sector highlighted areas for more work, including more effective action by the Commission and national regulators against anti-competitive behaviour. Member States saw no need for further legislation until there had been more investigation into key issues such as market concentration, long-term contracts and the impact of the Emissions Trading Scheme. They agreed that the main issues for developing an effective internal energy market—such as independent and effective regulation, the development of regional markets, effective unbundling, and transparency—could be done within the existing framework.

One Member State rejected the Commission analysis of market shortcomings, claiming that a period of regulatory stability was needed and that competition contributed to the EITs energy problems as much as it helped to resolve them. Some Member States expressed concern at their dependence on particular energy suppliers, noting that similar liberalisation to the EITs was needed in such countries.

Council conclusions were agreed on climate change and energy efficiency. Energy efficiency was recognised as making an important contribution to the three primary energy objectives. Member States saw the expected agreement on the Energy End-Use Efficiency and Energy Services Directive as welcome in this respect. Several Member States expressed concerns about the operation of the Emissions Trading Scheme and the need to revise the scheme before the next phase.

On EU-third country relations, the Presidency and Commission summarised progress on dialogues with key energy partners. On Russia, the successful Permanent Partnership Council held in October signalled real hope of progress. There would be a second ministerial meeting with OPEC on 2 December to develop the dialogue begun earlier in the year and promote mutual understanding. The Energy Treaty signed with south-east European countries would establish a neighbouring regional market on the same lines as the EU internal market. A key issue at the Energy Charter Treaty's annual Conference on 9 December would be how to take forward the negotiations on the Transit Protocol.

EU Telecoms Council

The Minister for Industry and the Regions (Alun Michael): I chaired the Telecoms part of the Transport, Telecommunications and Energy Council of the UK's EU presidency in Brussels on 1 December 2005.

The Council began informally over lunch, where I chaired a policy debate on the 2006 Review of the regulatory framework for Electronic Communications markets. The Council agreed that the Framework plays a key role in the development of open and competitive ICT markets. There was broad consensus that its implementation needs to be improved and that the Review of the Framework is a high priority for 2006. I was pleased that the Council gave a steer on the key issues for the Review. These included the importance of competition and investment in next generation networks, ensuring a light-touch regulatory approach and the importance of the needs of consumers.

The policy debate then continued in formal session with a focus on the future of EU spectrum policy. The Council agreed that spectrum is a valuable economic and social resource and that its management needs to be more flexible and efficient. However, views were divided about the role that market-based mechanisms and harmonisation should play in determining spectrum policy. There was broad support for further discussion and analysis on this important issue, particularly in light of the spectrum which will be released by the switchover from analogue television.

I then chaired a policy debate on the Commission's i2010 Strategy. This was a public open session. I reported on the successful events held as part of our presidency,

including the gathering of Chief Executives on 8–9 July and the i2010 and e-accessibility conferences held in London on 6 September and 21 October respectively. Evidence from the Disability Rights Commission prepared for the second of these conferences showed that websites that failed to meet the e-accessibility standards were 50 per cent. more difficult for all individuals to use, demonstrating that accessibility is an economic issue as well as an equalities issue. There was broad support for the i2010 Strategy and its three objectives to promote open and competitive markets, to strengthen ICT research and to achieve an inclusive information society. The Council discussed particular priority areas within the i2010 Strategy's three themes. These included the need for appropriate policy actions in the regulatory field, on broadband and content and on e-government and e-accessibility. There was agreement that the i2010 Strategy needs to be implemented effectively if its contribution to the Lisbon agenda is to be realised. I am pleased to report that at the end of this debate the Council adopted Council Conclusions on the i2010 Strategy and on e-accessibility.

The Council also adopted Conclusions without debate on the subject of the transition from analogue to digital broadcasting. These Conclusions highlight the intention of Member States to complete the switchover, as far as possible, by the end of 2012.

Finally, I reported on the successful outcome on internet governance at the World Summit on Information Society and I highlighted the key role of the EU under our presidency in facilitating the compromise position. The agreement reached will provide a sound basis for delivering enhanced co-operation, and the response from the Commissioner and the Council was very positive indeed.

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 7 December 2005

DEFENCE

3 Para (Trials)

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): On 7 November, my colleague Lord Drayson, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State and Minister for Defence Procurement, told the other place that he would report on the lessons learned following the "not guilty" verdict in the case of seven members and former members of the 3rd Battalion of the Parachute Regiment who were charged with murder and violent disorder.

It is worth reminding the House of the very difficult, demanding and hostile operational circumstances faced by the investigators of the Royal Military Police in Iraq in May 2003. It was in the immediate aftermath of the war fighting phase where there was an almost complete absence of civil governance, law and order and where there was widespread looting and civil disobedience. There were more than 2¾ million people in Basrah and Maysan Provinces who were very different in culture, language and religious background and the majority was also highly suspicious and often hostile. The RMP were required to support the deployed force, act as the local police for the Iraqi population and commence the huge undertaking of rebuilding the Iraqi police and prison services. The operational environment and situation facing the RMP cannot be equated to that faced by a civilian police force in the UK. In the first eight months of 2003, nine members of the RMP were killed on active service in Iraq.

Against that backdrop, the Adjutant General has conducted a comprehensive review of the case and the comments of the Judge Advocate General. He has concluded that many of the issues identified have already been addressed and action taken, but there remains room for improvement. The Adjutant General has identified: the need for a review of RMP resources to meet operational demands now and in the future; better and continuous liaison between RMP investigators and the Army Prosecuting Authority; and the need to drive down delays in the system in order to ensure the timely delivery of justice. These will also be taken forward, and further improvements will be delivered through the Armed Forces Bill. In the meantime, we continue to have full confidence in the professional ability of the Royal Military Police to conduct investigations of this complexity, seriousness, and in the context of a potentially hostile environment.

The Adjutant General has also confirmed that all seven defendants—both serving and former soldiers—were afforded very comprehensive support. Each had a Unit Defending Officer who could be contacted at any time, Legal Aid (including leading and junior Counsel) and time off for those still serving to prepare for their court martial. Personal issues and career consequences are always assessed fairly and kept under continuous review in such cases. The assertion by one of the defendants that he had been "hung out to dry" is unfounded.

Questions were raised about the payments made to Iraqi witnesses. This was done by the Military Court Service. The procedures and the level of expenses paid were in line with the standard practices applied in the civil process in the UK. Overall it is anticipated that the total cost of the trial will be around £4 million although final legal bills have to be submitted.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Housing Act (Implementation)

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Yvette Cooper): Further to my statement to the House on 10 October 2005 on a revised programme for implementing the provisions in the Housing Act 2004, I am now in a position to announce completion of most of the first phase of the programme which includes parts 1 to 4 and 7 of the 2004 Act.

Housing Health and Safety Rating System

On 28 November, the Housing Health and Safety Rating System (England) Regulations 2005 (SI 2005 No 3208) were laid before Parliament. The accompanying volumes of statutory guidance on the operation of the rating system, and on the use of the enforcement provisions in Part 1, were laid in draft at the same time, in accordance with section 9 of the Act. Part 1 applies to all residential premises and the laying of these Regulations and the draft guidance makes clear to those affected by the new provisions what is likely to be expected of them as from 6 April 2006.

Private Rented Sector Licensing

Today we have placed on ODPM's website http://www.odpm.gov.uk/housing/consult/, draft statutory instruments covering the licensing of HMOs and other private rented sector properties. These give effect to decisions announced on 10 October following extensive consultation with local authorities, managing agents, landlords and tenants.

We will take detailed comments into account before laying the final regulations at the end of January as indicated in the timetable published in October 2005. We want to make sure that the provisions are drafted in such a way that they are widely understood by those with responsibility to operate them.

The draft SIs include: The Licensing of Houses in Multiple Occupation (Prescribed Descriptions) (England) Order, The Licensing (HMOs and Other Houses) (Applications, Standards, Publication of Designation and Keeping of Registers) (England) Regulations 2005, The Selective Licensing (Specified Exemptions) (England) Order, The Housing (Interim Management Orders (Prescribed Circumstances) (England) Order and The Management of HMOs (England) Regulations.

The Government expect to lay these Orders in the week beginning 30 January 2006. They are expected to come into force on 6 April 2006.

Empty Dwelling Management Orders

The consultation exercise on Empty Dwelling Management Orders (EDMOs) closed on 14 October. In December we will publish our response to the consultation and set out our proposals for secondary legislation. We expect to lay the instruments in the week beginning 30 January 2006, and again expect these to come into force on 6 April 2006.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

School Funding Settlement

The Minister for Schools (Jacqui Smith): I am announcing today the school funding settlement for 2006–07 and 2007–08. The settlement will mean that, by 2007–08, total revenue funding per pupil will have increased nationally by over £1,400 in real terms since this Government came to power, an increase of some 50 per cent. The settlement demonstrates the continuing high priority the Government give to schools.

1. On 21 July this year I announced to the House details of the new school funding arrangements which will be introduced from April 2006: in particular a ring-fenced Dedicated Schools Grant (the DSG), multi-year budgets for schools and a rationalisation of standards-related grants. The purpose of those arrangements is to guarantee delivery of the Government's commitment to increase spending on schools in every local authority area, to provide schools with the tools to take a strategic approach to their financial planning, to reduce bureaucracy, to ensure stability and to enable schools to focus on raising standards for all pupils.

2. I am announcing today the Government's decisions on the overall increase in the Dedicated Schools Grant in 2006–07, the allocation methodology to be used to distribute the DSG, and the level of the minimum funding guarantee for schools in each of those years. Details of allocations of both the DSG and specific grants to authorities and schools are being sent to local authorities today and I am placing copies in the Library of the House.

3. I announced in July that the minimum funding guarantee for schools in both 2006–07 and 2007–08 would again be set at a level which covered the average cost pressures on schools in those years, subject to a final assessment of those pressures. As in previous years, my officials have discussed the likely pressures on schools with representatives of local authorities and head teachers. These include in particular the differing pressures on primary and secondary schools respectively which result from the final stage of implementation of the National Agreement on Workforce Reform.

4. To reflect these pressures, the minimum funding guarantee for secondary and special schools will be set at 3.4 per cent. per pupil for 2006–07. The guarantee for nursery and primary schools in 2006–07 will be higher, at 4 per cent. per pupil, to reflect the higher cost of implementing workforce reform in those schools in academic year 2005–06. In 2007–08 the guarantee will be the same for all schools, at 3.7 per cent. per pupil. As in previous years, we expect the majority of schools to receive increases above the level of the minimum guarantee.

5. The Learning and Skills Council will match the minimum funding guarantee for secondary schools in its funding rates for school sixth forms in both years.

6. The overall level of the DSG will increase by 6.4 per cent. in cash terms in 2006–07, over the baseline of local authorities' budgeted expenditure on schools in 2005–06, and by a further 6 per cent. in 2007–08. This includes funding which will be transferred out of the DSG to meet additional costs of the expanding academies programme, as pupils in academies no longer need to be funded via local authorities.

7. The guaranteed unit of funding per pupil from the DSG will increase by 6.8 per cent. on average in 2006–07, and by 6.7 per cent. on average in 2007–08. Final allocations of the DSG will depend on actual pupil numbers as at January 2006 and will be determined by May 2006. However, authorities can plan ahead with confidence now in the knowledge that they will receive a fixed sum for each of their pupils.

8. In August, my Department issued a consultation document on the method of distribution of the DSG. This proposed a modified method of distribution for 2006–07 and 2007–08 which would take the existing level of authorities' spend on the Schools Budget as the baseline, give every authority at least a 5 per cent. per pupil increase over that amount each year, and distribute the remaining grant according to criteria which would be determined by Ministers in advance of each multi-year budget period. Distribution against each of these criteria would be through a formula based on objective criteria. The key benefits of the proposed approach were that it met the concerns of those authorities which currently spend significantly in excess of their Schools Formula Spending Share (SFSS), since their spend in excess of SFSS would be consolidated into their baseline. It would also enable increases in funding to be targeted more directly at Government priorities for schools.

9. Following that consultation, we have now decided to go ahead with this approach for 2006–07 and 2007–08. A majority of respondents to the consultation supported the proposals. However, schools in a number of authorities which currently underspend against their Schools Formula Spending Share were concerned about the proposals. We have responded to their concerns by allocating in our distribution methodology additional funding specifically for schools in these authorities. As announced in July, we propose to review the operation of this methodology, consider what lessons can be learnt and work up proposals for the distribution of the DSG in the longer term, in time for the announcement of the first 3-year allocations of DSG in late 2007 following the Comprehensive Spending Review. We will announce in the new year how we propose to involve local authorities and other stakeholders in that review.

10. Overall, the minimum increase in any authority's per pupil DSG will be 6.4 per cent. in 2006–07 and 6.1 per cent. in 2007–08, and the maximum will be 9 per cent. in 2006–07 and 8.4 per cent. in 2007–08. In addition, to protect authorities with rapidly falling rolls, we will ensure that every authority receives a cash increase in its DSG of at least 4 per cent. in each year.

11. Within this overall increase we will, as announced in July, give every authority an initial basic increase of 5 per cent. per pupil in both 2006–07 and 2007–08: for

authorities in London this will be increased to 5.1 per cent. per pupil in both years in response to the STRB's recommendation that there should be a higher increase in the London pay scales for teachers, amounting to a pressure on school budgets of 0.1 per cent.

12. Beyond this basic increase, we intend to distribute the available increase in funding in 2006–07 and 2007–08 to reflect the priority which the Government attach to meeting the costs of greater personalisation of learning, more practical learning options for 14–16 pupils, workforce reform and the increased entitlement to early years provision from 33 to 38 weeks. In relation to each of these priorities, the sums allocated in 2006–07 will be consolidated into the authority's baseline for 2007–08, and any further sums identified for 2007–08 will be on top of that amount.

13. First, as set out in the recent White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools For All" and announced by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State to the House on 17 October, we will earmark £335 million over the 2 years to support personalised learning, including extended opportunities outside the school day, at Key Stage 3. £120 million of the increase in the DSG will be earmarked for this purpose in 2006–07, and a further £215 million will be earmarked in 2007–08. In addition, £100 million will be earmarked for personalised learning, including extended opportunities, in primary schools in 2006–07, with a further £130 million in 2007–08. Every authority will receive an element of this funding, but it will be targeted particularly at authorities with the highest levels of deprivation and low prior attainment.

14. Secondly, we will distribute £40 million in 2006–07 and a further £70 million in 2007–08 to support the provision of more practical learning options for pupils aged 14–16 to maintain their engagement in learning. This funding will be distributed to all local authorities on the basis of pupil numbers aged 11–15.

15. Thirdly, we will distribute £70 million of the 2006–07 increase to reflect the full year cost of implementing guaranteed planning, preparation and assessment time in primary schools from September 2005. This will be distributed on the basis of primary aged pupil numbers in each authority.

16. Fourthly, we will distribute £82 million of the 2006–07 increase to meet the cost of the increased entitlement to free early years provision from 33 to 38 weeks which was announced in the 10-Year Childcare Strategy. This will be distributed on the basis of numbers of 3 and 4-year-old pupils in private, voluntary and independent settings.

17. In each of these cases we will apply the Area Cost Adjustment as used in the Local Government Finance Settlement, announced on 5 December, to the distribution of funds to reflect the higher costs of employing staff in certain areas.

18. Finally, we will distribute £30 million in 2006–07 and a further £30 million in 2007–08 to authorities whose spending on schools was below the level of their Schools Formula Spending Share (SFSS) in 2005–06. In 2006–07 each of these authorities will receive a sum equal to around a quarter of the difference between its Schools Budget for 2005–06 and its SFSS for that year. In 2007–08 we will give them a further quarter of the difference so that half the gap between spending and SFSS has been closed by then.

19. Although some of the increases in each year will be earmarked for particular purposes, it will be for individual local authorities in consultation with their Schools Forums to decide on the distribution of the whole of the grant locally, subject to meeting the minimum funding guarantee, and taking into account local circumstances as well as the Government's priorities. Local authorities and their forums are best placed to take decisions on the balance of priorities locally. As I announced in July we will be enhancing local decision-making under the new arrangements by giving Schools Forums new powers to approve certain proposals from their local authority. We are also strengthening the arrangements for Schools Forums' constitutions and proceedings to ensure that all partners within the school and wider educational community have confidence in the decisions that forums will be taking on their behalf. Regulations for this purpose will be laid before the House tomorrow.

20. At the same time, it is important to ensure a consistency of approach across authorities on key issues which will affect the stability and predictability of schools' budgets. I have therefore decided, following consultation, to go ahead with the proposal I announced in July to require authorities to use a single pupil count to determine their schools' budgets from 2006–07. The majority of those consulted welcomed this proposal, which will mean an end to in-year re-determinations of schools' budgets, and the consequent uncertainty about those budgets. This requirement will be incorporated into regulations which will be brought before the House soon.

21. I believe that this settlement provides the financial foundation for key Government priorities for schools and 14–19 learners. The distribution reflects an appropriate balance between delivering explicit resources to where they are needed to meet key Government commitments, and providing all authorities with headroom, once the cost of the minimum funding guarantee has been met, to target on local priorities. This will ensure that all authorities have scope to begin to respond to the conclusions of the review of deprivation funding—published today alongside the settlement—ensuring that schools in our most deprived communities and areas benefit from sufficient resource to meet the pressures and challenges they face.

22. The settlement also recognises the position of schools in authorities which in the past have chosen to spend above the level of their funding allocation—by taking their actual spending rather than their funding as the starting point for the DSG—but goes some way towards closing the gap by prioritising schools in authorities which have traditionally spent less than their funding allocation. The Government will consider whether and how to move further towards convergence around a national formula for authorities as part of the more fundamental review of the DSG in advance of 2008–09.

23. I am also publishing today details of specific grants for 2006–07 and 2007–08. As I promised in July, the funding for the School Development Grant will be

increased by 3.4 per cent. per pupil in 2006–07 and by 3.7 per cent. per pupil in 2007–08, in line with the minimum funding guarantee for secondary schools. We will also bring a number of currently separate grants into the School Development Grant to reduce the number of different funding streams going to schools, and enable them to use these resources more flexibly. I am announcing details of a new fairer formula for the Schools Standards Grant, which from 2006–07 schools can use to support the development of extended services.

24. Finally, I can confirm that, as previously announced, the Leadership Incentive Grant (LIG) will come to an end in March 2006. However, the Government believe it is important to continue to provide specific support to our most deprived schools, and I am there announcing today arrangements for doing so within the School Development Grant, together with transitional arrangements for other schools which currently receive LIG.

25. The announcement I am making today creates a framework which combines clarity about the Government's priorities for school funding with flexibility for local authorities and Schools Forums over how they respond to those priorities. But most importantly it means that, for the first time, schools will know what their budgets will be for more than one year ahead, giving them increased stability and predictability and allowing them to plan ahead with confidence and make the best use of their resources for the benefit of all their pupils.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Gothenburg Protocol

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Mr. Ben Bradshaw): The 1999 Protocol to abate acidification, eutrophication and ground-level ozone—known as the Gothenburg Protocol—was adopted under the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe (UNECE) Convention on Long-Range Transboundary Air Pollution. The UK signed the Protocol in 1999. The Protocol came into effect in May 2005 and has now been ratified by 18 Parties.

The Government placed an Explanatory Memorandum on the Protocol before both Houses of Parliament in September 2002. At that time it was thought that additional legislation would be required to allow the UK to ratify the Protocol.

However, further analysis of the provisions of the Protocol has allowed us to establish that further legislation will not be required. I have tabled a revised Explanatory Memorandum indicating that we propose to ratify the Protocol forthwith. I intend that the instrument of ratification will be deposited with the United Nations in the course of December 2005.

The UK will ratify the Protocol subject to a reservation. The new Explanatory Memorandum sets out the reservation that the UK will make. It relates to a provision on a type of gas engine where the UK considers that it is not technically feasible to meet the limit values required by the Protocol.

As the Government take these urgent steps to ratify, we are conscious that Parliament will have less time than convention normally allows to consider the revised Memorandum. However, we believe this to be a special case on the ground that the earlier Memorandum on the Protocol has been available to both Houses since 2002. In these circumstances, the Government consider that a shortening of the normal scrutiny period is reasonable.

HEALTH

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Ms Rosie Winterton): The next meeting of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council will be on 8–9 December. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health will chair the meeting and I will attend for the United Kingdom. Items on the agenda relating to health will be covered on 9 December. Items for discussion are: Human health aspects of pandemic flu; proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on medicinal products for paediatric use; and the European Commission's Green Paper: "Improving the mental health of the population, Towards a strategy on mental health for the European Union".

Health Ministers will have a policy debate on human health aspects of pandemic flu and Ministers will be asked to adopt Council Conclusions on this topic. The Presidency then hopes to reach political agreement on the regulation on medicinal products for paediatric use.

There will then be an exchange of views on the green paper on mental health. The discussion will be structured around the European Commission's consultation questions.

Under any other business, the Presidency and the Commission will provide information on: Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Programme of Community action in the field of public health and consumer protection; health inequalities and patient safety; a co-ordinated approach to the fight against HIV/AIDS in the European Union and the neighbouring countries; Council Public Health Working Party meeting at senior level; Commission High Level Group on Health Services and Medical Care; Framework Convention on Tobacco Control; and International Health Regulations.

In addition, Ministers will have an informal discussion on promoting healthy diets and physical activity.

Autumn Performance Report

The Secretary of State for Health (Ms Patricia Hewitt): Today I announce the publication of the Department of Health's 2005 Autumn Performance Report (Cm 6704). A copy of this has been placed in the Library. It shows the progress my Department has made towards achieving its public service agreement targets.

Further details of the performance of the National Health Service can be found in the latest copy of the Chief Executive's Report to the NHS; this has also been placed in the Library.

The Autumn Performance Report shows that there have been further improvements in access to services. The number of NHS patients waiting longer than three months for an outpatient appointment has fallen from 77,500 to 39,800 over the past year. In addition, the number of people waiting more than six months for an inpatient appointment fell from 69,900 to 24,800. We are on course to meet our maximum three month wait for outpatients and six month wait for inpatients by December 2005.

In addition to improving access we are also introducing choice. By the end of the year all eligible patients will be offered the choice of at least four providers at the point of general practitioner referral to consultant-led first outpatient appointments. Some patients are already benefiting from choice of hospital; since January 2005, cataract patients have been offered the choice of two or more providers at the point of referral. From April 2005, patients needing cardiac surgery have been given the choice of two or more providers at the point of referral by the cardiologist.

We are also improving health. Death rates from heart disease among people under 75 have fallen by 31 per cent., since the baseline of 1995–97; deaths from cancer have fallen by 14 per cent., over the same period. We have also seen a 6.6 per cent., fall in suicides against the 1995–97 baseline.

These are just some of the achievements of the NHS over the past year. These improvements have been made in a demanding year through the hard work, skills and passion of hundreds of thousands of staff, the increased funding the government is investing in heath and social care, and new and better ways of engaging services.

Finally, the Department has today published a report, "Accounting for Quality Change", which discusses the way the output of the NHS is measured. The Department considers it important to make the new figures public and encourage discussions, and ideas for further development.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Victims of Crime

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Fiona Mactaggart): I am laying before the House today a command paper on services for victims of crime: "Rebuilding Lives: supporting victims of crime" (Cm 6705). It is part of the Government's ongoing reforms which have improved services for victims of crime and their families.

In it we make proposals for reform of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme which will enable us to increase awards to the most seriously injured victims of crime, and to offer more immediate practical help to the vast majority. We are consulting on a range of options to deliver better support to victims through our manifesto commitment to introduce Victim Care Units. We will consult widely and the consultation period runs until 27 February 2006. A summary of the consultation responses will be published and placed in the House Library. Copies of the consultation paper will be placed in the House Library.

Royal Patriotic Fund

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Paul Goggins): Today I will be laying before Parliament the Royal Patriotic Fund (Transfer of Property, Rights and Liabilities) Order 2005.

The Order provides for the transfer of the property, rights and liabilities of the Royal Patriotic Fund Corporation (a body corporate established under the Patriotic Fund Reorganisation Act 1903) to the RPFC, a company registered under the Charities Act 1993, and for the dissolution of the Royal Patriotic Fund Corporation. The RPFC has been established for the benefit of the persons specified in section 6 of the Armed Forces (Pensions and Compensation) Act 2004. Schedule 2 to that Act makes further provision in relation to the transfer of employees to the RPFC.

The object of the new body will remain the same as that of the Royal Patriotic Fund Corporation, namely to provide (by way of grants and allowances) assistance to the widows and other dependants of members of the Armed Forces. But the new constitution will enable it to carry out its functions more efficiently. The transfer will take effect from 1 January 2006.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Agriculture

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): I am placing in the Libraries of both Houses a copy of a new DFID policy paper, "Growth and poverty reduction; the role of agriculture".

The paper analyses the importance of agriculture for poverty reducing growth and shows why agriculture should be placed at the heart of efforts to reduce poverty. Increasing agricultural productivity can bring benefits to both producers and consumers. But of equal importance are agriculture's strong links with the wider economy.

The paper argues that reversing recent disappointing trends in agriculture's performance is critical if poor countries are to escape the trap of slow growth and poverty. This is particularly true in sub-Saharan Africa, where growth in agricultural output has barely kept pace with population. A major improvement in agriculture's performance in the world's poorest countries is possible and must be achieved if millions of people are to escape poverty.

The paper reaffirms the rationale for DFID support to agriculture and lays out the principles and priorities that should direct DFID's approach. Seven priority areas for action are identified. They are to: create policies and procedures that support agriculture; target public spending more effectively; tackle market failure; fill the agricultural finance gap; spread the benefits of new technology; improve access to land and secure property rights; and reduce distortions in international agricultural markets.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Post-primary Education

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Angela E. Smith): I have published a statement setting out the overall reform programme for post-primary education in Northern Ireland. This provides the context for the reforms and explains how the various elements fit together, including new admissions arrangements. Alongside this, I have published a summary of the responses to an earlier consultation on the new admission arrangements.

I have also launched a consultation on a proposal for a draft Education (Northern Ireland) Order which will give effect to key elements of the reforms. The consultation will run until 7 March 2006.

I have arranged for copies of these documents to be placed in the Library.

TRANSPORT

Longer and Heavier Goods Vehicles

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Dr. Stephen Ladyman): I have received applications from two hauliers each wishing to trial a longer and heavier goods vehicle than is currently permitted. I have decided to refuse these applications.

Both vehicles exceed the current maximum length and weight limits of 18.75 m and 44 tonnes respectively. One applicant proposed to trial a vehicle 25.25 m in length weighing 60 tonnes, in common with moves elsewhere in Europe, while the other was expected to be 30.8 m and 84 tonnes.

While recognising that there are arguments both for and against, I have not been convinced that these vehicles are well suited to the UK at the present time, for a number of reasons. I have not seen clear evidence that longer and heavier vehicles (LHVs) would deliver economic benefit to the industry and in particular whether the benefits would come from increased mass, increased volume or both.

I believe that more work needs to be done to look at axle loadings for various designs of LHVs and the consequent impact on pavements, bridges and other infrastructure; and to estimate the costs of any reinforcement or remedial works.

The Department for Transport has examined video material showing prototype lorries turning and carrying out other manoeuvres and feels that more needs to be done to test their likely impact on traffic and to assess any constraints that might have to be placed on their usage. In particular I have noted that the previous increase in HGV weights to 44 tonnes had assumed that vehicles would be permitted to use the whole of the road network. If operation of LHVs in the UK were to depend on the designation of some form of "sub-network", as might be implied by access constraints, then the Department needs to study this premise and if correct assess the implications of creating such a sub-network.

The freight and logistics industry is constantly changing so I have instructed officials at my Department to continue to monitor developments, and to carry out their studies in close liaison with the industry.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Social Security Benefit Uprating

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (John Hutton): The proposed rates of benefit for 2006 are set out in the table below. The annual uprating of benefits will take place for State Pension and most other benefits in the first full week of the tax year. In 2006, this will be the week beginning 10 April. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland proposes to introduce similar changes for Northern Ireland.

(Weekly rates unless otherwise shown)	*Rates 2005*	*Rates 2006*
ATTENDANCE ALLOWANCE		
higher rate	60.60	62.25
lower rate	40.55	41.65
CARER'S ALLOWANCE	45.70	46.95
COUNCIL TAX BENEFIT		
Personal allowances		
single		
18 to 24	44.50	45.50
25 or over	56.20	57.45
lone parent—18 or over	56.20	57.45
couple—one or both over 18	88.15	90.10
dependent children		
from birth to September following 16th birthday	43.88	45.58
from September following 16th birthday to day before 19th birthday	43.88	45.58
pensioner (from October 2003)		
single/lone parent—60–64	109.45	114.05
couple—one or both 60–64	167.05	174.05
single/lone parent—65 and over	125.90	131.95
couple—one or both 65 and over	188.60	197.65
Premiums		
family	16.10	16.25
family (lone parent rate)	22.20	22.20
child under 1	10.50	10.50
pensioner		
single	53.25	56.60
couple	78.90	83.95
pensioner (enhanced)		
single	53.25	56.60
couple	78.90	83.95
pensioner (higher)		
single	53.25	56.60
couple	78.90	83.95
disability		
single	23.95	24.50
couple	34.20	34.95
enhanced disability premium single rate	11.70	11.95
disabled child rate	17.71	18.13
couple rate	16.90	17.25
severe disability		
single	45.50	46.75
couple (lower rate)	45.50	46.75
couple (higher rate)	91.00	93.50
disabled child	43.89	45.08
carer	25.80	26.35
bereavement	25.85	26.80
Non-dependant deductions aged 18 or over and in remunerative work		
— gross income: £338 or more	6.95	6.95
— gross income: £271–£337.99	5.80	5.80
— gross income: £157–£270.99	4.60	4.60
— gross income less than £157	2.30	2.30
others, aged 18 or over	2.30	2.30

(Weekly rates unless otherwise shown)	Rates 2005	Rates 2006
Alternative maximum Council Tax Benefit second adult on IS, JSA(ib) or Pension Credit	25% of Council Tax	25% of Council Tax
second adult's gross income:		
— under £157	15% of Council Tax	15% of Council Tax
— £157 to £203.99	7.5% of Council Tax	7.5% of Council Tax
Capital		
upper limit	16,000.00	16,000.00
amount disregarded	3,000.00	6,000.00
upper limit (claimant/partner 60 or over)	16,000.00	16,000.00
upper limit (PC guarantee) from Oct 2003	No limit	No limit
amount disregarded (claimant/partner 60 or over)	6,000.00	6,000.00
child disregard	3,000.00	3,000.00
upper limit of RC/NH	16,000.00	16,000.00
amount disregarded of RC/NH	10,000.00	10,000.00
Tariff income		
£1 for every complete £250 or part thereof between amount of capital disregarded and capital upper limit		
Tariff income (claimant/partner 60 or over) from October 2003		
£1 for every £500 or part thereof between amount of capital disregard and capital upper limit		
Earnings disregards		
where disability premium awarded	20.00	20.00
various specified employments	20.00	20.00
lone parent	25.00	25.00
where the claimant has a partner	10.00	10.00
single claimant	5.00	5.00
where carer premium awarded	20.00	20.00
childcare charges	175.00	175.00
childcare charges (2 or more children)	300.00	300.00
Other income disregards		
maintenance disregard	15.00	15.00
war disablement pension and war widow's pension	10.00	10.00
Armed Forces Compensation Scheme	10.00	10.00
certain voluntary and charitable payments	20.00	20.00
student loan	10.00	10.00
student's covenanted income	5.00	5.00
income from boarders: disregard the fixed amount (£20) plus 50% of the balance of the charge	20.00	20.00
additional earnings disregard	14.50	14.90
Expenses for subtenants		
furnished or unfurnished	4.00	4.00
where heating is included, additional	10.55	11.95
DEPENDENCY INCREASES		
Adult Dependency Increases for spouse or person looking after children, with:		
state pension on own insurance, long term incapacity benefit, unemployability supplement	49.15	50.50
severe disablement allowance	45.70	46.95
carers allowance	27.50	28.25
short-term incapacity benefit if beneficiary over state pension age	27.30	28.05
maternity allowance/short-term incapacity benefit	43.95	45.15
Child Dependency Increases, with: State Pension, widowed mothers allowance, widowed parents allowance, short-term incapacity benefit at the higher rate and long term incapacity benefit, carers allowance, severe disability allowance, higher rate industrial death benefit, unemployability supplement and short-term incapacity benefit if beneficiary over pension age	35.65	36.60
NB—The Overlapping Benefits Regulations provide for the rate of child dependency increases to be adjusted where the increase is payable for the eldest eligible child for whom Child Benefit is also payable. The weekly rate of the increase is reduced by the differential (less £3.65 from April 2004) between the rate of Child Benefit payable for the oldest eligible child and that payable for a subsequent child.	11.35	11.35

(Weekly rates unless otherwise shown)	Rates 2005	Rates 2006
DISABILITY LIVING ALLOWANCE		
Care Component		
Highest	60.60	62.25
Middle	40.55	41.65
Lowest	16.05	16.50
Mobility Component		
Higher	42.30	43.45
Lower	16.05	16.50
EARNINGS RULES		
Carers Allowance	82.00	84.00
Limit of earnings from councillor's allowance	78.00	81.00 (from 1 Oct 05)
Permitted work earnings limit	78.00	81.00 (from 1 Oct 05)
Industrial injuries unemployability supplement permitted earnings level (annual amount)	4,056.00	4,212.00 (from 1 Oct 05)
Adult dependency increases with short-term incapacity benefit where claimant is		
(a) under state pension age	35.65	36.60
(b) over state pension age	43.95	45.15
maternity allowance	35.65	36.60
state pension, long-term incapacity benefit, severe disablement allowance, unemployability supplement where dependant		
(a) is living with claimant	56.20	57.45
(b) still qualifies for the tapered earnings rule	45.09	45.09
state pension, long-term incapacity benefit and unemployability supplement where dependant not living with claimant	49.15	50.50
severe disablement allowance where dependant not living with claimant	45.70	46.95
carers allowance	27.50	28.25
Child dependency increases level at which CDIs are affected by earnings of claimant's spouse or partner	27.30	28.05
for first child	170.00	175.00
for each subsequent child	22.00	23.00
HOUSING BENEFIT		
Personal allowances		
single		
16 to 24	44.50	45.50
25 or over	56.20	57.45
lone parent		
under 18	44.50	45.50
18 or over	56.20	57.45
couple		
both under 18	67.15	68.65
one or both 18 or over	88.15	90.10
dependent children		
from birth to September following 16th birthday	43.88	45.58
from September following 16th birthday to day before 19th birthday	43.88	45.58
pensioner (from October 2003)		
single lone parent—60–64	109.45	114.05
couple—one or both 60–64	167.05	174.05
single/lone parent—65 and over	125.90	131.95
couple—one or both 65 and over	188.60	197.65
Premiums		
family	16.10	16.25
family (lone parent rate)	22.20	22.20
child under 1	10.50	10.50
pensioner		
single	53.25	56.60
couple	78.90	83.95
pensioner (enhanced)		
single	53.25	56.60
couple	78.90	83.95
pensioner (higher)		
single	53.25	56.60
couple	78.90	83.95
disability		
single	23.95	24.50
couple	34.20	34.95
enhanced disability premium single rate	11.70	11.95
disabled child rate	17.71	18.13
couple rate	16.90	17.25

(Weekly rates unless otherwise shown)	*Rates 2005*	*Rates 2006*
severe disability		
single	45.50	46.75
couple (lower rate)	45.50	46.75
couple (higher rate)	91.00	93.50
disabled child	43.89	45.08
carer	25.80	26.35
bereavement	25.85	26.80
Non-dependant deductions, rent rebates and allowances, aged 25 and over, in receipt of Income Support or income-based Job Seekers Allowance aged 18 or over, not in remunerative work		
— gross income less than £106	7.40	7.40
aged 18 or over and in remunerative work		
— gross income: less than £106	7.40	7.40
— gross income: £106 to £156.99	17.00	17.00
— gross income: £157 to £203.99	23.35	23.35
— gross income: £204 to £270.99	38.20	38.20
— gross income: £271 to £337.99	43.50	43.50
— gross income: £388 and above	47.75	47.75
Service charges for fuel		
heating	10.55	11.95
hot water	1.25	1.40
lighting	0.85	0.95
cooking	1.25	1.40
Amount ineligible for meals		
three or more meals a day		
single claimant	20.05	20.50
each person in family aged 16 or over	20.05	20.50
each child under 16	10.15	10.35
less than three meals a day		
single claimant	13.35	13.65
each person in family aged 16 or over	13.35	13.65
each child under 16	6.70	6.85
breakfast only—claimant and each member of family	2.45	2.50
Capital		
upper limit	16,000.00	16,000.00
amount disregarded	3,000.00	6,000.00
upper limit (claimant/partner 60 or over)	16,000.00	16,000.00
upper limit (PC guarantee) from October 2003	No limit	No limit
amount disregarded (claimant/partner 60 or over)	6,000.00	6,000.00
child disregard	3,000.00	3,000.00
upper limit of RC/NH	16,000.00	16,000.00
amount disregarded of RC/NH	10,000.00	10,000.00
Tariff income		
£1 for every complete £250 or part thereof between amount of capital disregarded and capital upper limit		
Tariff income (claimant/partner 60 or over) from October 2003		
£1 for every £500 or part thereof between amount of capital disregard and capital upper limit		
Earnings disregards		
where disability premium awarded	20.00	20.00
various specified employments	20.00	20.00
lone parent	25.00	25.00
where the claimant has a partner	10.00	10.00
single claimant	5.00	5.00
where carer premium awarded	20.00	20.00
childcare charges	175.50	175.00
childcare charges (2 or more children)	300.00	300.00
Other income disregards		
maintenance disregard	15.00	15.00
war disablement pension and war widow's pension	10.00	10.00
Armed Forces Compensation Scheme	10.00	10.00
certain voluntary and charitable payments	20.00	20.00
student loan	10.00	10.00
student's covenanted income	5.00	5.00
income from boarders: disregard the fixed amount (£20) plus 50% of the balance of the charge	20.00	20.00
additional earnings disregard	14.50	14.90
Expenses for subtenants		
furnished or unfurnished	4.00	4.00
where heating is included, additional	10.55	11.95
Maximum rates for recovery of overpayments		
ordinary overpayments	8.55	8.70
where claimant convicted of fraud	11.20	11.60
INCAPACITY BENEFIT		
Long-term Incapacity Benefit	76.45	78.50
Short-term Incapacity Benefit (under pension age)		
lower rate	57.65	59.20
higher rate	68.20	70.05
Short-term Incapacity Benefit (over state pension age)		
lower rate	73.35	73.35
higher rate	76.45	78.50
Increase of Long-term Incapacity Benefit for age		
higher rate	16.05	16.50
lower rate	8.05	8.25
Invalidity Allowance (Transitional)		
higher rate	16.00	16.50
middle rate	10.30	10.60
lower rate	5.15	5.30
INCOME SUPPORT		
Personal Allowances		
single		
under 18—usual rate	33.85	34.60
under 18—higher rate payable in specific circumstances	44.50	45.50
18 to 24	44.50	45.50
25 or over	56.20	57.45
lone parent		
under 18—usual rate	33.85	34.60
under 18—higher rate payable in specific circumstances	44.50	45.50
18 or over	56.20	57.45
couple		
both under 18	33.85	34.60
both under 18, one disabled	44.50	45.50
both under 18, with responsibility for a child	67.15	68.65
one under 18, one 18-24	44.50	45.50
one under 18, one 25+	56.20	57.45
both 18 or over	88.15	90.10
dependent children		
birth to September following 16th birthday	43.88	45.58
from September following 16th birthday to day before 20th birthday	43.88	45.58
Premiums		
family	16.10	16.25
family (lone parent rate)	16.10	16.25
pensioner couple	78.90	83.95
pensioner (enhanced) couple	78.90	83.95
pensioner (higher) couple	78.90	83.95
disability		
single	23.95	24.50
couple	34.20	34.95
enhanced disability premium single rate	11.70	11.95
disabled child rate	17.71	18.13
couple rate	16.90	17.25
severe disability		
single	45.50	46.75
couple (lower rate)	45.50	46.75
couple (higher rate)	91.00	93.50
disabled child	43.89	45.08
carer	25.80	26.35
bereavement	25.85	26.80
Housing costs		
deduction for non-dependants aged 25 and over, in receipt of Income Support or income-based Job Seekers Allowance aged 18 or over, not in work	7.40	7.40
aged 18 or over and in remunerative work		
— gross income: less than £106	7.40	7.40
— gross income: £106 to £156.99	17.00	17.00
— gross income: £157 to £203.99	23.35	23.35
— gross income: £204 to £270.99	38.20	38.20
— gross income: £271 to £337.99	43.50	43.50
— gross income: £338 and above	47.75	47.75
Deduction for direct payments, arrears of housing, fuel and water costs, council tax, and	2.85	2.90
deductions for child maintenance (standard)	5.70	5.80
deductions for child maintenance (lower)	2.85	2.90
Arrears of Community Charge		
court order against claimant	2.85	2.90
court order against couple	4.45	4.55
Third party deductions personal expenses allowance	18.80	19.60
Third party deductions for fine or compensation order		
standard rate	5.00	5.00
low rate	2.85	2.90
Maximum rates for recovery of overpayments		
ordinary overpayments	8.55	8.70
where claimant convicted of fraud	11.20	11.60
Reduction in benefit for strikers	30.50	31.00

(Weekly rates unless otherwise shown)	*Rates 2005*	*Rates 2006*
Capital		
upper limit	8,000.00	16,000.00
amount disregarded	3,000.00	6,000.00
upper limit (partner 60 or over)	12,000.00	16,000.00
amount disregarded (partner 60 or over)	6,000.00	6,000.00
child's limit	3,000.00	3,000.00
upper limit (RC/NH)	16,000.00	16,000.00
amount disregarded (RC/NH)	10,000.00	10,000.00
Tariff income £1 for every complete £250 or part thereof between amount of capital disregarded and capital upper limit		
Disregards		
standard earnings	5.00	5.00
couples earnings	10.00	10.00
higher earnings	20.00	20.00
war disablement pension and war widow's pension	10.00	10.00
Armed Forces Compensation Scheme	10.00	10.00
voluntary and charitable payments	20.00	20.00
student loan	10.00	10.00
student's covenanted income	5.00	5.00
income from boarders: disregard the fixed amount (£20) plus 50% of the balance of the charge	20.00	20.00
Expenses for subtenants, furnished or unfurnished	4.00	4.00
where heating is included, additional	10.55	11.95
INDUSTRIAL DEATH BENEFIT		
Widow's pension		
higher rate	82.05	84.25
lower rate	24.62	25.28
Widower's pension	82.05	84.25
INDUSTRIAL INJURIES DISABLEMENT PENSION		
18 and over, or under 18 with dependants		
100%	123.80	127.10
90%	111.42	114.39
80%	99.04	101.68
70%	86.66	88.97
60%	74.28	76.26
50%	61.90	63.55
40%	49.52	50.84
30%	37.14	38.13
20%	24.76	25.42
Under 18		
100%	73.85	77.90
90%	66.27	70.11
80%	60.68	62.32
70%	53.10	54.53
60%	45.51	46.74
50%	37.93	38.95
40%	30.34	31.16
30%	22.76	23.37
20%	15.17	15.58
Maximum life gratuity (lump sum)	8,230.00	8,450.00
Unemployability Supplement	76.45	78.50
plus where appropriate an increase for early incapacity		
higher rate	16.05	16.50
middle rate	10.30	10.60
lower rate	5.15	5.30
Maximum reduced earnings allowance	49.52	50.84
Maximum retirement allowance	12.38	12.71
Constant attendance allowance		
exceptional rate	99.20	101.80
intermediate rate	74.40	76.33
normal maximum rate	49.60	50.90
part-time rate	24.80	25.45
Exceptionally severe disablement allowance	49.60	50.90
JOBSEEKERS ALLOWANCE		
Contribution based JSA—Personal rates		
under 18	33.85	34.60
18 to 24	44.50	45.50
25 or over	56.20	57.45
Income-based JSA—personal allowances		
under 18	33.85	34.60
18 to 24	44.50	45.50
25 or over	56.20	57.45
lone parent		
under 18—usual rate	33.85	34.60
under 18—higher rate payable in specific circumstances	44.50	45.50
18 or over	56.20	57.45

(Weekly rates unless otherwise shown)	*Rates 2005*	*Rates 2006*
couple		
both under 18	33.85	34.60
both under 18, one disabled	44.50	45.50
both under 18, with responsibility for a child	67.15	68.65
one under 18, one 18–24	44.50	45.50
one under 18, one 25+	56.20	57.45
both 18 or over	88.15	90.10
dependent children from birth to September following 16th birthday	43.88	45.50
from September following 16th birthday to day before 20th birthday	43.88	45.58
Premiums		
family	16.10	16.25
family (lone parent rate)	16.10	16.25
pensioner		
single	53.25	56.60
couple	78.90	83.95
pensioner (enhanced) couple	78.90	83.95
pensioner (higher)		
single	53.25	56.60
couple	78.90	83.95
disability		
single	23.95	24.50
couple	34.20	34.95
enhanced disability premium single rate	11.70	11.95
disabled child rate	17.71	18.13
couple rate	16.90	17.25
severe disability		
single	45.50	46.75
couple (lower rate)	45.50	46.75
couple (higher rate)	91.00	93.50
disabled child	43.89	45.08
carer	25.80	26.35
bereavement	25.85	26.80
Housing costs		
deductions for non-dependants aged 25 and over, in receipt of Income Support or income-based Job Seekers Allowance aged 18 or over, not in work aged 18 or over and in remunerative work	7.40	7.40
— gross income: less than £106	7.40	7.40
— gross income: £106 to £156.99	17.00	17.00
— gross income: £157 to £203.99	23.35	23.35
— gross income: £204 to £270.99	38.20	38.20
— gross income: £271 to £337.99	43.50	43.50
— gross income: £338 and above	47.75	47.75
Deduction for direct payments		
Deductions from JSA (IB) arrears of housing, fuel and water costs, council tax, and	2.85	2.90
Deductions for Child Maintenance		
deductions for child maintenance (standard)	5.70	5.80
deductions for child maintenance (lower)	2.85	2.90
Arrears of Community Charge		
court order against claimant	2.85	2.90
court order against couple	4.45	4.55
Third party deductions		
personal expenses allowance	18.80	19.60
Deductions from JSA (continued)		
Arrears of Community Charge, Council Tax, fines and overpayment recovery		
Age 16–17	11.28	11.53
Age 18–24	14.83	15.16
Age 25 +	18.73	19.15
Maximum deduction for arrears of Child Support Maintenance		
Age 16–17	11.28	11.53
Age 18–24	14.83	15.16
Age 25 +	18.73	19.15
Third party deduction for fine or compensation order		
standard rate	5.00	5.00
lower rate	2.85	2.90
Maximum rates for recovery of overpayments in JSA (IB)		
ordinary overpayments	8.55	8.70
where claimant convicted of fraud	11.20	11.40
Reduction in benefit for strikers	30.50	31.00
Capital		
upper limit	8,000.00	16,000.00
amount disregarded	3,000.00	6,000.00
child's limit	3,000.00	3,000.00
upper limit (RC/NH)	16,000.00	16,000.00
amount disregarded (RC/NH)	10,000.00	10,000.00
upper limit (partner 60 or over)	12,000.00	16,000.00
amount disregarded (partner 60 or over)	6,000.00	6,000.00

(Weekly rates unless otherwise shown)	Rates 2005	Rates 2006
Tariff income		
£1 for every complete £250 or part thereof between amount of capital disregarded and capital upper limit		
Disregards		
standard earnings	5.00	5.00
couples earnings	10.00	10.00
higher earnings	20.00	20.00
war disablement pension and war widow's pension	10.00	10.00
Armed Forces Compensation Scheme	10.00	10.00
voluntary and charitable payments	20.00	20.00
student loan	10.00	10.00
student's covenanted income	5.00	5.00
income from boarders: disregard the fixed amount (£20) plus 50% of the balance of the charge	20.00	20.00
Expenses for subtenants		
furnished or unfurnished	4.00	4.00
where heating is included, additional	10.55	11.95
MATERNITY ALLOWANCE		
Standard rate	106.00	108.85
MA threshold	30.00	30.00
PENSION CREDIT		
Standard minimum guarantee		
single	109.45	114.05
couple	167.05	174.05
Additional amount for severe disability		
single	45.50	46.75
couple (one qualifies)	45.50	46.75
couple (both qualify)	91.00	93.50
Additional amount for carers	25.80	26.35
Savings credit		
threshold—single	82.05	84.25
threshold—couple	131.20	134.75
maximum—single	16.44	17.88
maximum—couple	21.51	23.58
Capital		
Amount disregard	6,000.00	6,000.00
Amount disregard—care homes	10,000.00	10,000.00
Deemed income £1 for each complete £500 or part thereof in excess of above amounts		
Housing costs		
Deduction for non-dependents		
— aged 18 or over, in receipt of IS/JSA(IB) and over 25	7.40	7.40
— aged 18 or over and in work:		
aged 18 or over and in remunerative work		
— gross income: less than £106	7.40	7.40
— gross income: £106 to £156.99	17.00	17.00
— gross income: £157 to £203.99	23.35	23.35
— gross income: £204 to £270.99	38.20	38.20
— gross income: £271 to £337.99	43.50	43.50
— gross income: £338 and above	47.75	47.75
Amount for claimant and first spouse in polygamous marriage	167.05	174.05
Additional amount for additional spouse	57.60	60.00
Disregards		
Standard earnings	5.00	5.00
Couples earnings	10.00	10.00
Higher earnings	20.00	20.00
War disablement pension and War widows pension	10.00	10.00
Armed Forces Compensation Scheme	10.00	10.00
Widowed Parent's Allowance	10.00	10.00
Income from subtenants	20.00	20.00
Income from boarders (disregard the fixed amount (£20) plus 50% of the balance of the charge)	20.00	20.00
Third Party Deductions		
arrears of housing, fuel, water costs, council tax and fines default	2.85	2.90
Arrears of Community Charge		
court order against claimant	2.85	2.90
court order against couple	4.45	4.55
Maximum rates of recovery of overpayments		
— ordinary overpayments	8.55	8.70
— where claimant convicted of fraud	11.20	11.60
Third party deductions personal expenses allowance	18.80	19.60

(Weekly rates unless otherwise shown)	Rates 2005	Rates 2006
PNEUMOCONIOSIS, BYSSINOSIS, AND MISCELLANEOUS DISEASES SCHEME AND THE WORKMEN'S COMPENSATION (SUPPLEMENTATION)		
Total disablement allowance and major incapacity allowance (maximum)	123.80	127.10
Partial disablement allowance	45.70	46.95
Unemployability supplement plus where appropriate increases for early incapacity	76.45	78.50
higher rate	16.05	16.50
middle rate	10.30	10.60
lower rate	5.15	5.30
Constant attendance allowance		
exceptional rate	99.20	101.80
intermediate rate	74.40	76.35
normal maximum rate	49.60	50.90
part-time rate	24.80	25.45
Exceptionally severe disablement allowance	49.60	50.90
Lesser incapacity allowance		
maximum rate of allowance	45.70	46.95
based on loss of earnings over	60.60	62.25
STATE PENSION		
Category A or B	82.05	84.25
Category B (lower)—husband's insurance	49.15	50.50
Category C or D—non-contributory	49.15	50.50
Category C (lower)—non-contributory	29.40	30.20
Additional pension		Increase by: 2.7%
Increments to:		Increase by:
Basic pension		2.7%
Additional pension		2.7%
Graduated Retirement Benefit (GRB)		2.7%
Inheritable lump sum		2.7%
Contracted-out Deduction from AP in respect of pre-April 1988 contracted-out earnings		Nil
Contracted-out Deduction from AP in respect of contracted-out earnings from April 1988 to 1997		2.7%
Graduated Retirement Benefit (unit)	0.0993	0.1020
Graduated Retirement Benefit (Inherited)		Increase by: 2.7%
Addition at age 80	0.25	0.25
SEVERE DISABLEMENT ALLOWANCE		
Basic rate	46.20	47.45
Age-related addition (from December 1990)		
Higher rate	16.05	16.50
Middle rate	10.30	10.60
Lower rate	5.15	5.30
STATUTORY ADOPTION PAY		
Earnings threshold	82.00	84.00
Rate	106.00	108.85
STATUTORY MATERNITY PAY		
Earnings threshold	82.00	84.00
Standard rate	106.00	108.85
STATUTORY PATERNITY PAY		
Earnings threshold	82.00	84.00
Rate	106.00	108.85
STATUTORY SICK PAY		
Earnings threshold	82.00	84.00
Standard rate	68.20	70.05
WIDOW'S BENEFIT		
Widowed mother's allowance	82.05	84.25
Widow's pension		
standard rate	82.05	84.25
age-related		
age 54 (49)	76.31	78.35
53 (48)	70.56	72.46
52 (47)	64.82	66.56
51 (46)	59.08	60.66
50 (45)	53.33	54.76
49 (44)	47.59	48.87
48 (43)	41.85	42.97
47 (42)	36.10	37.07
46 (41)	30.36	31.17
45 (40)	24.62	25.28

Note: For deaths occurring before 11 April 1988 refer to age-points shown in brackets.

(Weekly rates unless otherwise shown)	*Rates 2005*	*Rates 2006*
BEREAVEMENT BENEFIT		
Bereavement payment (lump sum)	2,000.00	2,000.00
Widowed parent's allowance	82.05	84.25
Bereavement Allowance		
standard rate	82.05	84.25
age-related		
age 54	76.31	78.35
53	70.56	72.46
52	64.82	66.56
51	59.08	60.66
50	53.33	54.76
49	47.59	48.87
48	41.85	42.97
47	36.10	37.07
46	30.36	31.17
45	24.62	25.28

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 8 December 2005

DEFENCE

War Pensions and Allowances 2006

The Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr Don Touhig): The new rates of war pensions and allowances proposed from April 2006 are set out in the tables below. The Annual uprating of war pensions and allowances for 2006 will take place from the week beginning 10 April.

War Pensions Rates

(Weekly rates unless otherwise shown)	*Rates 2005*	*Rates 2006*
WAR PENSIONS		
Disablement Pension (100% rates)		
officer (£ per annum)	6,851.00	7,034.00
other ranks	131.30	134.80
Age allowances		
40%–50%	8.80	9.05
over 50% but not over 70%	13.50	13.85
over 70% but not over 90%	19.25	19.75
over 90%	27.00	27.70
Disablement gratuity		
specified minor injury (minimum)	835.00	858.00
specified minor injury (maximum)	6,243.00	6,412.00
unspecified minor injury (minimum)	345.00	354.00
unspecified minor injury (maximum)	8,118.00	8,337.00
Unemployability allowance		
Personal	81.15	83.35
adult dependency increase	45.70	46.95
increase for first child	10.60	10.90
increase for subsequent children	12.50	12.85
Invalidity allowance		
higher rate	16.05	16.50
middle rate	10.30	10.60
lower rate	5.15	5.30
Constant attendance allowance		
exceptional rate	99.20	101.80
intermediate rate	74.40	76.35
full day rate	49.60	50.90
part-day rate	24.80	25.45
Comforts allowance		
higher rate	21.20	21.80
lower rate	10.60	10.90
Mobility supplement	47.25	48.55
Allowance for lowered standard of occupation (maximum)	49.52	50.84
Therapeutic earnings limit	4,056.00	4,212.00
Exceptionally severe disablement allowance	49.60	50.90
Severe disablement occupational allowance	24.80	25.45
Clothing allowance (£ per annum)	169.00	174.00
Education allowance (£ per annum) (maximum)	120.00	120.00

War Pensions Rates

(Weekly rates unless otherwise shown)	*Rates 2005*	*Rates 2006*
War widow(er)s' pension (further details in schedule WWP)		
Widow(er)s—private	99.50	102.20
Widow(er)s' (other ranks)	99.50	102.20
Widow(er)—Officer (£ pa maximum)	6,132.00	6,298.00
Childless widow(er)s' u-40 (other ranks)	23.85	24.49
Childless widow(er)s' u-40 (Officer maximum £s pa)	6,132.00	6,298.00
Supplementary Pension	66.62	68.42
Age allowance		
(a) age 65 to 69	11.40	11.70
(b) age 70 to 79	21.80	22.40
(c) age 80 and over	32.35	33.20
Children's allowance		
Increase for first child	15.65	16.05
Increase for subsequent children	17.50	17.95
Orphan's pension		
Increase for first child	17.80	18.30
Increase for subsequent children	19.55	20.10
Unmarried dependant living as spouse (maximum)	97.15	99.85
Rent allowance (maximum)	37.55	38.55
Adult orphan's pension (maximum)	76.45	78.50

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Information Sharing Index

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Ruth Kelly): I am announcing today a step change in the support the Government provide to front-line professionals in children's services by leading the implementation of an information sharing index.

The information sharing index is a key element of the "Every Child Matters" programme to transform children's services by supporting more effective prevention and early intervention. Its goal is to improve outcomes and the experience of public services for all children, young people and families. Better information sharing is essential for early and effective intervention. The index will provide a tool to support better communication among practitioners across education, health, social care and youth offending. It will allow them to contact one another more easily and quickly, so they can share information about children who need services or about whose welfare they are concerned.

Our decision about the way forward with the index has been informed by substantial input from, and consultation with, many front-line practitioners and managers across a wide range of children's services organisations. We have also drawn extensively on the experience of local index approaches run under existing legislation by Trailblazer local authorities. Our conclusions respond to what stakeholders have told us they need to be able to do their jobs more effectively and take account of views expressed on the design of the index.

The index will be a simple basic online system containing:

> minimal identifying information for each child; name, address, date of birth, gender, and contact details for parents or carers. Each child will also have a unique identifying number. In almost all cases this will be a scrambled version of their Child Reference Number (which all children are allocated when a claim for child benefit is made);
>
> contact details for their educational setting and GP practice and for other practitioners or services working with them; and
>
> where a practitioner judges it appropriate and necessary, an indicator showing that they wished to be contacted by other practitioners because they have relevant information to share, are taking action, or have undertaken an assessment in relation to that child.

No case information will be held on the index. Children, young people, or, where appropriate, their parents or carers will be able to ask to see their records and to challenge any inaccuracies, in accordance with Data Protection Legislation.

There will be a single central index with its data partitioned into 150 parts, one relating to each local authority in England. A central index will ensure that the system works for children who move areas or who access services from more than one area. Partitioning the data will ensure local authorities take the lead in maintaining the accuracy of the data for children living in their area. To avoid double-inputting of data and to ensure high standards of accuracy, information on the index will be drawn from and updated through existing systems. It will use proven technology.

Technical access to the index will be either through the practitioner's existing case management systems, via a web link or, where an approved practitioner has no access to appropriate IT facilities, via another approved user who does have IT access.

The Government are determined that the index will be as secure as possible, and will therefore ensure it complies with rigorous security standards. Access to it will be granted only to authorised users who have undergone appropriate checks, including those provided by the Criminal Records Bureau. Practitioner use of the index will be audited to ensure information is only accessed where it is necessary for practitioners to do so, and so guard against inappropriate access by authorised users.

The Government are today making available a report on local authority trailblazer experience. Copies will be placed in the Library of the House.

The experience of the Trailblazers identifies significant benefits in the effectiveness of services. These include improved access to information to inform action, better identification of children not receiving universal services, and better multi-agency communication and information exchange. Scope for significant efficiency gains has also been demonstrated from time saved by practitioners on such tasks as identifying other services involved with a child, tracking down and contacting the individual practitioners involved, and making wasted referrals to services already involved with a child. These savings have been quantified as worth over £88 million per annum across England. We do not intend to reduce funding for children's services, but instead to enable savings realised to be reinvested in more and better services for children and more effective use of staff time. We anticipate that this will enhance staff satisfaction with their jobs.

The Government will commit substantial resources to the index. One-off implementation costs will be an estimated £224 million over the next three years—this includes the costs of adapting systems that will supply the data to the index and adapting the day-to-day systems used by practitioners so they can access the index from their own systems. It also includes the cost of ensuring the original data supplied to the index are accurate, that there are robust systems in place to ensure security, and that staff are trained to use the index properly. Operating costs, thereafter, will be £41 million per year. Most of these costs will fund the additional staff needed to ensure the on-going security, accuracy and audit of the index. Both set-up and running costs will be funded by central Government, so that the costs to local authorities do not form a pressure on the Council Tax.

Our plan is that a technically robust, secure and accurate index is available to support children's services across England by the end of 2008. To enable this to be achieved we plan to publish draft Regulations under Section 12 of the Children Act 2004, which will be subject to the affirmative resolution procedure. An initial set of Regulations in spring 2006 will provide the necessary vires to allow trials to take place for the creation of the initial records. We then plan to publish in autumn 2006 the main Regulations to govern the operation of the index. We will consult publicly on draft regulations in the summer/autumn of 2006.

Implementation will be led by a dedicated project team within DfES. The Project Team will continue to work closely with local authorities, users and other stakeholders to ensure that developments continue to be relevant and lead to more effective practice. Building on the current knowledge gained by the local authority trailblazers, the Project Team will directly and actively seek the views of children, young people and families and will ensure those views are taken into account as we develop the index.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Bribery Laws

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Fiona Mactaggart): I am pleased to announce the publication today of the Government's consultation paper on reform of the laws of bribery.

Although the crime of bribery remains relatively rare in the UK, it is vital that we, through our actions and principles, remain vigilant and promote high standards of propriety at home and abroad. Modernising the criminal law plays an important role in carrying out this aim.

The existing law on bribery, which comprises the common law offence of bribery and a variety of statutory offences dating as far back as 1889, is fragmented, outdated and complex.

The Government sought to address problems in the existing law when we published the draft Corruption Bill; however since the publication of the report of the

Joint Committee, which gave the Bill pre-legislative scrutiny in 2003, opinion has been divided on the way in which the offences should be formulated.

The purpose of this consultation is to seek a new consensus on the way forward. We are conscious that a good deal of criticism of the draft Bill came from those most exercised by the problem of bribery overseas. We therefore also seek views on a new proposal to enhance Serious Fraud Office powers to tackle bribery of foreign public officials.

The consultation, which contains proposals that will apply to England, Wales and Northern Ireland, will run until 1 March 2006 and I look forward to receiving views from a wide range of stakeholders. The Government are committed to reforming the law and today's consultation is a step towards delivering that commitment.

Copies of the consultation paper will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses. The consultation paper is also available on the Home Office website at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/about-us/haveyoursay/current-consultations/.

Scientific Procedures Statistics (Living Animals) 2004

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Andy Burnham): The Statistics of Scientific Procedures on Living Animals in Great Britain—2004 is being published as a Command Paper today. Copies will be placed in the House Library.

This annual report meets the requirement in the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 to keep Parliament informed about the use of animals for experimental or other purposes. It also forms the basis for meeting periodic reporting requirements at EU level. The format and content of future reports has recently being reviewed by the Animals Procedures Committee and I hope to be able to respond to their report shortly.

The report shows an overall increase over last year of 2.3 per cent in the number of procedures undertaken. The total number of procedures was 2.85 million, an increase of 63,000 over the previous year. Although this is the highest total since 1992, it does not necessarily signal an established upwards trend in animal use. The overall level of scientific procedures is determined by a number of factors, including the economic climate and global trends in scientific endeavour.

Non-toxicological procedures accounted for about 85 per cent. of the procedures carried out in 2004. These included studies for fundamental biological or applied research in human and veterinary medicine, with the main areas of use being for immunological studies, pharmaceutical research and development, and cancer research.

Procedures for toxicological purposes accounted for the remaining 15 per cent. of all procedures. About 70 per cent. of these were for testing the safety and efficacy of new drugs and medicines.

In keeping with previous years, those procedures which used mice or rats (or other rodents) were the great majority at 85 per cent. Those using fish amounted to 7 per cent. and those using birds, 4 per cent. The total of all procedures using dogs, cats, horses and non-human primates, that is, those species offered special protection by the Act, was less than 1 per cent. of the total.

Genetically normal animals were used in 1,673,000 regulated procedures, representing 59 per cent. of all procedures for 2004 (compared with 63 per cent. in 2003 and 84 per cent. in 1995). Genetically modified animals (nearly all rodents) were used in 914,000 regulated procedures, representing 32 per cent. of all procedures for 2004 (compared with 27 per cent. in 2003 and 8 per cent. in 1995).

These trends have been evident over recent years, reflecting the changing balance in use between genetically normal and modified animals, and are set to continue as advances in genetic science open up new and promising avenues of research.

It is important to point out that the Home Office, as regulatory authority under the 1986 Act, does not control the overall amount of animal research and testing which takes place, but seeks to minimise the numbers of animals used for justifiable purposes. We ensure, in carrying out our licensing function, that the provisions of the Act are rigorously applied in each programme of work. All animal use must be justified, and that for each particular programme of work the number of animals used, and the suffering caused must be minimised.

Further information on the annual statistics 2004 may be found on the Home Office website at http://scienceandresearch.homeoffice.gov.uk/animal-research/.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Southern Africa

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): Since my statement of 11 October, further assessments in Southern Africa have identified an additional 1.4 million people in Malawi, Zambia and Mozambique likely to face food shortages in the period up to April 2006. This brings the total numbers in need of assistance to over 11.4 million in Zimbabwe, Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique, Lesotho and Swaziland. This could rise as further reassessments take place, particularly in Zimbabwe.

The Scale of the Problem

Country assessments are carried out by national committees and are co-ordinated regionally by the Southern African Development Community (SADC). They consider whether households will be able to access their normal food requirements between harvests. Assessment reports can be found at the website of the Southern African Development Community: www.sadc.int. The figures include those with potential food shortages ranging from 1 per cent. to over 80 per cent. of their normal food requirements.

The breakdown by country is as follows:

Zimbabwe: The national assessment was formally released on 17 November and indicates that 2.88 million people will face food shortages, assuming stable maize prices. However, maize prices have risen significantly and, while hyper-inflation in Zimbabwe makes it difficult to assess affordability, it is possible that as many as 5 million people face food shortages. The underlying causes remain a combination of erratic rains, HIV/AIDS and bad governance. The World Food Programme, with support from DFID, has been

providing food aid for 1 million vulnerable people, mainly children, and plans to scale this up to cover 3 million people over the next few months, and other donors are distributing to smaller groups. The World Food Programme has also now signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government guaranteeing humanitarian access and freedom from political interference in their humanitarian operations through the role of NGOs as implementing partners.

DFID has committed over £1 million in response to the Government of Zimbabwe's forced clearance of unauthorised dwellings earlier this year, Operation Murambatsvina ("Clean Up"), which displaced or destroyed the livelihoods of 700,000 people. The Zimbabwe Government have now reversed their refusal to accept international assistance to provide shelter. However, the UN and donors have not yet agreed with the Government on acceptable and equitable mechanisms for providing that aid. In the meantime, UN and non-Governmental agencies continue to operate relief programmes reaching 40,000 affected households, including those affected by HIV and AIDS, with food, blankets, medical care and other essential items. These issues were being discussed in Zimbabwe during the visit there this week by the UN Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Jan Egeland.

Malawi: The latest assessment indicates that up to 4.85 million people face food shortages. The Government and the World Food Programme have started a coordinated emergency programme targeting the 2.7 million most vulnerable people and plans are in place to reach all of those facing food shortages in the period leading up to the harvest in March/April 2006. A UN appeal for $88 million was launched in September covering food aid and distribution of seeds and fertiliser. This was later revised downwards to $74 million, of which $32 million has been pledged so far, with a further $68 million contributed outside the appeal. The UK Government contributed £10.2 million before the appeal was launched and £5 million in October in response to the appeal. We will contribute a further £3 million to help respond to the increased needs this week, bringing our total contribution to £18.2 million (about $32 million) making the UK the largest contributor to the relief effort in Malawi this year.

Zambia: The latest assessment indicates that 1.4 million people in the Southern, Western and Eastern Provinces will face food shortages before the next harvest in February–March 2006. The Government have now requested assistance. Food distributions by the World Food Programme, the Government of Zambia and an NGO consortium are increasing in response to this and the UK has this week committed an additional £4 million.

Mozambique: The latest assessment indicates that about 800,000 people will face food shortages, mostly in the south of the country. The World Food Programme continues to distribute food aid to some of those worst affected and the Government have established a range of safety nets, such as food for work programmes and free or subsidised seed distribution so that the poorest households have enough seeds to plant for next year.

Lesotho: Assessments in Lesotho have not changed. About 440,000 people could face food shortages. These are virtually all in households that suffer from chronic food insecurity. The Government are responding through safety nets, including a recently introduced old age pension.

Swaziland: Assessments in Swaziland have not changed. About 225,000 people could face food shortages in households that suffer from chronic food insecurity. As in Lesotho, other responses to chronic hunger, apart from food aid, are being encouraged, such as provision of seeds and fertiliser to poorer households.

What are the UK Government doing?

In response to this crisis, the UK Government have now allocated over £64 million in humanitarian assistance for the region this year. Some of this has been channelled through UN agencies and some has gone through Governments or NGOs.

The breakdown of our commitments so far this year is as follows:

Zimbabwe: £40 million covering relief programmes for up to 3 million people provided through non-Government channels, including contributions to the World Food Programme, HIV/AIDS programmes and responses to those affected by Operation Murambatsvina.

Malawi: Over £18 million towards the Government's emergency food distribution, helping to purchase maize, options on additional maize, seeds, pulses and oil, support to the Government's logistics and early warning capacity, and support to UNICEF for nutritional surveillance and response. Government of Malawi planning for the emergency began in March with help from early pledges from the UK.

Zambia: Up to £3,430,000 for food aid distribution to 200,000 households and other support through the World Food Programme and other agencies, and £1 million to Oxfam for cash transfers to 14,950 households in Western Province. In addition, we will provide £500,000 for nutritional surveillance and preparedness, and £500,000 for emergency seed distribution.

Mozambique: £235,000 for provision of seeds to drought affected farmers, using the Ministry of Agriculture's drought mitigation plan.

Lesotho: £350,000 for distribution of seeds and fertilisers and small-scale livestock interventions for affected households.

Swaziland: £300,000 for distribution of seeds and fertilisers and other necessary help for vulnerable households.

I am again urging EU partners to respond speedily to these additional needs and remain in contact with the UN on the international community's response.

The Wider Challenge

The crisis has reinforced the need to address the high levels of chronic hunger in Southern Africa more effectively and take action to reduce the risk of repeated crises affecting the region. I welcome the recent commitment by European Development Ministers—at the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 21–22 November—to support safety nets for the most vulnerable in Africa as well as commitments by the US

Government to help break the cycle of hunger in Africa. I intend to work closely with all partners to address these longer-term issues while continuing to tackle emergency food needs effectively. We will continue to monitor the position closely and be ready to take further action if necessary.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Water Reform

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Mr. Shaun Woodward): Today I have placed in the Libraries of the House copies of the Consultation Report on the Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) of the Government's proposals for the reform of water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland, known as the Water Reform Programme. This also includes the final Equality Impact Assessment and final Regulatory Impact Assessment.

Consultation on the draft IIA took place from 29 November 2004 until 4 March 2005. As part of the IIA process a number of impact assessments were carried out on the policy proposals, drawing upon available quantitative and qualitative evidence. Assessments carried out included Human Rights, Health, Equality, New Targeting Social Need (TSN), Regulatory impacts and Rural Proofing.

The Consultation Report I am publishing today summarises and responds to the comments made on the various IIA impact assessments and on the Water Reform proposals generally.

The Government have listened carefully to what has been said throughout the consultation period and has noted the substantial level of opposition to the proposals, particularly the introduction of domestic water and sewerage charges. However, the Government have heard nothing to suggest there is a realistic alternative to the Water Reform Programme which is needed urgently to:

- improve the delivery, efficiency and quality of service currently provided to the public in ways that would not be possible while Water Service remains in central Government;
- provide a sustained and reliable means of financing future investment in water and sewerage services; and
- release resources for allocation to other public services, up to £300 million by the end of the decade, in addition to the borrowing power in the Reinvestment and Reform Initiative which is currently delivering £200 million of capital investment in Northern Ireland's public services every year.

The Government have not heard a realistic alternative to increasing what people in Northern Ireland pay in local taxes and charges, compared with the position in Great Britain, as a vital step that must be taken if Northern Ireland is to have world class public services. In Great Britain average household contributions (including water bills) are £1,200–£1,300, whereas in Northern Ireland they are £550. The Government therefore remains committed to the introduction of the Water Reform Programme but, in response to the consultation, with revised or new policy in two key areas.

The strongest criticism of the original proposals was that the new domestic charges would be neither fair, nor affordable, particularly for those on low incomes.

The Government understand these criticisms. The introduction of the new charges has been deferred until April 2007, partly to allow more time to ensure change is properly managed. However in view of their impact, the Government still intend to phase the new charges in over a three-year period, with households paying one third of the full charge in 2007–08, two thirds in 2008–09 and the full amount in 2009–10. The changes to the non-domestic charging regime will be introduced on the same basis.

Water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland are not yet of as high a standard as those in England, Scotland and Wales, reflecting the lower levels of investment over many years and lower levels of efficiency. The gap in standards is being closed rapidly in Northern Ireland with new investment of £1.1 billion in the period 2003 to 2008. However, in recognition of the gaps that remain, and the burden that the introduction of the new charges may cause, the Government intend to set the new household charges during the three year period to 2009–10 to achieve the average level of charges that will apply in England and Wales in 2009–10. A detailed charging scheme will be published in late 2006. A first Periodic Price Determination conducted by the new Economic Regulator is planned to be concluded in 2009. This Determination will set tariffs for 2010–11 onwards.

The three year phasing-in period to 2009–10 will provide an opportunity for the Government-owned company (to be known as Northern Ireland Water Limited) to continue the delivery of the ongoing investment programmes that should bring services up to necessary standards both in terms of water quality and wastewater treatment. Progress has also been made in the past three years to improve efficiency levels. However there remains a gap in comparison with performance in England, Scotland and Wales, reflecting the exposure of companies in GB to commercial pressures and their greater freedoms and flexibilities. The three-year transitional period will allow the company time to deliver a demanding efficiency programme to bring down substantially the cost of water and sewerage services in Northern Ireland in line with best practice in Great Britain. This will be a major and testing challenge for the new company and its workforce.

A Strategic Financial Review has been completed to provide advice to Government on issues such as the company's financial structure, efficiency, corporate governance and regulatory arrangements. This Review, together with the Government's conclusions on its recommendations, will be published shortly.

The Government consider that phasing charges in over three years, and setting them at levels equivalent to the average in England and Wales during this transitional period, is fair to the people of Northern Ireland and is also fair to other taxpayers and water charge-payers elsewhere the United Kingdom.

The greatest concern expressed during the consultation was that the new domestic charges would not be affordable and would create hardship amongst those on low incomes. To ease the transition, and in recognition of the relatively high levels of poverty and

disadvantage in Northern Ireland, the Government's broad objective will be to ensure that low income households, particularly pensioner households, should not need to spend more than 3 per cent. of their income on water and sewerage services. To achieve this, a new Affordability Tariff will be available for those households who are eligible. This tariff will be based on income and will be set at a level equivalent to 3 per cent. of the single person's pension credit guarantee as updated by Parliament each year. Additional protection in the form of lower caps will be set for those with properties valued at less than £100,000.

Eligibility for the scheme will be determined through the social security system and not through any new form of separate means testing. All those who are entitled to Housing Benefit, Rate Rebate or the Special Rate Relief scheme currently being developed within the Review of Rating Policy in Northern Ireland will automatically be entitled to the Affordability Tariff. Householders in receipt of Income Support and Pension Credit who would be entitled to these passport benefits (but do not claim them) will be assisted in securing access to low income protection by virtue of their eligibility for Housing Benefit or Rate Rebate. In addition the Government have decided that 16–17 year old householders will have automatic eligibility for low income protection. Children leaving care will also be automatically entitled to low-income protection up to age 21. The cost of the Affordability Tariff scheme will be met from existing Northern Ireland public expenditure rather than other customers and this scheme will be reviewed after three years.

The other area where the Government are announcing new policy is on domestic metering.

The IIA consultation exercise revealed strong views in support of domestic metering but also significant opposition to it. While there are very good environmental reasons for metering, the high cost of metering and the issue of affordability of water charges raise real concerns. Many argued strongly that universal or voluntary metering would penalise large and lower income families.

In recognition of these conflicting views the Government are setting an objective of a managed long-term transition to widespread domestic metering as a means of meeting long-term environmental and sustainability objectives. This recognises that it will take time to introduce widespread metering given the costs associated with the installation of large numbers of meters. It also recognises that the introduction of metering will need to be managed to mitigate adverse social effects. To avoid these, the Affordability Tariff scheme should virtually eliminate any significant adverse impact that domestic metering might have had on low income households. The long-term transition will involve a number of steps.

In the short term, meters will be offered as an option to pensioner households. In practice this will only benefit pensioner households who are not eligible for the Affordability Tariff, with implementation at a rate of 2,000–3,000 households per month. This will further mitigate the negative equality impact on pensioners from the capital value charging regime. Metered charges should be lower than unmeasured charges for most pensioner households whose consumption of water is significantly lower than average households. This will particularly benefit the "asset-rich and income poor". Those opting for meters will be able to revert to an unmeasured charge within 12 months.

Meters will be installed in all new properties and first time connections and billed on that basis as a practical means of reaching the long-term objective of widespread metering—low income protection would be provided on the same basis as for unmeasured customers.

Where a meter is installed in a property, all subsequent occupiers will be subject to metered charges with no option to revert to an unmeasured charge. However, if the new occupants are eligible for low income protection their protection would be provided on the same basis as for unmeasured customers.

The policy would be subject to a review within two years with a view to extending the domestic metering option to further groups from 2009–10 thus making metering more generally available to customers. However any such proposals would need to be subject to equality impact screening.

The Government have taken time to listen carefully to the points made in the consultation. They conclude there is no realistic alternative to introducing domestic water charges and extending the existing non-domestic charging regime. However, the Government have amended their policy and are confident that the balanced package of measures announced today will deliver better water and sewerage services, provide benefits to public services generally in Northern Ireland and do so in a way that is fair, affordable and sustainable.

The publication of the Final IIA, and the announcement of these revised and new policies, closes the consultation on the Water Reform policy proposals. The next step will be to bring forward draft legislation reflecting these proposals. This is planned for spring 2006.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Regional Development Agencies

The Minister for Industry and the Regions (Alun Michael): I have decided to appoint the new Board Members listed at Annex A and to reappoint the RDA Chairs and Board Members, listed at Annex B. Both new appointments and reappointments will be for a period of three years.

The new appointments, with the exception of Vanda Murray (NWDA), and all the reappointments, will begin on 14 December 2005. Vanda Murray will take up her appointment, at the North West Regional Development Agency (NWDA), on 1 April 2006. All the appointments will expire on 13 December 2008. I have placed further details of both the new appointments and reappointments in the Library of both Houses. All of them were made in accordance with the Code of Practice of the Commissioner for Public Appointments.

Annex A: New Appointments

RDA	*Name*
East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA)	Parvin Ali Stan Crawford
North West Regional Development Agency (NWDA)	Vanda Murray
One North East (ONE)	Ian Brown John Shipley
South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA)	Nigel Costley Kelvyn Derrick Jonathon Porritt
Yorkshire Forward (YF)	Kath Pinnock

Annex B: Reappointments

All reappointments commence on 14 December 2005.

RDA	*Name*
Advantage West Midlands (AWM)	Richard Hyde Nick Paul (Chair)
East of England Development Agency (EEDA)	Stephen Castle George Kieffer Bryony Rudkin
East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA)	Neville Jackson Ross Willmott
North West Regional Development Agency (NWDA)	Marie Rimmer Maureen Williams
One North East (ONE)	Kevin Rowan Christine Smith
South East of England Development Agency (SEEDA)	Jim Brathwaite (Chair) Poul Christensen Sarah Hohler Keith House Terry Mills John Peel
South West Regional Development Agency (SWRDA)	Judith Reynolds Harry Studholme Eric Thomas Juliet Williams (Chair)
Yorkshire Forward (YF)	Julie Kenny John Napier

TRANSPORT

Autumn Performance Report

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): I have today published my Department's Autumn Performance Report for 2005. Copies have been laid before Parliament and placed in the House Libraries.

The Report sets out the Department's progress made on our seven Public Service Agreement targets over the last six months since the publication of the Annual Report in June 2005.

Potters Bar Derailment

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): On 23 May 2005, in response to a question from the hon. Member for Hertsmere (Mr. Clappison), the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State informed the House that I expected to be in a position to decide whether to hold a public inquiry into the Potters Bar derailment once the Crown Prosecution Service had decided whether to bring prosecutions. On 17 October 2005, the Crown Prosecution Service announced that they would not be bringing any prosecutions. After careful consideration, I have decided that there should not be a public inquiry into the rail accident at Potters Bar on 10 May 2002 in which seven people died.

Three investigations into the accident have taken place, by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the British Transport Police and the Rail Standards and Safety Board. The HSE interim reports made recommendations in order to avoid a similar accident in the future and I am satisfied that these recommendations have been acted upon. In addition, the coroner intends to hold a full inquest, which will take place as soon as the necessary arrangements can be put in place. I have agreed, if necessary, to fund his costs.

I do not therefore believe, on legal or general policy grounds, that it is necessary or appropriate to hold an inquiry in this case, or that such an inquiry would reveal more information on the cause of the accident than is already available.

The Health and Safety Executive recognise rail safety has improved and, when responsibility for safety enforcement is transferred to the Office of Rail Regulation, they will continue that work. Since the accident Network Rail, the company which replaced Railtrack, has taken steps to improve maintenance and ended the practice of contracting it out to separate companies. Network Rail now takes direct responsibility for maintenance of the rail network.

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 12 December 2005

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Dedicated Drug Court Pilot

The Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (Ms Harriet Harman): My right hon. and noble Friend, the Secretary of State and Lord Chancellor, Lord Falconer of Thoroton, has made the following written ministerial statement in the other place today, 12 December 2005:

"I am pleased to announce the launch of the dedicated drug court pilot. Under this model the same magistrate or district judge who gave a drug treatment order will be responsible for management of the offender during their reviews and to the point of completion. In the event of a breach of the order the same sentencing panel will consider the options available for re-sentence for the original offence committed.

By increasing continuity in the process, from the court and also from local partner agencies, offenders will be encouraged to complete the orders and become rehabilitated members of society.

The project will run for 18 months and will collect data from West London and Leeds Magistrates' Courts. It is hoped that by the end of the trial period there will be sufficient evidence that proves that this model is effective in reducing re-offending. If this model is successful my Department will recommend rollout to appropriate areas."

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Diplomatic Missions

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): From a community of around 23,000 in the United Kingdom entitled to diplomatic immunity, 11 serious offences, allegedly committed by such persons were drawn to the attention of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 2004. "Serious Offences" are defined in accordance with the 1985 White Paper on Diplomatic Immunities and Privileges—that is as offences that would, in certain circumstances, carry a penalty of 12 months or more imprisonment.

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): There were 4,821 outstanding parking and other minor traffic violation fines incurred by Diplomatic Missions and International Organisations in the United Kingdom recorded during the year 1 January 2004 to 31 December 2004. These totalled £425,480.00. In July this year the Foreign and Commonwealth Office wrote to all Diplomatic Missions and International Organisations concerned giving them the opportunity to pay their outstanding fines, or appeal against them if they considered that the fines had been issued incorrectly. As a result payments totalling £63,650.00 were received, leaving a total of 4,135 (£361,830.00) unpaid fines for 2004. The table below details those Diplomatic Missions and International Organisations which have 11 or more undisputed fines unpaid.

Diplomatic Mission/ International Organisation	*Number of fines Outstanding*	*Amount in £*
Kazakhstan	246	23,870.00
Saudi Arabia	243	21,980.00
Egypt	235	22,200.00
Nigeria	180	8,750.00
China	153	13,350.00
Georgia	152	14,560.00
Turkey	140	13,230.00
Germany	128	12,280.00
Russia	124	11,410.00
Libya	105	9,850.00
Kuwait	93	9,070.00
Jordan	91	8,330.00
France	90	8,360.00
Qatar	86	8,030.00
Hungary	77	7,130.00
Greece	76	7,000.00
Angola	76	5,890.00
Sudan	75	6,810.00
Yemen	71	6,400.00
Guinea	70	6,440.00
Afghanistan	67	5,660.00
Algeria	65	6,060.00
Ghana	63	5,070,00
Iran	59	5,400.00
Oman	56	5,400.00
Kenya	49	4,090.00
Pakistan	47	4,240.00
Malaysia	47	4,170.00
Zambia	47	3,530.00
Tanzania	44	3,720.00
Brunei	41	3,860.00
Tunisia	41	3,670.00
Mozambique	41	2,170.00
Bangladesh	40	3,450.00
Kyrgyzstan	36	1,890.00
Senegal	35	2,880.00
Morocco	32	3,040.00
Thailand	31	2,960.00
Poland	30	2,280.00
Latvia	28	2,500.00
Cyprus	28	2,010.00
Sierra Leone	27	2,120.00
Zimbabwe	27	1,510.00
Cote d'Ivoire	25	2,160.00
European Bank	24	1,900.00
Syria	23	2,160.00
Lithuania	22	2,200.00
Bulgaria	22	2,090.00
Jamaica	22	2,030.00
IMO	22	1,790.00
Ukraine	21	1,950.00
Spain	21	1,910.00
DPR Korea	20	1,000.00
Rep of Korea	19	1,750.00
Romania	18	1,740.00
Vietnam	18	1,610.00
Uzbekistan	17	1,570.00
Cuba	16	1,140.00
Barbados	15	990.00
Malawi	15	900.00
Azerbaijan	14	1,350.00
Ethiopia	14	1,200.00
Italy	13	1,250.00
Panama	12	1,000.00
Mongolia	12	990.00

Diplomatic Mission/ International Organisation	Number of fines Outstanding	Amount in £
Cameroon	11	990.00
Albania	11	990.00
Uganda	11	910.00
Total	3,930	344,190.00

London Congestion Charge

The number of outstanding fines incurred by Diplomatic Missions in the United Kingdom for non-payment of the London Congestion Charge since its introduction in February 2003 until 10 November 2005 was 32,761. The table below shows the 10 Diplomatic Missions with the highest number of outstanding fines.

Mission	Number of Fines outstanding	Value £
1–United Arab Emirates	4,859	452,650.00
2–Angola	4,218	392,750.00
3–Sudan	2,924	274,870.00
4–Nigeria	1,533	140,620.00
5–Tanzania	1,477	136,280.00
6–Sierra Leone	1,441	135,290.00
7–South Africa	1,321	122,590.00
8–Kenya	1,067	96,010.00
9–Zimbabwe	1,031	96,390.00
10–USA	933	62,250.00
Total	20,804	1,909,700.00

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): The majority of diplomatic missions in the United Kingdom pay the National Non-Domestic Rates requested from them. They are obliged to pay only 6 per cent. of the total National Non-Domestic Rates value which represents payment for specific services such as street cleaning, lighting, maintenance and fire services. The total amount outstanding from all diplomatic missions is approximately £880,000.00. However, as at 1 July 2005 missions listed below owed over £10,000 in respect of NNDR. Ten additional diplomatic missions, who owe £10,000 or more in respect of National Non-Domestic Rates, have made arrangements with the Valuation Office Agency to clear their outstanding debts and have not been included in this list.

Country	Amount
China (Embassy)	£62,320.96
Algeria	£59,058.33
Zimbabwe	£54,605.88
Cameroon	£38,126.01
Mozambique	£36,970.23
Bangladesh	£31,703.18
Uganda	£28,083.07
Malawi	£27,843.99
Senegal	£23,781.95
Yemen Republic	17,618.15
Ghana	£13,115.76
Korea South (Embassy)	12,799.99
Bulgaria	£11,330.70
Tunisia	£10,845.06
Bolivia	£10,207.13
Total	£438,410.39

General Affairs and External Relations Council

The Minister for Europe (Mr. Douglas Alexander): The General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) will be held on 12 December in Brussels. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and I will represent the UK.

The agenda items are as follows:

Annual Operating Programme 2006

The incoming Austrian presidency and future Finnish presidency will present their 2006 Operating Programme.

Financial Perspectives 2007–13

We expect the Council to focus on the outstanding areas where further progress is needed following the 7 December Conclave, with the aim of providing a useful basis for working towards a deal at the European Council on 15–16 December.

Preparation for the December European Council

The presidency will update the Council on preparation for the December European Council and discuss the outstanding issues in relation to the European Council Conclusions. The Council will also discuss the Commission and Council Papers setting out priority actions for improving migration management with a focus on Africa, which were mandated by the Hampton Court Summit.

WTO

We expect the Commission to update the Council on the latest state of play in the WTO negotiations.

Western Balkans

The Council is expected to have a further discussion on the EU's role in Kosovo, confirm EU agreement on a candidate to succeed Lord Ashdown as EU Special Representative in Bosnia, and discuss the Commission's opinion on Macedonia's EU membership application.

Enlargement

The Council is expected to note the Commission's latest enlargement package, including the overarching strategy paper and country reports on all the enlargement and Western Balkan countries (including Bulgaria and Romania). The Council will also look to agree new Accession Partnerships for Turkey and Croatia and new European Partnerships for the other Western Balkan countries.

European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)

External Relations Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner will update the Council on achievements during the first year of implementation of European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) Action Plans and highlight the critical priorities for implementation in 2006, both for the EU and the EU's partners.

EU/Africa

We expect the Council to discuss and agree the EU-Africa Strategy, which will then be adopted at the December European Council. This will be the first substantive discussion of the Strategy by Foreign Ministers. Development Ministers have already discussed the Commission's Africa Communication.

Ethiopia/Eritrea

Following a request from Dutch Foreign Minister Ben Bot, the Council will discuss the situation on the Ethiopian/Eritrean border, particularly how the EU might work with the UN to help resolve the dispute.

Parliamentary Questions

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): During Foreign and Commonwealth Office Oral Questions on Tuesday 29 November, in response to a supplementary question from the hon. Member for New Forest, West (Mr. Swayne), I said

> "the United Kingdom has historically been paid significantly more than France over many years, notwithstanding the abatement that was secured in 1984", *Official Report*, 29 November 2005, volume 440, column 115.

I should have said that "the United Kingdom has historically paid" rather than "been paid". I apologise to the hon. Member and to the House for this inadvertent error.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Control Order Powers

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): Section 14(1) of the Prevention of Terrorism Act 2005 (the 2005 Act) requires me to report to Parliament as soon as reasonably practicable after the end of every relevant three-month period on my exercise of the control order powers during that period.

The 2005 Act came into force on 11 March 2005. During the 3rd period (11 September to 10 December) I made four orders on 23 November 2005 and one order on 8 December 2005, all five were made with the permission of the court under section 3(1)*(a)* of the 2005 Act.

There are eight control orders currently in force.

During the period I have refused two requests to modify control order obligations. A right of appeal exists in section 10 of the 2005 Act against a decision by the Secretary of State not to modify an obligation contained in a control order. This has not been exercised in respect of these refusals.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Gleneagles Implementation Plan for Africa

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): The Government are committed to ensuring that the pledges on Africa and development made at the G8 summit at Gleneagles in July are implemented, and progress has already been made. At the international level, implementation will be monitored by the Africa Partnership Forum, as well as by the G8 group of countries and the EU. The Gleneagles Implementation Plan for Africa—a copy of which I am placing in both Libraries—sets out the Government's views on the key milestone which need to be achieved on Africa and development in the twelve months following the Gleneagles summit. I am pleased that some of these have already been achieved, and the Government are working with their partners in developed and developing countries to ensure that the remainder are achieved as quickly as possible. This Plan will be updated monthly as further progress is made.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Pension Credit (Quarterly Report)

The Minister for Pensions Reform (Mr. Stephen Timms): I have today placed in the Library the latest quarterly progress report on Pension Credit, with figures to the end of September. The report gives the number of households and individuals receiving Pension Credit overall, broken down by the Guarantee Credit and Savings Credit and by Government Office Region and parliamentary constituency.

The total number of households receiving Pension Credit at 30 September 2005 was 2.71 million, or around 3.30 million individuals. The average weekly award is now £43.54.

The figures show that there were just under 2.1 million households, or 2.48 million individuals, getting Pension Credit Guarantee awards as at 30 September.

In future, Pension Credit caseload figures will be incorporated within the National Statistics reporting framework. The multi-benefit release of National Statistics in January 2006, including detailed Pension Credit figures for August 2005, will also include provisional headline Pension Credit statistics for November 2005.

Copies of the report are also available for hon. Members in the Vote Office.

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 13 December 2005

TREASURY

Economic and Financial Affairs Council

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Gordon Brown): On 6 December I chaired the Economic and Financial Affairs Council (ECOFIN) in Brussels. My right hon. Friend the Paymaster General represented the UK.

For the first time the Council agreed conclusions setting out the reforms necessary for Europe to respond successfully to the opportunities and challenges of globalisation. The Council also agreed conclusions on the implementation of the first Lisbon national reform programmes.

The Council discussed the joint UK, Austrian and Finnish presidencies paper "Advancing Better Regulation in Europe".

The Council agreed to refer proposals to reform reduced rates of value added tax to the European Council on 15 and 16 December.

The Council heard a report from the Chair of the Code of Conduct Group, the Paymaster General, right hon. Dawn Primarolo MP.

The Council took note of a presentation by Commissioner McCreevy on the Commission's White Paper on EU financial services policy 2005–10.

As part of its work in combating terrorist financing, the Council agreed a general approach, pending the European's Parliament opinion in first reading, on a draft regulation addressing payer information accompanying transfer of funds; and took note of progress in implementing the EU's action plan on combating terrorism.

The Council discussed oil and related energy market issues.

DEFENCE

Iraq

The Secretary of State for Defence (John Reid): The United Kingdom keeps under constant review, in consultation with coalition partners, the troop numbers required to assist the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) in Multi-National Division South-East.

We continue to work with the ISF, with training, mentoring and an equipment and infrastructure programme towards the conditions for formal transfer of security responsibilities. Until those conditions are achieved, it is important that we retain the operational flexibility to respond to any change in the security environment, and ensure that this important programme with the ISF is not disrupted.

To ensure that this remains the case, the General Officer Commanding (SE) needs to retain forces to provide security along our principal lines of communication. At present the 1st Battalion, The Royal Irish Regiment provides the capability, and they will be replaced in January 2006 with the 1st Battalion, The Royal Scots Regiment (IRS).

Vaccines (PowderJect)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Don Touhig): There have been no reports that any vaccines provided by PowderJect to the Ministry of Defence have been substandard.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Children's Services and Skills

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Ruth Kelly): In July 2005 I launched a consultation on the creation of a single inspectorate for children and learners. I am today publishing my conclusions in the light of the responses. I am grateful to everyone who responded to the consultation and I have taken careful consideration of the points made, developing my proposals significantly in the light of those comments.

I intend to proceed, as proposed in the consultation, to establish an enlarged Ofsted. This will be achieved by bringing together in Ofsted the children's social care remit of the Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI), the Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) inspection remit of Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Court Administration (HMICA) and the inspection remit of the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI). The enlarged organisation will have the formal title of the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills.

ALI, CSCI and HMICA have played vital roles in driving up standards in their respective sectors. But I am convinced of the benefits to users and providers of services of an inspectorate that can look across a wide range of services as they affect children, young people, families and adult learners.

The enlarged Ofsted will be able to follow learning from early years through to adult and work-based settings. It will support the needs of employers and business whilst at the same time sustaining focused, high-quality inspections of standards in our schools and, building on existing activity, across wider services for children, including social care for vulnerable children and young people.

The changes also reflect the drive to integrate services around improving outcomes for the user, for example through the integration of local services for children as set out in the Green Paper, "Every Child Matters" and the bringing together of academic and vocational learning outlined in the 14–19 White Paper. It is part of the wider reform of public service inspection to focus on needs of users, generate improvement in the services inspected, and help deliver better value for money.

Inspection and regulation have been powerful levers for improvement in services for children and learners in recent years. As we move into the next stage of inspection reform it will be essential to build on the strengths of current arrangements and the expertise of existing inspectorates, but also to reflect current and planned changes in the pattern of services, new arrangements for performance management and accountability and our increasing knowledge about what makes for effective inspection and regulation.

The Government will continue to work closely with inspectorates and others to ensure an effective transfer of inspection remits.

School Admissions

The Minister for Schools (Jacqui Smith): I have today placed copies of the summary of the responses received to the consultation on the school admissions and school admission appeals codes of practice, and supporting regulations, in the Libraries of both Houses.

We consulted on the codes of practice with the intention of having new codes in place from January 2006 for effect from September 2007 admissions onward. The consultation ran from 26 July to 18 October 2005. There has been a wide range of views and some points on which we wish to reflect further, particularly on the respective roles of local authorities, schools, admission forums and the schools adjudicators. Therefore, we have decided not to lay the revised codes at this time. The existing codes of practice will remain in force. We will, however, take forward the regulations on subjects approved for new aptitude selection and giving priority to looked after children in admission arrangements. We remain fully committed to a system of fair admissions for all children.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Environment Council

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): I attended and chaired the second Environment Council under the UK Presidency in Brussels on 2 December. I was accompanied by the Minister for Climate Change and the Environment, Elliot Morley, in the UK seat.

Council adopted conclusions on the Climate Change Impact of Aviation, by consensus. The Conclusions support the aim of including aviation emissions in the EU Emissions Trading Scheme (ETS) and request that the Commission bring forward a legislative proposal before the end of 2006. The Conclusions also state that a comprehensive and consistent approach to tackling climate change is needed and that existing policies and actions should continue and be strengthened. This outcome is a major achievement and one of our key Presidency priorities on climate change. All Member States were ultimately able to agree on the conclusions, after various textual amendments were made to address specific points made by delegations, particularly in relation to the impact of the inclusion of aviation on industries already covered by the EU ETS and on islands and remote regions within the EU.

The Council reached partial political agreement on the Regulation on the Financial Instrument for the Environment (LIFE+), covering all aspects of the dossier except those relating directly to the overall budget, which are dependent on the wider future financing negotiations. The UK Presidency had done a great deal of preparatory work on this dossier at working level, in order to balance the needs of different Member States and to protect funding for biodiversity protection. The main issue outstanding at Council was the apportionment of funding between Member States, and between Member States and the Commission. After a lengthy discussion and a number of further changes to the Presidency's proposed text, the proportion of the budget to be delegated to Member States was increased from 75 per cent. to 80 per cent. to which the Commission agreed, subject to the ultimate size of the budget. The final stages of the negotiation concerned the weighting to be given to population density within the allocation formula, and in particular how to integrate Malta without unduly distorting the calculations. The Netherlands and Belgium were unable to support the partial political agreement following inclusion of this final adjustment, but with all other Member States and the Commission in support the Council was able to adopt the partial political agreement by QMV.

Council also adopted Conclusions in preparation for the International Conference on Chemicals Management to be held in Dubai in February 2006, and scheduled to adopt the Strategic Approach to International Chemicals Management (SAICM). The Conclusions confirm the EU's unanimous support for SAICM.

The Commission proposal to approve the placing on the market of a genetically modified maize product, MON 863 x MON 810 was unable to attract a qualified majority either for or against the proposal, and under the agreed procedure for such approvals now returns to the Commission for a final decision.

There was also an initial Council discussion on next steps on GMOs. A number of delegations were critical of the regulatory process in which the Commission, in the absence of a qualified majority in Council either for or against approval, is subsequently required to authorise GMO products for placing on the market. The Danes, supported by other delegations, called for a further debate which recognising the potential advantages of GMOs for the developing world. The Netherlands indicated that it was satisfied with the existing regulatory system.

Council also held the first debate on the Thematic Strategy on Air Pollution and the associated proposal for a new Directive on Ambient Air Quality, which made a valuable contribution to the UK Presidency Better Regulation priority. The Thematic Strategy was broadly welcomed by most Member States. A large majority called for detailed examination of the legislation under consideration by the Commission to deal with source-related pollution at Community level. This included a requirement for Impact Assessments to be carried out on all new proposals and for cost-benefit considerations to be taken into account during negotiations on any new legislation. The Netherlands, Germany and Belgium called for the quick adoption of the Euro 5 and NECD legislation. A number of Member

States, including Cyprus and Spain, stressed that the varying geographical factors across the EU had a significant effect on compliance and this should be reflected in the proposed text. There was wide support for the flexibility of the Ambient Air Quality Directive and some discussion of future standards for fine particles, in particular support for these to be non-binding.

At lunch, I updated delegations on progress on REACH, and raised the importance of Ministers going to the Montreal Conference of the Parties to the UN Climate Change Convention with sufficient pledges to support the Kyoto mechanisms. Ministers also discussed the forthcoming meetings of the UNEP Governing Council and the Commission on Sustainable Development. We heard a presentation from Professor Jacqueline McGlade of the European Environment Agency on its recently published State and Outlook for the Environment Report 2005. The general reaction was that the report was very useful and demonstrated the benefits of action at EU level in delivering better environmental performance.

AOB items included information from the Commission on its plans to publish its long-awaited Biodiversity Strategy and from the Presidency on the Nanotechnology Action Plan and on Green Public Procurement. Sweden called for urgent action on the Baltic marine environment, following an informal Ministerial Meeting on 23 November. Belgium raised the subject of the importation of wild birds into the EU and urged the Council to agree to discuss and adopt tough restrictions, were supported by Hungary, Portugal, Germany, Spain and Poland. The Commission agreed to a Presidency request to undertake an option study on the issues involved. Finally, the Dutch made a statement about progress on their Clean, Clever and Competitive initiative.

In conclusion I thanked the Ministers present, the Commission and the Council Secretariat for their constructive approach and support, noting the substantial successes on the environment achieved during the UK Presidency. I passed the traditional green baton to my successor as President for the first half of 2006, the Austrian Minister Josef Proll.

Climate Change

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): The eleventh conference of the parties to the UN framework convention on climate change (COP11) and the first Meeting of the parties to the Kyoto protocol (MOP1) took place in Montreal from 28 November to 9 December. Margaret Beckett, UK Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, led the European Union delegation.

The agreement reached by all countries participating in the conference represent a important step forward in the global effort to tackle climate change. Despite the deep divisions of recent years, the whole global community including the United States, India and China have agreed to work together through the United Nations process to examine the way forward.

The conference agreed:

to implement the Kyoto protocol, by adopt a draft rulebook detailing the operation of the protocol (the Marrakech Accords) and a compliance mechanism for the protocol;

to improve the protocol by providing additional support and improvement to the Clean Development Mechanism;

to establish the Five-Year Adaptation Work Programme, following last year's agreement in Buenos Aires;

to launch processes for fixing new targets for greenhouse gas emissions reductions beyond 2012 (when the first commitment period under the Kyoto protocol ends), and for reviewing the functioning of the UN climate change system.

There will be two tracks to the discussions on global action post-2012:

developed country Kyoto signatories will consider further targets beyond 2012, when the first commitment period under the Kyoto protocol ends; and

all countries under the UNFCCC (including Kyoto parties plus non-signatories including the US and Australia) have agreed to begin talks on the longer term future, analysing strategic approaches for long-term cooperative action. This includes advancing development goals in a sustainable way, addressing action on adaptation, realising the full potential of technology, and making full use of the market.

The UK's leadership on climate change has played an important role in enabling this agreement, through our action at home and abroad, in particular in 2005. The Prime Minister's decision to make climate change a top priority for the UK's presidencies of the Group of Eight (G8) industrialised nations in 2005 and the European Union from 1 July to 31 December 2005 is recognised by all parties as an important factor that has injected fresh momentum into the international debate. The entry into force of the Kyoto protocol this year was another important boost to global discussion on climate change.

The outcome of the G8 Summit at Gleneagles in July, attended also by leaders from China, India and other large developing countries, was a milestone. Key world leaders agreed for the first time that climate change was exacerbated by man's emission of greenhouse gases and required a rapid response. The G8 agreed to a new G8+ Dialogue on climate change, clean energy and sustainable development to create a political space outside the formal negotiating process and to complement and reinforce the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) process.

By implementing a series of innovative policy measures at home, the UK is one of the few countries on track to meet its Kyoto target, a reduction in emissions of a basket of greenhouse gases of 12.5 per cent. from 1990 levels by 2012. And the UK has shown international leadership by setting an even more challenging domestic goal to reduce emissions by 20 per cent., to which we remain committed and are addressing through the climate change programme review.

The UK recognises that the agreement reached at Montreal is only the beginning of a further round of global discussion. We remain committed to achieving the stabilisation of GHGs in the atmosphere in line with the goal of the UN Climate Change Convention.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Indian Ocean Tsunami

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): I should like to make a written statement on the commemorative events planned for the anniversary of the Tsunami in the Indian Ocean. This follows my previous statements to the House on 22 March and 28 June 2005.

I wish to express again my deepest sympathies and condolences and those of the entire Government to the family and friends of all the British nationals who lost their lives in the Tsunami and to all the British nationals who suffered trauma or injury. This feeling, I am sure, is shared by every member of the House. And we remember too the millions of people from the region who lost loved ones or whose lives have been shattered by the Tsunami. The anniversary on 26 December will be a very painful time for all those affected by the disaster; our thoughts and prayers will be with them.

British victims of the Tsunami

We have now confirmed that a total of 149 British nationals died as a result of the Tsunami; 129 in Thailand, 17 in Sri Lanka and three in the Maldives. The bodies of 143 of these people have been identified. The bodies of the remaining six have not yet been identified. There is one British national whose death has not been confirmed and who is still listed as a category one missing person—that is highly likely to have been caught up in the Tsunami.

Anniversary arrangements

On the morning of 26 December, the Royal Thai Government is arranging events in six separate locations where the greatest loss of life occurred. One memorial event will be held on Phi Phi Island; two in the Khao Lak area; and three in the Phuket area. A memorial foundation stone laying ceremony will take place in Khao Lak on the afternoon of 26 December, followed in the evening by an inter-faith service. Both of these events will be attended by the Prime Minister of Thailand. My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs with responsibility for consular affairs, Lord Triesman, will represent the Government at the anniversary events.

We expect that around 130 British nationals will travel to Thailand for the anniversary. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's priority will be to provide support for families of the British victims during this very difficult time. As part of the special package of assistance which I agreed for victims of the Tsunami, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will cover the travel and accommodation costs of a number of British nationals travelling to Thailand to mark this anniversary. Some of those families who have already taken advantage of this package of assistance and some of those injured will have their travel and accommodation provided for by the Royal Thai Government. A few families have chosen to travel independently, and will make their own arrangements.

The families of all British victims will be met at Bangkok airport and at Phuket airport and given assistance with travel to official commemorative events on 26 December. If they wish, officials from the Government and the British Red Cross will accompany them during their visit. My noble Friend, Lord Triesman, with the British Ambassador David Fall, will attend a religious service and host a reception in Phuket on 24 December for the families and for survivors.

In Sri Lanka, many communities and religious groups along the coast will hold events to mark the anniversary of the Tsunami. The Sri Lankan authorities are not planning to hold a large-scale commemoration ceremony but they are organising an inter-faith service on the evening of 26 December in the town of Bentota, on the south-west coast. We expect that 15 British nationals will travel out to Sri Lanka for the anniversary. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office will cover the accommodation and travel costs of some of those going out through the special package of assistance. Others are travelling independently. The Sri Lanka Government will also mark the anniversary with a remembrance service held on the morning of 26 December at their High Commission in London.

The Maldives Government are not planning to commemorate the anniversary as the whole of this year has been declared a year of national unity to mark the Tsunami. We are not expecting any British nationals to travel there for the anniversary itself.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (Tessa Jowell), has recently visited India, Thailand and Sri Lanka to thank all the staff and volunteers for their work in the aftermath of the Tsunami. In Thailand she discussed arrangements for the forthcoming anniversary commemoration with the Thai Government.

The Government deeply appreciate the tremendous support and kindness shown by the governments and the peoples of all the countries in which British people were killed. At a time when they were each overwhelmed by their own national tragedies, they have shown enormous compassion and generosity to the nationals of other countries.

Ongoing Government response

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office continues to provide support and assistance to British nationals affected by the Tsunami. The United Kingdom has a dedicated consular team in Phuket for this purpose. We have also encouraged the British Red Cross to use some of the money which was donated by the public for Tsunami relief to assist British families who are suffering financial hardship. The Fund will primarily be available to UK residents, and grants will be made available to individuals who have been seriously affected by the Tsunami whether through bereavement, injury or trauma. Funds are also available for those otherwise unable to afford travel to events such as the formal inquest in West London. Payments from the Fund will normally be single grants of up to £10,000 per individual in respect of financial hardship and up to £2,000 for those requiring private psychological treatment.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has taken over the running of the Red Cross Helpline which had been funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. This helpline offers support and telephone counselling to all victims of the Tsunami and provides advice on, for example, how victims can get long-term

psychological help or on how to access the benefits system. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is also funding the Red Cross Tsunami Support Network which was set up by the Red Cross and was also initially funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Police Family Liaison Officers got back in touch with all the families of the victims in the run up to the formal inquest into the majority of the British deaths last week. Three British police officers are still seconded to the international disaster victim identification team in Thailand and are expected to remain there until the end of February.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is continuing to improve its crisis management procedures in the light of the recently published joint report by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the National Audit Office on lessons learned from our response to the Tsunami. The report concludes that Foreign and Commonwealth Office staff in the region and in London "coped tremendously well under severe pressure" and that they had "worked extremely long hours and made great personal sacrifices". But the unprecedented scale of the Tsunami meant that some people did not get the level of support which we would have wanted to give them. Where that happened, I have apologised to the families affected and we have listened to their suggestions for how we could have done better.

The joint report includes detailed recommendations on how the Foreign and Commonwealth Office can further improve its emergency response. We have accepted those recommendations in full; we have already implemented some and others are in hand. So, for example, although we had put in place new arrangements with the police for handling calls in the wake of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001, the police call centre could not cope with the volume of traffic generated by the Tsunami—at times more than 10,000 calls an hour. We are now part of new police call handling arrangements which route emergency calls across their national network; and we are looking at a way to register missing people on-line, taking some of the load off people staffing the telephones.

I was and remain determined to learn lessons so that our consular crisis management, an area in which the National Audit Office recognised the Foreign and Commonwealth Office as "world leaders", is the very best it can be.

Support for countries affected by the Tsunami

The Government have allocated the equivalent of around £275 million to disaster relief and reconstruction in the Tsunami affected countries including the Indonesian province of Aceh which took the brunt of the Tsunami. This can be broken down into: £75 million of bilateral funds allocated to the humanitarian relief effort; £65 million of bilateral funds to the longer-term reconstruction phase; £50 million through tax relief on public donations made through the Gift Aid Scheme; £40 million contributed through the European Union; and £45 million by adding Sri Lanka to the list of countries eligible for the United Kingdom's new multilateral debt relief initiative.

TRANSPORT

Greater Western and Thameslink Rail Franchises

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): I am announcing today that First Group has been awarded contracts to run the Greater Western and Thameslink/GN (Great Northern) franchises. Both contracts will commence on 1 April next year.

The contracts have been awarded following a rigorous, competitive and independent bidding process. Both are tough and will deliver value for money for the taxpayer and an improved service for passengers.

The contract my Department has signed for the Greater Western franchise commits First Group to operate the services from London to the South West and South Wales.

Many of the concerns raised following my Department's consultation on the Invitation to Tender on the Franchise have been addressed. In particular it commits First Group to retain the overnight sleeper between London and Penzance and retains the half hourly off peak service between London and Cardiff.

In excess of £200 million of private sector investment will be made within the early years of the franchise. This will contribute towards a complete re-design of the high speed fleet. Together with the new timetable this will increase the number of standard class seats on trains between London and Reading in the morning and evening peak periods by more than 20 per cent. and 30 per cent. respectively.

It will also fund a programme of station enhancements, including better customer information systems, passenger security measures including CCTV and 1,700 new car parking spaces. Additional revenue protection staff and community support officers will also be provided.

The contract is for 10 years, with the final three years dependent on achieving tough service performance targets.

On the Thameslink/GN franchise First Group has been contracted to run services from Brighton, through London and on to Bedford, and from London to Cambridge and Peterborough.

The timing and capacity of services to Bedford will be improved. Over £40 million of private sector investment will be made in the first three years. This will help improve the reliability and quality of the rolling stock, enhance stations and provide 600 additional car parking spaces.

The franchise is for up to nine years. At the end of the fourth year the franchise will automatically continue for two years if performance improvement targets are met. Subject to my Department's agreement the franchise can then continue for up to three further years. This flexibility is necessary to facilitate work on the Thameslink 2000 Programme which was subject to a public inquiry under the Transport and Works Act.

On both franchises First Group expects to deliver continuous improvement in service performance. In addition, it is contracted to provide premiums of

£1,131 million for the Greater Western Franchise and £808 million for the Thameslink/GN franchise. This is funding that will be put to good use and reinvested back into the railways to help ensure rail services continue to improve.

Cross London Rail Links Ltd.

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): I am today making an additional £100 million available for the further development of Crossrail. This money will be used by Cross London Rail Links (CLRL)—the company held jointly by the Department and TfL to assist them with promotion of the Crossrail Bill—to provide proper support to the project as we take the Crossrail hybrid Bill through Parliament over this period. It will also allow CLRL, working with the Department and TfL, to do necessary research and planning before the Crossrail scheme can enter its next phase of development.

The case for Crossrail is clear and the Government have long said that they are committed to the scheme. This is a further sign of that commitment. This is a complex long-term project but important features are being determined at this stage. Money spent properly now will see its reward later in a better planned, better designed and therefore better value for money final scheme. But that does not mean that resource is unlimited. The grants I am announcing today will allow CLRL to make a start on a detailed programme of work for the development of Crossrail. My Department will continue to monitor expenditure on the project, so as to ensure best value as the Bill continues through Parliament.

These grants will be paid to CLRL by my Department under section 6 of the Railways Act 2005.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Employment and Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. James Plaskitt): The Employment and Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council was held on 8 and 9 December in Brussels. Employment and social policy issues were taken on 8 December. Health and Consumer Affairs were taken on the 9 December. The Council was chaired by my right hon. Friend Secretary of State for Work and Pensions apart from the agenda item on the working time directive which was chaired by my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry. I represented the UK seat apart from the working time directive agenda item when my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry took that role.

The first item was a presidency report from the informal meeting of Heads of State and Government, Hampton Court, 27 October. The presidency recalled that Hampton Court, in endorsing the Commission's paper on "European Values in the Globalised World", had agreed a coherent framework for future thinking on social justice, globalisation and demography. The Employment and Social Policy Council would take the lead on following up work on demographic change.

A policy debate on "Demography and Human Capital" revealed a high degree of consensus on the broad approach. Discussions covered labour market participation, the need to extend working lives, reconciling work and family life, increasing momentum towards gender equality in access to employment, regulated immigration mitigating effects of demographic change and free movement within the EU being achieved before third country immigration. The Commission agreed that all the areas identified by Member States were important, and must be coordinated into a coherent overall strategy. The presidency concluded that Council would return to this issue during discussions on the joint implementation report in the new year.

The Chairman of the Employment Committee (EMCO) outlined the key conclusions from the Examination of national reform programmes. These are the annual reports on each member state's progress towards achieving the Lisbon goals which outline their focused policy objectives. The Council noted EMCO's report, and the presidency concluded that EMCO's findings would be useful to the Commission in its preparation of the joint implementation report, and in preparations for the spring Council.

Council reached agreement on two dossiers: a partial political agreement on a decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity—(PROGRESS) which involved agreement on all parts of the programme without budgetary implications; and, political agreement on a common position on the gender recast directive which aims to simplify, modernise and improve existing EU law on equal treatment between men and women. The presidency advised that the European Parliament had confirmed its undertaking not to adopt any amendments in second reading if the Council adopted the common position on the basis of the text negotiated in the informal discussions.

The Commissioner introduced the proposed directive on portability of occupational pensions, which seeks to facilitate the acquisition, transfer and protection of occupational pension rights, with the aim of reducing barriers to worker mobility. The presidency gave some feedback from exchanges in Council working groups: a number of issues would need to be addressed before the dossier was ready to be discussed at ministerial level.

There was a lengthy debate on the directive of the European Parliament and of the Council amending Directive 2003/88/EC concerning certain aspects of the organisation of working time; the presidency prepared revised texts for discussion and the Council almost reached agreement on a package which retained the opt out and solved the doctors' on call issue. However, despite intense negotiation, concerns about clarifying that the limits in the directive applying per worker rather

than per job/contract meant this agreement could not finally be reached. The presidency agreed to reflect on the best way forward.

Under "Any Other Business", the Council noted reports from the presidency on the 10-year anniversary of the Beijing Platform for Action—which reviews annually gender equality issues, and presidency conferences on health and safety, corporate social responsibility, and social inclusion. Council also noted a report from Luxembourg on the four European meeting of persons in a situation of poverty, and two information items from the Commission, on the biennial report on disability, and on a memorandum of understanding between the Commission and China on employment and social affairs.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Crown Prosecution Service: Overall Performance Assessment

The Solicitor-General (Mr. Mike O'Brien): HMCPS Inspectorate has today published the outcome of phases 1 to 5 of their programme of "Overall Performance Assessments of CPS Areas". Reports have been published covering 22 of the 42 CPS Areas. Of the 22 Areas, 2 were rated as excellent, 10 as good, 7 as fair and 3 as being poor.

Copies of the reports relating to the area which serves their constituency have been sent to relevant Members of Parliament and are also being placed in the Library.

Written Ministerial Statements

Wednesday 14 December 2005

CABINET OFFICE

Better Regulation Bill (Consultation Responses)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Jim Murphy): A copy of the summary of the public consultation on proposals for a Better Regulation Bill is today being placed in the House Library and on the website of the Cabinet Office Better Regulation Executive at:

http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/regulation/

The publication of the summary of consultation responses follows a three-month consultation exercise, which ran from 20 July to 12 October 2005.

The proposed Bill will replace the Regulatory Reform Act 2001, so that it is easier to remove or amend outdated and unnecessary legislation. It also requires regulators to have regard to a set of regulatory principles which will be contained in and made under the proposed Bill.

This document also includes the Government's responses to issues raised during the consultation process.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Co-ordinated Online Record of Electors

The Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (Ms Harriet Harman): My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and Lord Chancellor, Lord Falconer of Thoroton, has made the following written ministerial statement in the other place today, 14 December 2005:

> "Today, I am pleased to announce to the House the launch of a consultation on detailed issues and proposals for the implementation of arrangements providing national access to locally collected and maintained electoral registration data.
>
> Part one of the Electoral Administration Bill currently before Parliament makes provision for the establishment of one or more Co-ordinated Online Record of Elector (CORE) schemes. It will allow—at national level—access to electoral registration data that will continue to be locally gathered and maintained. The scheme would be established by a secondary legislation order, a draft of which would first need to be actively approved by both Houses of Parliament. The paper seeks views on what the CORE scheme order should contain. Stakeholders will have until 7 March 2006 to respond.
>
> Copies of the consultation document are available in the Libraries of both Houses and will also be made available on the website of the Department of Constitutional Affairs."

Boundary for Wales Commission Report

The Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (Ms Harriet Harman): I have today laid the Report of the Parliamentary Boundary Commission for Wales, and associated Draft Order, before Parliament. The Report, and associated Draft Order, will affect Welsh Parliamentary Constituencies and National Assembly for Wales Electoral Regions.

DEFENCE

Autumn Performance Report

The Secretary of State for Defence (John Reid): I have today placed in the Library of the House copies of the Ministry of Defence's "Autumn Performance Report". This shows that Defence has continued to deliver on its primary objectives in the last six months. The armed forces, supported by their civilian colleagues, have consistently succeeded on military operations, including providing support to a number of home departments, and have made a significant contribution towards the Government's wider conflict prevention goals. At the same time we have continued to improve the level of military readiness and deliver the changes and efficiencies needed to make the most of the resources available for defence. In particular, a major programme of work is currently in hand across defence, the Government and industry to improve the way in which we acquire and support equipment.

Future Aircraft Carrier (CVF)

The Secretary of State for Defence (John Reid): The Ministry of Defence has today taken a major step forward in its plans to acquire two new Future Aircraft Carriers (CVF) for the Royal Navy. These carriers will provide mobile, flexible, independent bases from which to deploy the Joint Combat Aircraft (JCA) and other capabilities. They will provide a step change in capability—enabling us to deliver significant strategic effect and influence around the world at the time and place of our choosing.

I am pleased to announce agreement on an innovative shipbuild strategy for these vessels, bringing together a number of shipyards in a type of partnering arrangement that will be central to the forthcoming Defence Industrial Strategy.

Key to this ground-breaking approach will be the innovative Aircraft Carrier Alliance: a single integrated team formed from MOD and industry. I am pleased to announce that today also marks a major stage in the development of the Alliance with the shipyards VT and Babcock now joining BAE Systems, KBR, Thales UK and MOD as full members. To mark the commitment to the Alliance approach, these five companies and MOD have signed an Alliance Charter committing to this arrangement. The Alliance has also agreed the best allocation of roles and responsibilities between them to achieve overall success for the project. In doing so all the Alliance members will share in the risks and rewards of delivering this challenging project to time and cost.

Having completed detailed assessment work, we have now decided to commit to the Demonstration phase, amounting to some £300 million of further work: an essential step before we commit to and contract for manufacture of these two ships. This is the first of a two-stage incremental approach to "Main Gate". The second stage of the "Main Gate" approval will set the time, cost and performance envelope for the manufacture phase. Shifting the point at which we make

the main investment decision has no effect on the "In Service Date". We are undertaking work now that we had originally intended to undertake during the demonstration phase after full commitment to manufacture.

We will now refine the detail of the adaptable CVF Delta design for these new carriers, including the ship systems, ahead of rather than after the signature of manufacture contracts. By this innovative approach we will ensure the commitment of the maritime industry to supporting this vital project. This further approval also includes commitment to long lead materials, where this is necessary to maintain the momentum of the build programme.

In addition, we are now able to maintain momentum and give the industry a greater degree of planning stability. I can announce that subject to satisfactory contract and demonstration of value for money—that we have already allocated some 60 per cent. of the carriers to be built in separate "super blocks" at BAE Systems yards at Govan and Barrow; at VT in Portsmouth and Babcock in Rosyth, with final assembly of both carriers at Rosyth. The structure above the hangar deck will be open to competition and will allow an opportunity for the many shipyards and suppliers with the ability to undertake this work, but not currently involved, to compete and win work. These blocks will then be joined to the base structure at Rosyth. We will also aim to maximise the level of subcontract competition within the "super blocks". Early indications suggest that CVF associated work could sustain and create some 10,000 jobs in the UK across its design and manufacture period.

The expansion of the Alliance partnership provides an important launch pad for further innovation on this project. We have agreed that we will jointly consider, subject to negotiation, how the build contract can be extended to encompass not only the carriers' initial support but also the support for the Invincible class carriers until their out of service dates. This approach will ensure coherency in maintaining continuity in our carrier capability, with the same companies responsible for ensuring the continuation in service of the Invincible carriers also managing the introduction into service of their replacements.

In parallel with this approach, we are continuing our discussions with France, with whom we are jointly examining areas of mutual benefit and opportunities to deliver economies in our respective carrier programmes. For any co-operation to work, however, it must deliver cost savings and must do so without delaying UK or French programmes and we look forward to receiving industry's proposals.

Taken together, therefore, our approach provides a key stepping stone towards the developing maritime industrial strategy which we intend to outline in our forthcoming Defence Industrial Strategy. It is already clear that the CVF programme, as part of the wider Carrier Strike capability with the Joint Strike Fighter, will offer the enhanced power projection capability required by our armed forces in the future. This announcement reinforces our commitment to this flagship project for the Royal Navy and represents a significant step on the route to re-shaping our maritime industry and providing this vital expeditionary capability.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

14–19 Implementation Plan

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Ruth Kelly): I have today placed copies of 14–19 Education and Skills Implementation Plan in the Libraries of both Houses.

The Implementation Plan sets out what the reform programme we set out in the 14–19 White Paper published in February will mean in practice.

We are aiming to create an education system that is not merely good but world class and which is built around the needs of all young people, employers and our society. We are guaranteeing more choice about what young people can learn so that they have a head start for a rewarding future. Our recent White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools for All" proposed reforms to ensure that every school is a good school and that every child receives increasingly tailored support. A continued focus on improving standards, especially in English and maths, in developing more personalised learning and in creating greater flexibility are strong components of both the 14–19 reform agenda and of our strategy for schools.

At the heart of this system is a new curriculum entitlement which will offer each young person a choice of high quality learning pathways—including the option of more theoretical or more practical approaches at an appropriate level for them—which can be the basis for progression to further learning, higher education and employment. Delivering this entitlement will require profound change in the education system with collaboration of all players a key requisite for success.

At the local level, a coherent 14–19 system will need excellent partnerships between Local Authorities and local Learning and Skills Councils. The role of Local Authorities as the integrators of services of children up to the age of 19 will be crucial.

This Plan sets out how we will strengthen the role of local Government in 14–19 education, and pilot better models of partnership working between Local Authorities and the local LSCs to ensure the strategic development of 14–19 provision in their area, particularly in relation to local skill needs.

The Implementation Plan sets out three key priorities: developing new qualifications and the curriculum; supporting every local area to deliver; and improving the system for today's young people.

The agenda is a long-term one and we are working closely with key delivery partners to make it a reality. In taking work forward we will continue to consult with a wide range of individuals and organisations.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

European Union Budget 2007–13

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): As presidency of the European Union, Her Majesty's Government are today circulating to all member states of the European Union revised proposals for the European Union budget in the

next financial period 2007–13 inclusive. Copies of the proposal are available in the Library of the House and in the Vote Office.

This written ministerial statement outlines the context of the proposal.

These revised budget proposals maintain the four policy objectives set out in my written ministerial statement of 5 December, *Official Report*, columns 65–68 WS:

> The first is tough budget discipline. They remain well below the level proposed by the Luxembourg Presidency in June and 17 per cent. below the level proposed by the Commission.
>
> Secondly they help the new member states in the enlarged EU by building their economies and societies, and they more fairly distribute the costs among the better off nations. On 5 December, the UK offered an extra contribution to these costs of enlargement amounting to 8 billion euros over the budget period.
>
> Thirdly, the proposals keep the rebate. Indeed the rebate will rise, from an annual average over recent years of 5 billion euros to around 7 billion.
>
> Fourthly, the proposals ensure there can be no fundamental change in the rebate without fundamental reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. All spending, including on agriculture, will be subject to a review during the coming budget period.

The revised proposals do, however, take account of the discussions amongst EU Foreign Ministers on 7 December and of the intensive bilateral contacts we have had with other member states and the European Commission since then. In particular, the revised proposals:

> Extend the scope of the practical changes we proposed to the rules governing structural and cohesion funding, and extend their application to Greece and Portugal, all of which should increase the impact of EU money on the ground in enhancing prosperity, stability and competitiveness.
>
> Provide extra money for the decommissioning of nuclear power plants in Slovakia and Lithuania, and additional structural and cohesion fund support for Poland, Hungary, the Czech Republic, Estonia and Latvia.
>
> Extend transitional cohesion funding for Spain until 2013, and grant additional funding for Ceuta and Melilla.
>
> Offer additional rural development funds to Finland, Ireland, Portugal, Sweden and Austria.
>
> Improve the net positions of Sweden and the Netherlands, two of the countries with the highest net contributions to the EU budget.
>
> Commit the Council to increase spending on R&D by 75 per cent. between 2006 and 2013

The overall ceiling for the budget for 2007–13 with these changes is €849.3 billion (1.03 per cent. GNI).

We remain convinced that these proposals are good for Britain and good for Europe, and offer a sound basis for agreement at this week's European Council.

HEALTH

NHS Ambulance Trusts

The Secretary of State for Health (Ms Patricia Hewitt): A review of ambulance services, "Taking Healthcare to the Patient: Transforming NHS Ambulance Services" was published in June 2005. It set out a clear strategic direction for ambulance services that would improve patient services. Over the next five years, ambulance services will provide an increasing range of mobile healthcare for patients who need urgent care. They will work to help provide diagnostic services and support patients with long-term conditions and they will continue to improve the speed and quality of ambulance responses to 999 calls.

This review was undertaken by Peter Bradley CBE, Chief Executive of London Ambulance Service National Health Service Trust and National Ambulance Adviser, at the request of the Department of Health. He was supported by a reference group of key stakeholders including ambulance trust chief executives, clinicians and representatives of other NHS organisations. Copies of the review were placed in the Library in June 2005.

The reference group's view was that in order for the benefits outlined in the review to be fully realised, ambulance trusts need to have sufficient strategic capacity, and to be of a size to attract the high calibre senior managers and leaders necessary to manage these new organisations. The review therefore recommended that there should be significantly fewer, larger ambulance trusts, so that ambulance trusts would have the infrastructure, capacity and capability necessary to deliver and sustain the changes needed.

Benefits of these larger trusts include:

> More investment in front-line services as trusts make savings in "back room" functions;
>
> Improved patient care by providing an opportunity to raise the standards of service provided by all trusts to the level of the best;
>
> Better emergency planning with greater capacity and capability to respond to major incidents of all kinds;
>
> More integrated services and better career opportunities for staff.

I have accepted the recommendation for fewer ambulance trusts. A 14-week consultation, led by strategic health authorities (SHAs) on my behalf, will now consider the future organisation of ambulance trusts. Consultation will begin today and conclude on 22 March 2006. Any changes to the organisation of ambulance trusts will only happen following local consultation and discussion with relevant parties in the local area.

We expect that SHAs will involve hon. and right hon. Members in the consultations, including sending them copies of the consultation document. Some copies of the consultation document have also been placed in the Library.

We believe these proposals to reorganise ambulance trusts, coupled with all other recommendations made in "Taking Healthcare to the Patient: Transforming NHS Ambulance Services" will put the NHS in the best position to provide more convenient, consistently high quality and appropriate mobile healthcare for the people of England. Under these proposals, there would be no reduction in ambulance vehicles or frontline staff. Instead, they will mean less bureaucracy and more money to invest in front-line services. Response times for life-threatening situations will not be adversely affected by these changes.

I can confirm that the proposals for the reconfiguration of SHAs and the proposals for the reconfiguration of primary care trusts (PCTs), as set out in my written statement of 1 December, are also going forward for consultation from today. All proposals will

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be subject to a fourteen-week local consultation and will therefore run concurrently with the consultation on the proposed reconfiguration of NHS ambulance trusts. No decisions will be taken regarding the reconfiguration of SHAs or PCTs until the results of the local consultations have been considered and any recommendations reviewed.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Animal Procedures Committee

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Andy Burnham): On behalf of the Home Secretary and the Minister for the Department of Health and Social Services and Public Safety for Northern Ireland, I am very pleased to announce the appointment of Ms Sara Nathan to chair the Animal Procedures Committee from 1 February 2006 for a four year term. Sara Nathan currently occupies several other non-executive positions with public bodies and is a member of Ofcom, the Criminal Injuries Compensation Appeal Panel and the Regulatory Decisions Committee of the Financial Services Authority. She is a former member of the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority.

I also wish to thank the Reverend Professor Michael Banner, who stands down as chairman of the Animal Procedures Committee on 31 January 2006 for his work on the Committee. The Animal Procedures Committee has an important role providing advice to the Home Secretary, and the Minister for the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for Northern Ireland, on matters concerned with the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 and their functions under it, having regard both to the legitimate requirements of science and industry and to the protection of animals against avoidable suffering and unnecessary use. Under Michael Banner's skilful chairmanship the Committee has significantly expanded its role and has produced valuable and thoughtful advice on a number of issues relating to the use of animals in scientific procedures. This included the completion of a wide-ranging review of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. Ministerial colleagues wish to record our gratitude to Michael Banner for his excellent personal contribution to the work of the Committee over the last eight years.

Zimbabwe (Immigration Removals)

The Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality (Mr. Tony McNulty): On 27 June my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for the Home Department made a statement on the return of failed asylum seekers to Zimbabwe and on 6 and 18 July he updated the House on that issue. I would like to provide a further update on returns to Zimbabwe.

On 18 October the Asylum and Immigration Tribunal issued a determination in relation to the treatment of failed asylum seekers whose return to Zimbabwe was enforced. The Tribunal found that the particular way we were enforcing returns of failed Zimbabwean asylum seekers from the United Kingdom to Harare airport put them at risk of mistreatment. The Tribunal has refused permission to appeal their determination so we will be seeking permission to appeal from the Court of Appeal. In the meantime, as we made clear at the time of the Tribunal determination, we will not be enforcing returns of Zimbabweans to Zimbabwe whilst we work to resolve the concerns identified by the Tribunal.

On 16 November, the Tribunal issued a further determination. They concluded that the effect of the earlier determination is that any Zimbabwean citizen who will not return there willingly is a refugee even though the method by which we enforce returns is being reviewed. We strongly disagree with this conclusion and will also be seeking permission to appeal this determination or others which rely upon it. We shall continue to take decisions based on the individual merits of the claims.

In its 18 October determination the Tribunal did not find that Zimbabwe was unsafe generally for failed asylum seekers or that those who return voluntarily are at risk. Voluntary returns to Zimbabwe are possible and are continuing. We therefore expect failed asylum seekers to return voluntarily to Zimbabwe and will assist them in doing so through the International Organisation for Migration (IOM).

The Government remain deeply concerned about the political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe, in particular its appalling human rights situation, and continue to work with international partners to press for an end to abuses.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Northern Ireland Departments (Priorities and Budget 2006–08)

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Angela E. Smith): My hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Northern Ireland Office (Lord Rooker) has made the following ministerial statement:

"Following consultation on the Government's 'Draft Priorities and Budget for Northern Ireland', which was launched on 25 October 2005, the Government are today setting out its priorities and spending plans for Northern Ireland Departments for the years 2006–07 and 2007–08. In reaching final decision on the allocations for the next two years, the ministerial team has considered carefully the views expressed during the consultation period on the draft proposals.

Our vision is for a world class Northern Ireland, and the 'Priorities and Budget' we are publishing today represents key steps towards achieving that aim. To turn this vision into reality, we need to direct resources to support new initiatives; to fundamentally reform the way services are managed and delivered to get the best value for money; and to raise more money to pay for local services.

Underpinning this vision, and providing a framework for the detailed spending plans, are the key strategic priorities of:

economic growth;

public sector reform;

high quality public services; and

a society based on partnership, equality, inclusion and mutual respect.

These priorities will be taken forward by action across all Departments, supported by targets across a number of important areas, where the proposed outcomes will deliver the changes needed to ensure the achievement of the vision for Northern Ireland.

In overall terms, Northern Ireland has benefited from massive increases in investment in public services in recent years and that growth will continue over the next two years. By March 2008 we will be spending in excess of £16 billion a year on public services in Northern Ireland. However, public expenditure per head in Northern Ireland is higher than any other region in the UK, while revenue raised from the domestic rating system is only around half the equivalent figure for the rest of the UK. This is unsustainable if we are to continue to improve public services here in Northern Ireland.

There is the need to continue to invest resources wisely in areas that will help transform society and the economy. We are committed to investing in those services which make a difference in people's lives including—health and education; children and young people; promoting long term economic growth through investment in training and skills; and in protecting the environment through research and development of new sources of renewable and clean energy.

As a key step in taking forward work in priority areas, we have established three new ring fenced priority funding packages, worth some £48 million in 2006–07 and £58 million in 2007–08 and underpinned by a further £15 million and £34 million capital investment in those years.

Children and Young People

For children and young people some £28 million and £33 million will be available to ensure every child has the best start in life. This will include driving forward our policies in areas such as pre-school and extended/out of hours school based activities, childcare and Sure Start, along with measures to foster their health and wellbeing. This will be a distinctive allocation of funding that will be used to make good the shortfall in provision for these key areas of support for families. A fundamental aspect of all of this will be the integrated delivery of programmes and activities to ensure real and effective joined up thinking and working by the key Departments and agencies involved.

Skills and Science

Beyond school age, around 24 per cent. of our working population has no qualifications whatsoever, compared with 15 per cent. in the UK as a whole. We are already committed to significant investment in skills and training programmes for employment. And we recognise the critical importance of ensuring a secure foundation for lifelong learning and employment. It is for this reason an additional £15 million next year and an additional £20 million the year after will be allocated to tackle economic inactivity and to promote greater investment in skills and science training leading to employment—alongside investment in research and development. Our working age population must have the skills to allow us to prosper in the new, more competitive, and highly skilled international markets that will dominate all our futures.

Environment and Energy

The quality of life in the future will also depend on our children continuing to enjoy the same clean and healthy environment that we do. That means we need to take action now to support the development and use of renewable forms of energy.

An extra £5 million in each of the next two years will be allocated to encourage the research and development of renewable forms of energy. £10 million and £30 million over the next two years will also be available for capital investment in renewable energy. This will enhance the security and diversity of our energy supply and minimise the environmental impact of energy generation. Finally, capital investment of £5 million in 2006–07 and £4 million in 2007–08 will be available to ensure the 'Warm Homes' scheme in Northern Ireland can be extended to match the commitments made for central heating for pensioners in England, as set out in the Chancellor's recent pre-Budget report.

The funding for these three priority packages comes from additional resources received in the course of the Chancellor's March 2005 Budget, and recent pre-Budget report, and from revenue raised as a result of a planned 19 per cent. increase in the domestic regional rate in 2006–07. For other areas, because this was not a Spending Review year, there were no additional resources available for allocation, compared to the position established last year. Therefore, to allow extra money to be allocated to the top priority services of health and education, the spending in lower priority areas has been reduced by 3 per cent. in 2006–07 and 4 per cent. in 2007–08.

This approach provides for increases in health of 7.5 per cent. in 2006–07 and 6.4 per cent. in 2007–08, with education receiving increases of 4.2 per cent. in 2006–07 and 3.9 per cent. in 2007–08.

Alongside the improvements in the financing of our public services, it is important that the management and delivery of those services is also improved. We are continuing to push forward the reform agenda initiated by the former Northern Ireland Executive and by the ministerial team since devolution was suspended.

In the health service in Northern Ireland, as in the rest of the UK, there is the need to ensure that increased resources are matched by reform and improvement to ensure services are delivered both effectively and efficiently. The recent Independent Review of Health and Social Care Services completed by Professor John Appleby of the King's Fund made recommendations for creating more effective performance management across HPSS. These, together with recommendations on the funding of the health and social care sector and the new structure put forward by the RPA, will need to be considered.

In education, programmes and actions are being developed to reduce the overcapacity and duplication of education provision, with the Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland playing a major part in reshaping the schools estate to contribute to the removal of surplus places.

The Northern Ireland public sector will continue to push forward with the efficiency plans announced in last year's 'Priorities and Budget', with the reallocation of resources, released through efficiency improvements, to priority front line services. The plans include targets for

the public sector to deliver efficiency gains of 2.5 per cent. each year over the period 2005–06 to 2007–08. During the same period the administration costs of civil service departments being held flat over the next three years and civil service numbers will reduce by 2,300 across all departments, thus reducing bureaucracy and releasing resources to priority areas.

This 'Priorities and Budget' builds on the real growth in public expenditure that has occurred in recent years, and that will continue over the next two years. It provides the necessary investment, underpinned by reform, to equip Northern Ireland to move towards a better and brighter future.

I have placed copies of the 'Priorities and Budget 2006–08' document in the Library."

Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (Angela E. Smith): My right hon. Friend the Minister of State for the Northern Ireland Office (Lord Rooker) has made the following ministerial statement:

> "The Government have today published the first Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland. The Investment Strategy takes a longer term, more strategic view of Northern Ireland's infrastructure and investment needs.
>
> It is based on the recognition of the need to make best use of the opportunities presented by developments such as the Reinvestment and Reform Initiative and PPPs, along with historic capital budgets, to address the need of Northern Ireland for better public services after a lengthy period of under investment. In taking a longer term view of Northern Ireland's needs, the Investment Strategy allows decision-makers to ensure that investment in public infrastructure is directed to where it is most needed, is prioritised appropriately, and is delivered effectively.
>
> A copy of the document has been placed in the Library of the House."

TRANSPORT

European Union Transport Council

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): I chaired the Transport Council in Brussels on 5 December. The Minister of State, my hon. Friend the Member for South Thanet (Dr. Ladyman), was in the UK national seat.

The Council received a progress report from the Commissioner on the "Air Transport Negotiations Between the EU and the US". The Commissioner reported on the progress made in recent talks with the US. For the UK, my hon. Friend stressed the need for a balanced package, in which changes on airline ownership and control are an essential element. Summing up, I welcomed progress so far, but noted that the Council could not reach any decisions until the US has concluded its internal rule-making process.

The Council discussed the Commission's request for a mandate to open air transport negotiations with China. While there was agreement about the growing importance of China as an aviation market, the view of the Council was that it would be premature to give the Commission a mandate for community-level negotiations while the focus is on EU-US.

Following a progress report on the amending regulation on aviation security, I concluded that there were good prospects for early agreement.

The Council reached political agreement on three proposals from the "Third Rail Package".

The rail market access directive was put to the Council as amended in prior negotiation to take account of member state's concerns. The directive would open the market for international rail passenger transport in 2010, including allowing "cabotage", that is, picking up and setting down passengers in the same member state, but enable member states to restrict competition where strictly necessary to protect public services. In reaching political agreement, the Council accepted requests for member states to be allowed to impose a levy on all passenger train services on their territory to contribute to the financing of services provided under public service contracts, provided certain conditions are met; and for market opening to be delayed until 2012 in those member states in which more than half of the turnover is derived from international traffic.

Discussion of the market access directive has proceeded alongside consideration of relevant aspects of the proposal for a regulation on Public Service Obligations (PSOs) in land-based public transport. This would provide an updated regulatory framework for award of public service contracts and the financial compensation provided to operators. A progress report was noted by Council on the PSO element. In addition, the Council and Commission made a minutes statement stating that rail market opening can only be achieved step by step recognising public service needs, and committing the Council to try to reach political agreement on the PSO proposal as soon as possible in 2006 on the basis, inter alia, that member states should continue to have the possibility to award directly without competition contracts for rail public services.

The Council reached political agreement on the regulation on international rail passenger rights. This builds on the existing international convention (COTIF/CIV) and creates new rights for international rail passengers on access to tickets and information, a system of compensation and assistance for passengers in case of delay, and specific rights of access and assistance for passengers of reduced mobility.

There was political agreement on the directive on train crew licensing. It provides for a European licensing and certification system for train drivers, with the possibility for renewable derogations for "domestic" train drivers if it is demonstrated that application of the EC system would not be cost effective.

The Council was unable to reach political agreement on the directive on driving licences. While there was recognition of the positive elements in the proposal, particularly regarding driving licence tourism and improved security, a significant number of member states still had problems with the proposal. In summing up, I reminded the Council that there was support for the measure from several member states and that the Council would need to return to it.

The Commissioner gave a progress report on the Galileo project. He reported that the first Galileo satellite would be launched later in December and that progress on the concession had been made. In summing

up, I emphasised the importance of ensuring proper functioning of the public private partnership to give value for money.

The Council agreed conclusions on boosting employment prospects in the maritime sector. The conclusions aim at action by all stakeholders to sustain high-quality maritime skills and assure continuation of European maritime know-how across the broader sector. This is an example of a non-regulatory approach to a timely issue.

The regulation on multi-annual funding for the European Maritime Safety Agency, for its work in responding to pollution caused by ships, and the regulation on information on the identity of air carriers were agreed without debate.

Four of the presentations under AOB referred to in my pre-Council statement on 1 December were given as planned, namely on road safety, the new maritime package, the air traffic management Single Sky Project (SESAR) for which a PPP is proposed, and extension of the scope of the European Aviation Safety Agency.

There were a number of additional AOB points.

Ireland called for action on the current situation regarding ferry manning. The Commission recalled that there is no EC legislation on ferry manning at present, and that priority should go to achieving solutions through the social partner dialogue and to implementing higher standards based on the forthcoming Convention text from the ILO.

The Slovenian Minister invited Ministers to a conference he is hosting in Ljubljana in January on Motorways of the Sea.

France introduced a Memorandum calling for a strengthening of oversight of aviation safety: nationally, within the Community and within the International Civil Aviation Organisation. The Commissioner welcomed this approach.

France presented a memorandum to the Council and expressed its concern about the impact of high fuel prices on road transport.

Local Transport Capital Settlement

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): Today I am announcing firm allocations for the 116 local highway authorities and six Passenger Transport Authorities in England, outside London, for capital expenditure in 2006–07. This will amount, in total, to a £1.6 billion package of funding to improve local transport, with £1.4 billion in this local transport capital settlement announced today, and a further £200 million for new major schemes, the details of which will be finalised early next year. This is the first part of some £8 billion over the next five years.

This builds on the £8 billion of investment in local transport projects in the five years of the first Local Transport Plan period. That period saw a reduction in road casualties, an improvement in local road maintenance and better travel choices being delivered in many towns and cities. Today's announcement demonstrates the Government's commitment to building on these achievements.

This year's settlement delivers firm funding for 2006–07, the first year of local authorities' second Local Transport Plans (2006–07 to 2010–11). We have also issued financial planning guidelines for the integrated transport block for the whole of the second LTP period. This will give authorities predictable funding levels for the next five years to enable them to formulate effective and realistic transport strategies.

Funding has been released to allow authorities to continue work on major transport schemes already under construction. I will be announcing further 2006–07 funding for new major schemes next year after I have received regional advice on the prioritisation of schemes.

Details of the 2006–07 allocations have been placed in the Vote Office and both Libraries of the House. Right hon. and hon. Members representing English constituencies outside London will receive details for the local transport plan area covering their constituencies, from their regional government office.

Written Ministerial Statements

Thursday 15 December 2005

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Freedom of Information Act

The Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (Ms Harriet Harman): My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State has made the following written ministerial statement.

Today I have deposited copies of "The Freedom of Information Act 2000—Statistics on Implementation in Central Government July to September 2005" in the Libraries of both Houses.

This is the third quarterly bulletin produced by DCA monitoring the performance of central Government and associated bodies under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Judicial Pensions

The Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (Ms Harriet Harman): My right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State and Lord Chancellor has made the following written ministerial statement.

"The judicial pension schemes are mainly governed by the Judicial Pensions Act 1981 and the Judicial Pensions Act 1993.

I have concluded that, as administrator of the judicial pension schemes, it would be in the best interests of the members that, for the future, the schemes should not be registered schemes for the purposes of the Finance Act 2004.

The principal effect will be that lump sum benefits payable from, and members contributions payable to, the schemes will cease to attract tax relief from 6 April 2006. Income tax will, of course, also continue to be payable on pension benefits. Judicial pension benefits will consequentially not be taken into account for the purposes of the registered pension schemes provisions of the Finance Act 2004 as they will not receive the preferential tax treatment afforded to such schemes.

I also propose to make provision for judges to receive a long service award which will become payable when they near retirement. The level of the award, which will be a proportion of the lump sum, will reflect their years of service and their judicial grade and will ensure their net position is maintained. I will amend judicial terms and conditions to reflect this proposal.

There will be an adjustment to the rate of contributions for dependants' benefits and certain technical changes to the schemes needed to reflect the terms of the Finance Act will be made under powers contained in that Act.

I am satisfied that these proposals are in accordance with the terms of the Finance Act 2004. They serve to maintain but not improve the overall remuneration package for the serving judiciary and to protect the principle of judicial independence in so doing. There will be no net cost to the Exchequer. In these circumstances, it is not necessary for me to introduce separate legislation for judicial pensions and I do not therefore propose to proceed with the Bill which was announced in May this year."

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Compulsory Purchase Law

The Minister for Housing and Planning (Yvette Cooper): The Deputy Prime Minister has today placed copies of his response to the Law Commission's report: "Towards a Compulsory Purchase Code" in both Libraries of the House and has also placed the response on the ODPM website www.odpm.gov.uk/planning-information. The Commission presented their report to Parliament in two parts: on Compensation (Law Com No 286) in December 2003 and on Procedures (Law Com No 291) in December 2004.

In 2000 the Compulsory Purchase Policy Review Advisory Group (CPPRAG) had recommended changing the compulsory purchase of land powers, procedures and compensation arrangements. The most pressing changes were put in the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 and included strengthening local authority powers to acquire land for the creation of sustainable communities as well as making the compensation fairer to those losing their land.

CPPRAG also proposed the Government should work with the Law Commission on how to replace the whole of the current raft of statute and case law on compulsory purchase and compensation by a single statute expressed in modern language. ODPM and its predecessor Departments (DETR and DTLR), along with the Welsh Assembly Government, have been working on this with the Commission since 2000.

Although the Commission's recommendations identify a basic framework for reforming the structure of the law, they do not set out the detailed provisions needed to ensure fairness to those affected, as well as speed and simplicity. The ever-evolving complexity of the statute and case law has shown that these aims cannot always easily be reconciled. As the Law Commission has demonstrated, there are no quick and easy solutions and moving towards a simpler and more readily accessible set of laws would still require substantial further work.

The Government would like to have a single simple compulsory purchase code expressed in modern English. But finding further legislative time for this needs to be balanced against the Government's many other priorities. Given the changes providing immediate and tangible improvements were in the 2004 Act, implementing the Law Commission's proposals is not a practicable proposition for the foreseeable future.

The Government consider it more important to maintain a stable legislative framework providing certainty both for acquiring authorities and for those whose properties may need to be acquired. This should encourage acquiring authorities to exercise their compulsory purchase powers wherever this makes sense in the public interest to further their wider policy objectives.

English Local Government (Conduct)

The Minister for Local Government (Mr. Phil Woolas): The Government have today published a Discussion Paper about standards of conduct in English local government. It sets out our vision for a future comprehensive conduct regime for local authority members and employees. Such a regime would need to

be part of our future strategy for local government, and hence this is published as part of the ongoing local vision debate begun by the Government last year.

The paper incorporates the Government's response to the recommendations on conduct in local government in Chapter three of the 10th report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life (Graham Committee). It also incorporates our response to the report of the ODPM Select Committee on the role and effectiveness of the Standards Board for England, as well as a response to the recommendations of the Board itself following its review of the code of conduct for members.

We have largely accepted the recommendations of the Graham Committee; in particular its central recommendation for a more locally based decision-making process for the conduct regime. Accordingly, we have not accepted the recommendation of the ODPM Select Committee to maintain the present centralised regime for handling allegations of misconduct by members. We have, however, largely accepted the other recommendations made by the Select Committee.

The paper also indicates the approach the Government are minded to follow on the conduct of employees, in particular on the political restrictions which apply to local government employees, the pay of political assistants and a code of conduct for employees. In reaching these views, the Government have had regard to the responses received to the consultation that the Office undertook on these issues last year.

We believe that the approach set out in the paper would both deliver a clearer and more proportionate conduct regime for local government members and employees, and ensure that the public can continue to have confidence in those who serve them. We now intend to work with the Standards Board and other stakeholders to carry forward the changes identified in the paper, having regard to any comments and debate the paper itself generates. The Government recognise that certain of these changes would require primary legislation and it intends to seek this at the next convenient opportunity Parliamentary time allows.

Copies of the paper have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

TREASURY

United Kingdom Coins—2007

The Chancellor of the Exchequer (Mr. Gordon Brown): Her Majesty the Queen has been graciously pleased to approve my recommendation that the following coins should be issued in 2007:

a crown piece to celebrate the diamond wedding anniversary of Her Majesty the Queen and His Royal Highness Prince Philip;

a two-pound coin to mark the 200th anniversary of the abolition of the slave trade in the British Empire; and

a 50 pence piece to mark the centenary of the foundation of the scouting movement.

Collector versions of these coins will be released at a premium above face value and, during the course of the year 2007, the coins will also become available at face value from banks and post offices.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Reducing Reoffending through Skills and Employment

The Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Ruth Kelly): I am today, with my right hon. friends the Home Secretary and the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, presenting to the House a document setting out our strategy to help reduce re-offending through improved skills and employment opportunities for offenders.

The Government will publish in the new year a five-year strategy for reducing re-offending and protecting the public. This will emphasise the importance of punishment and deterrence in preventing offending. But it will also recognise the need to deal with the range of factors which lead some offenders into a cycle of repeat offending. This cycle carries a considerable cost to the Exchequer: a re-offending former prisoner costs the criminal justice system an average of £65,000 up to the point of re-imprisonment and £37,500 each year in prison. On top of this, there are often unquantifiable costs to the victims of crime and their communities.

An important part of the Government strategy is a concerted drive to transform the skills and employment prospects of offenders. The challenge is stark. A majority of offenders have poor skills, with over half having no qualifications at all. Nearly half have experienced exclusion from school. Two thirds were unemployed before prison.

Evidence suggests that employment and a reduction in re-offending are linked, and that stability and quality of employment are key factors. Accordingly, there is a strong case, as part of our wider strategy, for seeking to get more offenders into jobs, and to raise their skill levels in order to improve their chances of becoming more productive and successful in employment, to the benefit of individuals, their families, and the wider society that would be damaged by continued offending.

A great deal of progress has been made in recent years. Increased investment has raised the capacity of the prison education service, and improved basic skills training for offenders in the community. Achievement of qualifications in literacy, language and numeracy has more than doubled since 2001. Prisons are subject to the same demanding standards of external inspection as other education providers, and this is driving up quality. Jobcentre Plus offers employment and training advice to offenders in prisons and, with the help of additional Prison Service investment, in 2004–05 there were over 41,000 cases in which an offender leaving prison went directly into employment, training or education.

But there is more to do. Inspection evidence tells us that the quality of learning and skills in prisons is still too often inadequate, and unresponsive to individual needs. We need more coherence in assessment, planning and continuity between different settings, for example when prisoners are moved at short notice, or released into the community. We also need to do better in engaging and motivating particular groups of offenders to improve their skills. Opportunities for education and training must lead to skills and qualifications that are meaningful for employers and to real job opportunities.

We intend to take advantage of the opportunity presented by the sentencing reforms of the Criminal Justice Act 2003—which make rehabilitation one of the statutory purposes of sentence—together with the creation of the National Offender Management Service, to build a new approach. The strategy is set out in the document, "Reducing Re-offending Through Skills and Employment".

The document sets out the case for action and outlines a radical vision to make a step change in four main areas:

to focus strongly on jobs for offenders, with employers driving the design and delivery of programmes, and new approaches to get offenders into work;

to ensure that training providers and colleges are better able to provide the skills offenders need to get a job;

to promote a new emphasis on skills and jobs for offenders across prisons and probation services; and

to motivate and engage offenders, through a new "employability contract", with a strong emphasis on rights and responsibilities.

Some action can begin at once. In other areas we propose to test new approaches in order to make the best use of the resources and capacity within the system. We look forward to the widest possible debate—with employers, with the learning and skills sector, and with colleagues working in prisons, probation and in jobcentres.

This may in the past have been an area of education and training that has had a low profile. Along with my right honourable friends I am determined that we should set a new ambition: to provide more offenders with the tools and motivation to turn away from crime and become employable and productive members of society.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Bovine Tuberculosis

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): The Government are today announcing new measures to tackle bovine tuberculosis (TB) in cattle in England. These include:

A 12 week public consultation on the control of badgers to reduce the disease in high incidence areas.

The introduction of a requirement for the pre-movement testing of cattle to reduce cattle to cattle spread. This will apply to cattle over 15 months of age moving from one and two year tested herds.

Changes to compensation arrangements that will bring into line payments for bovine TB and three other cattle diseases.

The consultation on badger culling follows the publication yesterday of results from the "Randomised Badger Culling Trials". It also follows a cost benefit analysis by DEFRA of a number of badger culling options, drawing on the evidence of the trials carried out in Britain and the Republic of Ireland.

The Government continue to pursue the development of potential bovine TB vaccines for both cattle and badgers. We are also planning to extend the use of the gamma interferon test to improve diagnosis of TB in cattle.

The Government are also announcing the setting up of a new independent stakeholder group to provide advice on bovine TB policy.

Copies of all the relevant documents have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Autumn Performance Report

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Jim Knight): The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' 2005 Autumn Performance Report (Cm 6692), which highlights progress towards achieving the Department's Public Service Agreement targets since the publication of my Departmental Report (Cm 6537) in June, will be published on Friday 16 December. Copies will be placed in the House Libraries.

Avian Quaratine

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): On 26 October, I announced an independent review of the UK's avian quarantine system. The review panel, chaired by Professor Nigel Dimmock, Emeritus Professor of Virology at Warwick University, examined the avian quarantine system as a whole.

The independent review group has concentrated on the principles of the system, assessed how effective it is and given recommendations about how it might be improved.

I have now received Professor Dimmock's report and copies are available in the House Libraries.

The main conclusions include:

Imports of captive birds should be permitted to continue. However, existing quarantine procedures should be improved to further reduce the risk, and should be kept under review.

Because imports into the EU are governed by EU rules, and movements within the Community are less rigorously controlled, the health protection provided by avian quarantine of imported captive birds can only be achieved if action is taken at EU level.

Avian flu and Newcastle disease present little risk to public health, and if the modified quarantine system were operating throughout the EU the risk from imports of captive birds would be negligible.

My Department will study the reports findings carefully, including the associated costs and benefits of each of the findings. The work will be taken forward in partnership with the EU and stakeholders, and the appropriate action will be taken as quickly as possible.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

The G8 Gleneagles Summit

The Minister for Trade (Ian Pearson): The G8 summit at Gleneagles Hotel took place on 6–8 July 2005. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister made a statement to the House on 11 July in which he outlined the successful outcomes of the Gleneagles Summit and the real benefits G8 leaders committed to, including delivering an additional $25 billion in annual aid to Africa by 2010 and agreement on a process to tackle climate change.

I am now able to release the organisational costs of this summit. Based on the final invoices and accounts received from our suppliers, as well as prudent estimates where final figures are not yet available, the organisational cost of the summit was £12.7 million. A breakdown of this figure will be placed in the Library of the House and then will be made available on the G8 website: www.g8.gov.uk.

Securing the summit was the responsibility of the Devolved Administration and the Scottish Executive. This covered every aspect of policing operations, including specialist public order, search and other teams drawn from forces around the UK, and additional grants to the emergency services. I understand that Scottish Ministers released the figures for these costs yesterday.

HEALTH

Health Reform

The Secretary of State for Health (Ms Patricia Hewitt): I have published this week "Health Reform in England: update and next steps". Copies have been placed in the Library. The document describes the framework for reform of the national health service in England, restates the rationale for reform and explains how the reforms will be mutually reinforcing. It summarises the initiatives already announced and lays out a programme of further policy development for 2006.

It is the first in a series of publications building on the commitment in "Creating a Patient-led NHS" to explain how the whole reform programme fits together. It shows how the reforms offer a real opportunity to provide a better service to patients and the public, enabling the people working in the NHS to make the most of their skills and commitment.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Counter-Terrorism: Progress Report

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): On 5 August, my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, announced a 12 point plan of measures designed to tackle terrorism. This statement sets out the very significant progress which has been made since that time. We will report again to Parliament on further progress before the summer recess.

1. *To introduce new grounds for deportation and exclusion* (including the drawing up of lists of extremist bookshops etc, engagement of which would trigger deportation; the negotiation of "Memoranda of Understanding" with relevant countries; and consultation on the introduction of non-suspensive appeals in respect of deportation).

The Home Office and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have worked closely together to identify extremists overseas who pose a threat to the UK and I have already excluded a number of individuals from the UK.

Work is underway to put together a similar list of individuals in the UK and we are reviewing the processes and mechanisms already in place for gathering national information on extremist activity. In respect of bookshops, the Terrorism Bill will make it illegal to disseminate material that may incite or be useful to terrorists.

"Memoranda of Understanding" have been concluded with Jordan and Libya and good progress is being made with other priority countries to which we wish to deport people. Notices of intention to deport where we would need to rely on assurances from the receiving state have been served on 29 individuals whose presence has been assessed to be a threat to national security. Most are detained pending the outcome of their appeal; four have been released on bail. It remains the position that we would consider legislation if legal obstacles were to arise in the process.

Following consultation with opposition parties, a provision has been included in the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Bill which provides that in national security deportations any in country appeal would be confined to ECHR issues and that matters of national security could be challenged only after the individual had been removed.

2. *To create an offence of condoning or glorifying terrorism, anywhere, not just in the UK.*

The Terrorism Bill now proceeding through Parliament contains many important measures that will assist the law enforcement and security agencies in the fight against terrorism, including the introduction of a new offence of glorifying terrorism in the UK or abroad.

3. *To refuse asylum in this country automatically to anyone who has participated in terrorism, or has anything to do with it anywhere.*

A provision has been included in the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Bill which will allow us to deny asylum while respecting our obligations under the Refugee Convention.

4. *To consult on extending the powers to strip citizenship, applying them to British citizens engaged in extremism, and making the procedures simpler and more effective.*

Following consultation with opposition parties, provisions now included in the Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Bill will, if passed, replace one of the existing criteria for deprivation of citizenship—that the person concerned "has done anything seriously prejudicial to the vital interests of the United Kingdom"—with a test of the public interest. If passed, the Bill will additionally confer on the Secretary of State a power to remove a person's right of abode in the UK, again on "conducive" grounds, where this right derived from citizenship of a Commonwealth country other than the United Kingdom.

5. *To consult on setting a maximum time limit for all future extradition cases involving terrorism.*

Work is underway in consultation with Her Majesty's Court Service, the Crown Prosecution Service and the judiciary. This will involve better co-ordinating the responsibilities of all agencies with the aim of speeding up every stage of the process short of putting the case at

risk or compromising fairness. Rashid Ramda has now been extradited and we will continue to prioritise cases such as these.

6. *To examine a new court procedure to allow a pre-trial process: and examine whether the necessary procedure can be brought about to give us a way of meeting the police and security service request that detention, pre-charge of terrorist suspects, is significantly extended.*

We are currently examining ways of allowing more sensitive evidence, specifically evidence derived from intercept, to be produced in court. The Government have accepted the decision of the House of Commons that the maximum period of pre-charge detention should be extended to 28 days.

7. *To extend the use of control orders for those who are British nationals and cannot be deported.*

To date a total of 17 control orders have been made of which nine have been revoked because the individuals who were the subject of the orders are now detained under immigration powers pending deportation. Eight orders are therefore currently in force, one of which is in respect of a British national.

8. *To expand the court capacity necessary to deal with control orders and other related issues. The Lord Chancellor will increase the number of special judges hearing such cases;*

The Department for Constitutional Affairs is reviewing the capacity of the courts, specialist tribunals and the judiciary to deal with existing and anticipated caseload relating to terrorism, with a view to meeting the demands of counter-terrorism.

The judiciary have been very supportive of our efforts to improve the efficiency of terrorism-related trials. They have put in hand new procedures for the allocation, handling and case management of such trials. Her Majesty's Court Service is making an additional suitable court room available.

9. *To proscribe Hizb-ut-Tahrir and the successor organisation of Al Muiahiroun, and to examine the ground for proscription to widen them and put forward proposals in the new legislation.*

The Terrorism Bill widens the criteria for proscription. The list of proscribed organisations will be reviewed on the basis of the new Bill.

10. *To review the threshold for the acquisition of British citizenship to make sure that it is adequate, and to establish with the Muslim community a commission to advise on how there is better integration of those parts of the community presently inadequately integrated.*

The Immigration, Asylum and Nationality Bill will extend the requirement to be "of good character", which presently applies only to those seeking citizenship by naturalisation, to all applicants for citizenship except those relying on a provision in the 1961 UN Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness. I will establish a Commission drawing on representatives of all faiths and communities and have written to faith leaders for their views on membership and terms of reference. I intend to make an announcement on this matter early in the new year.

In addition, my Department continued to work with representatives of the Muslim community, culminating in the announcement of a number of important initiatives including:

the creation of a National Advisory Council on Mosques and Imams;

the training and accreditation of imams; and

placing a greater emphasis on citizenship training for children attending madrassahs.

11. *To consult on a new power to order closure of a place of worship which is used as a centre for fomenting extremism, and to consult with Muslim leaders in respect of those clerics who are not British citizens to draw up a list of those not suitable to preach and who will be excluded from our country in the future.*

I have today placed in the Library of the House and on the Home Office website the responses to the consultation paper "Preventing Extremism Together: Places of Worship" which was issued on 6 October. We received 66 responses in total, from a range of individuals, and representative national faith and law enforcement organisations. I am grateful to everyone who submitted views.

Respondents were clear that strengthening police and community partnership was the most effective way of dealing with the problem of extremism at places of worship, emphasising in particular greater exploitation of existing police channels by communities to report extremist behaviour earlier, citizenship training and, as was emphasised in the response Association of Chief Police Officers, the earlier use of existing legislation and operational techniques by law enforcement agencies.

This commitment to joint working and information sharing, alongside the provisions to tackle extremism in the Terrorism Bill and the positive recommendations that emerged from the "Preventing Extremism Together" report published on 10 November, represents a coherent package of action and, consequently, I will not seek to legislate on this issue at the present time, although we will keep the matter under review.

A database of individuals around the world who have demonstrated unacceptable behaviour is being developed.

12. *To bring forward the proposed measures on the security of our borders with a series of countries specifically designated for biometric visas over the next year; and to compile an international database of those individuals whose activities or views pose a threat to Britain's security—anyone on the database will be excluded from entry with any appeal only taking place outside the country.*

Embarkation controls were immediately introduced as a response to terrorists attacks in London. Fixed controls were introduced at major ports in support of Special Branch. The Immigration Service has the ability to re-establish a fixed embarkation control at one hour's notice in case of urgent operational need.

Over the next five years, e-Borders will transform our immigration control. Using new technology we will develop an integrated system to check travellers before they enter the UK and to prevent travel to those who have no right to enter or who are known security threats. E-Borders will also enable us to take appropriate

actions against passengers of interest to each of the border agencies, and to collect information on when people arrive and whether they leave.

With this approach we will be able to improve security, improve efficiency and improve data information flow and intelligence on people entering and leaving the UK. The introduction of high-tech e-Borders will be combined with the phasing in of biometric passport-based ID cards to increase substantially our knowledge of who is coming in and out of the country.

We have already implemented biometrics operations in visa posts in Sri Lanka and East Africa; new operations began in Vietnam, Democratic Republic of Congo and the Netherlands in November 2005. As a result, Biometric Match data is available to Entry Clearance Officers in these countries before a decision is taken. By 2008, all those entering the UK on a visa will have been fingerprinted and digitally photographed. Border Control staff are working with the United Kingdom Passport Service (UKPS) to identify and provide authentication and verification of biometrically enabled travel documents.

As set out earlier, we have worked with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office to establish an international database of individuals whose behaviour gives cause for concern.

Public inquiry

In addition to work on the 12 point plan, I have given careful consideration to the views of those who have asked the Government to establish a foil public inquiry into the atrocities of 7 July. The Government do not believe that such an inquiry would add to our understanding of the causes of those atrocities, in particular when there are Parliamentary and other inquiries underway into these and related events. Additionally, to establish one would be to divert the attention of our police and security services during an extended period of time when they are still actively engaged in both the murder investigation which continues and the detection and prevention of further atrocities.

However, I believe that it is important to set out clearly an authoritative account or "narrative" of what happened before and around 7 July. Accordingly my Department will develop such a narrative which we intend should be published in due course. In doing so, they will work closely with the police and security services. In making final decisions on the content of the narrative to be published we will of course have due regard to the need not to compromise intelligence sources or put at risk possible prosecutions.

Oakington Investigation

The Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality (Mr. Tony McNulty): An action plan containing all 54 recommendations from the investigation carried out by Stephen Shaw into the allegations contained in the BBC documentary, "Detention Undercover: the Real Story" has been compiled and is being published today. The recommendations are aimed at strengthening management, improving the monitoring of people at centres across the detention estate and improving staff attitude towards detainees.

We have now implemented 30 of the recommendations and any outstanding recommendations relating specifically to Oakington will be implemented by March 2006. All contractors who operate centres under contract to the immigration and nationality directorate have taken on board those recommendations not aimed specifically at Oakington to ensure consistency across the detention estate. All remaining recommendations will be implemented by October 2006.

We have always made it clear that there is absolutely no place for racism anywhere in our society, and particularly within the immigration system. Immigration staff will continue to work closely with the contractors to ensure that all those who are detained are treated with dignity and respect.

PRIME MINISTER

Cabinet Committees

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): I have today placed a copy of the current list of Cabinet Committees, their full membership and terms of reference in the Libraries of both Houses. Details have also been updated on the Cabinet Office website.

Committee on Standards in Public Life (Tenth Report)

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): I am today publishing the Government's response to the Tenth Report of the Committee on Standards in Public Life, "Getting the Balance Right: Implementing Standards of Conduct in Public Life". The Government have considered the Committee's report with great care, and I would like to place on record my thanks to the Committee for its thorough consideration of these issues. Our response to the main recommendations is as follows:

Ethical Standards Framework for Local Government

We consider that a move to a more locally based process for considering misconduct allegations against local government members, along the lines recommended by the Committee, would be the most appropriate way of addressing local issues and ensuring the local ownership of standards.

To maintain a culture of good conduct and provide strategic support to enable councillors to manage conduct issues effectively, we feel there is an essential, continuing role for the Standards Board for England in supporting high standards locally, as also recommended by the Committee.

Public Appointments

The Government accept the Committee's recommendation that more systematic information should be published by departments on their overall policy and approach to public appointments. The Cabinet Office will work with Departments to ensure a more consistent approach.

The Government also recognise the important role of independent assessors in the process and believes that the accreditation of independent assessors should be given further consideration by the Commissioner in consultation with the Cabinet Office and departments.

The Government are also attracted to the Committee's recommendation for a Board of Public Appointments Commissioners, and for individual Commissioners to each be linked to a small number of departments. However, such a proposal will have cost implications and the Government would therefore welcome the views of the Public Administration Select Committee who are currently carrying out an Inquiry into the role and independence of the ethical regulators of Government.

Copies of the Government's response [Cm 6723] have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Wilson Doctrine

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): The Government have received advice from the Interception of Communications Commissioner, Sir. Swinton Thomas, on the possible implications for the Wilson Doctrine of the regulatory framework for the interception of communications, under the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.

The Government are considering that advice. I shall inform Parliament of the outcome at the earliest opportunity.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Coal Health Compensation Schemes

The Minister for Energy (Malcolm Wicks): I announced in my written statement of 21 July that I was setting up an independent external review of the handling of the Department's coal health compensation schemes. This followed a series of press articles raising concerns about various aspects of the schemes.

The terms of reference for the review were:

> To review the integrity of the administration of the scheme for dealing with coal health claims; and to identify any specific measures needed to improve the administration of the scheme; to consider whether there are adequate safeguards in place to prevent, detect and pursue fraud while ensuring the fair and timely settlement of claims; and to make recommendations accordingly to Ministers and/or the accounting officer.

The review was undertaken by a team led by Stephen Boys Smith, a former senior official at the Home Office.

I am publishing today the report of the review. I have placed the report in the Libraries of both Houses and it is available on the Department's website at: http://www.dti.gov.uk/coalhealth/.

I am grateful to Stephen Boys Smith and the review team for producing a focused report on what are complicated issues.

The Coal Schemes were initially set up to discharge very substantial liabilities, inherited by my Department from British Coal, for industrial injuries suffered by miners. In total we estimate they will result in payment to miners and their estates of up to £5 billion in compensation. We are about halfway through the schemes and more than £2.8 billion has been paid out in compensation so far. As the report notes, and as Members in coal mining constituencies will be aware, significant sums have been paid out in the coal areas equivalent to around 3.5 per cent. of local annual income. Current expenditure is nearly £2 million a day.

In short, I think that the Government are fully facing up to their obligations to discharge these liabilities. Given the scale of the task, it is important that there is confidence that the schemes are being well run. I am therefore pleased to take from the report the assurance that:

> the administration of the schemes is basically sound although there are lessons to be learned about how the schemes were put into operation;
>
> that, aside from continuing efficiency improvements, no major changes are needed to improve the running of the schemes; and
>
> that the fraud procedures in place are appropriate.

The report also rejects the argument that the Union of Democratic Mineworkers were granted more favourable terms over other parties and confirms that arrangements with the UDM effectively provided identical compensation to that under the "Agreements with the Claimants Group".

The report also makes a number of specific recommendations. The Department fully accepts those recommendations which are directed at it and will follow them through in the months ahead. I will report to the House as appropriate on this.

I wish to comment at this point, however, on the report's specific conclusions and recommendations in three areas, namely the initial design of the scheme; the issue of the costs of administering the scheme, including legal costs; and the issue of transparency.

On the basic design of the schemes, the report concludes that the arrangements put in place in the late 1990s were not the best way to administer compensation for so many people; and it goes on to recommend that, were a similar case to arise in future, the Government "should very carefully examine alternative ways of proceeding".

I agree with this recommendation.

When the basic groundwork for the current schemes was put in place in the late 1990s, no one knew that we would have anything like as many as 700,000 claims under the schemes; and, in particular, that we would have so many relatively low value claims. The existing schemes are now well established and we have introduced radical changes to the lung disease scheme in the last twelve months to speed up the processing of significant numbers of claims.

Any further substantive changes to the existing schemes would run the risk of delaying the payment of claims which would be to no one's benefit. Moreover, given that we are in the last few years of the current schemes now is not the time for further redesign. But were we to face such circumstances again, we would undoubtedly want to think long and hard about whether there are better alternatives.

The second key issue which the report raises is the question of costs and solicitors' costs in particular.

In commenting on this, I should first make clear the considerable contribution to the running of the scheme that has been made by the various firms of solicitors involved. The schemes are complex; and it is entirely right and proper that miners and their families should have professional legal support through this process, funded by the Government under the legal obligations we inherited from British Coal.

But the report nonetheless points out that the legal cost structures were largely negotiated, along with the agreements themselves, at a time when the anticipated volumes of cases under the schemes were considerably lower than has proved to be the case. It would be wrong not to recognise that higher than anticipated volumes of cases undoubtedly bring opportunities for batch processing and reduced costs per case. The report also notes that not every claim will always require the assistance of qualified legal professionals and that the cost to public funds "does not now necessarily reflect the more routine nature of the work". The report recommends, therefore, that we consider whether there is more to be done in this area, with the aim of ensuring that legal costs more accurately reflect the nature of the work actually undertaken.

This is an issue the Department is already actively pursuing. In particular, we believe that the new "fast-track" approach we have implemented this year for the lung disease scheme should require significantly less input by solicitors and should therefore incur considerably reduced costs.

We have argued that case with the solicitors' representatives and, indeed, before the High Court. We have now taken the issue to the Court of Appeal. I do not think it appropriate to comment in detail at this stage. But significant sums in legal costs—perhaps up to £200 million of taxpayers money—are at stake.

There are also other areas where we have yet to reach agreement with the claimants' solicitors on costs and we will be pursuing these equally vigorously to ensure they reflect work done and a reasonable level of return.

More generally, I regret that legal costs have become the source of such contention. It is right that solicitors are properly rewarded for the work they have done. But claimants representatives will recognise that it does no good whatsoever to the reputation of themselves or their profession if they are perceived in the press and elsewhere, rightly or wrongly, as being primarily motivated by fee earning opportunities.

In this context, the report also discusses the concern that in some cases solicitors have taken money from claimants' compensation to cover costs even though legal costs are met by the Government, and that, again in some cases, union fees have been deducted from compensation. Both issues are discussed in the report in some detail.

Clearly, it would be wholly unacceptable for deductions to be made from any compensation payment without the claimant's agreement, though the report notes that, as far as they were aware, there were no examples of that happening. But the report equally suggests that in some cases, claimants appear to have been invited to agree to make such contributions without it being crystal clear to them that such donations were a matter for their choice and that other solicitors would not seek to make them. That would strike me, to say the least, as questionable.

These are essentially matters about conduct within the legal profession and the Department has no direct role. We have, however, raised the issues with the Law Society in the past and will continue to make clear to them the importance of taking these issues forward rigorously and proactively. There is again legal action in prospect, though not involving the Department. The report does however make a specific recommendation that, subject to the outcome of any legal action in this area, the legal profession should take forward the issue of claimants who were not made fully aware that they were free to use solicitors who did not make any deductions. The report calls on the legal profession to take this forward. I urge them to do so—and I will follow up this issue with the Law Society.

Third, we have also taken steps immediately to address the recommendation about greater availably of information about the schemes. We have already put on the website: http://www.dti.gov.uk/coalhealth/ the claims handling agreements, including the UDM agreements, and the latest reports to the courts on progress of the schemes—which cover a lot of detail. We will consider what further information might be added and would welcome input from interested parties about what additional information they would find helpful.

Although it is not dealt with within the report, I can also report separately to the House that the Serious Fraud Office has now confirmed to my Department that, while their investigations are continuing, their investigation is not now focusing on any suspected fraud against the Department.

Company Law (Operating and Financial Review)

The Minister for Industry and the Regions (Alun Michael): The Chancellor announced on 28 November that the Government had decided no longer to require quoted companies to prepare an Operating and Financial Review, in addition to the requirements of the EU Accounts Modernisation Directive.

I am today laying regulations which repeal the requirement on quoted companies to prepare an Operating and Financial Review for financial years starting on or after 1 April 2005. They will need to include a Business Review as part of the Directors' Report, in compliance with the EU Accounts Modernisation Directive requirements. This is in line with the Government's general policy not to impose regulatory requirements on UK businesses over and above relevant EU Directive requirements. I am today publishing guidance on the regulations.

We are committed to improving strategic, forward-looking narrative reporting by companies, and to enhanced dialogue with shareholders based on such reporting. We believe it is important for companies to report on non-financial issues relevant to the development and performance of the business, including, for example, environmental matters and human capital management, and they will need to do so under the Business Review requirements. The Business Review will need to cover principal risks and uncertainties as well as giving a balanced and comprehensive analysis of the business.

The contents of the Business Review cover much of the ground covered in the Operating and Financial Review, but in less prescriptive form. The depth of analysis required is proportionate to the size and complexity of the business. A small company (namely one which satisfies two of the following: turnover of not more than £5.6 million balance sheet total of not more than £2.8 million; not more than 50 employees) need

provide no such review. Also, the Business Review does not have the additional audit requirement specified for the OFR.

Companies that have been preparing to produce an OFR will be able to use that work to produce their Business Review. In addition, many companies have been producing a voluntary OFR for some years, and may wish to continue doing so using work that they have done toward the mandatory OFR. Or they may use that work to improve the quality and depth of their Business Review.

The Government also believe that disclosures—both mandatory and voluntary—are only part of the picture. On their own, disclosures are insufficient to generate responses by businesses to the legitimate concerns of civil society. Dialogue with and pressure from stakeholders, including the public, NGOs, shareholders and Government, is vital for achieving this outcome.

In order to have the maximum impact, it is important that the requirements for narrative reporting are properly calibrated, and neither impose an excessive compliance burden, nor push companies into a "tick box" or "boilerplate" approach to disclosure.

As regards enforcement of the Business Review requirements, the Financial Reporting and Review Panel has the legal authority to review a company's Directors' Report, for financial years beginning on or after 1 April 2006 and, if necessary, go to the court to compel a company to revise its report.

The Company Law Reform Bill contains provisions relating to the Operating and Financial Review. We intend to bring forward amendments to remove the need for a quoted company to produce an Operating and Financial Review. In future such a company will have to produce a Business Review. I am today inviting views from interested parties by 15 February before we bring forward appropriate amendments to the Bill.

TRANSPORT

Night Flying Restrictions

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Ms Karen Buck): On 10 June 2005 I launched stage 2 of a two-stage consultation process about setting the night restrictions regime at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted to run to October 2012. The consultation paper explained that we intended to continue the present night restrictions regime for a further year from 30 October 2005 until 29 October 2006.

We stated that, during that year the current regime should continue unchanged. The consultation document then invited comment on whether the specific movements limits and noise quotas to apply for summer 2006 should be the same as those for summer 2005. I also announced that the movements limits and noise quotas for winter 2005–06 should remain the same as those for winter 2004–05.

After careful consideration of the responses on this subject to the stage 2 consultation on night flying restrictions which we launched in June, we have concluded that the movements limits and noise quotas for the summer season 2006 should be the same as for summer 2005.

The reasons for adopting this approach remain as set out in the consultation paper and were not disputed by those responding to the consultation.

We are continuing to consider carefully the full responses on the other issues outlined in the recent consultation exercise and will make an announcement in due course on the night restrictions regime to apply from 29 October 2006.

The consultation also invited comment in a range of issues including the length of the night quota period (currently 11.30pm until 6am), the specific movements limits and noise quotas, proposals for environmental objectives and specific noise abatement objectives and possible noise insulation schemes or criteria in respect of night disturbance.

Although there was relatively little comment on the specific point about the summer 2006 movements limits and noise quotas, there was been a greater response about other issues raised in the consultation. We are continuing to analyse those responses and carry out the associated assessments including a full Regulatory Impact Assessment.

Road Safety Cameras

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr. Alistair Darling): I am today publishing an independent research report which confirms the effectiveness of the national safety camera programme over the four years from April 2000 to March 2004. I am also announcing changes which will end the current ring-fencing of funding for safety cameras, and will give much more local flexibility and accountability, both on funding and in other respects, to local authorities, the police and the other agencies who are involved in improving road safety at the local level.

The four-year research report, prepared by PA Consulting and University College London, examines over 4,000 camera sites in 38 safety camera partnership areas, covering virtually the whole of Great Britain. The report finds that safety cameras continue to be highly effective in reducing speeding, accidents and casualties at camera sites:

- The number of vehicles exceeding the speed limit fell by 70 per cent. at fixed camera sites;
- After allowing for the general trend of improving road safety, there was a 22 per cent. reduction in personal injury collisions (PICs)—around 4,230 fewer per annum; and
- Again after allowing for the general trend, there was a 42 per cent. reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSIs)—around 1,745 fewer per annum, including over 100 fewer deaths.

The report also considers the "regression-to-mean" effect. This effect arises because the number of PICs and KSIs in the period before installation of a camera may be higher than the long-term average for that location. The report finds that, at the very small number of sites where it was possible to examine this effect, a proportion of the observed reduction in PICs and KSIs could be attributable to regression-to-mean. The report concludes that, even after allowing for this finding, safety cameras are achieving substantial and valuable reductions in collisions and casualties.

I have placed a copy of the PA-UCL report in the Library. It will also be available on my Department's website.

I am also announcing today important changes to the national safety camera programme in England and Wales. Taking account of the findings of the four year report, we have concluded that:

> Safety cameras are delivering substantial and valuable reductions in accidents and casualties;
>
> The current netting-off funding arrangements have enabled a rapid programme of investment in safety cameras;
>
> The safety camera programme is now more mature, with some camera partnerships seeking few or no additional camera sites, as many of the worst casualty sites where a camera is the right solution have now been dealt with.

It is therefore now timely that camera activity and partnerships are integrated into the wider road safety delivery process. For the future we are going to give greater flexibility to local authorities, the police and the other agencies who work with them to improve road safety, so that they can pursue whichever locally agreed mix of road safety measures will make the greatest contribution to reducing road casualties in their area. As part of this process the responsibility for safety cameras in Wales will transfer to the National Assembly for Wales.

Therefore, 2006–07 will be the last year of the netting-off funding arrangements for safety cameras in England and Wales. I understand that the Scottish Ministers are also considering the future of the hypothecated Safety Camera Programme in Scotland, and will announce their decision in due course.

For 2007–08 and beyond, my department will enhance the overall level of funding for road safety provided to local highway authorities in England through the Local Transport Plan (LTP) process. For the first time a proportion of this funding will be revenue based.

The enhanced funding will be allocated to authorities in accordance with their road safety needs (using the existing LTP road safety formula) and with the quality of their second round LTP submissions and delivery record. We will also provide enhanced funding to Transport for London. My Department is writing to all highway authorities in England to provide details of this change, and inviting them to reflect this new flexibility in their LTP submissions due in March 2006.

We propose to allocate some £110 million a year for this enhanced funding over the period 2007–08 to 2010–11. As well as the greater flexibility, this will provide financial stability and facilitate long term planning. It is also a substantial increase in funding for road safety, by comparison with the latest projection of 2005–06 expenditure by safety camera partnerships in England which is some £93 million.

In considering the quality of LTP submissions, we will have regard to, among other factors, the degree of cooperation and wider collaboration between the local authority, the police force and the other relevant agencies in the area, in respect of their road safety strategy, linkages with other areas of work and their approach to tackling individual problematic locations. We want local strategies and decisions to be well-founded, taking account of the combined knowledge and expertise of all the agencies concerned, and to avoid duplication of effort. My Department will work closely with local road safety partnerships to help them produce high quality bids, and to deliver substantial casualty reductions. We will also encourage road safety partnerships to include a wider range of other organisations in local decision-making, and not restrict themselves only to police and local authorities.

For the final year of safety camera netting-off funding in 2006–07 we are amending the handbook of "Rules and Guidance" to reflect the findings of the four-year report. The criteria on the location of safety cameras are being changed to ensure that cameras can be used where there is a strong road safety need. The deployment criteria will take account of all injury accidents as well as the level of KSIs, look back five years rather than three; and allow camera enforcement on routes where there is a serious problem of speeding and casualties, without the problem necessarily being concentrated at one particular location. A copy of the updated handbook will be placed in the Library and on my Department's website in due course.

The handbook will also make improvements to the signing of cameras, to further assist drivers to recognise and comply with the speed limit:

> Speed limit and camera signs will be co-located where possible.
>
> Signs will be placed to allow the sign and camera to be visible to the driver in the same view.

We also intend to publish shortly revised guidance to Traffic Authorities on setting local speed limits, which will request authorities to review the speed limits on their A and B roads by 2011, and to give priority to reviewing the limit on any road [not just A and B roads) on which there are poor casualty histories or there is a widespread disregard for the current speed limit, especially where safety cameras are being considered. By undertaking this review, which may lead to inappropriately low speed limits being raised as well as inappropriately high speed limits being lowered, we wish to encourage motorists to have greater respect for speed limits generally.

Regional Air Access to London

The Secretary of State for Transport (Mr Alistair Darling): The Government have today published guidance on the Protection of Regional Air Access to London, copies have been placed in the Libraries of the House. This guidance was foreshadowed in "The Future of Air Transport" White Paper (December 2003) and follows extensive consultation with stakeholders.

The aim of the guidance is to clarify how the Government will interpret the criteria in the relevant European Regulation (EC 2408/92) when assessing applications for Public Service Obligations (PSOs) to protect existing regional air services to London. A more precise definition of the criteria will provide a firmer basis for the discussion of individual cases with both airlines and regional bodies.

"The Future of Air Transport" White Paper recognised the concern of regional stakeholders about the availability of landing and take-off slots at major London airports. It stated that the Government were prepared to intervene in well defined circumstances to protect slots at the London airports for regional services through imposing PSOs. Where services already exist from UK regional airports to London (defined as City,

Gatwick, Heathrow, Luton and Stansted airports), this intervention would guarantee a minimum level of scheduled air services on these routes.

The criteria for PSO imposition are set out, but not precisely defined in EC Regulation 2408/92. In 2004, The Government consulted on interpretations of these criteria and the agreed definitions are set out in the guidance. The Government consider that in order to justify intervention in the market, a PSO application must illustrate the benefits to the regional and national economy that would otherwise be lost if a service was withdrawn. It will be the responsibility of regional bodies to make a case for a PSO against the criteria. In order to assist regional bodies in assembling the evidence required to demonstrate wider benefits, the guidance contains an Annex which provides a common methodology for assessing the economic benefits of maintaining an adequate air service to London, so as to ensure transparency and comparability.

Final judgment on the eligibility of a route for PSO imposition rests with me, as Secretary of State for Transport, and would be based on the merits of each case set against the criteria in Regulation 2408/92. If an application is supported, the Department would notify the European Commission and air carriers operating the route, and a PSO would be imposed to the extent necessary to ensure on that route the adequate provision of scheduled air services satisfying fixed standards of continuity, regularity, capacity and pricing. After a PSO has been imposed on a route, European Law (Regulation 95/93 as amended) allows Member States to reserve slots at airports on that route so that an airline cannot use them for a service to an alternative destination. The reservation of slots is at the discretion of the Member State and can only take place at airports designated as "co-ordinated", which in London are Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted.

The Government think it unlikely that the imposition of a PSO on a route to London would require subsidy. All regional routes to London are currently commercially viable. Should subsidy be required, however, it would be the responsibility of the relevant regional body to reimburse the Department for these funds. PSOs will be reviewed every three years to ensure that their imposition is still appropriate and the obligations set out are being met.

In addition to clarifying the interpretation of the European Regulation, the guidance also supports a voluntary early warning system for airlines operating regional routes to London. This invites airlines to provide as much notice as possible, preferably at least four months, of their intention to withdraw from, or reduce services on routes to London. Whilst I recognise that airlines operate within a competitive commercial environment, I believe that the early warning system strikes a good balance between the need to maintain an adequate level of regional services to London, and limiting the Government intervention in the market. The system offers regional partners together with the Government the time and opportunity to explore all potential solutions to ensure continuity of regional services into London.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Autumn Performance Report

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. John Hutton): I am publishing today the Autumn Performance Report of the Department for Work and Pensions. The report is intended to supplement the Department's annual report published in June 2005 (Cm 6539).

The report provides the latest account of how the Department is performing against its Public Service Agreement targets. Copies have been placed in the Library.

Social Fund

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. James Plaskitt): I would like to expand upon the Pre-Budget Report 2005 announcements on the treatment of capital in the discretionary Social Fund.

The Government have already announced a number of significant improvements to the budgeting loan scheme to take effect from April 2006, which will amount to an increase in finding of £210 million over three years. There will be further publicity about these for customers and advisers nearer April.

In addition, to ensure that budgeting loan recipients are not penalised for having small amounts of savings, Pre-Budget Report 2005 announced that the capital allowances available to budgeting loan applicants would be increased from April 2006. The current rules mean that capital of up to £500 (for people of working age) or up to £1,000 (for pensioners) is ignored when deciding whether a budgeting loan should be awarded and the amount of the loan. Capital in excess of £500/£1,000 will be offset against the amount of loan sought. From April 2006 the allowances will increase to £1,000 (people of working age) and £2,000 (pensioners).

The crisis loan scheme works differently from the budgeting loan scheme, with all resources available to the applicant taken into account when deciding whether a loan can be made. There is no capital allowance and one will not be introduced.

The Government are also currently exploring the scope to make early improvements to the community care grant scheme, to tighten its focus on the cases with the strongest case for help. This currently operates the same capital allowances as the budgeting loan scheme and we will consider whether the same change or any other change should be made to the treatment of capital as part of this work.

Written Ministerial Statements

Monday 19 December 2005

TREASURY

Former Inland Revenue—"Hansard" Statement

The Paymaster General (Dawn Primarolo): This is to clarify the position of the civil settlement procedure for serious tax evasion offences, known commonly among tax professionals as "Hansard", following the introduction within HM Revenue and Customs of a new single procedure on the 1 September 2005 for dealing with cases of fraud civilly.

Both former HM Customs and Excise and the Inland Revenue had procedures for tackling serious acts of evasion using civil sanctions. Following the creation of HMRC it is important for the efficient and effective administration of the tax system, that there should be a single process to resolve both direct and indirect tax losses where they result from the same fraudulent behaviour.

HMRC reviewed their procedures and following consultation with external stakeholders, introduced a new single procedure for handling fraud cases civilly on 1 September 2005. This builds on and replaces former procedures inherited from both former Departments such as the Revenue's "Hansard" and Customs' VAT "New Approach".

With effect from that date, previous procedures will not be used for cases of suspected fraud, but they will continue to be used on cases commenced under these procedures prior to 1 September 2005.

A new Code of Practice 9 (2005) has been introduced in respect of these procedures and a copy is being placed in the House of Commons Library.

Public Service Pensions

The Chief Secretary to the Treasury (Mr. Des Browne): Legislation governing public service pensions requires public service pensions to be increased annually by the same percentage as additional pensions (State Earnings Related Pension and State Second Pension). My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions announced on 6 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 74, that benefits such as additional pensions will be increased by 2.7 per cent. in line with the annual increase in the retail prices index up to September 2005. Public service pensions will therefore be increased by 2.7 per cent. from 10 April 2006, except those which have been in payment for less than a year, which will receive a pro-rata increase.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

General Affairs and External Relations Council

The Minister for Europe (Mr. Douglas Alexander): The General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) was held on 12 December in Brussels. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs chaired the Council as presidency and I represented the UK on certain agenda items.

The agenda items were covered as follows:

Annual operating Programme (AOP) of the Council for 2006

The incoming Austrian and Finnish presidencies introduced the annual operating programme. The main operational lines of the programme will be:

rekindling the confidence of people in the European project;

the European model, including those issues in the constitutional treaty, which promoted quality of life;

driving forward the Lisbon process in the run-up to the spring European Council, with a

focus on growth and jobs;

follow up to the Hampton Court summit;

promoting Europe on the world stage;

the EU's external policy, with a focus on South East Europe and the Western Balkans.

Financial Perspective 2007–13

The presidency outlined the results of the 7 December conclave and other discussions, and noted that it aimed to issue a revised negotiating box on Wednesday 14 December, with a view to achieving consensus at the European Council on 15–16 December. There was no further discussion.

Preparation for the December European Council

The presidency gave an update on preparations for the European Council on 15–16 December, and the Council had an initial discussion of European Council conclusions.

The Council also had a short discussion of the Commission and Council papers setting out priority actions for improving migration management—with a focus on Africa and the Mediterranean—which were mandated by the Hampton Court summit.

Western Balkans

Croatia: the Council welcomed the recent arrest of Ante Gotovina and praised the work of the International Criminal Tribunal for Yugoslavia (ICTY).

Kosovo: High Representative Solana and Commissioner Rehn presented their joint paper on the EU's future role in Kosovo. They underlined the fact that the EU should prepare for an enhanced post-status role but should not prejudge the end of the status process. The presidency noted that the EU would continue to act under UN authority for the foreseeable future.

Bosnia high representative/EU special representative (HR/EUSR): the Council agreed to support the nomination of Dr. Schwarz-Schilling as Lord Ashdown's successor.

Macedonia: the Council discussed the Commission's opinion that the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia should be granted candidate country status and agreed that the decision should be referred to the European Council. The Council agreed short conclusions reflecting this decision.

Enlargement

The Council agreed conclusions on enlargement with minimal discussion.

European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP)

Commissioner Ferrero-Waldner briefed the Council on progress under the European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP), one year after its launch, and identified key priorities for 2006. She noted that seven ENP action plans had now been negotiated and formally adopted (with Israel, Jordan, Moldova, Morocco, the Palestinian Authority, Tunisia and Ukraine) and that partners had begun implementing the agreed priorities, in line with clear timetables. She also noted that the ENP had strengthened and expanded the scope of the EU's political dialogue with a number of Mediterranean countries and facilitated the regular discussion of issues such as democracy, human rights and governance.

Ferrero-Waldner identified the completion of the next five ENP action plans (with Egypt, Lebanon, Armenia, Azerbaijan and Georgia), preparation of an ENP Country Report on Algeria and the smooth transition between the existing neighbourhood programmes (2005–06) and the new cross-border co-operation programmes (2007–13) as priorities for 2006. The Council supported Ferrero-Waldner's assessment and also highlighted the importance of reviewing the implementation of existing action plans.

EU/Africa

The Council discussed the EU-Africa strategy. The Council agreed that the strategy would play a crucial role in directing clear and substantive EU engagement with Africa in coming years. The Council agreed the strategy and submitted it to the European Council.

Ethiopia/Eritrea

The Council discussed the deterioration of the situation in Ethiopia-Eritrea over the last few months and the recent Eritrean request that European and North American members of the UN Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE) should be withdrawn. The presidency noted that an EU mission, led by my noble Friend the Minister for Africa (Lord Triesman of Tottenham), would visit the region on 17 December. Council conclusions were agreed, calling for co-operation with UNMEE and early progress on border demarcation.

Middle East Declaration

The Council directed officials to continue working on the draft of a Middle East declaration in advance of the Foreign Ministers' dinner on 15 December.

AOB—EU/ASEM/Burma

Some member states raised the issue of Burmese representation at EU/Asia-Europe meetings.

HEALTH

Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Jane Kennedy): We have received the Annual Report and Accounts of the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency for 2004–05 which has been laid before Parliament today in accordance with the requirements of sections 5(2) and 5(3) of the Exchequer and Audit Departments Act 1921. Copies have also been placed in the Library.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Autumn Performance Report 2005

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): The Home Office autumn performance report 2005 has been published today by Command of Her Majesty. Copies of the report are available in the Vote Office and in the Library. The report is also available on the Home Office website.

The report sets out the progress we have made towards achieving our public service agreement targets.

The report shows that we have made significant progress against our targets. Overall crime is down by 12 per cent., and the fear of crime has fallen. In the year to September 2005 we have brought 1.194 million offences to justice, exceeding our target for 2005–06. Police performance has improved, but there is still much to do in reforming the police services, to meet operational requirements and the public's expectations. Our drugs strategy continues to deliver real benefits to communities across the country with record numbers of drug misusing offenders entering drug treatment through the Criminal Justice System, and falling drug related crime. Asylum remains under control, with sustained falls in those not only claiming asylum but also those whose claims are unfounded.

Ministers of Religion

The Minister for Immigration, Citizenship and Nationality (Mr. Tony McNulty): I am today announcing the results of our recent consultation exercise on the immigration provisions for religious workers from abroad.

It has long been the case that we have recognised that religious communities in the UK can face difficulties in recruiting sufficient numbers or suitably trained personnel from within the resident labour market. Therefore there are longstanding provisions in the immigration rules which enable faith communities to recruit religious personnel from overseas.

However, it is important that these provisions balance the needs of faith communities with the twin aims of maintaining community cohesion and maintaining an effective immigration control and we have been working with faith communities over the last couple of years to ensure these aims are met.

Since the White Paper "Secure Borders, Safe Haven" was published in February 2002 we have held two separate consultation exercises with faith communities about our immigration provisions. As a result of the first consultation, since August last year all those applying for leave as a Minister of Religion have had to demonstrate that they speak English so that they can speak to and for their communities. At the moment this is to a basic level (level four of IELTS), but we announced at the time that this will be raised to the standard of a competent user of English (level six IELTS) in August 2006. Also as a result of the first

consultation, some migrants already in the UK have been able to change the basis of their stay to be recognised as a Minister of Religion.

We recently completed a second stage of consultation on the skills needed to practise ministry in a diverse and cohesive society. The consultation ran from March to July this year, and asked faith communities for their views on pre-entry qualifications for those entering the UK for religious employment and on civic knowledge tests for those who have been in the UK for at least a year. Due to some concerns raised, we also asked for views on the impact of the English language requirement on religious workers in non-pastoral roles.

The Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department, my hon. Friend the Member for Wythenshawe and Sale East (Paul Goggins), the Minister with responsibility for faith issues, and I have now fully considered both the written responses to this consultation and would like to announce the following measures:

Firstly, we will be introducing a pre-entry qualification requirement for religious workers from abroad. This will mean that any overseas national seeking to enter the UK to perform religious duties will have to demonstrate that their community considers that they are suitably qualified to perform these duties.

The faith communities themselves support this approach. We recognise that different faith groups have very diverse standards to assess who is qualified to work in their community, and we will be working with them on the best way of introducing such a requirement. For this reason, the pre-entry qualification will not be introduced now, but as part of the implementation of the new points based system for managed migration.

Secondly, I will introduce a new category within the Immigration Rules for religious workers in non-pastoral roles. This category, which is being laid before Parliament today and will come into effect on 9 January 2006, will enable religious communities in the UK to recruit the personnel they need from abroad. Many faiths require a range of personnel to perform religious rites in their community but who do not have a pastoral role. This new category caters for such workers. The requirements of the new category reflect the roles that these people will fill. For example, Ministers of Religion preach to their congregation and therefore are required to speak English, but those coming to the UK under the new category will have a non-pastoral role and will not be required to speak English. Following discussions with the faith communities, they will not be eligible to stay in the UK for more than two years.

I have also taken this opportunity to clarify the provisions for certain religious workers who have previously been able to come to the UK for short periods as visitors by including them within this new category.

The recent consultation also proposed a post-entry civic knowledge test for Ministers of Religion from Abroad, which would apply at the point at which the individual applied for an extension of their stay, normally after one year. However, since then we have introduced an equivalent test for all those applying for British citizenship. We have also published proposals for changes to the requirements for settlement, to include a civic knowledge test, as part of our five-year strategy for asylum and immigration. Therefore we are not proposing introducing a civic knowledge test for Ministers of Religion from Abroad at this stage, but will consider the issue again in the context of these subsequent changes.

Both changes I announce today recognise the needs of the faith communities and their concerns about ensuring that overseas nationals have the skills needed to practice their ministry in the UK's diverse society. They also balance this with the aims of community cohesion and a robust and effective immigration control. We will continue to work with the faith communities on these issues.

TRANSPORT

Modernising Operator Licensing

The Minister of State, Department for Transport (Dr. Stephen Ladyman): I have today published a consultation paper setting out the Government's proposals for streamlining and modernising the licensing system for operators of heavy goods vehicles and public service vehicles. Copies have been placed in the Library of the House.

The proposals take forward our commitment in the White Paper "The Future of Transport" to provide better regulation of the road haulage and passenger transport industries.

The three key changes proposed in the consultation are:

New arrangements for holders of more than one licence,

A revised fee structure,

The abolition of vehicle discs and margin concession for goods vehicles.

These will simplify procedures, reduce administrative burdens but maintain safety standards. They will also build on administrative improvements already made by the Vehicle and Operator Service Agency (VOSA).

The consultation closes on 31 March 2006. If the proposals are supported by the various stakeholders implementation would take place during 2006–07.

Further information is available from the Departmental website at www.dft.gov.uk

Written Ministerial Statements

Tuesday 20 December 2005

TREASURY

HM Revenue and Customs Investigation

The Financial Secretary to the Treasury (John Healey): In a letter to the Chairman of the Treasury Select Committee on 29 September 2004 (a copy of which was deposited in the Library of the House), I reported that the Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) was conducting an investigation—Operation Gestalt—into Customs and Excise's handling of a series of excise diversion frauds on the London City Bond in the mid-1990s.

I can today update the House on significant developments in the police investigation.

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) yesterday received confirmation that the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) have considered a report from the MPS relating to allegations of non-disclosure to the Butterfield Review involving two very senior then serving officers, Terry Byrne and David Pickup, and also Sir Richard Broadbent, former Chairman of Customs and Excise. The CPS have concluded that there is insufficient evidence to charge any of these individuals with a criminal offence and that further work on this matter would not be justified.

The Chairman of HMRC, David Varney, has confirmed that the Department will now discuss with David Pickup a return to work in accordance with the Department's procedures. Terry Byrne retired from HMRC in November 2004 on reaching the age of 60.

I made clear in my letter of 29 September 2004, and HMRC has also consistently stated, that it would be wrong and unjust to prejudge the outcome of investigations, and that the term "under investigation" should not be taken to mean that charges would follow. This has been an extremely difficult and unpleasant period for the individuals concerned. It is, however, necessary that reports of serious alleged wrongdoing are properly and independently investigated.

The MPS's Operation Gestalt investigation continues. A total of 12 current and former HMRC officials at present remain under investigation. The Department has in place established contact and welfare arrangements to support those officers affected. The priority of the Department continues to be to ensure that: the MPS receive HMRC's full and active co-operation with the investigation; the rights of all individuals involved are protected; and the Department's ongoing law enforcement operations are maintained while the investigation is ongoing.

CABINET OFFICE

Cabinet Office Autumn Performance Report 2005

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Jim Murphy): I have today published the Cabinet Office 2005 Autumn Performance Report (Cm 6725). Copies of the report have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

DEFENCE

SKYNET 5

The Minister of State, Ministry of Defence (Mr. Adam Ingram): I am pleased to announce that we have been able to agree to a change to the already successful Skynet 5 PFI deal, to enable a revised risk mitigation approach to be adopted.

Rather than relying on space insurance to cover satellite loss in an unpredictable insurance market, as under the original deal the revised approach is built upon increasing the in-orbit constellation. Instead of two satellites in orbit, there will now be three satellites, with a part built fourth satellite available as a back up to a satellite loss throughout the satellite launch phase, which ends in late 2008. The MOD requirement will continue to amount to two satellites, which means that an in-orbit spare will be available; delay in building a replacement satellite in the event of a loss would therefore be avoided. Continuous operational capability can therefore be maintained.

This innovative approach to risk management is fully consistent with the aims of smart acquisition and it shows how a PFI deal can evolve over time, to continue to provide our armed forces with the best available capability at the right price.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agriculture and Fisheries Council

The Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett): The European Union Agriculture and Fisheries Council will meet in Brussels from 20 to 22 December 2005.

I will chair for the agriculture items and my hon. Friend, the Member for Exeter, (Mr. Bradshaw) will chair for fisheries issues. My hon. Friend, the Member for Dorset South, (Jim Knight) will be in the UK seat.

The Council is expected to adopt conclusions on the Commission's communication for simplification and better regulation of the common agricultural policy.

We also hope to reach political agreement on Community measures for the control of avian influenza and related expenditure under the veterinary fund.

We expect the Council to adopt the first stage of the European Community and United States agreement on trade in wine.

At the request of Germany, the Council will discuss the implementation of cross compliance rules under the CAP single payment scheme.

The Council will vote on a proposal to authorise the use of genetically modified maize variety 1507.

The main fisheries item is the annual negotiation on total allowable catches and fishing quotas for next year, where we hope to reach political agreement. We also hope to secure agreement on total allowable catches and quotas in the Baltic and recovery measures for sole stocks in the Bay of Biscay.

Under any other business, the Fisheries Commissioner will update the Council on proposals for restructuring the fisheries sector and on the EU action plan on simplification of the Common Fisheries Policy. The Agriculture Commissioner will update the Council on the outcome of the WTO negotiations in Hong Kong. Demark will raise the issue of export refunds for live bovine animals. Italy will draw the Commission's attention to the situation in the poultrymeat market, following the recent avian influenza outbreak in Europe. The Commissioner for Health and Consumer Protection will update the Council on that outbreak and outline proposals for an EU action plan on the protection and welfare of animals. Spain will draw attention to repeated outbreaks of the animal disease, blue tongue, arising from North Africa and request resources to control its spread.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention

The Minister for the Middle East (Dr. Kim Howells): States Party to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) met in Geneva, 5–9 December. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss and promote common understanding and effective action on the content, adoption and promulgation of codes of conduct for scientists.

The States Party to the BTWC agreed by consensus a politically binding report where, *inter alia*, States Party stressed the need to undertake activities at the national and international levels and recognised the following:

(a) while the primary responsibility for implementing the convention rests with States Party, codes of conduct, voluntarily adopted, for scientists in the fields relevant to the convention can support the object and purpose of the convention by making a significant and effective contribution, in conjunction with other measures including national legislation, to combating the present and future threats posed by biological and toxin weapons, as well as by raising awareness of the convention, and by helping relevant actors to fulfil their legal, regulatory and professional obligations and ethical principles;

(b) codes of conduct should reflect the provisions of the convention and contribute to national implementation measures;

(c) a range of different approaches exists to develop codes of conduct in view of differences in national requirements and circumstances;

(d) codes of conduct should avoid impeding scientific discovery, placing undue constraints on research or international co-operation and exchange for peaceful purposes;

(e) science should be used for peaceful purposes only but has the potential to be misused in ways that are prohibited by the convention, and therefore codes of conduct should require and enable relevant actors to have a clear understanding of the content, purpose and reasonably foreseeable consequences of their activities, and of the need to abide by the obligations contained in the convention.

Further, States Party recognised that all those with a responsibility for, or legitimate interest in, codes of conduct should be involved in their development, promulgation and adoption and agreed on the value of codes of conduct applying not just to scientists, but to all those involved in scientific activity, including managers and technical and ancillary staff.

On the content of codes of conduct, recognising the principles listed above, States Party agreed on the importance of codes of conduct being:

(a) compatible with national legislation and regulatory controls and contributing to national implementation measures;

(b) simple, clear and easily understandable both to scientists and to wider civil society;

(c) relevant, helpful and effective for guiding relevant actors in making decisions and taking action in accordance with the purposes and objectives of the convention;

(d) sufficiently broad in scope;

(e) reviewed regularly, evaluated for effectiveness, and revised as necessary.

On the adoption of codes of conduct, recognising that it is important to build on and co-ordinate with existing efforts and avoid imposing burdensome and duplicative measures, the States Party agreed on the value of:

(a) demonstrating the benefits of codes and encouraging relevant actors to develop codes themselves;

(b) using existing codes, mechanisms, frameworks and bodies as far as possible; and

(c) tailoring adoption strategies according to the needs of each relevant sector.

On the promulgation of codes of conduct, recognising that codes of conduct will be most effective if they, and the principles underlying them, are widely known and understood, the States Party agreed on the value of continuous efforts on promulgation through appropriate channels.

States Party were also encouraged to inform the Sixth Review Conference in 2006 of any actions, measures or other steps that they have taken on the basis of the discussions on codes of conduct to facilitate the conference's consideration of the work.

The preceding meeting of experts held in Geneva in June 2005 had prepared the way for this political decision making. At this earlier meeting, levels of attendance and participation were excellent with 82 States Party contributing to international discussion and sharing of expertise on codes of conduct for scientists. States Party were also able to benefit from the input, expertise, and experience of a number of

international and non-governmental organisations and science stakeholders. A multi-agency delegation represented the United Kingdom. Sir David King, Chief Scientific Adviser, made a well-received presentation on his code of ethics for Government scientists, which is currently being piloted across Government. UK officials also made four presentations on different aspects of the subject.

Ambassador John Freeman, on behalf of the United Kingdom, led the international work on this subject in 2005 and chaired both the meeting of States Party and the meeting of experts. I am sure Members will join me in expressing appreciation for the work and efforts of Ambassador Freeman to achieve consensus on a report that reflected the large measure of agreement that exists on the subject under discussion. Moreover the level of active participation and engagement over the last three years of the current work programme is an indication to us that States Party recognise both the importance of the selected subjects and also the value of the work programme more generally in contributing to strengthening the convention.

At the meeting of States Party, delegations also agreed the dates for a preparatory committee to the Sixth Review Conference of the convention in 2006. The preparatory committee will be held in Geneva, 26–28 April 2006. The Sixth Review Conference will be held in Geneva, 20 November–8 December 2006, with the precise dates to be confirmed by the preparatory committee.

The UK is one of the three depositaries to the convention and will continue to work co-operatively, both nationally and internationally, through 2006 in preparation for a successful conclusion to the Sixth Review Conference.

I will keep the House informed of developments and outcomes in 2006.

British Council Annual Report

The Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (Mr. Jack Straw): Copies of the British Council Annual Report, incorporating the Trustees' Annual Report and Accounts, for the year ended 31 March 2005 have been placed in the Library of the House. During the period the Council received £172.065 million grant in aid from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

HEALTH

Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council

The Minister of State, Department of Health (Ms Rosie Winterton): The Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council met on 8–9 December. The Secretary of State for Health chaired the meeting and I represented the United Kingdom. Items on the agenda relating to health were covered on 9 December. Items for discussion were: human health aspects of pandemic flu; proposal for a Regulation of the European Parliament and of the Council on medicinal products for paediatric use; and the European Commission's Green Paper: "Improving the mental health of the population, Towards a strategy on mental health for the European Union".

The policy discussion on the human health aspects of pandemic flu focused on areas of EU co-operation to complement existing work on this topic. Member States acknowledged that the first and most vital step was the completion of national contingency plans. On the issue of risk communication with the public, Council agreed that, while this was primarily a Member State responsibility, there was a need for clear co-ordination between Member States, the Commission and the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control to avoid confusing messages. The Commission reported the experiences of the common ground simulation exercise on pandemic flu.

The Council also discussed the issue of increasing production capacity for both antiviral drugs and vaccines. On vaccines, Council stressed the importance of increasing the research effort into the development of new vaccines. On antivirals, Ministers agreed that building up production capacity was primarily for Member States, but outlined that further consideration should be given to the available options for dealing with a pandemic influenza outbreak including the feasibility and added value of the EU holding a targeted strategic stockpile of anti-viral drugs.

The presidency issued conclusions on the human health aspects of pandemic flu.

There was a qualified majority in favour of a political agreement to the proposed regulation on paediatric medicines.

The Council gave a supportive steer to the Commission on its recent Green Paper on improving mental health.

Ministers took note of Presidency information on: Proposal for a Decision of the European Parliament and of the Council establishing a Programme of Community action in the field of Public Health and Consumer Protection; Health inequalities and patient safety; and Council Public Health Working Party meeting at senior level.

Member States also took note of information from the Commission on: A coordinated approach to the fight against HIV/AIDS in the European Union and the neighbouring countries; Commission High Level Group on Health Services and Medical Care; Framework Convention on Tobacco Control; and International Health Regulations.

Ministers also had an informal discussion on promoting healthy diets and physical activity.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Antisocial Behaviour Orders

The Minister for Policing, Security and Community Safety (Hazel Blears): I am announcing today statistics relating to Antisocial Behaviour Orders (ASBOs).

An ASBO is a civil order which protects the community from behaviour that has caused or is likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more persons not of the same household as the perpetrator.

ASBOs were introduced under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 and have been available since April 1999.

ASBOs can be issued to anyone aged 10 years or over. They impose restrictions on the behaviour of individuals who have behaved in an antisocial way and protect communities from often long-standing and highly intimidating activity.

Breach of an ASBO is a criminal offence and can lead to custody. The maximum penalty for breach of an ASBO is five years imprisonment or a fine of up to £5,000 for an adult offender.

The Home Office is notified by all courts of ASBOs issued. As I indicated in my statement on 3 November, *Official Report*, columns 52–53 WS, a joint exercise between the Court Service and the Home Office is under way to refine and improve further the collection of these data.

Data on the number of ASBOs issued are updated quarterly. New figures for the period up to June 2005 are now available. These figures show that for the period between April 1999 and June 2005 the total number of ASBOs issued (as reported to the Home Office) was 6,497. The number of ASBOs issued in the quarter April to June 2005 is 14 per cent. of the total number of ASBOs issued over all quarters and represents an increase of 48 per cent. on the same quarter last year. However, this represents an increase of 1 per cent. on last quarter's figures so the rate of increase is slowing.

Of those ASBOs issued, 54 per cent. were to adults and 43 per cent. to juveniles (3 per cent. of ASBOs are age unknown).

Some 47 per cent. were orders on application and 53 per cent. were orders on conviction.

I have placed with the Libraries of both Houses a briefing note containing information about ASBOs and the ASBOs statistics issued today.

National Probation Service/National Offender Management Service

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Home Department (Fiona Mactaggart): The National Probation Service has today published its Annual Report for 2004–05. The Prison Service and the Office for Contracted Prisons published their Annual Reports and Financial Accounts for 2004–05 on 19 July. Copies of all the Annual Reports have been placed in the Library.

Performance against all the National Offender Management Targets for 2004–05 is indicated in the table below. A full breakdown of the performance of both public and contracted prison establishments, in relation to applicable Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), will be placed in the Library. The breakdown includes updated figures for those establishments managed by the Office of Contracted Prisons.

PERFORMANCE AGAINST THE NATIONAL OFFENDER MANAGEMENT TARGETS FOR 2004–05

Public Protection Targets		
KPI	*ANNUAL Target*	*OUTTURN*
Category A Escapes	0	0
Total Escapes from Prisons and Prison Escorts	Less than 0.05%	0.03
Escapes from Contracted Escorts (NOMS)	1:20,000	1:38,894
REDUCING RE-OFFENDING TARGETS		
Education Awards (Probation Service) Basic Skills starts	32,000	34,199
Education Awards (Probation Service) Basic skills awards achieved	8,000	9,451
Education Awards (Prisons) Basic skills awards achieved	56,080	63,628
Education Awards (Prisons) Key Work Skills awards achieved	120,000	170.558
Drug Treatment and Testing Orders	13,000	10,322
Of which lower intensity orders	1,000	329
Drug Treatment and Testing Order successful completions	35%	36%
Intensive Control and Change Programmes started	1,790	841
Intensive Control and Change Programmes completed	1,100	125
Enhanced Community Punishment completions	30,000	38,473
Offending Behaviour Programmes completions (Probation Service)	15,000	15,595
Offending Behaviour Programmes (Prisons)	7,000	8,364
Of which Sex Offender Treatment programmes	1,180	1,232
Of which Living Skills Programmes	5,820	7.132
Drug Treatment Programmes Completions (prisons)	3,900	4,902
Employment, Training and Education (ETE) place on release	38,000	41,146
Breach proceedings initiated within 10 days	90%	87%
Proportion of orders and licences in which the offender complies	70%	79%
JUSTICE AND REPARATION TARGETS		
Timely Arrival at Court (NOMS)	75%	79%
Pre-Sentence Reports to the Magistrates courts within 15 days	90%	73%
Victim Contact	85%	93%
DECENCY TARGETS		
Mandatory Drug Tests	Less than 10%	11.8%
Self-inflicted Deaths	Less than 112.8 per 100,000	113.7 per 100,000
Serious Assault	Less than 1.56%	1.56%
Overcrowding (public prisons)	Less than 24%	23.7%
Overcrowding (contracted prisons)	Less than 34.5%	26.1%

Public Protection Targets		
KPI	*ANNUAL Target*	*OUTTURN*
ORGANISATIONAL TARGETS		
Staff Sickness (public prisons only)	Less than 12.5 days/person	12.7
Staff Sickness (Probation Service)	Less than 9 days/person	12.3
Ethnic Minority Staff (public prisons only)	At least 6%	5.7%
Regionally set employment targets for Ethnic Minority Staff	8.4%	10.91 (Apr-Dec 2004)
Clear proposals in court reports for minority ethnic offenders	95%	97%

Justice and Home Affairs Council

The Secretary of State for the Home Department (Mr. Charles Clarke): The Justice and Home Affairs Council was held on 1–2 December in Brussels. I chaired the meeting along with my right hon. and noble Friend the Secretary of State for Constitutional Affairs and Lord Chancellor. My noble friend Baroness Ashton of Upholland also represented the presidency.

I introduced the counter-terrorism coordinator's six-monthly report (doc 14734/1/05), the EU CT Strategy (doc 14469/4/05) and the EU Strategy and Action Plan to combat radicalisation and recruitment to terrorism (docs 14781/1/05 and 14782/05 RESTREINT). It was concluded that EU-level co-operation, including Europol and Eurojust, was an important component of member states' approaches to counter-terrorism. The six-monthly progress report and the EU Counter-Terrorism Strategy was sent to the European Council on 12 December. The Strategy and Action Plan on Radicalisation and Recruitment were also agreed.

Following on from discussions led by the Prime Minister at the Hampton Court summit, I emphasised that the presidency was very pleased that the issue of migration had been discussed, stressed its political importance and invited the Commission to present their communication "Priority actions for responding to the challenges of migration: first follow-up to Hampton Court". The Commission set out the three main pillars of the Communication: the need for a comprehensive approach covering all aspects of migration; the improvement of operational co-operation between member states, particularly in the Mediterranean; and the need to improve co-operation on migration with third countries of origin and transit, particularly sub-Saharan African countries.

Member states welcomed the communication emphasising its balanced and thorough approach. Member states who intervened strongly supported the focus on Africa and the Mediterranean, though some also noted that it was important not to forget the importance of other geographic regions, such as Russia and the Eastern Neighbourhood. Adequate resources were considered particularly important for demonstrating real political will to implement actions.

The Mixed Committee was chaired by Iceland and they invited the presidency to bring forward a compromise proposal on the Exchange of Information and Intelligence between Law Enforcement Authorities, including a new recital on the application of Article 11(2) (indicating that it should be interpreted so as to allow for the exchange of information on at least minor offences linked to terrorism and organised crime) and a Council declaration (noting that Article 11 would be reviewed on the basis of a report from the Commission). I was pleased to note agreement to a general approach on the draft Framework Decision (as in document 13986/5/05 CRIMORG 124) with the two changes agreed.

The draft Directive on Data Retention was discussed throughout the second day of the Council and I am pleased to be able to say that, on this vital piece of legislation for the EU's citizens, we were able to reach an agreement as to the Council's position. The new text proposed: language on the retention for the purpose of serious crime, where that term was defined by national law; the inclusion of data on unsuccessful call attempts (connected unanswered calls) only where it is stored or logged for business purposes; the exclusion of unconnected calls; limited provisions on data protection, data security; and sanctions against abuse of powers to access retained data. The European Parliament held a debate on data retention on 13 December and voted on 14 December to adopt amendments identical to those of the Council.

In the area of civil justice, the Council reached a general agreement on the text of the draft: Regulation Creating a European Order for Payment. Member states agreed that the proposal should be limited to cross-border cases. These are defined as being those in which at least one of the parties is domiciled or habitually resident in a member state other than the member state of the seized court. This is a significant decision with important implications for judicial co-operation in civil matters. It represents an emerging consensus among member states as to how "cross-border" should be defined. This will help to unblock progress on future measures. The European Parliament voted on 13 December to adopt amendments identical to those of the Council. This is the first complete civil justice procedure to be agreed by the EU and will make it easier to obtain judgments on uncontested claims across EU borders and so help the internal market grow further. Following the consensus reached at the Informal JHA Council in September, member states agreed to a number of key principles essential to a simplified, accelerated and cost-effective procedure for resolving small claims across European borders. Among other things, the procedure will be conducted primarily in writing, with modern communications technology used when a hearing is necessary; legal representation will not be mandatory; and costs will be kept proportionate to the claim. Finally, the Council agreed a common understanding on the draft Directive on Certain Aspects of Mediation in Civil and Commercial Matters. Promoting access to justice has been a key theme of the UK presidency. Civil justice issues have rightly achieved a higher priority than ever before in recent years, and the achievements in Council confirm the importance of their place in an agenda for citizens.

On the European Evidence Warrant, following a debate, member states were not able to remove all their reserves. The presidency concluded that it would not be possible to make further progress on the outstanding issues and remitted the dossier back to ambassadors.

The incoming Austrian presidency said that it would give priority to completing work on the Framework Decision.

On Procedural Rights, the Council took note of the state of play on negotiations as in documents 14642/05 DROIPEN 59 and 14248/05 DROIPEN 54 REV 1. I noted that there had been substantial work on the draft Framework Decision over the last year but that it had not been possible to complete this within the UK presidency. Discussions are underway with the incoming Austrian presidency on how to take forward the need for a political debate on this dossier.

The Commission gave a brief update on the state of play in the technical development of SIS II at a central level indicating there were difficulties concerning the overall timetable of the project but that the Commission was committed to meeting the timetable. The Commission also noted it was open to making the draft legal instruments on the SIS II more flexible as some of the member states wished and was committed to ensuring the EU7 had sufficient financial support from the Schengen facility until SIS II was running in 2007.

Following a Commission presentation on the Interoperability of EU JHA Databases it was noted that they had been brought forward to meet the Council's timetable. The Commission considered both to be a contribution to making information available more widely with a view to implementing the principle of availability.

In the margins of the Council member stats also agreed intergovernmental Conclusions on security standards on identity cards. As an A point the Council also agreed the EU Action Plan on Human Trafficking. This is a focused plan which details the objectives, a timetable and assessment tools. It is aimed at establishing common standards best practices and mechanisms to prevent and combat trafficking in human beings, and will drive forward practical action and co-operation in the EU.

There was also agreement from JHA Ministers to commit to an additional €250 million for assistance and the provision of additional trainers and personnel to counter narcotics in Afghanistan. Ministers also agreed conclusions on the roll out of biometrics under the Visa Information System to countries of high risk.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Uganda

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): I have decided to reduce UK budget support this year to Uganda by £20 million. Some £15 million of this money will be used to provide humanitarian relief in northern Uganda, and £5 million will be held back until after the elections in February (when a decision will be taken on whether to disburse it). Overall this will cut UK Poverty Reduction Budget Support (PRBS) to Uganda to £30 million, below the 2004–05 figure of £35 million.

The UK and Ugandan Governments signed a new Poverty Reduction Budget Support (PRBS) arrangement in December 2004 for a grant of up to £145 million over three years. This arrangement links budget support to reforms detailed in Uganda's Poverty Eradication Action Plan (PEAP), including macro-economic management and governance. The criteria which guide our disbursement are drawn directly from the PEAP and include both the "prior actions" agreed for the World Bank's Poverty Reduction Support Credit (PRSC) and specific indicators on governance.

We disbursed £35 million out of our £40 million allocation in 2004–05, but cut £5 million due to concerns about the progress of Uganda's political transition leading up to multi-party elections in 2006.

The disbursement decision for 2005–06, which has just been made, follows a further assessment of Uganda's performance. In a number of respects this is still strong. Growth in 2004–05 was 6 per cent. and Uganda is on track to meet almost half of the MDG targets, although additional efforts will be required to achieve them all. Negotiations of the PRSC with the World Bank have now concluded. Ten of the eleven "prior actions" have been successfully completed, but worryingly a "prior action" on the execution of the budget has only been partially met because expenditure on public administration significantly overran. Our governance assessment has highlighted concerns about: delays in putting in place the legal basis for multi-party elections; the continuation of state financing for the Movement system in a new era of multi-party politics; and more recently, and particularly worryingly, about issues associated with the arrest and trial of the leader of the Forum for Democratic Change, one of the main parties that plans to contest the election.

The decision to reduce the PRBS commitment to £30 million in 2005–06 takes into account the need to ensure that Uganda's budget is still able to finance key expenditures that are crucial to improve the lives of poor people.

The decision to reallocate £15 million to humanitarian assistance provided through the UN reflects our concern about the serious humanitarian situation in northern Uganda. This is not being fully addressed by the Ugandan Government or the finance that has so far been committed to humanitarian agencies. Our additional assistance will be focused on providing food and improving access to basic services, especially health care.

A decision on the remaining £5 million will be made after the elections in February.

We will continue to monitor Uganda's performance closely. I will make a decision on our PRBS commitment to Uganda in 2006–07 in the light of our assessment of Uganda's continuing commitment to the partnership objectives set out in "Partnerships for Poverty Reduction: Rethinking Conditionally".

European Development Fund

The Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn): The European Council on 15–16 December agreed to establish a 10th European Development Fund (EDF) to provide development assistance to African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) countries that are signatories to the ACP-EU Partnership (Cotonou) Agreement.

I am pleased to announce that the 10th EDF will provide €22,682 million (£15,536 million) over the period 2008–13. This is a significant increase on the

value of the 9th EDF and the EDF will remain as an EU intergovernmental fund, both important objectives of the UK Government. The UK share of the 10th EDF will be 14.82 per cent. rising from a 12.69 per cent. share of the 9th EDF, reflecting our recognition of an upward trend in the effectiveness of the Fund, and our commitment to increasing EU assistance to Africa.

I believe that this represents a good outcome for our ACP partners and I am delighted that the UK Presidency was able to deliver this positive agreement after lengthy negotiations. Member States will now negotiate an intergovernmental agreement on the structure, allocation, programming and management arrangements of the 10th EDF. This will present an opportunity to further enhance the effectiveness of the EDF. I will keep the House informed fully on progress.

Tsunami Follow-up

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development (Mr. Gareth Thomas): I am placing in the Libraries of both Houses a copy of a discussion paper, "The EU's contribution to the international response to the 2004 Asian Tsunami: Achievements, next steps and lessons learned".

The paper has been written by the Department for International Development and the European Commission to inform discussions at a high-level meeting in Brussels on 20 December 2005. The meeting will examine the international humanitarian and reconstruction response to the 26 December 2004 South East Asian tsunami, with a particular focus on the EU.

Invited participants include the European Commissioners for Humanitarian Aid and External Relations, representatives of the Council of Ministers, Members of the European Parliament, countries affected by the disaster, the United Nations, international financial institutions, the International Federation of the Red Cross and civil society organisations.

The paper examines EU activity in three main areas: financial assistance for humanitarian and reconstruction needs; support for peace building via reconstruction work; and reinforcing preventive measures, early warning and disaster preparedness. The paper highlights a number of issues that continue to influence the effectiveness of aid delivery. These include conflict sensitivity, co-ordination, monitoring, accountability, local ownership, communication, strengthening the humanitarian system, ensuring funds continue to flow, equity in distribution and early warning and disaster preparedness.

The aim of the meeting is to identify lessons learned from the EU's response that could guide the international community's response in the tsunami-affected countries and in other disaster-affected countries in the future.

PRIME MINISTER

Appointments

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): I am pleased to announce that Her Majesty in Council has approved the appointments of Janet Paraskeva as the First Civil Service Commissioner and Janet Gaymer CBE as the Commissioner for Public Appointments. Janet Gaymer is also being appointed as a Civil Service Commissioner.

Janet Paraskeva is currently the Chief Executive of the Law Society. Janet Gaymer is currently a senior partner with Simmons and Simmons.

In announcing these appointments, I would also like to record my appreciation to their predecessors, Baroness Prashar CBE and Baroness Fritichie DBE, who have come to the end of their terms of appointments. I am grateful to them for the contributions that they have made in ensuring the highest standards in their work.

Review of Business Appointment Rules

The Prime Minister (Mr. Tony Blair): In summer 2004, I commissioned Sir. Patrick Brown to undertake a review of the Business Appointment rules. The terms of reference were:

> "To review the Business Appointment Rules to ensure that they are compatible with a public service that is keen to encourage greater interchange with the private and other sectors which is essential for effective delivery in today's public service. The review will consider the operation of the system, taking account of practice overseas. It will also consider the current machinery for dealing with applications and the necessary resources".

I am today placing copies of Sir Patrick's report in the Library of the House and would like to place on record my thanks to him for his careful consideration of the issues. The report makes a number of recommendations relating to handling of the business appointments rules for civil servants and other public servants. The report does not cover Ministers.

The Government are attracted to some of Sir Patrick's recommendations. However, it is conscious that the Public Administration Select Committee (PASC) is currently undertaking an Inquiry into the role and independence of the ethical regulation of Government, which includes the Business Appointments processes. We would therefore welcome the views of PASC before providing a substantive response to this report.

In particular, we would welcome the views of PASC on the proposal to transfer responsibility for business appointments processes for crown servants to the Civil Service Commissioners which would involve increasing the numbers of Commissioners and providing additional support. This would have a cost and would disperse the oversight and administration of the rules to more than one body.

The Government would also welcome the views of PASC on the proposals that there should effectively be one test and that where this test is satisfied that there should be one form of restriction placed upon public servants who are proposing to move to other jobs.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Competitiveness Council

The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Barry Gardiner): I chaired the extraordinary Competitiveness Council in Brussels on 13 December 2005 on the draft regulation for the

registration, evaluation, authorisation and restriction of chemicals (REACH), and establishing a European chemicals agency. This followed the constructive debate held at the 28–29 November Competitiveness Council.

The Competitiveness Council reached unanimous political agreement on the draft REACH regulation following a policy debate based on the UK presidency compromise text and additional proposals presented by the presidency directly to the Council. The Council will formally adopt its common position at a later session once the legal text has been finalised. The common position will be forwarded to the European Parliament for a second reading under the co-decision procedure.

Reform of the EU Structural and Cohesion Funds

The Minister for Industry and the Regions (Alun Michael): As the Prime Minister explained in his statement to Parliament of 19 December, the European Council of 15–16 December 2005 succeeded in achieving agreement on the next EC budget for the 2007–13 Financial Perspective. As part of the package, the Member States reached agreement on future Structural and Cohesion Funds spending for the 2007–13 budgetary cycle. The deal is now subject to an Inter-Institutional Agreement with the European Commission and the European Parliament.

The European Council has agreed that there should be a Structural and Cohesion Funds budget of €308 billion, representing 0.37 per cent. of EU Gross National Income (GNI), for the 2007–13 Financial Perspective. This will be focused on three Objectives: a Convergence Objective for regions with a Gross Domestic Product (GDP) below 75 per cent. of the EU average; a Competitiveness Objective for other regions; and a Co-operation Objective for cross-border and trans-national projects.

The agreement constitutes an increase of 31 per cent. or around €73 billion in comparison with the current Structural Funds budget of around €235 billion for the 2000–2006 Financial Perspective, excluding expenditure under the European Agricultural Guidance and Guarantee Fund (EAGGF) and the Financial Instrument for Fisheries Guidance (FIFG). The new Structural Funds budget is 8.3 per cent. less than in the Commission's initial proposals of July 2004. The reformed budget will enable the EU to address priorities in the new Member States while still maintaining some funding for richer Member States, in particular their poorer regions.

In summary, the European Council has agreed to allocate: €252 billion (or 81.9 per cent. of the Structural Funds budget) to the Convergence Objective, including €62 billion for the Cohesion Fund (for Member States with a GNI below 90 per cent. of the EU average) and €12 billion for so-called "phasing-out regions" (the regions that no longer qualify for full Convergence funding, but would have done without enlargement); €48 billion (or 15.7 per cent. of the Structural Funds budget) to the Competitiveness Objective, including €10 billion for so-called "phasing-in regions" (the regions that no longer qualify for full Convergence funding, and would no longer qualify even if enlargement had not taken place); and €7.5 billion (or 2.4 per cent. of the Structural Funds budget) to the Co-operation Objective.

The Government have argued consistently that, following enlargement, it is right that the Structural Funds should be focused to a greater extent on the poorest EU Member States. Overall the 10 new Member States, together with Bulgaria and Romania, will receive a total of €158 billion in Structural Funds (or €174 billion including transfers to the EAGGF and FIFG). The 10 new Members will see a more than 250 per cent. increase in their Structural Funds receipts from an average of €7 billion per annum during the 2004–06 period to an average of €19 billion per annum in the 2007–13 period. We estimate this to be equivalent to an average increase in their domestic public sector expenditure of up to 7 per cent. In per capita terms, the new Member States will receive an average per citizen of around €1,500 in Structural and Cohesion Funds, and around €2,500 including other spending, over the next Financial Perspective.

The older EU Member States (the EU15) will face reductions in spending compared with current levels, reflecting their comparative prosperity and the need to support the economic convergence of the new Member States. However, the UK will continue to receive substantial funds for its poorest regions. We estimate that the UK will receive a total of approximately €9.4 billion (in 2004 prices) in Structural Funds receipts from 2007–13, in comparison with approximately €15.85 billion (in 1999 prices) in the current Financial Perspective, excluding funds now transferred to the EAGGF and FIFG.

Of this, the UK will receive approximately €2.6 billion in Convergence funding for its poorest regions. Cornwall and West Wales and the Valleys will receive full Convergence funding, while the Highlands and Islands will receive phasing-out Convergence funding averaging approximately two-fifths of the intervention rates for the UK's future full Convergence regions. The UK will also receive approximately €6.2 billion in Competitiveness funding for its other regions. Of this, South Yorkshire and Merseyside will receive phasing-in Competitiveness funding averaging approximately one-third of the intervention rates for the UK's future full Convergence regions. It will be for the Government, in agreement with the Commission, to decide how the UK's remaining Competitiveness funding should be allocated between its nations and regions. Finally, the UK will receive approximately €0.6 billion in Co-operation funding. The Government will also need to agree with the Commission how this should be allocated.

At this stage it is not possible to provide precise figures for the amounts to be received by UK regions. We will only know the precise figures after an Inter-Institutional Agreement has been reached on the final EC budget and once the European Commission has produced official Structural Funds allocations for the UK and its regions. Our initial estimate is that Cornwall is likely to receive full Convergence funding of approximately one-third higher than current allocations, West Wales and the Valleys should receive full Convergence funding approximately equal to current allocations, the Highlands and Islands should receive phasing-out Convergence funding of over half its current allocations, and South Yorkshire and Merseyside should receive phasing-in Competitiveness funding of approximately one-third of current

allocations. These comparisons are in real terms and exclude allocations that have now been transferred to the EAGGF and FIFG.

In the light of this outcome, which means that the UK and its poorer regions will continue to receive substantial Structural Funds, the conditions for application of the domestic funding Guarantee, set out in the written statements to Parliament by the then Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Member for Leicester West (Ms. Hewitt), on 17 September and 11 December 2003, do not apply. As those statements made clear, the purpose of the Guarantee was to ensure that our nations and regions would not lose out if the Member States agreed a reform package where the Structural Funds were focused solely on the poorest countries, and it would apply only if the richer Member States no longer received Structural Funds allocations in the next Financial Perspective. It should be noted that spending on regional development from the UK's own resources already far exceeds the contribution from Europe as a result of increased allocations over recent years. Domestic regional spending allocations will be considered further in the Comprehensive Spending Review, taking into account the outcome of the negotiations, the needs of the regions and the overall fiscal context. The Devolved Administrations will receive the normal formula shares of changes in overall departmental provision.

As part of the reform negotiations, the Member States have agreed to strengthen the strategic focus of future Structural Funds spending by establishing Community Strategic Guidelines on Cohesion and National Strategic Reference Frameworks, which will set out the broad objectives for future programmes. The Government plan to consult on the UK's draft National Strategic Reference Framework early in 2006 and, as part of the consultation, they will also seek views on the methodology for allocating the UK's Competitiveness funding.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 28 November 2005

WALES

Olympic Games

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the discussions he has had with his colleagues in Cabinet and with the Welsh Assembly Government regarding the promotion of the 2012 Olympics in Wales. [31917]

Mr. Hain: I have had many useful discussions regarding the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games.

The Welsh Assembly Government has expressed its full support for the Games. The Nations and Regions Group of London 2012 will work to ensure that the benefits of London's successful bid are spread to all parts of the United Kingdom.

Cardiff hosted a highly productive meeting of the UK Sports Cabinet on 2 November, which was attended by Lord Coe.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Aborted Prosecutions

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Solicitor-General how many prosecutions have failed owing to the failure of witnesses to reach court in each of the last five years. [31617]

The Solicitor-General: The figures for the year from April 2004 to March 2005 are as follows: 4,945 cases failed because the victim unexpectedly failed to attend court, equivalent to 2.1 per cent. of failed cases; 1,935 failed because of the unexpected failure of other witnesses to attend, equivalent to 0.8 per cent. of failed cases; and 1,593 cases failed because of the unexpected failure of police witnesses to attend court, equivalent to 0.7 per cent. of failed cases.

No comparable information is held for earlier periods.

Reasons for unsuccessful outcomes: 2004–05

		Percentage
Administrative finalisations[1]	51,589	21.6
Evidential reasons		
E10 Key witness does not support case	1,786	0.7
E11 Unreliable/lack of identification	7,975	3.3
E1 Inadmissible evidence—breach of PACE	399	0.2
E2 Inadmissible evidence—other than breach of PACE	1,201	0.5
E3 Unreliable confession	194	0.1
E4 Conflict of evidence	8,416	3.5
E5 Essential medical evidence missing	510	0.2
E6 Essential forensic evidence missing	1,515	0.6
E7 Essential legal element missing	35,251	14.8
E8 Unreliable witness or witnesses	5,183	2.2
E9 Key victim does not support case	5,229	2.2

Reasons for unsuccessful outcomes: 2004–05

		Percentage
Public interest reasons		
P12 Effect on victim's physical or mental health	534	0.2
P13 Defendant elderly or in significant ill health	1,404	0.6
P14 Loss or harm minor and single incident	612	0.3
P15 Loss or harm put right	1,177	0.5
P16 Long delay between offence/charge or trial	2,875	1.2
P17 Very small or nominal penalty	2,906	1.2
P18 Other indictment/sentence	8,966	3.8
P19 Informer or other public interest immunity iss	1,776	0.7
P20 Caution more suitable	5,209	2.2
P21 Youth of offender	164	0.1
Prosecution unable to proceed		
U22 File not received from police—adjournment refused	2,055	0.9
U23 CPS not ready—adjournment refused	1,886	0.8
U24 Offence taken into consideration	561	0.2
U25 Victim refuses to give evidence or retracts	10,401	4.4
U26 Other witness refuses to give evidence or retracts	1,321	0.6
U27 Victim fails to attend unexpectedly	4,945	2.1
U28 Other civilian witness fails to attend unexpectedly	1,935	0.8
U29 Police witness fails to attend unexpectedly	1,593	0.7
U30 Victim intimidation	29	0.0
U31 Other civilian witness intimidation	33	0.0
U32 Documents produced at court	9,330	3.9
Other reasons		
O33 Bind over acceptable	16,463	6.9
O34 Acquittal after trial	17,428	7.3
O35 Other	25,534	10.7
Total	238,385	

[1] Where the defendant could not be traced, died, or was unfit to plead.

Reasons for unsuccessful outcomes: 2005–06 to 21 November 2005

		Percentage
Administrative finalisations[1]	24,114	18.4
Evidential reasons		
E10 Key witness does not support case	1,185	0.9
E11 Unreliable/lack of identification	4,592	3.5
E1 Inadmissible evidence—breach of PACE	207	0.2
E2 Inadmissible evidence—other than breach of PACE	569	0.4
E3 Unreliable confession	65	0.0
E4 Conflict of evidence	5,330	4.1
E5 Essential medical evidence missing	255	0.2
E6 Essential forensic evidence missing	853	0.7
E7 Essential legal element missing	24,378	18.6
E8 Unreliable witness or witnesses	3,219	2.5
E9 Key victim does not support case	4,160	3.2
Public interest reasons		
P12 Effect on victim's physical or mental health	316	0.2
P13 Defendant elderly or in significant ill health	968	0.7
P14 Loss or harm minor and single incident	496	0.4
P15 Loss or harm put right	907	0.7
P16 Long delay between offence/charge or trial	1,526	1.2
P17 Very small or nominal penalty	2,029	1.5
P18 Other indictment/sentence	5,603	4.3
P19 Informer or other public interest immunity issues	892	0.7
P20 Caution more suitable	3,555	2.7
P21 Youth of offender	192	0.1
P36 Inappropriate to compel victim	94	0.1
P37 Inappropriate to compel witness	40	0.0
Prosecution unable to proceed		
U22 File not received from police—adjournment refused	1,447	1.1
U23 CPS not ready—adjournment refused	1,014	0.8
U24 Offence taken into consideration	293	0.2
U25 Victim refuses to give evidence or retracts	5,763	4.4
U26 Other witness refuses to give evidence or retracts	708	0.5
U27 Victim fails to attend unexpectedly	3,096	2.4
U28 Other civilian witness fails to attend unexpectedly	1,202	0.9
U29 Police witness fails to attend unexpectedly	956	0.7
U30 Victim intimidation	9	0.0
U31 Other civilian witness intimidation	13	0.0
U32 Documents produced at court	4,680	3.6

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Reasons for unsuccessful outcomes: 2005–06 to 21 November 2005

		Percentage
Other reasons		
O33 Bind over acceptable	8,374	6.4
O34 Acquittal after trial	12,441	9.5
035 Other	5,656	4.3
Total	131,197	—

[1] Where the defendant could not be traced, died, or was unfit to plead

Mr. Bone: To ask the Solicitor-General how many and what percentage of prosecutions were aborted in *(a)* England and *(b)* Northamptonshire in 2004–05. [31440]

The Solicitor-General: In 2004–05, 202,370 prosecutions resulting in an early termination in England, amounted to 17.3 per cent. of all completed prosecutions. This compared with a figure of 1,789 for CPS Northamptonshire, or 12.6 per cent. of all prosecutions completed in the Area.

Carbon Management Programme

Norman Lamb: To ask the Solicitor-General whether his Department will sign up to the Carbon Trust's Carbon Management programme. [23731]

The Solicitor-General: I am answering this question on behalf of the Departments for which I am ministerially accountable—the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Treasury Solicitors Department (TSol), Serious Fraud Office (SFO), Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office (RCPO) and HMCPS Inspectorate (HMCPSI).

All my Departments work together to share best practice in relation to sustainable development. None has immediate plans to adopt the Carbon Trust's scheme in its own right, although the CPS, which already uses renewable energy (climate levy exempt) on a large part of its "controlled estate" will be using the Carbon Trust to carry out energy surveys in their offices with a view to identifying further ways of reducing energy use.

TSol occupies 80 per cent. of a single building for which the landlord provides mechanical and electrical services. The landlord is using cleaner energy, which contributes to reducing carbon emissions. Although the landlord does not currently intend to sign up to the Carbon Management programme, to a great extent they believe that they have already undertaken the five steps required.

Dr. Ann David

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Solicitor-General if the Crown Prosecution Service will revisit the papers relating to the conduct of Dr. Ann David, following the completion of her disciplinary case before the General Medical Council, in relation to deaths of patients at Basildon hospital for whom she had responsibility. [31637]

The Solicitor-General: Yes. Essex police have delivered a comprehensive file relating to Dr. Ann David to the Crown Prosecution Service in Essex. A senior and experienced casework lawyer will review all the available evidence in accordance with the Code for Crown Prosecutors. Advice will be provided to the police as soon as practicable and commensurate with the complexity and sensitivity of the case.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agricultural Levy Boards

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the European Commission on the application of state aid rules in relation to the expenditure of the Agricultural Levy Boards. [29735]

Mr. Bradshaw: As part of ensuring that all UK's levy board activities comply fully with EU state aid rules, officials have had regular contacts with the European Commission. Except in those specific cases covered by special arrangements agreed as part of the UK's accession to the European Community, our levy bodies' activities are covered by European Commission state aid approvals.

Avian Influenza

Mr. Ian Austin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to ensure that strains of avian influenza do not enter the UK chicken population. [15375]

Mr. Bradshaw: Trade in animals, birds and products within and into the European Community is controlled by Community law, which aims to prevent the introduction of disease.

All imports of poultry and poultry products from EU countries must be accompanied by a health certificate as specified in Community Law, stating that they show no signs of disease. Poultry must originate from approved establishments and come from flocks which have been held in Community establishments for 21 days prior to export. Poultry must have undergone a health examination by an official or authorised veterinarian prior to despatch.

All imports of poultry and poultry products into the EU from third countries must enter at designated border inspection posts where they are subject to documentary and identity checks. A physical check must be carried out to observe the state of health and behaviour of either the whole group or a representative sample of the animals. For poultry products, a proportion of consignments undergo physical checks. These checks ensure that the animals or products meet Community import requirements. Captive birds (e.g. canaries, budgies, parrots and birds of prey) must undergo a period of quarantine.

The situation in affected countries is kept under review and controls on imports are modified in line with Community decisions. Safeguard measures are currently in place to ban or restrict imports of animals, meat and other products of susceptible species in respect of Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) in Cambodia, Indonesia, Laos, Malaysia, Mongolia, Pakistan, the People's Republic of China, including the

territory of Hong Kong, North Korea, Thailand, Vietnam, Russia, Kazakhstan, Romania, Croatia, and Turkey.

However careful we are, disease may get into European countries carried by migrating wild birds. Whatever the source of an outbreak, European legislation lays down the action member states have to take to eradicate it.

Defra monitors the disease situation globally and will take action to respond to disease outbreaks in other countries where a risk assessment justifies it.

If there is an outbreak of disease in an exporting country likely to present a risk to human or animal health, Community legislation allows us to take appropriate safeguard action, pending action at Community level. This may include a ban on imports of animals and meat from all, or parts, of the affected country.

Farmers also need to ensure that they are vigilant looking for signs of disease and ensure that they report any suspicions to their local Animal Health Divisional Office. All keepers of birds should ensure they maintain high standards of biosecurity. The Government has published guidance to poultry keepers stressing the importance of good biosecurity.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the genomic characteristics which determine the virulence of the avian influenza virus H5N1. [25464]

Mr. Bradshaw: The virus contains multiple basic amino acids at the cleavage site (PRQRRRKRGLF) of the haemagglutinin gene and therefore contains a sequence consistent with highly pathogenic avian influenza.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the clade designation was of the first isolated strain of H5N1 avian influenza identified in the UK. [25470]

Mr. Bradshaw: The H5N1 virus from Norfolk in 1992 belonged to a clade of contemporary European viruses (distinct from the three clades of 'Asian' viruses), descendants of which are still present in wild birds and poultry in Europe.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her policy is on the EU-wide ban on the trade of wild caught birds as a response to the threat of avian influenza. [30487]

Mr. Bradshaw: On 25 October the Commission proposed a temporary ban on the importation of live captive (wild) birds, following calls for action by UK Ministers. The ban, due to last until 30 November 2005, was agreed by the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCoFCAH), On 16 November SCoFCAH agreed a Commission proposal to extend the ban until 31 January 2006. This was supported by the UK.

Defra continues to keep the global disease situation under review. When we are officially notified of a new disease incident in an EU member state, a country on the border of the EU or one of the UK's third country trading partners, we carry out a qualitative risk analysis. These are published on our website at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/monitoring/riskassess.htm

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether type A human influenza can be transmitted to poultry. [30724]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is no substantial scientific evidence to suggest that type A human influenza viruses are transmitted to poultry.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on how many occasions in each of the last five years officers from her Department have inspected the quarantine facility in Essex from which isolates of H5N1 avian influenza virus have been isolated. [30746]

Mr. Bradshaw: From January 2000 to date, SVS records show there have been five inspection visits by a VO at the quarantine facility in the past five years:

One in May 2000 (this was in its capacity as primate quarantine premises at the time, not birds)

One in December 2001—initial approval visit to become captive birds quarantine premises and then yearly bird quarantine facility re-approval visits

One in November 2002—routine inspection one in December 2003—routine inspection and

One in December 2004—routine inspection.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether highly pathogenic avian influenza virus is transmissible from bird to bird via *(a)* fomites and *(b)* other contamination passed by humans who have been in contact with those birds. [30747]

Mr. Bradshaw: Highly pathogenic avian influenza viruses can be transmitted in excretions of infected birds, particularly faeces. It is possible for viruses to be spread on contaminated objects such as utensils, shoes and clothes.

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 6W to the hon. Member for Brecon and Radnorshire (Mr. Williams), on avian influenza, where the suitably engineered commercial licensed landfills will be located; and what research has been evaluated on the safety of deep burial of avian-influenza-infected carcasses. [30753]

Mr. Bradshaw: In consultation with the Environment Agency, officials are currently reviewing the suitability for poultry carcase disposal of all commercial licensed landfills where Pollution Prevention and Control (PPC) permits have been applied for. Once this review is complete a list of potentially suitable sites will be made public. A landfill protocol designed to mitigate any public health, animal health and environmental risks is being drawn up by representatives from Government, the environmental agencies and the landfill industry. This protocol draws on the experiences obtained from the deep burial of large number of animal carcases during the 2001 outbreak of foot and mouth disease—it also draws on published data on virus survival and Environment Agency research.

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1048W, on avian influenza, what discussions she has had with *(a)* the National Farmers Union, *(b)* local authorities and *(c)* the Local Government Association on (i) the work that will be undertaken and (ii) funding for the work; what the timetable is for reaching decisions; and what estimate has been made of the likely costs to local authorities. [30763]

Mr. Bradshaw: Officials in the Department have had discussions with the National Farmers Union and other bodies representing poultry keepers about the responsibilities of keepers of poultry and the Government's disease control arrangements in the event of an outbreak of avian influenza.

Discussions will be held with the Local Government Association about the role local authorities would play in an outbreak of avian influenza.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether, for the purpose of determining the presence of H5N1 avian influenza in birds, Veterinary Laboratories Agency standard operating procedures *(a)* permit and *(b)* consider it good practice to pool samples for laboratory analysis from different (i) batches, (ii) species and (iii) origins of birds. [30770]

Mr. Bradshaw: Veterinary Laboratories Agency (VLA) standard operating procedures prescribe that for laboratory analyses, where possible samples from the same unit in the quarantine centre should be batched into five birds per batch according to species. However, provision is made that when the total consignment from a single unit consists of mixed species and comprises five birds or fewer, these may be conveniently grouped into a single batch.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the availability of capacity within the rendering sector to cope with a potential outbreak of avian influenza; and if she will make a statement. [30928]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department is in close contact with the United Kingdom Renderers Association (UKRA) and has assessed the current available capacity and maximum likely capacity. The available capacity at any time will depend on the time of year, breakdowns and other demands. Some 2,500 tonnes per week (equivalent to 1.25 million chickens) would be available very quickly and a further 10–15,000 tonnes could be brought on stream within about two weeks.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the conditions under which the Mesias, in whose samples the avian influenza virus was isolated at the quarantine facility in Essex were imported into this country, with particular reference to *(a)* the form of transport and *(b)* other birds which were imported in the same cargo space. [31064]

Mr. Bradshaw: The bird shipment from Taiwan, which included the Mesias, was transported in cages that complied with IATA (International Air Transport Association) live animal regulations. They were flown as manifest freight (cargo) in one of the cargo holds of the aircraft.

The only other birds that were imported on the aircraft with the Mesias were the laughing thrushes and mynah birds that were part of that particular consignment.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department has taken to minimise the chances of the H5N1 virus entering the UK through the import of live birds; and what changes have been made to *(a)* the rules for the transport of live birds and *(b)* the procedures relating to the quarantine of birds. [31066]

Mr. Bradshaw: On 25 October the commission proposed a temporary ban on the importation of live captive (wild) birds, following calls for action by UK Ministers after the incident of avian influenza found in a quarantine premises. The ban, due to last until 30 November 2005, was agreed by the Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health (SCoFCAH). On 16 November SCoFCAH agreed a commission proposal to extend the ban until 31 January 2006.

DEFRA continues to keep the global disease situation under review. When we are officially notified of a new disease incident in an EU member state, a country on the border of the EU or one of the UK's third country trading partners, we carry out a qualitative risk analysts. These are published on our website.

There have been no changes to the rules for the transport of live birds. All birds are required to be transported in cages that comply with IATA (international Air Transport Association) standards.

We are currently awaiting the outcome of an independent review of the quarantine system, which is expected to report early in December, to see whether quarantine procedures need to be reviewed.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in relation to the pooled sample of 30 Mesias in which the presence of avian influenza virus H5N1 has been detected, how the exact date of death was determined; and how was the *(a)* time and *(b)* source of infection determined. [31067]

Mr. Bradshaw: Six pooled samples from the 30 Mesias were examined virologically. As indicated in the published epidemiology report the exact dates of death of these birds is unknown, but they are believed by the keeper to be before 7 October. Neither the time nor the source of infection have been determined.

Badgers

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the relative suffering caused to badgers when they are killed by means of *(a)* carbon monoxide, *(b)* carbon dioxide and *(c)* other gases. [29877]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The Government will shortly be making an announcement on preventing the further spread of bovine TB. The evidence considered in developing the Government's approach will be published at the time.

Bird Imports (Border Procedures)

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what procedures are undertaken at border inspection posts to ensure that the documentation accompanying imported captive birds is genuine. [30723]

Mr. Bradshaw: Before the ban on captive birds was implemented, the only third countries that could export captive birds to the EU had to be members of the World Organisation for Animal Health (the OIE). The OIE's Terrestrial Animal Health Code lays down the standards of certification members have to apply.

Captive birds imported into the EU from third countries must enter at designated Border Inspection Posts where they are subject to veterinary inspections. All consignments are subject to documentary and identity checks to ensure that import conditions are met.

The captive birds must be accompanied by a health certificate, as laid down in Community law. The Official Veterinary Surgeon at the border inspection post will check to ensure that the certificate accompanying the birds conforms to this model, has been completed correctly, has been signed and stamped, and is genuine.

Bovine Tuberculosis

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment she has made of the risk to cattle herds in Northamptonshire from bovine tuberculosis. [30863]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 22 November 2005]:* Statistics on bovine TB are aggregated according to the office structure of the state veterinary service (SVS). Northamptonshire is not currently a recognised region within the SVS structure. As a result it is not possible to disaggregate data on bovine TB in cattle herds in this manner We are, however, able to provide data for the Leicester Animal Health Divisional Office (AHDO) which covers Northamptonshire.

Our latest assessment shows that in the Leicester AHDO area there were 39 new TB incidents in the first nine months of 2005, compared to 30 in 2004. Supplementary data also show that 1.8 per cent. of herds were restricted due to a TB incident in the first nine months of 2005, compared to 1.3 per cent. in 2004.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the polymerase chain reaction test for *M. bovis* DNA in *(a)* identifying infected material around badger setts and *(b)* combating bovine tuberculosis; and if she will make a statement. [29866]

Mr. Bradshaw: The detection of *Mycobacterium bovis* directly from live badgers and their excretions using techniques based on the polymerase chain reaction (PCR) is complex and difficult. Largely this is because of the low levels and intermittent nature of excretion of *M. bovis* by infected animals. Currently the most robust PCR techniques for use on any sample (cattle, badger or environmental) are specific for *M. tuberculosis complex* and not *M. bovis*. Small scale use of this technique on environmental samples has highlighted the practical difficulties in obtaining good quality DMA and specificity is a further problem. The results so far have not been encouraging, but we are looking to see if improvements can be made.

Research using conventional laboratory-based PCR has shown that the technique is not yet able to perform as well as conventional bacterial culture in the detection of *M. bovis*. However, the PCR technique may well have a future role to play in helping to combat the disease in cattle by helping to reduce the time taken to confirm a herd breakdown. Our research is designed to look more closely at this aspect of disease control.

Brazilian Beef

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations her Department has made on ensuring that Brazil's animal traceability systems are improved following recent incidents of foot and mouth disease in that country; and if her Department will introduce a full ban on Brazilian beef imports. [30082]

Mr. Bradshaw: Each consignment of imported meat must be accompanied by appropriate health certification. The certificate confirms the territory from which the animals originated. In addition the animal must have been subjected to ante and post-mortem inspection and the meat must be deboned and matured. This process ensures that imported meat does not present a risk.

All meat imported into the EU from third countries must enter at designated border inspection posts (BIPs) where it is subject to veterinary inspections. All consignments are subject to documentary and identity checks and at least 20 per cent. of consignments undergo physical checks. These ensure import conditions are met and that the products remain in a satisfactory condition during transport.

Following recent outbreaks of foot and mouth disease, the Brazilian authorities have imposed additional internal movement controls on animals from the affected area.

The European Commission's Food and Veterinary Office is responsible for carrying out inspections in the third countries from which meat is imported into the Community. An inspection visit was carried out in Brazil in September. The outcome of that inspection is not yet available, but Commission Services would have taken immediate action to protect animal and public health if they thought this was necessary.

WTO rules allow protective measures to be taken on the basis of scientific evidence and these measures must be adapted to regional conditions. Therefore, following notification of the recent outbreak, immediate action was taken to ban imports of meat from the affected regions.

Calf Exports

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her policy is on the resumption of the export of live calves to Europe. [31018]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 22 November 2005]:* The Government is working towards lifting the current ban on exports of UK beef, bovine products and live cattle and we expect the European Commission to submit proposals to other EU member states to lift the ban. Our objective is to be able to trade on the same basis as other EU member states for cattle born after July 1996 and for products derived from them.

If the ban is lifted, any live exports would be subject to the rigorous application of health and welfare rules.

Contaminated Land Capital Projects Programme

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how long it took for each eligible area to receive funding from her Department's Contaminated Land Capital Projects Programme from the time that her Department was notified of payment of the funding to the affected area; [30569]

(2) how many contaminated land areas have been eligible for funding under her Department's Contaminated Land Capital Projects Programme; [30573]

(3) how many contaminated land areas have been rectified by identified class A polluters without recourse to her Department's Contaminated Land Capital Projects Programme in the last five years; [30575]

(4) what the criteria are for eligibility of contaminated land areas for funding under her Department's Contaminated Land Capital Projects Programme. [30576]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department's Contaminated Land Capital Projects Programme (CLCPP) provides financial assistance to English local authorities for contaminated land capital projects. It covers both investigation and remediation work by authorities. It does not fund work by other parties. It is delivered to successful authorities as supported capital expenditure (revenue) via the next available revenue support grant settlement after expenditure by the authority. In 2004–05 we approved 163 bids. Approval times vary, but two months is common for straightforward cases. Sites and projects may involve more than one bid, for example where work is in stages.

The eligibility criteria for this programme are at section 2 of CLAN1/05, "A Guide for English Local Authorities". Local authorities were made aware of the guide. A copy is on DEFRA's website at: http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/land/contaminated/approvals/index.htm, which is updated each year.

We do not hold information about investigation or remedial work undertaken without recourse to our programme. Where the case is the subject of action under part 11A of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, then information is placed on the relevant public register held by each local authority. The DEFRA website details overall numbers of part 11A cases at http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/land/contaminated/faq.htm This data on part 11A regulatory activity is regularly updated. Many contaminated sites are dealt with through the development of land and the grant of planning permission, and applications and decisions are placed on the local planning register.

EU Committees

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the UK representatives on the EU Sugar Management Committee and Special Committee for Agriculture will support the proposal that the EU price used for calculation of the export refunds for manufactured goods containing sugar should include the proposed restructuring levy. [29436]

Jim Knight: The European Commission's proposals for reform of the EU sugar regime provide for the difference between world prices and prices in the Community to be covered by export refunds to the extent necessary to enable trade to take place. The setting of refunds is delegated to the Commission through the Management Committee procedure. UK representatives at that Committee will judge proposals for the calculation of refunds on their merits and in the light of appropriate consultations with stakeholder interests.

EU Directives

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment the Department has carried out of the impact on costs of the *(a)* EU end of life vehicles directive and *(b)* EU waste electrical equipment directive; and if she will place copies of the assessments in the Library. [29770]

Malcolm Wicks: I have been asked to reply.

The Department has published final Regulatory Impact Assessments of the costs of the UK implementing regulations for the end of life vehicles directive, and partial Regulatory Impact Assessments for the planned implementation of the waste electrical and electronic equipment directive, all of which have been placed previously in the Libraries of the House.

Fly-tipping

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what volume of waste she estimates was illegally fly-tipped in each year since 1992, broken down by the nature of this waste. [27886]

Mr. Bradshaw: No national data are currently available on the volume of waste illegally fly-tipped over the whole of the period specified. Flycapture, the national fly-tipping database, was established in April 2004 and although it does not record the specific volume of incidents, average data are gathered.

	Number of tips	Size of tip/m3	Volume/m3	Type
Single Item	333,055	0.25	78,954.5	assumption
Car boot or less	246,468	1	242,335.0	guidance
Van load	194,904	4	759,172.0	guidance
Transit van load	96,943	10	941,320.0	guidance
Tipper lorry load	20,987	40	777,640.0	assumption
Significant multi loads	6,860	100	569,900.0	assumption
Total/m3			3,369,321.5	

Note:
1. Data in the table is from waste collection authorities and the Environment Agency for England as recorded on the Flycapture database from April 2004–March 2005.
2. Volume details are an estimate only as the database records summary numbers linked to average sizes rather than reporting specific volumes in an incident database. 'assumption' indicates an average size that can be assumed, whereas 'guidance' indicates that a suggested size is proposed in the database guidance.

The Environment Agency also keeps more detailed information on the incidents they deal with. The total number of substantiated fly-tipped incidents attended by the Environment Agency is:

	Number
2001	2,437
2002	4,636
2003	4,967
2004	3,658
2005	[1]1,932

[1] 1 January 2005 to 10 November 2005

Note:
1. Environment Agency data capture on the nature of wastes fly-tipped and available for 2001 to 2005 is in the table. The number of pollutants identified will exceed the number of incidents due to single incidents with multiple pollutants.
2. Environment Agency volumetric data capture commenced last year It is therefore as yet detailed will not provide as complete a picture as Flycapture.

Substantiated fly-tipping incidents—nature of waste fly-tipped 2005 data (up to 1 November 2005)

Pollutant type (tier 1)	Pollutants (tier 2)	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Agricultural Materials and Wastes	Carcasses	4	8	12	6	1
Agricultural Materials and Wastes	Fertiliser	1		1		
Agricultural Materials and Wastes	Other Agricultural Material or Waste	8	23	27	10	10
Agricultural Materials and Wastes	Silage Liquors				1	
Agricultural Materials and Wastes	Solid Manure	2	10	3	6	1
Atmospheric Pollutants and Effects	Chemical Odour	1				
Atmospheric Pollutants and Effects	Dust	2	1		1	
Atmospheric Pollutants and Effects	Fumes			1	1	
Atmospheric Pollutants and Effects	Other Atmospheric Pollutant or Effect	2	5	1	2	
Atmospheric Pollutants and Effects	Smoke	2	2	10	7	3
Contaminated Water	Chemically Contaminated Run-Off	1	1			
Contaminated Water	Firefighting Run-Off		2	1		
Contaminated Water	Other Contaminated Water	3	2		2	
Contaminated Water	Urban Run-Off	1				
Contaminated Water	Vehicle and Plant Washings		2		1	
General Biodegradable Materials and Wastes	Algae		1			
General Biodegradable Materials and Wastes	Animal and Vegetable Oil	3	4	6	6	1
General Biodegradable Materials and Wastes	Blood and Offal	1	2	1	1	2
General Biodegradable Materials and Wastes	Composted Material	14	13	11	9	5
General Biodegradable Materials and Wastes	Food and Drink	23	31	39	35	13
General Biodegradable Materials and Wastes	Natural Organic Material	46	88	83	71	22
General Biodegradable Materials and Wastes	Other Animal Matter	11	15	18	17	12
General Biodegradable Materials and Wastes	Other General Biodegradable Material or Waste	373	602	659	456	154
General Biodegradable Materials and Wastes	Vegetable Cuttings and Deposits	149	195	196	150	51
Inert Materials and Wastes	Coal	2	3			
Inert Materials and Wastes	Demolition Materials and Wastes	519	901	967	716	266
Inert Materials and Wastes	Mineral Materials and Wastes	7	12	14	12	3
Inert Materials and Wastes	Other Inert Material or Waste	218	370	366	210	87
Inert Materials and Wastes	Rocks and Gravel	12	19	18	20	2
Inert Materials and Wastes	Soils and Clay	65	147	131	89	41
Inorganic Chemicals/Products	Acids	6	10	6	6	9
Inorganic Chemicals/Products	Alkalis	3	3	5	5	3
Inorganic Chemicals/Products	Ammonia Solutions	1				
Inorganic Chemicals/Products	Cement		2	3	1	
Inorganic Chemicals/Products	Cyanides		2			1
Inorganic Chemicals/Products	Heavy Metals			1	1	1
Inorganic Chemicals/Products	Other Inorganic Chemical or Product	9	17	16	13	6
No pollutant Entered	No pollutant Entered		1			
Oils and Fuel	Crude Oil				1	1
Oils and Fuel	Cutting Oils		1	2	1	3
Oils and Fuel	Diesel	11	17	23	4	5
Oils and Fuel	Gas and Fuel Oils	2	4	7	5	
Oils and Fuel	Hydraulic Oils	7	7	1	2	

Substantiated fly-tipping incidents—nature of waste fly-tipped 2005 data (up to 1 November 2005)

Pollutant type (tier 1)	*Pollutants (tier 2)*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Oils and Fuel	Insulating and Cable Oils				1	
Oils and Fuel	Kerosene and Aviation Fuel		1	1		
Oils and Fuel	Lubricating Oils	7	21	20		7
Oils and Fuel	Mixed/Waste Oils	22	60	48	58	34
Oils and Fuel	Other Oil or Fuel	6	17	8	12	10
Oils and Fuel	Petrol	7	14	10	11	3
Oils and Fuel	Unidentified Oil	17	32	43	42	20
Organic Chemicals/Products	Adhesives			7	1	
Organic Chemicals/Products	Alcohols/Aldehydes		4	2	2	1
Organic Chemicals/Products	Dyes and Inks	4	2	1		1
Organic Chemicals/Products	Hydrocarbons	4	5	1	5	5
Organic Chemicals/Products	Other Organic Chemical or Product	7	12	15	9	13
Organic Chemicals/Products	Paints and Varnishes	3	11	14	15	7
Organic Chemicals/Products	Pesticides and Biocides	1	1	2	3	2
Organic Chemicals/Products	Phenols and Creosote		1	4	2	2
Organic Chemicals/Products	Solvents	10	22	19	21	12
Organic Chemicals/Products	Surfactants and Detergents	2	5	1	4	4
Other Pollutant	Microbiological		1	1		
Other Pollutant	Noise				1	
Other Pollutant	Other	98	129	151	138	45
Other Pollutant	Radionucleid			1		
Pollutant Not Identified	Not Identified	43	72	113	71	44
Sewage Materials	Crude Sewage	1		1	3	2
Sewage Materials	Grey Water		2	1		
Sewage Materials	Other Sewage Material	1	2		1	1
Sewage Materials	Sludge		1	1		
Specific Waste Materials	Asbestos	122	241	274	275	167
Specific Waste Materials	Batteries	9	29	33	27	18
Specific Waste Materials	Clinical Waste	9	12	14	13	4
Specific Waste Materials	Commercial Waste	130	292	316	214	96
Specific Waste Materials	Containers	21	39	56	64	35
Specific Waste Materials	Contaminated Construction and Demolition Material and Waste				13	7
Specific Waste Materials	Contaminated Soil	1	1	8	3	
Specific Waste Materials	Electrical Equipment				61	58
Specific Waste Materials	Household Waste	369	840	1,002	790	309
Specific Waste Materials	Inorganic Chemical Wastes	2	3	3	3	5
Specific Waste Materials	Metal Wastes	36	88	74	59	16
Specific Waste Materials	Organic Chemical Wastes	2	6	3	3	5
Specific Waste Materials	Other Composites	6	6	8	6	
Specific Waste Materials	Other Non-Metal Wastes	7	19	23	26	8
Specific Waste Materials	Other Specific Waste Material	57	219	228	179	59
Specific Waste Materials	Prescription only medicines			2	2	
Specific Waste Materials	Tarry Wastes	6	10	11	5	3
Specific Waste Materials	Thermal Mineral Residues			2		
Specific Waste Materials	Tyres	199	404	429	282	160
Specific Waste Materials	Vehicles and Vehicle Parts	62	116	140	102	55

Household Waste

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate the Government have made of the financial implications for local authorities of its proposed household duty of care on waste. [26925]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Waste (Household Waste Duty of Care) (England and Wales) Regulations 2005 give local authorities a new power to take action against householders for breaches of the duty of care. There is no duty on local authorities to enforce this requirement or to prosecute offenders. Therefore, the extent to which this new power is used will be a matter for individual local authorities based on their enforcement and prosecution policies, and the financial implications will vary accordingly.

As many local authorities have enforcement teams to deal with fly-tipping and other local environmental quality offences, there will be no additional cost as this is simply another power they can use to target offenders. Local authorities have been requesting this power for some time. They currently spent around £44 million from April 2004 to March 2005 on clearing fly-tipping, 55 per cent. of which was household waste. Enforcing the household waste duty of care will help to reduce illegal dumping and could lead to resource savings for authorities.

Landfill

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the landfill requirement arising from the use of bottled water; and if she will make a statement. [27428]

Mr. Bradshaw: No specific assessment has been made by Defra of the landfill requirements arising from the use of bottled water. Both plastic and glass bottles are recyclable and there is no need to landfill them.

Live Animal Exports

Sir Patrick Cormack: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to enforce the rules governing the export of live animals. [30814]

Mr. Bradshaw: Any live exports will be subject to the rigorous application of the health and welfare rules. Any evidence of non-compliance should be brought either to the attention of the relevant local authority or Defra so that it can be investigated.

Livestock Farmers (Levy)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her response is to the recommendation of the Committee of Public Accounts, Ninth Report of 2005–06, HC563, page 5, that a levy on livestock farmers be introduced to pay for the cost of disease outbreaks. [29356]

Mr. Bradshaw: The introduction of a levy that enables livestock producers to share the risks of animal disease outbreaks is one of the options that will be examined under an industry/government partnership in the context of the soon to be published Farming Regulation and Charging Strategy.

Mobile Phones/Printer Cartridges

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many *(a)* mobile phones and *(b)* printer cartridges she estimates were (i) recycled, (ii) reused overseas and (iii) disposed of within the United Kingdom waste stream in each year since 1990. [27888]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department does not collect recycling or reused information on mobile phones or printer cartridges.

Nappies

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans her Department has to continue to fund campaigns to encourage the use of cloth nappies. [28633]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Waste and Resources Action Programme is running the re-usable nappy programme on behalf of Defra. Funding for this programme includes support for schemes encouraging the use of re-usable nappies.

The current funding with WRAP finishes the end of March 2006. We are currently in discussion with WRAP about their programmes, including the Real Nappy Work after this date.

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the environmental effects of the use of cloth nappies on maternity wards. [28634]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Life Cycle Analysis published in May this year by the Environment Agency stated that there was no overall environmental benefit in using either disposable or re-usable nappies.

However, the use of re-usable nappies, including those from maternity wards, will help to reduce the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill and therefore contribute towards the meeting of targets to reduce such waste under the Landfill Directive.

Pet Fairs

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she plans to bring forward a ban on pet fairs. [30489]

Mr. Bradshaw: We have been in contact with interested parties, both for and against the banning of pet fairs, in order to prepare proposals in relation to these events. We have now had an opportunity to consider the responses to this first consultation and our proposal to license pet fairs is detailed in a Regulatory impact Assessment which Defra published alongside the Animal Welfare Bill. We also intend to undertake a wider public consultation before any legislation in this area is finally introduced.

New measures to help prevent the spread of avian influenza have been agreed by the European Commission. Decision 2005/745/EC, adopted by the EU on 21 October, requires member states to ban birds at markets, shows, fairs and similar events. Domestic legislation bringing these measures into effect has been in force since Friday 28 October. The EU decision will be reviewed on 30 November.

Pigeons

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1067W, on pigeons, what criteria will be used in the die-off assessment to calculate response times; and what assessment she has made of the capacity of the State Veterinary Service to deal with carcase collection. [30754]

Mr. Bradshaw: A die-off involving more than three to four birds from the same species or five to six birds from different species will be referred, by the Defra helpline, to a laboratory specialist (during normal working hours) or to a veterinary officer from the State Veterinary Service (out of normal working hours). The decision as to whether carcases are required for examination is made during this second, more detailed assessment. The criteria to determine the time until collection will depend on factors including the scale of the die-off, other possible causal factors and the location of the carcases.

In order to enable the State Veterinary Service to make response times as short as practicable, all animal health offices have increased the number of staff on call out of hours by arranging for an additional Animal Health Officer to be available from each office out of hours specifically to carry out this work.

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1067W, on pigeons, what discussions she has had with veterinary organisations on arrangements for carcase collection in the event of an outbreak; and what

representations veterinary surgeons have made to her on the safety implications of transporting carcases to incineration sites. [30755]

Mr. Bradshaw: Plans for carcase collection and disposal are set out in Defra's Exotic Disease Generic Contingency Plan which was laid before Parliament in July 2005. The plan was issued for public consultation in February and the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons, British Veterinary Association and British Small Animal Veterinary Association were all formally consulted—a summary of responses is available on the Defra website.

The Department has developed stringent protocols and arrangements for the safe collection and transportation of carcases for off-site disposal which are based on veterinary risk assessments and build on the experiences of the 2001 foot and mouth outbreak. This includes the use of appropriately sealed and covered specialist vehicles which comply with the requirements of the EU Animal By-Products Regulation. All trucks are leak tested prior to use and all loads are escorted.

Private Sewers

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions she has had with Ofwat on the cost models involved in the adoption of private sewers; which is the preferred model; when the process of adopting private sewers will begin; and if she will make a statement. [30865]

Mr. Morley: Following discussions with Defra, Ofwat has provided financial analysis for potential implementation options should ownership of private sewers and lateral drains be transferred to water and sewerage companies. The implementation options were decided on following discussions with key stakeholders.

The Government now expects to publish a decision on transfer in the new year and does not rule out further consultation on the options for implementation.

Quarantine

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to change the quarantine arrangements involving *(a)* bird traders and *(b)* importers of birds. [30488]

Mr. Bradshaw: An Independent Review chaired by Professor Nigel Dimmock has been established to review avian quarantine arrangements. We expect to receive his report, which we will publish, in early December.

Veterinary Surgeons Bill

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects to be in a position to publish the Veterinary Surgeons Bill. [32211]

Mr. Bradshaw: A draft Bill will be introduced when parliamentary time is available. We are developing options on which to base a draft Bill and will ensure that there is appropriate consultation of stakeholders.

Waste Management

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the total volume of *(a)* domestic, *(b)* commercial and *(c)* other waste was in each region in each year since 2001–02; what this represents per head of population; and what proportion was (i) sent to landfill, (ii) incinerated and (iii) disposed of by other means. [27890]

Mr. Bradshaw: Results for municipal waste, of which approximately 90 per cent. is domestic waste, are taken from the annual Defra Municipal Waste Management Survey. The results for both commercial waste and industrial waste are taken from the Environment Agency Commercial and Industrial Waste Survey and are available for 2002–03 only. Results for other types of waste are not available broken down at regional level. Totals may not add due to rounding.

Municipal waste

Thousand tonnes

	Arisings	*Tonnes per head*	*Landfill*	*Incinerated*	*Other*
2001–02					
East Midlands	2,409	0.58	1,881	156	373
East of England	2,999	0.56	2,411	42	545
London	4,438	0.61	3,244	844	351
North East	1,572	0.62	1,220	243	108
North West	4,183	0.62	3,608	97	478
South East	4,477	0.56	3,537	1	940
South West	2,830	0.57	2,284	3	544
West Midlands	2,985	0.57	1,688	944	351
Yorkshire and the Humber	3,013	0.61	2,549	116	348
2002–03					
East Midlands	2,449	0.58	1,899	142	408
East of England	3,012	0.56	2,369	43	600
London	4,446	0.60	3,163	873	410
North East	1,657	0.65	1,261	232	164
North West	4,344	0.64	3,625	112	607
South East	4,538	0.56	3,467	16	1,055
South West	2,901	0.58	2,263	3	635
West Midlands	3,046	0.57	1,650	968	428
Yorkshire and the Humber	3,001	0.60	2,372	217	411

Municipal waste

Thousand tonnes

	Arisings	*Tonnes per head*	*Landfill*	*Incinerated*	*Other*
2003–04					
East Midlands	2,445	0.57	1,791	151	503
East of England	2,944	0.54	2,203	36	704
London	4,342	0.59	3,021	827	494
North East	1,637	0.64	1,147	216	273
North West	4,380	0.64	3,491	109	779
South East	4,529	0.56	3,310	93	1,125
South West	2,865	0.57	2,166	4	695
West Midlands	3,031	0.57	1,594	928	509
Yorkshire and the Humber	2,931	0.59	2,212	237	482

2002–03 Commercial waste

Thousand tonnes

	Arisings	*Tonnes per head*	*Landfill*	*Incinerated*	*Other*
East Midlands	2,322	0.55	1,178	113	1,031
East of England	3,308	0.61	1,389	111	1,808
London	5,604	0.76	2,520	286	2,798
North East	1,199	0.47	589	121	489
North West	3,833	0.57	2,035	133	1,665
South East	5,271	0.66	2,547	223	2,501
South West	2,967	0.60	1,549	47	1,371
West Midlands	3,019	0.57	1,457	99	1,463
Yorkshire and the Humber	2,797	0.56	1,261	64	1,472

2002–03 Industrial waste

Thousand tonnes

	Arisings	*Tonnes per head*	*Landfill*	*Incinerated*	*Other*
East Midlands	5,771	1.37	2,550	145	3,076
East of England	3,256	0.60	857	202	2,197
London	1,902	0.26	482	88	1,332
North East	3,400	1.34	1,293	181	1,926
North West	4,502	0.66	1,867	226	2,409
South East	3,581	0.45	1,310	192	2,079
South West	2,589	0.52	802	63	1,724
West Midlands	4,246	0.80	1,457	135	2,654
Yorkshire and the Humber	8,339	1.67	2,574	89	5,676

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when officials from her Department last discussed with Northamptonshire county council its waste disposal strategy. [30861]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 22 November 2005]:* Defra officials have not met with Northamptonshire county council but are aware of their intention to submit an Expression of Interest for waste PFI credits. As part of that process, Defra will be assessing the status and quality of Northamptonshire's Municipal Waste Management Strategy.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on plans for the future of the Waste and Resources Action Programme. [27520]

Mr. Bradshaw: Earlier this year we advised the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) of their indicative funding from Defra until the financial year 2007–08. We are currently reviewing all aspects of our waste strategy, including how the work of WRAP contributes to our objectives. We hope to publish a substantial progress report on this for consultation early in the New Year.

World Trade Organisation

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the likely effect of the EU's most recent offer in the World Trade Organisation trade negotiations on *(a)* applied EU agricultural tariffs and *(b)* total levels of EU agricultural subsidy. [29489]

Mr. Bradshaw: For most EU tariffs, the general 'most favoured nation' (MFN) applied tariffs are the same as the bound tariffs. This means that, in general, the cuts in the bound tariffs will translate into equivalent cuts in the general MFN applied tariffs. (The most notable exceptions are some of the tariffs in the cereals, rice and fruit and vegetables sectors.)

For some countries EU applied tariffs are less than the applied MFN tariffs. These lower applied tariffs are granted to groups such as the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (for least developed countries most tariffs are already zero under the everything but arms agreement). At present there is no proposal for any specific reduction in these preferential tariff rates. Neither is there any proposal for a reduction in the concessionary within-quotas tariffs which already exist.

Total agricultural support consists of two broad categories: market price support (keeping domestic agricultural prices above world prices), which involves costs to consumers and Government expenditure; and direct payments by Government. The two aspects of the EU offer which will have the most impact on consumer costs are the elimination of export subsidies and the reductions in tariffs. The elimination of export subsidies and the reductions in tariffs will allow prices to fall, resulting in a decrease in the overall level of subsidy due to a decrease in consumer costs. However, it is difficult to predict the magnitude of this effect because of the complex interactions between domestic support reforms, trade reforms, and reforms in other major agricultural producing countries.

The EU's offer on domestic support will consolidate the 2003 CAP reforms. The result of the offer would be a real reduction in trade-distorting subsidy from both the pre-2003 position and the current position. However, the non-trade-distorting direct payments are not affected by the EU's offer in the WTO negotiations as these are eligible for the WTO 'green box'.

PRIME MINISTER

Al-Jazeera

Adam Price: To ask the Prime Minister what information he received on action that the United States Administration proposed to take against the Al-Jazeera television channel. [32183]

The Prime Minister: None.

Commission for Africa

Andrew George: To ask the Prime Minister what criteria he used to decide on the appointment of members of the Commission for Africa; and what assessment he has made of whether the commissioners still meet these criteria. [32184]

The Prime Minister: I established the Commission for Africa in February 2004. Commissioners were invited to participate in a personal capacity. Criteria included the desirability of a broad geographical balance both within and outside Africa, and a mix of those with political, civil society, private sector and international community backgrounds. Nine of the seventeen commissioners were from Africa; three commissioners were women.

The Commission for Africa report and the commission's consultation process have been widely praised, suggesting that the composition of the commission was and remains appropriate. I am grateful for the personal contribution of all of the commissioners.

Peerage

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Prime Minister how many persons elevated to the peerage in each year since 1997 were resident at the time of their elevation in *(a)* each region of England, *(b)* Scotland, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Northern Ireland. [32503]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave the hon. Member for North Shropshire (Mr. Paterson) on 24 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 939W and 14 September 2004, *Official Report*, column 1565W.

Since 25 March 2005, 38 people have been elevated to the peerage. Their place of residence at the time of their elevation is shown in the following table. Information for judicial peers is not held in the format requested.

Residence at time of elevation	*Number*
England	
North East	2
Yorkshire/Humberside	1
East of England	5
West Midlands	1
South East	4
South West	4
London	13
Scotland	6
Wales	1
Northern Ireland	0
Judicial (no home address)	1

HOME DEPARTMENT

Animal Experiments

Dr. Evan Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department at what stages the scientific validity of an animal experimentation project is assessed before it can be licensed by his Department; by whom; and by what methods. [30414]

Andy Burnham: The use of animals in scientific procedures in the United Kingdom is strictly regulated by the Home Office under the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986. Licences are granted for animal experiments undertaken for specific permissible purposes. There must be no alternative to the use of animals, the potential benefit of the work has to outweigh the adverse effects on the animals involved and the number of animals used and any suffering that may be caused must be minimised.

Under the conditions attached to a certificate of designation under the 1986 Act, proposals to conduct a programme of work involving animal experiments must first be considered by the local ethical review process at the establishment concerned. One of the functions of the Ethical Review Process is to examine the efficacy and conduct of work to be undertaken. In addition, research councils and charities fund many research projects carried out under the 1986 Act and such work is evaluated by and reported to those organisations. A licence application is only submitted to the Home Office once participants in the local ethical review process are satisfied that the work can be justified.

Applications received by the Home Office are thoroughly assessed by the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Inspectorate, to ensure compliance with the criteria laid down in the 1986 Act. To comply with section 5(4) of the Act, any application to use protected animals in research must be subjected to a detailed cost/

benefit assessment by Home Office inspectors. Here, the likely adverse effects on the animals concerned are weighed against the benefit likely to accrue as a result of the proposed programme of work. Inspectors are either medical or veterinary professionals. They usually have first hand experience of biomedical research and possess higher scientific or clinical postgraduate qualifications. They advise the Secretary of State on whether and on what terms licence authorities should be granted. Some applications are also referred for advice to the Animal Procedures Committee.

Dr. Evan Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent advice he has received from *(a)* the Animal Procedures Committee and *(b)* other sources of independent advice on the scientific validity of animal experiments. [30415]

Andy Burnham: Three major United Kingdom inquiries have reported since 2002 on the contribution of animal research to science and medicine.

In 2002 the House of Lords Select Committee on Animals in Scientific Procedures held that

> "On balance, we are convinced that experiments on animals have contributed greatly to scientific advances, both for human medicine and for animal health. Animal experimentation is a valuable research method which has proved itself over time. Toxicological testing in animals is at present essential for medical practice and the protection of consumers and the environment, as it often provides information that is not currently available from any other source."

The Animal Procedures Committee carried out a review of the cost-benefit assessment in the use of animals in research and reported on this in June 2003. That report clearly states that

> "An absolute position that all animal experiments are scientifically invalid is untenable examples of scientifically dubious or invalid animal experiments do not add up to a general proof that animal experimentation as a whole is flawed science."

In 2005 the Nuffield Council on Bioethics, in their report "The Ethics of Research Involving Animals", stated that

> "Animal research has been, and can potentially be, scientifically valid, in that it is possible to extrapolate from animal models to humans (or other animals) in specific cases (and) certain animal models have played significant roles in the study of particular diseases and led to the discovery of treatments for human diseases".

The report also states that

> "producing a new medicine is a lengthy and complex process, and that decisions on the compounds that should proceed to the next stage are taken using a wide range of information. Tests on animals play a vital role, but they are not the only source of information that is used to determine safety and efficacy."

We believe these views reflect those of the great majority in the wider scientific community.

Asylum/Immigration

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many failed asylum seekers have been deported to Zimbabwe from the UK since 2001. [19378]

Mr. McNulty: Information on the destination of asylum removals has only been recorded since the start of 2004.

The latest published information on removal of asylum seekers covers the second quarter of 2005.

Information on removals of asylum seekers for the third quarter of 2005 will be published later this year on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Removals and voluntary departures[1] of principal asylum applicants, all nationalities to Zimbabwe, 2004 to 2005 Q2[2,3]

Number of persons

	2004				2005	
Type of removal	*Q1*	*Q2*	*Q3*	*Q4*	*Q1*	*Q2*
Total persons removed[4,5]	15	15	25	50	95	105
of whom:						
Persons removed as a result of enforcement action[5,6,7]	5	10	10	30	70	75
of whom:						
Persons leaving under assisted voluntary return programmes[8]	15	10	15	20	25	30

[1] Under sections 3(6), 3(7) or 33(1) of the Immigration Act 1971, or under section 10 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.
[2] Figures rounded to the nearest five. Data may not sum due to rounding.
[3] Provisional.
[4] Including persons departing 'voluntarily' after enforcement action had been initiated against them.
[5] Persons who had sought asylum at some stage, excluding dependants.
[6] Due to a change in the working practices of IND all asylum removals are now classed as enforced removals. Therefore there are no longer any asylum removals classed as "Refused entry at port and subsequently removed", and so the figures for 2004 are not directly comparable with previous years. This reclassification has no affect on the total removals recorded for 2004. This reclassification occurred in February 2003 and so applied to all asylum removals conducted in 2004. This change does not affect non-asylum removals.
[7] Excludes assisted voluntary returns.
[8] Persons leaving under assisted voluntary return programmes run by the International Organisation for Migration. May include some on-entry cases and some cases where enforcement action has been initiated.

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his Department's policy is on the deportation of failed asylum seekers from the UK who are *(a)* enrolled in a school or college and *(b)* due to sit examinations for (i) GCSEs or (ii) A-levels in the year they were deported; and if he will make a statement. [30073]

Mr. McNulty: We will seek to remove failed asylum seekers who have no lawful basis of stay in the UK and who do not choose to leave voluntarily. In cases involving families, pastoral visits will normally be undertaken prior to removal to establish any factors which may impact on the timing of any removal. This may include any imminent examinations leading to a significant qualification.

Removals of failed minor asylum seekers by quarter for 2004 and 2005[1]

	2004					2005	
	Q1	*Q2*	*Q3*	*Q4*	*Total*	*Q1*	*Q2*
Adult	3,485	3,290	3,180	3,030	12,985	3,075	3,160
Minor	605	485	400	405	1,895	365	425
Unknown[2]	10	10	10	5	30	0	5
Grand total	4,100	3,780	3,585	3,440	14,905	3,445	3,590

[1] Minors defined as under 18 on the date of their removal.
[2] For those where no date of birth is available.
Notes:
1. This is based on provisional management information.
2. The above figures have been rounded to the nearest five and totals may not sum.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of female asylum seekers were pregnant on application for asylum in each of the last five years. [31004]

Mr. McNulty: Information on how many female asylum seekers are pregnant on application for asylum is not available. Information on asylum applications by sex is published annually. Copies are available from the Library of the House and on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the immigration and nationality directorate's protocol is for returning personal documentation to failed asylum seekers. [31182]

Mr. McNulty: The immigration and nationality directorate will take all reasonable steps to return personal documentation to asylum seekers whose claims have been rejected. The process for returning these documents depends on the circumstances of the person's case.

Mr. Benyon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether the immigration and nationality directorate review of managed migration routes has resulted in *(a)* the suspension of and *(b)* delay to applications from Commonwealth citizens residing in the UK under the ancestral visa scheme for indefinite leave to remain; [25345]

(2) how many individuals from each Commonwealth country have had applications through the ancestral visa scheme for indefinite leave to remain *(a)* delayed and *(b)* suspended since the outset of the review of managed migration routes. [25346]

Mr. McNulty: Concern about possible abuse of the UK ancestry route was identified during the course of the top-to-bottom review of managed migration routes launched by the Prime Minister in April 2004. The review found evidence of suspected abuse of the ancestral visa route from Zimbabweans, which has therefore resulted in suspension and delay of these applications. The suspension on decision making relates only to those UK ancestry cases submitted by Zimbabwean nationals and has affected approximately 300 indefinite leave to remain applications.

It is only right that the immigration and nationality directorate (IND) should take all actions necessary to identify the level of abuse and put in place measures to prevent it, and I regret any delay this creates for bona fide applicants. However I am pleased to announce that the investigation is now at such a stage that consideration of UK ancestry cases from Zimbabwean nationals can now be resumed.

We are currently consulting on a new points based system for managed migration to cover routes to work, study and train in the UK. As we develop the new system, we will consider how it relates to existing routes such as UK ancestry, and will assess the possible impact before making changes.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the penalty is for lorry drivers who allow illegal immigrants to enter the UK in their lorry. [26457]

Mr. McNulty: The civil penalty regime, as amended by the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, enables the imposition of a penalty on drivers, owners, operators and hirers of transporters of up to a maximum of £2,000 per clandestine entrant carried to the UK or to a UK immigration control operated in a prescribed zone. In cases where liability is incurred, the level of penalty: code of practice sets out the factors to be taken into consideration when setting the amount of penalty.

Basic Command Units

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which 20 basic command units have showed the greatest improvement in respect of *(a)* crime detection rates and *(b)* reported crime levels over the last 12 months. [23222]

Hazel Blears: The most recently published statistics for crime and detections in a local area are those for 2004–05, which show a 6.2 per cent. reduction in recorded crime and a 1.8 per cent. improvement in crime detection. Compared with the previous year, the 20 police basic command units (BCUs) showing the greatest improvements in detection rate for this period are shown in table A.

The 20 BCUs with the greatest reductions in recorded crime levels are shown in table B.

BCUs are shown as they are currently constituted and the figures are adjusted for previous boundary changes.

Table A: Detection rate

	2003–04 (percentage)	*2004–05 (percentage)*	*Improvement (pt)*
Metropolitan police—Tower Hamlets	11.8	23.0	11.2
North Wales—Central	31.0	41.5	10.6
Metropolitan police—Brent	14.5	24.8	10.3
North Wales—Western	38.4	48.6	10.1
Metropolitan police—Hackney	13.3	22.3	9.0
North Wales—Eastern	30.6	38.6	8.0
North Yorkshire—Central	26.4	34.4	8.0
Metropolitan police—Hillingdon	15.0	22.8	7.8
West Yorkshire—Calderdale	17.4	25.1	7.7
Metropolitan police—Waltham Forest	13.7	21.4	7.7
Metropolitan police—Harrow	14.5	22.2	7.7
Metropolitan police—Southwark	13.1	20.5	7.5
Metropolitan police—Greenwich	13.2	20.6	7.4
West Yorkshire—Bradford North	18.0	25.3	7.3
Metropolitan police—Kingston-upon-Thames	14.1	21.4	7.3
Bedfordshire—Luton	22.2	29.4	7.2
North Yorkshire—Western	28.5	35.7	7.2
Cleveland—Hartlepool	22.5	29.6	7.1
Surrey—West Surrey	24.5	31.5	7.0
West Yorkshire—Chapeltown	20.5	27.5	7.0

Table B: Notifiable crimes

	2003–04	*2004–05*	*Crime reduction (percentage)*
West Yorkshire—Calderdale	27,626	20,991	-24.0
West Midlands—J2 (Dudley South)	15,701	12,079	-23.1
West Midlands—F2 (Rose Road)	12,275	9,465	-22.9
West Yorkshire—Wakefield	48,302	37,573	-22.2
West Midlands—K1 (North Sandwell)	19,316	15,155	-21.5
West Midlands—K2 (South Sandwell)	19,136	15,093	-21.1
Cleveland—Hartlepool	14,012	11,134	-20.5
Derbyshire—Chesterfield (C Division)	24,805	19,724	-20.5
North Yorkshire—Central	35,984	28,692	-20.3
West Midlands—E3 (Belgrave Road)	12,468	9,950	-20.2
West Midlands—D2 (Sutton Coldfield)	20,002	16,014	-19.9
West Yorkshire—Pudsey and Weetwood	44,334	35,951	-18.9
West Midlands—E2 (Kings Heath)	14,704	11,962	-18.6
West Yorkshire—Kirklees	52,272	42,535	-18.6
West Yorkshire—Bradford North	24,305	19,825	-18.4
West Yorkshire—Bradford South	28,734	23,721	-17.4
West Yorkshire—City and Holbeck	39,885	32,987	-17.3
West Yorkshire—Killingbeck	21,459	17,791	-17.1
West Yorkshire—Keighley	18,625	15,485	-16.9
West Yorkshire—Chapeltown	20,014	16,675	-16.7

British Crime Survey

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of Londoners were recorded by the British Crime Survey as *(a)* having a high level of worry about violent crime, *(b)* perceiving local levels of disorder as high and *(c)* experiencing a high level of perceived anti-social behaviour in (i) 2002–03 and (ii) 2003–04, broken down by borough. [11947]

Hazel Blears: The British Crime Survey (BCS) is not able to provide estimates at more local level than police force area (PFA). Regional data are, however, available.

In 2003–04, 22 per cent. of people in the London region had a high level of worry about violent crime and 25 per cent. of people perceived a high level of disorder in their local area, compared to 29 and 34 per cent. respectively in 2002–03.

Perceiving a high-level of disorder (also termed the overall antisocial behaviour measure) is defined here from responses to five disorder strands (the BVPI 122 measure). Perceiving a high-level of disorder has since been redefined, and is now derived from responses to seven individual disorder strands, see Dodd et al. 2004 (HOSB 10/04) for further detail.

Call Centres

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many call centres were run by his Department and its agencies in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 to date; and how many and what proportion of calls (i) were handled by an adviser, (ii) were received but abandoned and (iii) received an engaged tone in each year. [23300]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office has eight call centres as defined by the DTI and their performance since March 2003 is shown in the table.

An abandoned call (also referred to as a lost call) is taken as one where the caller has hung up before an agent has answered due to the caller choosing to discontinue the call for any one of a variety of reasons, including wrong numbers and waiting times. No records are held in respect of the number of callers who received an engaged tone.

The Home Office's central Public Enquiry Service and Adelphi Service Centre do not fall within the DTI definition of call centre.

Home Office call centres volume of call received and performance

2003–04

	Calls handled by an advisor		*Calls abandoned*	
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
Immigration and Nationality Enquiry Bureau	1,268,436		[1]—	
Work permits UK	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Nationality Helpdesk[2]	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—
Employer's Helpline	27,396	96.9	876	3.1
MP's Hotline	22,252	97.6	552	2.4
Central Home Office Switchboard	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—
Criminal Records Bureau	1,285,632	98	29,243	2.2
Security Industry Authority[5]	[6]—	[6]—	[6]—	[6]—

2004–05

	Calls handled by an advisor		*Calls abandoned*	
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
Immigration and Nationality Enquiry Bureau	1,293	83.3	259,840	16.7
Work permits UK	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Nationality Helpdesk[2]	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—
Employer's Helpline	82,470	94.8	4,560	5.2
MP's Hotline	31,226	94.6	1,792	5.4
Central Home Office Switchboard	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—
Criminal Records Bureau	1,350,399	97.3	37,6874	2.7
Security Industry Authority[5]	155,590	97	[7]—	

2005–06

	Calls handled by an advisor		*Calls abandoned*	
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
Immigration and Nationality Enquiry Bureau	782,397	88.5	101,426	11.5
Work permits UK	33,500	46.1	39,500	53.9
Nationality Helpdesk[2]	71,146	76.7	21,626	23.3
Employer's Helpline	50,997	96.2	2,005	3.8
MP's Hotline	18,134	92.3	1,509	7.7
Central Home Office Switchboard	83,486	94.9	4,509	5.1
Criminal Records Bureau	699,711	97.9	14,756	2.1
Security Industry Authority[5]	101,215	89.0	12,545	11.0

[1] Unavailable
[2] The Nationality Helpdesk became operated in January 2005.
[3] Did not exist.
[4] Data only available at disproportionate cost.
[5] he SIA have established a linkline busy message for callers who would otherwise receive an engaged tone.
[6] ot available
[7] ot available for entire period.

Correspondence

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will answer question 18435 tabled on 13 October 2005; what the reason is for the delay in replying; and if he will make a statement. [27145]

Andy Burnham: A reply to question 18435 has now been published. I apologise for the delay, which was solely due to administrative error.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter dated 6 April from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, (acknowledgement ref B8243/5 dated 1 June) on behalf of Dr. Zade Limondein, Home Office reference H1080798. [32276]

Mr. McNulty: The immigration and nationality directorate replied to my right hon. Friend on 24 November.

Court Statistics

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) pursuant to his answer of 12 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 910W, on off licence sales, what the equivalent figures were for 2004; [20727]

(2) pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Brent East (Sarah Teather), of 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2508W, on abductions, what the equivalent figures were for 2004; [20725]

(3) pursuant to his answer of 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2621W, on under-age drinking and alcohol sales, how many convictions there were in *(a)* England, *(b)* each Government office region and *(c)* each London borough in 2004. [20672]

Hazel Blears: Statistics on court proceedings are due to be published in late November.

Crime (Hemel Hempstead)

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to address the movement of experienced criminal investigators from Hertfordshire to other police forces; and if he will make a statement. [25802]

Hazel Blears: Police officers may choose to move from one force to another if they are successful in applying for posts. The Hertfordshire Constabulary, like all forces, has a range of pay and other incentives to retain officers in particular posts. These include the south east regional allowance and special priority payments.

Departmental Employees

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the 10 highest-paid employees in his Department; what the *(a)* job title and *(b)* salary including bonuses is of each; and whether the individual concerned is (i) a civil servant and (ii) a contractor in each case. [27577]

Mr. Charles Clarke: It is not possible to list the 10 highest paid employees in the Home Office broken down by the criteria requested. Such an approach would identify individual jobholders and their remuneration details.

The 10 posts listed are the 10 highest paid in the Home Office. Jobholders in these posts are paid within the quoted pay bands. All are Civil Servants:

Permanent Under Secretary of State pay scale

Payband £130,350 to £264,250 p.a.

Permanent Under Secretary of State

Senior Civil Service Payband 3

Payband £93,139 to £198,197 p.a.

Chief Executive, Forensic Science Service

Director General, Crime Reduction and Community Safety

Director General, Criminal Justice Systems IT

Director General, Finance and Commercial

Director General, Immigration and Nationality Directorate

Director General, HM Prison Service

Legal Adviser

Senior Civil Service Payband 2

Minimum £75,607 to £159,659 p.a.

Senior Director Managed Migration, Immigration and Nationality Directorate

Director of Strategy

Bonus payments are available to Home Office senior civil service jobholders, in accordance with guidance issued annually from Cabinet Office.

Bonus arrangements for the appraisal year 2004–05 are summarised in the following list:

75 per cent. of the SCS jobholder group were eligible for consideration under the bonus arrangements

Bonus payments ranged between £3,000 and £15,000

Information about civil service reward, including arrangements for colleagues at senior levels, is available at:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/index.asp

Departmental Funding

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much funding was allocated by his Department to Hemel Hempstead constituency for *(a)* capital projects and *(b)* revenue funding in each of the last eight years. [25757]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The answer to the question is in the following table.

The location where Government funds are spent is a matter for Departments to decide. Chapter 8 of Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis shows the outturn of public expenditure by region. However while, generally, there are no records of funding spent specifically on Hemel Hempstead there has been funding sent to Hertfordshire county council (CC) and similar equivalent bodies for which the following information is given. N/A means not applicable and except for the Home Office Police Grant and the Police Capital grant all the 1997–98 figures are the same as the 1998–99.

Office For criminal justice reform

£

Payment/grant name and type	*2004–05*	*2003–04*	*2002–03*	*2001–02*	*2000–01*	*1999–2000*	*1998–99 and 1997–98*
Local performance and delivery support unit funding to Hertfordshire local criminal justice bd—revenue	131,200	40,000	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Note:

The funding for 2005–06 is £175,810.

Dacorum crime and disorder reduction partnership (CDRP) (including Hemel Hempstead)

£

Payment/grant name and type	*2004–05*	*2003–04*	*2002–03*	*2001–02*	*2000–01*	*1999–2000*	*1998–99 and 1997–98*
Crime Reduction Programme							
Capital	n/a	n/a	n/a	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	n/a
Revenue	n/a	n/a	n/a	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	n/a
Small Retailers in Deprived Areas							
Capital	n/a	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
Revenue	n/a	0	0	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
Partnership Development Fund							
Capital	n/a	n/a	0	0	0	n/a	n/a
Revenue	n/a	n/a	[2]1,550,000	[2]680,000	10,000	n/a	n/a
Communities Against Drugs							
Capital	n/a	n/a	36,890	36,890	n/a	n/a	n/a
Revenue	n/a	n/a	71,610	71,610	n/a	n/a	n/a
Safer Communities Initiative							
Capital	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Revenue	n/a	n/a	34,030	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Building Safer Communities Fund							
Capital	40,785	39,790	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Revenue	110,271	107,582	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Home Office Regional Directors' Allocation							
Capital	[2]272,025	[2]272,025	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Revenue	[2]735,475	[2]735,475	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
BCU Fund							
Capital	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Revenue	[3]177,869	[3]177,869	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

[1] The Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) was a multi-million pound intervention programme running for three years from April 1999 was never calculated down to constituency level. The effectiveness of each initiative was evaluated to add to the knowledge base of what works in reducing crime in England and Wales. Over £340 million has been committed to over 1,470 projects in England and Wales under the various initiatives that formed part of the Crime Reduction Programme. Figures are not available for constituency or CDRP level. The CRP funded projects rather than allocated money to CDRPs.

[2] These figures are the regional figures for the whole of the Eastern Region, and cannot be further broken down.

[3] These figures relate to funds allocated to the Western BCU within Hertfordshire police force.

Drug strategy funding

£

Payment/grant name and type	*2004–05*	*2003–04*	*2002–03*	*2001–02*	*2000–01*	*1999–2000*	*1998–99 and 1997–98*
Capital	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	n/a	n/a	n/a
Revenue	6,393,000	5,316,000	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Notes:

1. The funding for 2005–06 is £7,357,205.
2. These figures are for direct annual expenditure for tackling drug misuse and include allocations to Hertfordshire drug action team from the following funding streams:

Building Safer Communities
Drug Interventions Programme Main Grant
Drug Strategy Partnership Support Grant
Pooled Treatment Budget
Young People Substance Misuse Partnership Grant

3. Figures for previous years are not available on a comparable basis.

Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND)

£

Payment/grant name and type	*2004–05*	*2003–04*	*2002–03*	*2001–02*	*2000–01*	*1999–2000*	*1998–99 and 1997–98*
Hertfordshire CC local authority grants adults and families							
Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0	n/a
Revenue	1,144,392	1,552,552	1,287,715	4,083,041	4,513,420	2,409,669	n/a

Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND)

£

Payment/grant name and type	*2004–05*	*2003–04*	*2002–03*	*2001–02*	*2000–01*	*1999–2000*	*1998–99 and 1997–98*
Hertfordshire CC local authority grants unaccompanied asylum seeking children							
Capital	0	0	0	0	0	n/a	n/a
Revenue	2,079,587	1,025,700	649,307	1,016,179	882,260	n/a	n/a

Notes:
1. IND Payments for 2004/05 are payments on account and subject to change.
2. Figures for 1999–2000 grants for unaccompanied asylum seeking children were paid by Department of Health and not the Home Office's National Asylum Support Service. Figures for 1998–99 and 1997–98 are not available as they were not paid by not Home Office's National Asylum Support Service.

Hertfordshire police funding

£000

Payment/grant name and type	*2004–05*	*2003–04*	*2002–03*	*2001–02*	*2000–01*[1]	*1999–2000*	*1998–99 and 1997–98*
Home Office Police Grant[2]							
Revenue	66,003	64,816	61,940	62,172	60,647	51,868	48,343 47,466
Police capital grant							
Capital	1,716	1,493	1,345	1,234	1,254	1,842	1,266 1,044
Specific grants[3]							
Revenue	7,870	7,368	4,822	1,682	224	n/a	n/a
Capital	268	500	2,247	3,045	n/a	n/a	n/a
(Specific grants comprised of:)							
Crime Fighting Fund	3,306	3,112	2,626	976	n/a	n/a	n/a
DNA Expansion Programme	918	875	1,028	706	224	n/a	n/a
South East Allowance	7,555	1,340	1,007	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Basic Command Unit Fund	559	559	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Community Support Officers	652	609	161	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Special Priority Payments	854	580	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Airwave—Revenue	26	293	1247	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Airwave—Capital	268	0	1,247	3,045	n/a	n/a	n/a
Premises Improvement Fund	n/a	500	1,000	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

[1] As of April 2000, the Metropolitan Police District was reduced in size by a transfer of responsibility for policing some areas to the surrounding forces, including Hertfordshire. These changes need to be borne in mind when comparing figures before and after April 2000.
[2] General police grant includes Home Office police grants plus QDPM Revenue Support Grant and NNDR. The figures provided exclude the amounts from ODPM. Figures include £3.0 million in 1999–2000, £2.75 million in 2000–01, £627,000 in 2001–02 and £300,000 in 2002–03 for the transitional costs associated with changes in boundaries of the Metropolitan Police District from April 2000.
[3] Specific grants include Crime Fighting Fund, DNA Expansion Programme, BCD Fund, South East Allowance, Community Support Officers, Special Priority Payments, Airwave and Premises Improvement Fund.

Departmental Press Office

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many phone calls his Department's press office has *(a)* received and *(b)* answered in each month since January 2004. [29358]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office does not collate data on the number of calls received or answered across the whole of the press office. However an automated call log system is in place for its Newsdesk which receives a significant proportion of calls from the press. Data on these calls, received and answered, from January 2004 until October 2005, are contained in the following table.

Date	*Calls received*	*Calls answered*
2004		
January	6,348	5,916
February	7,052	6,379
March[1]	6,511	6,039
April	5,816	5,457
May	4,752	4,444
June	5,794	5,214
July[2]	6,890	6,054
August	5,567	4,872
September	5,031	4,444
October[3]	5,110	4,539
November	5,693	4,854
December[4]	4,900	4,275
2005		
January[5]	4,880	4,273
February[6]	3,341	2,520
March	5,642	5,079
April	3,312	3,011
May	3,290	2,998
June	5,241	4,755
July	5,003	4,549
August	5,695	5,298
September	4,722	4,377
October	5,046	4,723
Total	115,636	104,070

[1] The call total for 1 and 2 March 2004 may not be accurate.
[2] The call total for 1 July 2004 may not be accurate.
[3] The call total for 1 October 2004 may not be accurate.
[4] The call total for 1 December 2004 may not be accurate.

[5] Call data for 31 January 2005 is not retrievable and consequently is not included in the total.

[6] Due to the Home Office's move from Queen Anne's Gate to 2 Marsham Street, the call log equipment was not in operation for the full month.

Note:

Due to data error, daily call logs for 1 and 2 March 2004, 1 July 2004, 1 October 2004 and 1 December 2004 have been added twice to the respective monthly totals. Additionally, data for 31 January 2005 is not retrievable and consequently is missing from that month's total.

Departmental Spending

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 10 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 650W, on departmental spending, how much his Department paid to Annes Gate Property plc for the development of the new building at 2 Marsham Street. [31081]

Mr. Charles Clarke: 2 Marsham Street is occupied under a PFI contract which provides for an annual combined charge that covers land cost, design and construction costs, fit out costs, whole life maintenance and facilities management services. The combined charge for financial year 2005–06 is estimated to be £32.7 million.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills of new recruits to his Department. [21003]

Mr. Charles Clarke: In accordance with the Cabinet Office guidance, the Home Office uses a variety of methods to assess an applicant's literacy and numeracy skills during the recruitment process.

These include competency based application forms, the use of specific tests of ability, aptitude or potential, and Assessment Centres for staff entering the service at Higher Executive Officer (HEO) and Grade 7 level. For both of our Assessment Centres, candidates are presented with materials in written form and this provides a substantial test of literacy skills. Certain exercises we use include numerical material also.

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who the director of human resources in his Department is; what relevant specialist qualifications he or she holds; and what the details of his or her career are to date. [26309]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The group director of Human Resources is John Marsh. He has a postgraduate degree in industrial relations. He has been Human Resources director in the Home Office since 2003. He was previously head of the Personnel Management group in Her Majesty's Prison Service, and has held a variety of posts across Government since 1986.

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who is responsible for managing the estates of his Department; what relevant specialist qualifications he or she holds; and what the details are of his or her career to date. [26310]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Responsibility for managing the central estate of the Department rests with the Buildings and Estate Management Unit. Responsibility is otherwise devolved to the respective business areas, for instance the National Offender Management Service and the Immigration and Nationality Directorate who manage their respective estates, working within the policy guidance issued by the Buildings and Estates Management Unit. This unit is headed by Tony Edwards FRICS, an experienced and senior chartered surveyor with extensive estate management experience.

The organisation of estate management within the Department is the subject of a reform programme which will establish a small group head quarters estates team responsible for policy and estates strategy and two new estates shared services which will manage respectively the Department's general office estates and its custodial estates. The shared services are planned to start operating from summer 2006.

Deportees

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list people who have been deported from the UK to face terrorist charges overseas since September 2001, broken down by country to which they were deported; and whether each was deported willingly. [30917]

Mr. McNulty: Under current immigration law there are no provisions to deport anyone solely to face terrorist charges abroad.

Pursuant to extradition requests, one individual was surrendered to Italy in 2002 on charges of dealing in false documents, purportedly for terrorist purposes. Another individual was surrendered to the Netherlands in July 2005 for terrorist related charges.

Detentions

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been detained indefinitely under the Anti-Terrorism Crime and Security Act 2001. [29867]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Part four of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 was repealed in March 2005. No one is therefore detained under this power.

Farj Hassan Faraj

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1259–66W, on Farj Hassan Faraj, when he expects to complete his consideration of Farj Hassan Faraj's immigration position; and under what powers he is being detained. [31184]

Mr. McNulty: On 10 October 2005, the Italian authorities withdrew their extradition request for Mr. Farj Hassan Faraj.

Mr. Farj was then transferred to immigration custody and continues to be detained under immigration powers. Mr. Farj's immigration position is currently under active review.

Funding (Milton Keynes)

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much funding was allocated by his Department to Milton Keynes for (i) capital projects and (ii) revenue funding in each of the last five years. [23506]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The answer to the question is in the following tables:

The location where Government funds are spent is a matter for Departments to decide. Chapter eight of Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis shows the outturn of public expenditure by region. However, the following information is given concerning Milton Keynes.

£

Payment/grant name	*2004–05*	*2003–04*	*2002–03*	*2001–02*	*2000–01*
Race Equality Unit					
Connecting Communities Grant Round two funding to Milton Keynes Race Equality Council (REC): Revenue[2]	59,984	46,540	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Active Community Unit					
Capital Modernisation Programme funding to Milton Keynes Council of Voluntary Organisations (CVO): Revenue	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	175,000	[1]—
Immigration and Nationality					
Milton Keynes Council Local Authority Grants—adults and Families Revenue	152,396	433,032	503,178	1,082,188	1,851,130
Milton Keynes Council Local Authority Grants—Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children Revenue	284,675	359,441	399,196	163,472	15,665
Drug Strategy					
Milton Keynes Drug Action Team—Revenue	1,546,000	1,384,000	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Criminal Justice					
Funding allocated by Local Performance and Delivery Support Unit to Thames Valley Local Criminal Justice Board, since it was established in April 2003: Revenue[3]	240,500	65,000	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—

[1] Not applicable
[2] The 2005–06 funding is £55,984
[3] Further estimated funding for 2005–06 is £303,672. No funding specifically allocated by the Local Performance and Delivery Support Unit to Milton Keynes. Funding has been provided to Thames Valley Local Criminal Justice Board but information is not held centrally on whether or not any of the revenue funding was spent specifically on Milton Keynes.

Notes:

1. The Drug Strategy Funding figures are for direct annual expenditure for tackling drug misuse and include allocations to Milton Keynes Drug Action Team from the following funding streams:
Building Safer Communities
Drug Interventions Programme Main Grant
Drug Strategy Partnership Support Grant
Pooled Treatment Budget
Young People Substance Misuse Partnership Grant
2. Drug strategy funding for Milton Keynes Drug Action Team in 2005–06 is £1,844,791.
3. Figures for previous years are not available on a comparable basis.

Crime Reduction Programme (CRP)

£

Payment/grant name and type	*2004–05*	*2003–04*	*2002–03*	*2001–02*	*2000–01*
CRP					
Capital	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[2]—	[2]—
Revenue	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[2]—	[2]—
Small Retailers in Deprived Areas (SRDA)					
Capital	[1]—	0	0	0	[1]—
Revenue	[1]—	0	0	0	[1]—
Partnership Development Fund (PDF)					
Capital	[1]—	[1]—	0	0	0
Revenue	[1]—	[1]—	[3]2,000,000	[3]680,000	0
Communities Against Drugs (CAD)					
Capital	[1]—	[1]—	122,782	50,976	[1]—
Revenue	[1]—	[1]—	238,343	137,824	[1]—
Safer Communities Initiative					
Capital	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Revenue	[1]—	[1]—	67,467	[1]—	[1]—

Crime Reduction Programme (CRP)

£

Payment/grant name and type	*2004–05*	*2003–04*	*2002–03*	*2001–02*	*2000–01*
Building Safer Communities Fund (BSCF)					
Capital	73,223	71,437	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Revenue	197,973	193,145	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Home Office Regional Directors' Allocation (HORDs)					
Capital	[3]347,436	[3]347,436	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Revenue	[3]939,364	[3]939,364	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
BCU Fund					
Capital	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Revenue	[4]187,755	[4]187,755	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—

[1] Not applicable.
[2] The Crime Reduction programme (CRP) was a multi-million pound intervention programme running for three years from April 1999. The effectiveness of each initiative was evaluated to add to the knowledge base of what works in reducing crime in England and Wales. Over £340 million has been committed to over 1,470 projects in England and Wales under the various initiatives that formed part of the Crime Reduction programme. Figures are not available for constituency or CDRP level. The CRP funded projects rather than allocated money to CDRPs.
[3] The figures relate to the regional figures for the whole south east region and cannot be further broken down.
[4] The figures relate to allocated funds to Milton Keynes BCU within the Thames Valley police force area.

Thames Valley Police Funding

£000

Payment/grant name	*2004–05*	*2003–04*	*2002–03*	*2001–02*	*2000–01*
Home Office Police Grant[1]					
Revenue	139,463	134,382	132,223	122,387	122,843
Police capital grant Capital					
Capital	4,311	3,505	[2]3,165	2,657	[2]3,124
Specific grants[3]					
Revenue	20,674	19,727	14,698	6,906	1,846
Capital	540	500	3,013	6,138	[4]—
Specific grants comprised of:					
Crime Fighting Fund	9,929	9,451	7,980	3,856	713
Rural Policing Fund	1,241	1,245	1,262	1,263	630
DNA Expansion Programme	1,813	2,064	2,379	1,787	503
Street Crime Initiative	1,348	1,348	1,500	[4]—	[4]—
South East Allowance	2,547	2,024	1,577	[4]—	[4]—
Basic Command Unit Fund	1,715	1,715	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—
Community Support Officers	455	65	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—
Special Priority Payments	1,574	1,141	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—
Airwave					
Revenue	52	674	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—
Capital	540	0	2,514	6,138	[4]—
Premises Improvement Fund	[4]—	500	499	[4]—	[4]—

[1] General police grants include Home Office police grants plus ODPM Revenue Support Grant and NNDR. The figures provided exclude the amounts from ODPM.
[2] Includes an amount of Air Support
[3] Specific grants include Crime Fighting Fund, Rural Policing Fund, DNA Expansion Programme, BCU Fund, Street Crime Initiative, South East Allowance, Community Support Officers, Special Priority Payments, Airwave and Premises Improvement Fund.
[4] Not applicable.

Handcuffs

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance has been provided to secure training centres about use of handcuffs on trainees. [31058]

Fiona Mactaggart: Guidance on the use of handcuffs is contained in the manual on Physical Control in Care (PCC). It is for individual secure training centres to decide whether handcuffs will be used. As with all forms of physical intervention, it is necessary in each situation where handcuffs are applied to show that their use was reasonable in the circumstances.

Identity Cards

Mr. Khan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the identity cards scheme has been subject to a Gateway Review. [27898]

Andy Burnham: The Identity Cards Programme has been through a Gateway zero Review in January 2004 and Gateway one Review in July 2005. The next Gateway Review is currently planned for early 2006.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how his Department plans to prevent the production of forged identity cards; and if he will make a statement. [31097]

Andy Burnham: The Identity Cards Scheme and the identity card itself, are being designed to prevent the successful production and use of forged identity cards.

The identity card will be supported by an individual's record on the National Identity Register. The ability to either confirm the validity of the card or verify information electronically against the register using secure technologies means that forged cards will be ineffective, as they will be unable to make a connection to a valid record on the register.

In addition to the electronic protection measures, the programme will endeavour to use physical characteristics which significantly reduce the viability of creating counterfeit or modified cards for simple visual verification.

The card will be designed in accordance with physical anti-fraud measures required by International Civil Aviation Organisation standard 9303 and EU Council regulation 2252/2004. These requirements will be supplemented with the implementation of successful measures in use in industry, the results of research currently being conducted and experience gained through co-operating with document fraud units across Government.

Illegal Immigrants

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many illegal immigrants have been found guilty of *(a)* murder and *(b)* violent offences in (i) Greater London and (ii) England and Wales in each of the last 10 years. [27124]

Mr. McNulty: The Prison Service does not record information on immigration status on the Inmate Information System.

KPMG Review

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 349–50W if he will publish the KPMG review; and if he will make a statement. [23088]

Andy Burnham: The executive summary of the report and the Home Office's response to the recommendations will be published shortly.

Leave to Remain

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applicants from Poland have outstanding applications for leave to remain under the one-off exercise announced on 24 October 2003. [30656]

Mr. McNulty: Up to and including 30 September 2005 there were 745 applicants from Poland with outstanding applications under the exercise.

We will have completed consideration of the great majority of all outstanding cases by the end of April 2006.

Mohammed Zamir

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when Mohmmed Zamir (reference number LR1643012061/1) will be informed of the outcome of his application for a variation of leave to remain in the United Kingdom made in July 2004. [31354]

Mr. McNulty: I wrote to the hon. Member on 28 November 2005.

Parents (Learning Difficulties)

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what advice and support is available to a parent with learning difficulties when dealing with cases in the family court. [26980]

Bridget Prentice: I have been asked to reply.

In all family cases a parent with learning difficulties has the opportunity to be represented by a legal professional and given advice throughout proceedings.

In public law care proceedings, the parent(s) will be legally represented. The nature of these proceedings mean that local social services will have been involved before the case comes before the court. The particular needs of the parent(s) will be highlighted in the application. Depending upon the circumstances of individual cases, the Official Solicitor may be involved or a lawyer with suitable experience.

In private law proceedings, such as child contact cases, parties can seek a lawyer with suitable experience or the Official Solicitor may become involved if appointed by the court.

Police

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the Government would permit the amalgamation of two police forces located in different English regions. [27595]

Hazel Blears: We have made clear to the police service that the very strong starting presumption is that any new force areas should not cross Government Office regional boundaries. It follows that very strong arguments would need to be submitted in support of any merger proposals which were contrary to this presumption.

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the implications for national security of recently retired senior police officers *(a)* commenting in the media about ongoing operational matters and *(b)* revealing intelligence to which they had access while serving as police officers. [30338]

Hazel Blears: The Government do not believe that any recent remarks by retired senior police officers have damaged national security.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects a new chief constable to be appointed to the Thames Valley Police Force. [30466]

Hazel Blears: Following the publication of HM Inspectorate of Constabulary's report 'Closing the gap', which concluded that the existing 43 force structure was no longer fit for purpose, police authorities and chief constables have been asked to submit proposals for restructuring by 23 December. Restructuring would commence in 2006 and be completed by April 2008. Against this backdrop, we have considered what arrangements should apply in the short term when chief officer vacancies arise. In his capacity as chair of the Senior Appointments Panel Sir Ronnie Flanagan, Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary, recently wrote to police authorities advising, except where specific approval had already been granted, not to proceed with existing or future plans to recruit new chief constables. Currently there are discussions between the Thames Valley police authority and Sir Ronnie Flanagan on how to address this particular situation and I would expect the police authority to make an announcement in due course.

Politically Exposed Persons

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many investigations by law enforcement agencies resulting from suspicious activity reports in relation to *(a)* corrupt activity overseas and *(b)* foreign politically exposed persons have been (i) initiated, (ii) completed and (iii) abandoned in the last 12 months. [29695]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This information is not held centrally.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many suspicious activity reports have been received by the National Criminal Intelligence Service relating to *(a)* corrupt activity overseas and *(b)* foreign politically exposed persons in the last 12 months. [29696]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The number of Suspicious Activity Reports (SARs) received by the National Criminal intelligence Service (NCIS) which relate to the specified subjects since 1 February 2005 are as follows:

(a) Corrupt activity overseas—26 SARs

(b) Foreign politically exposed persons (PEPS)—199 SARs

The figures at *(a)* relate to UK companies or individuals engaged in overseas activities.

A database to register SARs referring specifically to PEPs was established by NCIS on 1 February 2005. The figures given here only reflect SARs recorded there since that date, and may involve single cases where activity is suspected in more than one jurisdiction.

Prisons

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures are being taken to tackle institutional racism in prisons. [29912]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Prison Service Associate Race Equality Scheme published in May 2005 sets out the actions that the service will be taking over the next three years to tackle institutional racism in prisons. A copy of the scheme has been placed in the Library.

Terrorism

Ms Butler: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what mechanisms are in place to monitor the operation by the police of detentions and arrests under the Terrorism Acts. [21568]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Schedule 8 to the Terrorism Act 2000 governs the treatment and review of persons arrested and detained under section 41 of the Act. There are appropriate safeguards in place and detention is subject to regular review.

There is also a limited power to detain in the case of a stop and search under the Act. Section 45 of the Act confers the power to detain a person only for the amount of time reasonably required to conduct a search authorised by virtue of section 44 of the Act. The Home Office stop and search manual provides guidance to police on all forms of stop and search to ensure the powers are used fairly and appropriately.

The use of counter terrorism powers is also subject to the same PACE codes of practice where appropriate and where specific counter terrorism guidelines are not already in place.

Under the Act, the Secretary of State is required to place a report on the operation of the whole Act before Parliament at least once every 12 months. The powers in the Act are thoroughly reviewed by an independent reviewer, currently Lord Carlile of Berriew QC, to ensure they are necessary, proportionate and used appropriately by the police.

Mr. Blunt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he had with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) on extending the maximum pre-charge detention period for suspect terrorists to 90 days; if he will list each date the discussions took place; and who proposed that ACPO contact their members about possible correspondence with hon. Members. [30323]

Hazel Blears: Home Office Ministers and officials have had regular discussions with ACPO about the content of the Terrorism Bill.

In the debate in the House of Commons on Wednesday, 2 November, my right hon. Friend, the Home Secretary, suggested that over the weekend hon. Members discuss the counter-terrorism issues with their constituents, and highlighted the importance of professional advice from local police. On Thursday, 3 November, he suggested to ACPO that chief constables write to MPs in their police authority area, making themselves or relevant senior officers available to MPs, of all parties, who wanted to know their local police attitude to these issues. He naturally made clear that this should not be on a party political basis.

Chief constables responded to this in a number of different ways ranging from doing nothing to setting out their views. The Government believes that it is entirely proper for the police service—who are tasked with

protecting our security—to make the case for new powers which they have sought and which they feel are necessary to protect the nation, as they have done since July.

Vandalism

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many convictions there have been for acts of vandalism in the West Lancashire area in each year since 1997. [27707]

Hazel Blears: There is no specific offence of vandalism. Most behaviour, which we understand as vandalism, would probably be covered by the offence of criminal damage, although the two might not always be exactly the same.

The available information from the Home Office court proceedings database on the number of offenders found guilty of criminal damage in Lancashire police force area is contained in the table. It is not possible to identify those convicted in the West Lancashire area, as the data is not collected at this level of detail.

Statistics for 2004 will be available late November.

Number of offenders found guilty of criminal damage at all courts: Lancashire police force area 1997–2003[1]

Offence description	*Number of offenders*
Other criminal damage	
Criminal damage (value of damage over £5,000)[2]	
1997	87
1998	64
1999	48
2000	24
2001	37
2002	30
2003	29
Criminal damage (value of damage £5,000 or less) and causing damage to an allotment through negligence or any unlawful act[3]	
1997	1,075
1998	1,203
1999	1,172
2000	1,213
2001	1,243
2002	1,207
2003	1,333

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] Principal statute—Criminal Damage Act 1971; Explosive Substances Act 1883; Ancient Monuments and Archaeological Area Act 1979; Post Office Act 1953; Malicious Damage Act 1861.
[3] Principal statute— Criminal Damage Act 1971; Allotments Act 1922

War Criminals

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his Department's policy is on the bringing to justice of suspected war criminals where evidence exists. [30416]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government takes all allegations of war crimes and crimes against humanity very seriously and is fully committed to its obligations under international law, which it has implemented through the Geneva Conventions Act 1957, the International Criminal Court Act 2001 and section 134 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988.

The prosecution of particular cases in England and Wales is a matter for the police and the Crown Prosecution Service. The recent successful trial of Faryadi Zardad, found guilty in July 2005 of torture and hostage taking in Afghanistan, demonstrated the commitment on the part of the police and CPS to pursue major war crimes cases.

CABINET OFFICE

Departmental Assets

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster pursuant to the answer of 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 963W, on departmental assets, what the *(a)* five items of art and antique furniture and *(b)* freehold properties are; and what the (i) value and (ii) annual cost of insurance is for each item or property. [32051]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The five items of art and antique furniture valued on the basis of insurance value are:

1. Set of five carved gilt wood armchairs worth £500,000.
2. Carved gilt wood furniture suite worth £500,000.
3. Harewood commode worth £350,000.
4. White marble bust of Oliver Cromwell worth £350,000.
5. Antique wooden table known as the "Treasury Table" worth £250,000.

Insurance value represents our valuer's view of the likely cost of replacing the item valued with as near a comparable item as is available for purchase second hand. In many cases, direct replacement of the items would not be possible.

The freehold properties stated at accounting net book value are:

1. 22–26 Whitehall at a value of £42,351,345.
2. 70 Whitehall at a value of £27,535,750.
3. Admiralty Arch at a value of £25,932,875.
4. No. 10–1, Downing street at a value of £23,625,942.
5. Admiralty House at a value of £9,971,052.
6. Emergency Planning College at The Hawkhills, Easingwold, Yorkshire at a value of £7,401,302.
7. 36 Whitehall at a value of £7,111,243.
8. 53 Parliament street at a value of £3,705,684.
9. Civil Service Club, 13–15 Great Scotland Yard at a value of £3,079,655.
10. Properties at Sunningdale Park, Ascot, Berkshire at a value of £2,182,391.

These properties are valued on the basis of existing use value. The Government are unlikely to place certain of these properties onto the open market for sale.

The Government do not purchase commercial insurance for the risks it faces as, in general, it is cheaper for the Government to cover its own risks.

Freedom of Information

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many Freedom of Information applications his Department has received; how many have taken more than 20 days to process; and how many of these gave rise to complaints about the time taken. [31224]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Between January and June 2005 the Cabinet Office received 967 Freedom of Information requests. Of these requests 157 took more than 20 working days to process but had an agreed extension and 180 took more than 20 working days to process with no agreed extension. The Cabinet Office does not hold information regarding the number of complaints about the time taken to process Freedom of Information requests.

The Department for Constitutional Affairs is committed to publishing quarterly updates in relation to departmental performance under FOI, including information on both the volume and outcomes of requests. The bulletin for the second quarter was published on 30 September 2005 and can be found on the DCA website at http://www.foi.gov.uk/statsapr-jun05.htm and in the Library. The next bulletin will be published before Christmas, while an annual report will be published in early 2006.

SCOTLAND

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what mechanisms are in place to assess the effectiveness of consultant-led projects in his Department; what sanctions are available to penalise consultants who run unsuccessful projects; how many projects conducted by consultants were assessed as unsuccessful in each year since 2000; and what sanctions were imposed in each case. [29069]

David Cairns: All projects in the Scotland Office are led by senior responsible owners who are civil servants; they may engage consultants to provide advice and assistance with the delivery of a project.

When engaging consultants, the Office would include, as part of the contract, terms and conditions that would provide sanctions should they fail to meet their contractual obligations. That, in conjunction with appropriate robust contract management arrangements, ensures that consultants deliver work within the terms and conditions of their contract. If they were to breach their contract, the Office would exercise its legal rights under the contract.

Media Relations

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much his Department spent on external media relations in each year since 2001. [29574]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office has incurred no expenditure on external media relations since 2001.

Ministerial Travel

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much has been spent in each year from 1 May 1997 on ministerial travel, broken down by *(a)* provision and running costs of vehicular transport, *(b)* first class travel by rail, *(c)* standard class travel by rail, *(d)* first class travel by air, *(e)* club or equivalent class travel by air and *(f)* economy class travel by air. [27675]

David Cairns: My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary at the Cabinet Office, has asked Roy Burke, Chief Executive of the Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA) to write to the hon. Member with details of the costs of ministerial vehicles provided to Departments in 2004–05. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

For information for the financial years 2000–01 to 2003–04, I refer the hon. Member to the letters from the GCDA chief executive to the hon. Member for Buckingham (John Bercow) dated 10 January 2005 and to the then hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs (Howard Flight) dated 13 September 2003. Copies of these letters are available in the Library.

In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet ministers costing£500 or more during each financial year. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Library of the House. These report information for the financial years 1995–96 to 2004–05. Information for 2005–06 will be published as soon as it is ready after the end of the current financial year. Detailed analysis of other forms of ministerial travel could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

All ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the "Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers", copies of which are available in the Libraries of both Houses.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Aflatoxin

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the impact of EU regulations on trace elements of the chemical aflatoxin on African producers of *(a)* nuts, *(b)* cereals and *(c)* dried fruits. [30501]

Hilary Benn: DFID supports a multi-donor funded programme that assists developing countries in improving their expertise and capacity to analyse and implement international sanitary and phytosanitary standards. It is a joint initiative between the World Trade Organisation, the World Health Organisation, the World Bank, the World Organisation for Animal Health, and the Food and Agriculture Organisation. DFID is the biggest donor, contributing £850,000.

The programme responds to developing countries' own priorities. Analysis of the impact of EU regulations on trace elements of the chemical aflatoxin on African producers, specifically on nuts, cereals or dried fruits would be supported through this programme at the request of African countries. This project, for example, supported a request from Malawi and Zambia to assist them to address post-harvest aflatoxin contamination in the paprika and groundnut sectors.

The EC has provided technical assistance to developing countries to meet the EU regulations on aflatoxins and residues through seminars and technical workshops. Additionally a specific workshop for African countries will take place in Brussels next spring

and there are additional opportunities for developing countries to become familiar with EU legislation on aflatoxins.

DFID is currently strengthening its own capacity to assess the impact of existing and proposed EU sanitary and phytosanitary legislation, such as the regulations on trace elements of aflatoxin, for agricultural products on developing country producers.

Central Asia

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will increase aid to the Central Asia region *(a)* between 2005–06 and 2007–08 and *(b)* after 2007–08. [31651]

Mr. Thomas: In 2005–06, DFID has committed £9.43 million in bilateral aid to countries in the Central Asia region. We have also committed £4.52 million to a regional programme in Central Asia that aims to help prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS.

DFID aims to increase bilateral aid to two focal countries in Central Asia, the Kyrgyz Republic and Tajikistan. Bilateral aid allocations to these countries in 2005–06 are £5.6 million for Kyrgyz Republic and £3 million for Tajikistan. Allocations for the next two financial years have not yet been finalised. DFID aims to increase assistance to these two countries both bilaterally and through multilateral organisations, beyond 2007–08.

Commission for Africa

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what steps the Government have taken to implement the recommendations of the Commission for Africa; [30233]

(2) what assessment he has made of progress in meeting the recommendations of the Commission for Africa. [30232]

Hilary Benn: I refer the hon. Member for St. Ives (Andrew George) to the response I gave the hon. Member for Vale of York (Miss McIntosh) on 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1295–96W.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the contribution of the Commission for Africa to the objectives of achieving *(a)* conflict resolution, *(b)* good governance and *(c)* transparent and accountable government structures in African countries since the Commission reported in March. [30712]

Hilary Benn: The Commission for Africa (CfA) report emphasises the progress that has been made in Africa in recent years. Its recommendations have helped to clarify development objectives and emphasise the importance of peace and security, and good governance.

On conflict resolution for example, the CfA recommended building the capacity of the African Union to prevent and resolve violent conflict. This was subsequently reflected in agreements at the G8 summit at Gleneagles to support the African Union's peace support operations, build up the African Standby Force for resolving conflicts, support development of an early warning system and establish a Panel of the Wise to mediate conflicts before they erupt into violence.

The CfA took a strong line on good governance, stating that improvements are first and foremost the responsibility of African countries and people. But action by rich nations is also essential. This was also reflected in G8 agreements at Gleneagles, such as that to help the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM) build African political and financial capacity and help African countries tackle their own issues.

The CfA was also clear about the need for Africa and its partners to tackle corruption. Once again, this was reflected in commitments at Gleneagles, including increasing support to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and early ratification of the UN Convention against Corruption.

The UK Government have regular meetings at ministerial level to discuss and monitor progress with implementing such G8 commitments and Commission for Africa recommendations. At the international level, the Africa Partnership Forum will be monitoring delivery of commitments on the basis of a joint action plan now being prepared.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what on-going contribution the Commission for Africa is making to help deliver the recommendations of its report. [30713]

Hilary Benn: The Commission for Africa (CfA) was established in February 2004 and provided an opportunity to take a fresh look at Africa's past and present, the international community's role, and agree recommendations on the future. In line with the original design that the Commission for Africa would not be a permanent institution, the independent Secretariat closed on 1 August 2005. The UK Government have committed to reflect CfA recommendations in their policy and we are working with African and donor partners to support and monitor implementation.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the time scale is for implementing the findings of the Commission for Africa report published in March; and if he will make a statement. [29447]

Hilary Benn: The Commission for Africa (CfA) report makes a wide range of recommendations with different time scales. When my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, launched the Commission for Africa (CfA) report on 11 March 2005, he committed to reflecting CfA recommendations in UK policy and proposed a mechanism to monitor implementation year by year.

Many CfA recommendations have been reflected in commitments made by the G8 at Gleneagles and by the UN at the Millennium Review summit. The UK Government have regular meetings at ministerial level to discuss and monitor progress on G8 commitments and Commission for Africa follow up. The Prime Minister chaired such a meeting on 18 October and the next one is scheduled for 8 December.

At the international level, the Africa Partnership Forum will be monitoring delivery of commitments on the basis of a Joint Action plan now being prepared. This will bring together the commitments of Africa and its development partners for the first time.

Consultants

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many contracts have been awarded by his Department to external consultancies in each year since 1997; and what the total value of such contracts was in each year. [31153]

Hilary Benn: The figures for financial years 1997–98 to 2004–05 are presented in the following table:

Financial year	*Number of contracts awarded*	*Value of contracts awarded (£ million)*	*Number of consultants used*
1997–98	1,995	242	816
1998–99	2,213	235	866
1999–2000	2,036	257	811
2000–01	1,610	224	655
2001–02	1,082	282	514
2002–03	833	262	407
2003–04	768	228	349
2004–05	668	186	310

This does not include lower-value contracts issued by DFID's overseas offices. This information could be obtained only by incurring a disproportionate cost.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which contracts let to external consultants in each of the last five years included strategies for *(a)* local knowledge transfer and *(b)* capacity building. [31154]

Hilary Benn: DFID consultants' terms of reference commonly require them to promote knowledge transfer and help with capacity building in order to achieve programme objectives. DFID does not maintain a separate record of contracts with these specific purposes and the information required could not be produced without incurring a disproportionate cost.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many and what proportion of the contracts let by his Department to external consultants for work under the value of £100,000 *(a)* have and *(b)* have not been let competitively in each of the last five years. [31159]

Hilary Benn: The figures for the proportion of the contracts let by DFID to external consultants for work under the value of 100,000 which *(a)* have and *(b)* have not been let competitively in each of the last five years are set out in the table:

	Contracts under £100,000	*Let competitively*	*Proportion (percentage)*
2000–01	1,321	74	5.5
2001–02	902	52	5.7
2002–03	672	69	10.2
2003–04	631	38	6
2004–05	572	26	4.5

The EU public procurement directives do not require mandatory competition in respect of business estimated to cost under £100,000.

In practice, a large proportion of DFID's contracts worth less than £100,000 are called down from competitively tendered framework arrangements.

DFID takes care to ensure value for money is achieved in all cases.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the contracts awarded in each of the last five years to *(a)* Maxwell Stamp plc, *(b)* HTS Consultants, *(c)* the British Council, *(d)* Adam Smith International Ltd. and *(e)* the Crown Agents for Overseas Governments and Administrations Ltd.; and what (i) the purpose for which the contract was awarded, (ii) the total value of the contract and (iii) the total expenditure on hosting consultants in the recipient country for the project was in each case. [31160]

Mr. Thomas: I shall arrange for copies of the document entitled "Contracts awarded to Maxwell Stamp plc, HTS Consultants, British Council, Adam Smith International Ltd. and Crown Agents for Overseas Governments and Administration Ltd. between 2000–2005" to be placed in the Libraries of the House. The table detailed in this document does not include lower-value contracts issued by DFID's overseas offices, of which there is no consolidated central record. It would require disproportionate cost to produce a list of those contracts.

Responsibility for arrangements and expenditures in the recipient country rests entirely with the consultants.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many external consultants used by his Department since 2001 have been based in *(a)* the recipient country for the project and *(b)* other countries. [31161]

Hilary Benn: The purpose of untying aid in 2001 was to enable DFID to engage consultants in any country to obtain best value for money. The required data have been recorded since April 2003. Information before that date and details of the contracts issued by DFID overseas offices is not held centrally, and could not be obtained without incurring a disproportionate cost.

	Consultant based in recipient country	*Consultant based elsewhere*
2003–04	196	572
2004–05	186	482

Departmental Contracts (Direct Mail)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many contracts for direct mail were signed by the Department in *(a)* 2005–06 to date and *(b)* 2004–05; and what the value was in each case. [27779]

Hilary Benn: None.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development who is responsible for running his Department's estate *(a)* in the UK and *(b)* overseas; what relevant specialist qualifications he or she holds; and what the details are of his or her career to date. [26328]

Mr. Thomas: Responsibility for the running of DFID's estate in the UK falls to our Office Services and Security Department, headed by Gary James. He has over 20 years experience working in four Government Departments and has been in the current post for five years. He has received training in Health and Safety issues and holds an Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (IOSH) certificate, but professional advice on general estates issues is provided to DFID by external consultants under framework agreements established by the Office of Government Commerce.

The majority of our overseas offices are part of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office estate. Office Services and Security Department also provide guidance and information to our remaining overseas offices but direct responsibility for managing these falls to our geographical Departments.

Departmental Finance

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the real terms percentage increase in allocated resources for his Department *(a)* was for the period 1997–98 to 2004–05 and *(b)* is estimated to be between 2005–06 and 2007–08 (i) for each period and (ii) for each year. [31039]

Hilary Benn: The real terms increase in DFID's resource spending within the departmental expenditure limit (DEL) between 1998–99 and 2004–05 was 50.8 per cent. on a full resource budgeting basis. Direct comparisons cannot be made with 1997–98 as resource budgeting figures are not available for that year.

Current plans are for resource spending within the DEL to increase by 17.7 per cent. in real terms between 2005–06 and 2007–08.

The year on year changes in outturn and planned spending are shown in the following table:

			Outturn			
	1998–99	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Resource DEL in nominal terms (£ million)	2,445	2,729	2,985	3,043	3,433	3,710
Percentage change in real terms[1]	—	+ 11.2	+9.2	+1.9	+12.5	+7.8

	2004–05 Estimated outturn	*2005–06 Plans*	*2006–07 Plans*	*2007–08 Plans*
Resource DEL in nominal terms (£ million)	3,868	4,452	4,987	5,281
Percentage change in real terms[1]	4.2	+14.8	+11.7	+5.7

[1] Real terms increases calculated using GDP deflators published by the Treasury.

Departmental Websites

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will take steps to ensure the Department's websites attain the W3C AAA standard of accessibility for people with visual and other disabilities; and if he will set a target date for this standard to be achieved by. [30958]

Mr. Thomas: The DFID website (www.dfid.gov.uk) has been rated AAA for accessibility in a Government-wide report[1], one of only four central Government sites to achieve this.

It is DFID's policy to ensure compliance with the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3C) Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, and Cabinet Office's e-government unit guidelines. Every HTML page that is published on the DFID website is checked using Bobby web accessibility checking software. Pages are only published when there are no errors at Priorities 1, 2 or 3. In 2005, our e-communications team was trained by the Royal National Institute for the Blind (RNIB) in order to ensure that we continue to meet best practice.

DFID's two standalone country sites DFID India (www.dfidindia.org) and DFID Bangladesh (www.dfidbangladesh.org) will meet accessibility requirements when they are integrated into the main DFID site in 2006.

[1] Nomensa: "Web Accessibility in Central Government: An investigation into the Accessibility of 28 Central UK Government Web Sites" (January 2005)

Earthquake (Kashmir)

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the outcome of the international donor conference on the earthquake in Kashmir. [32270]

Mr. Thomas: On 19 November, I attended the Pakistan earthquake donor conference in Islamabad and announced that the United Kingdom would contribute £70 million, (approximately $120 million), over three years for the reconstruction effort. This money will be used to support the Government of Pakistan's reconstruction programme, which includes the rebuilding and repair of schools, hospitals, electricity and water supplies, houses, and support for restoring people's livelihoods. In total, over $5.8 billion was pledged by the international community.

For further information, I refer the hon. member for Boston and Skegness to the written statement made on 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 104–06WS by my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for International Development.

Ethiopia

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what representations he has made to the Government of Ethiopia on the recent shootings of civilians. [31025]

Hilary Benn: I spoke to Prime Minister Meles Zenawi of Ethiopia on Sunday 6 November and expressed my deep concern at the use of live ammunition and the shooting of civilians. I made it clear that the events of the week beginning 31 October were profoundly affecting Ethiopia's international situation and that the international community was very concerned. I also encouraged Prime Minister Meles to give the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) or appropriate international representatives, access to detainees and to ensure that medical needs of detainees were being met.

In addition, the UK, as EU presidency and international donors to Ethiopia, have issued public statements expressing serious concern about recent events, calling for restraint and dialogue, and announcing a review of development assistance.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what action he has taken in respect of the United Kingdom's aid to Ethiopia in light of recent events in the country; what plans he has for such aid; and if he will make a statement. [32161]

Hilary Benn: The UK has a planned programme to Ethiopia of £90 million this year and remains committed to reducing poverty in Ethiopia.

Following election-related disturbances in June, I announced that I was putting on hold, a £20 million increase in Poverty Reduction Budget Support. No general budget support has been provided to Ethiopia from the UK so far this financial year. Following recent incidents in November, the UK is further reviewing its development assistance programme in close collaboration with other donors.

The international donors in Ethiopia, including the UK, have issued a public statement (and a more detailed follow-up letter to the Government of Ethiopia) expressing serious concern about recent events, calling for restraint and dialogue, and announcing a review of development assistance.

I have also spoken directly to Prime Minister Meles Zenawi, expressing concern over the current situation and urging restraint.

EU Aid Commitments

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the UK presidency has taken *(a)* to follow up and *(b)* to monitor implementation of EU commitments on aid to developing countries. [30979]

Mr. Thomas: The European Commission has a mandate from the Council of Ministers to report annually on EU commitments related to the Millennium Development Goals. The Commission sends out a questionnaire to each member state covering the aid volume and related commitments that were initially agreed in March 2002 and updated in May 2005. The Commission issued its questionnaire last month. The results will feed into a Commission Communication that is due to be published by March 2006. Development Ministers will discuss progress and agree conclusions on the communication when they meet in April 2006. This process provides a good opportunity for collective benchmarking and ensures that action taken by the Union is transparent.

The annual monitoring process falls during the first half of each year. But throughout the UK presidency, I and other Ministers have used speeches, information materials and meetings such as the informal meeting of EU Development Ministers in Leeds on 24–25 October, to publicise the commitments and maintain pressure on member states to deliver on them. On 21 November 2005, the conclusions from the General Affairs and External Relations Council re-affirmed the EU's commitment to monitoring the implementation of the aid volume and related commitments.

Europe and Central Asia Programme

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how his Department intends to use the £5.7 million savings that will be made from the Europe and Central Asia Programme over the 2005–06 and 2007–08 period. [31638]

Mr. Thomas: DFID's support to Europe and Central Asia is planned to decrease in line with our policy of focusing our resources in countries where we can have the biggest impact on poverty reduction. The consequent reductions in planned budgets for Europe and Central Asia, as set out in DFID's Departmental Report 2005, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House, increased the resources available for other DFID programmes alongside DFID's increasing budget which is set to rise from £4.5 billion in 2005–06 to £5.3 billion in 2007–08.

DFID operates an annual review of its programme allocations based on the total of available resources.

Africa

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the European Commission's Africa Communication. [30978]

Hilary Benn: The European Commission's Africa Communication "Towards a Euro-African Pact to accelerate Africa's Development", is a crucial contribution to the EU Strategy for Africa to be discussed at the December European Council. The communication was discussed by EU Development Ministers at the General Affairs and External Relations Council (GAERC) on 21–22 November and comprehensive conclusions were agreed in response to the communication. The conclusions are available under the title 2,691st External Relations Council Meeting on the EU Council website at: http://ue.eu.int/cms3_fo/showPage.ASP?lang=en.

Development Ministers welcomed specific elements of the document, notably points on the themes of peace and security, governance, economic growth and trade, investing in people and development assistance.

Ministers also identified specific priorities that they wish to see pursued in the EU Strategy to be discussed in December.

Illegal Drugs

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what role his Department is playing in restricting the production of *(a)* cocaine and *(b)* heroin in developing countries for sale in the UK. [30537]

Hilary Benn: Afghanistan currently accounts for 90 per cent. of heroin production worldwide. Our primary contribution to counter-narcotics is through promoting alternative livelihoods to drug cultivation, for which we will contribute £45 million in 2005–06. DFID's livelihoods programme addresses a range of issues including the development of alternative crops, access to agricultural services, as well as broader rural development issues such as market access, access to credit, skills development and improving Government planning at the provincial level. DFID is also working to strengthen the capacity of the Government of Afghanistan's counter-narcotics institutions which are essential for sustaining progress with counter-narcotics objectives and for long-term poverty reduction.

Our principal contribution to counter-narcotics in coca-growing countries in Latin America is through European Commission assistance, of which the United Kingdom share is 18 per cent. The Commission provides assistance to tackle drug production to a number of Andean countries, including Bolivia, Peru and Colombia. For example, the Commission is providing €45 million in support to the Government of Bolivia to promote alternatives to coca production, including in economically depressed areas, from where unemployed Bolivians migrate to coca-growing regions. EC work is in addition to major US efforts to tackle drugs production in the region.

Experience has shown that, to tackle illicit drug production effectively, developing countries need to reduce poverty and provide alternative economic opportunities, establish effective and accountable state mechanisms which provide adequate services to the poor, as well as develop the capacity to disrupt drugs production and trafficking networks. DFID's work to reduce poverty and build state capacity in drug-producing countries, even when not explicitly targeted at drug production, helps to provide the environment in which incentives to produce drugs are reduced.

DFID's activities to address illicit drugs production are not dependent on whether the ultimate destination of the drug is the United Kingdom.

Land Mines

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress is being made on international land mine clearance under the Ottawa Convention. [31916]

Mr. Thomas: At the Review Conference for States Parties to the Mine Ban Treaty held in Nairobi last year there was unified acknowledgement that this treaty had been successful but it was also acknowledged that there was more work to be done in the aim of a world free of anti-personnel land mines (APIs). An eight point action plan was agreed on how to take the work further.

144 countries have now signed the convention. Land mine casualties continue to decrease and the trade and manufacture of these weapons is virtually finished apart from some illicit activity. The ban is in practice universal, such is the stigma attached to the use of APLs.

Through DFID, the United Kingdom continues to be a major donor in global mine action. In 2005–06, DFID will spend some £10 million in this area. A further sum of approximately £5 million will be attributed as the United Kingdom spend via European Community programmes on mine action in the same period.

Lesotho

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what Lesotho's remaining debt to the international community is; and if he will make a statement. [30769]

Hilary Benn: According to the Government of Lesotho, the Kingdom of Lesotho's public and publicly guaranteed external debt stood at US $768 million in the financial year ending in March 2005. Of this 82 per cent. ($630 million) was owed to multilateral creditors, 13 per cent. ($97 million) to bilateral creditors and 5 per cent. ($41 million) to private sector creditors. The following table breaks the debt down further.

Of bilateral creditors, 82 per cent. ($80 million) of the total bilateral debt was owed to Paris Club creditors such as France, Norway, South Africa, and Sweden, and 18 per cent. ($17 million) to the non-Paris Club creditors such as China, and the Arab funds.

Of multilateral creditors, 53 per cent. ($334 million) of the total multilateral debt is owed to the World Bank, 30 per cent. ($188 million) to the African Development Bank, 5 per cent. ($32 million) to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the remaining 12 per cent. to other multilateral creditors.

Lesotho: external debt

	$ million
Multilateral Debt	
World Bank	333
African Development Bank	188
IMF	32
Others	77
Total	630
Bilateral Debt	
Paris Club	80
Non-Paris Club	17
Total	97
Private Sector	
Total	41
Total External Debt	768

In June 2005 the IMF conducted a debt sustainability analysis (DSA) and concluded that Lesotho's debt levels were sustainable. This means it does not classify as a heavily indebted poor country (HIPC). Although it will not have its debt written off as part of the G8 proposal

for multilateral debt cancellation, it will, however, benefit from the increased resources provided under the proposal. When the World Bank, the IMF and African Development Bank write off debts of HIPCs, donors including the UK, will compensate these institutions for the money they lose. This additional money will be allocated through those institutions' systems to all poor countries, including Lesotho, irrespective of whether they are HIPC countries or not.

The UK also operates a multilateral debt relief initiative (MDRI). Under this initiative, the UK is prepared to pay its share of the debt servicing costs of non-HIPC low-income countries like Lesotho. A key feature of this initiative is for countries to have demonstrable robust public financial management systems to ensure the savings are used for poverty reduction. The UK is providing support to Lesotho to improve its financial management systems to help it achieve this.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much financial aid the United Kingdom Government have given to Lesotho since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [30771]

Hilary Benn: DFID's primary development objective in Lesotho is to assist the Government to implement its Poverty Reduction Strategy, published in 2004. DFID support focuses on: strengthening Government efforts to address the HIV/AIDS pandemic; raising revenue more efficiently; developing financial management capacity to deliver public services; improving the enabling the environment for investment and growth, food security and governance and co-ordinating efforts with other development partners to achieve poverty reduction outcomes.

DFID's bilateral and multilateral financial aid to Lesotho since 1997 is set out in the following table.

£000

Financial year	Total bilateral gross public expenditure	Total multilateral shares	Grand total
1997–98	4,986	2,507	7,493
1998–99	4,166	2,164	6,330
1999–2000	2,974	77	3,051
2000–01	2,258	2,100	4,358
2001–02	2,718	2,100	4,818
2002–03	2,848	2,254	5,102
2003–04	3,318	1,838	5,156
2004–05	3,522	3,687	7,209

Malaria

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development when he expects malaria to be eliminated from sub-Saharan Africa at the present rate of progress of disease eradication; and if he will make a statement. [30480]

Hilary Benn: Working in partnership with the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the international community, DFID is committed to halving the burden of malaria by 2010 and reducing malaria mortality by 75 per cent. by 2015. Given that 90 per cent. of malaria deaths in the world today occur in sub-Saharan Africa, the attainment of these goals will go someway to eliminating malaria from this region. There is however, no internationally agreed target for the elimination of malaria from sub-Saharan Africa.

To combat malaria in sub-Saharan Africa, DFID works at both the bilateral and multilateral level. Since 1999, DFID has provided over £48 million to the WHO in support of its Roll Back Malaria campaign. At the country level, for example, DFID has pledged £27.8 million between 2002 and 2006 towards the distribution of heavily subsidised nets to target populations in Kenya.

Malawi

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness and speed of its response to the food crisis in Malawi in 2002. [31158]

Hilary Benn: DFID carried out a comprehensive review of the response to the crisis with the assistance of experts from the Overseas Development Institute in the latter half of 2003. This review took account of the report on the Southern Africa regional crisis by the House Committee on International Development and of reports by a wide range of international academic and agency reports. Among the lessons learnt and implemented were the development of the Malawi Vulnerability Assessment Committee which has informed decisions about food aid requirements and the integration of NGOs into food aid operations. Both these developments have played an important part in enabling the Government of Malawi to respond promptly and appropriately to this year's food shortages.

Maldives

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will cease all non-humanitarian aid to the Maldives in response to the human rights abuses there. [30907]

Mr. Thomas: We are seriously concerned about the human rights situation in the Maldives. The UK has raised these concerns with the Government of the Maldives, bilaterally and with EU partners and will continue to do so.

The UK provides a small allocation of non-humanitarian aid to the Maldives from the Small Grants Scheme.

The UK has no current plans to cease this non-humanitarian aid to the Government of the Maldives. Such actions are most appropriate where existing efforts at dialogue and co-operation are not able to lever positive progress. We note recent moves from the Government of the Maldives to establish dialogue with all political parties and we look forward to seeing early progress on democratic reform.

Ministerial Travel

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much has been spent in each year from 1 May 1997 on ministerial travel, broken down by *(a)* provision and running costs of vehicular transport, *(b)* first class travel by rail, *(c)* standard class

travel by rail, *(d)* first class travel by air, *(e)* club or equivalent class travel by air and *(f)* economy class travel by air. [27778]

Mr. Thomas: My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary at the Cabinet Office (Jim Murphy) has asked Roy Burke, Chief Executive of the Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA) to write to the hon. Member with details of the costs of ministerial vehicles provided to Departments in 2004–05. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library.

For information for the financial years 2000–01 to 2003–04 I refer the hon. Member to the letters from the Chief Executive of the GCDA to the hon. Member for Buckingham (John Bercow) dated 10 January 2005 and to the then hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs (Howard Flight) dated 13 September 2003. Copies of these letters are available in the Library.

National Minimum Wage

Ms Katy Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many employees in his Department were affected by the rise in the national minimum wage on 1 October. [28973]

Mr. Thomas: There were no DFID employees affected by the rise in the national minimum wage on 1 October 2005.

Niger

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 3–4W, on Niger, what discussions he has had with his foreign counterparts about the need to strengthen the existing international early warning systems used for the prediction of food crises. [30974]

Hilary Benn: In Niger and the wider Sahel region, DFID recently sent a humanitarian advisor to engage in discussions with the US, the French and the European Commission about how to improve existing early-warning systems, particularly through broadening the data collected to reflect vulnerability beyond food production.

Globally, DFID supports international and national efforts to improve early warning capacity. We see a strong role for co-ordination by the UN at the international level but recognise that responsibility for implementation rests primarily with Governments and stakeholders at local, national and regional level.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 3–4W, on Niger, what representations his Department received before June regarding a food crisis in Niger from *(a)* the Government of Niger, *(b)* other African Governments and *(c)* non-governmental organisations. [30975]

Hilary Benn: DFID received no representations from the Government of Niger regarding a food crisis, nor from any other African Governments. One non-governmental organisation (NGO) appealed to DFID at the end of 2004 for funds to help tackle the localised impact of drought and locusts, but did not predict a food crisis. Another NGO alerted DFID in April 2005 to worrying nutritional trends that did point to an emerging food crisis. That NGO was offered funding support to help tackle the crisis, but declined.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 3–4W, on Niger, what assessment his Department has made of the effectiveness of the United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation Global Information and Early Warning System. [30976]

Hilary Benn: The United Nations Food and Agricultural Organisation's Global Information and Early Warning System is just one of many sources of early warning information that DFID consults. We have not made any in-depth evaluation of its effectiveness, but since it is based primarily on food-production data, we are aware that it does not always capture a complete picture of food-insecurity and vulnerability. Its failure to forewarn of the Niger crisis is evidence of this. However, used alongside complimentary information from other sources, it is useful.

Pakistan

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what aid effort to date his Department has offered to the victims of the recent earthquake in Pakistan. [30507]

Mr. Thomas: My hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for International Development, provided a written statement to the House on 24 October announcing that the Government are providing a further £25 million of humanitarian assistance for those affected by the 8 October earthquake. This brings DFID's contribution to the relief effort to £58 million, and our overall contribution, including support for reconstruction to £128 million.

We will continue to keep hon. Members informed of our response. In addition, specific details of our support to the relief effort are given in our regular Situation Reports, available at www.dfid.gov.uk.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what *(a)* financial and *(b)* other aid his Department has given to Pakistan following the earthquake; and if he will make a statement. [32656]

Mr. Thomas: My hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for International Development, provided a written statement to the House on 24 October announcing that the Government are providing a further £25 million of humanitarian assistance for those affected by the 8 October earthquake. This brings DFID's contribution to the relief effort to £58 million, and our overall contribution, including support for reconstruction, to £128 million.

Specific details of our support to the relief effort are given in our regular Situation Reports, available at www.dfid.gov.uk.

Parliamentary Questions

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many written

parliamentary questions to his Department were unanswered as at 14 November; and if he will make a statement. [29812]

Mr. Thomas: At the last Prorogation in April 2005 DFID had no parliamentary questions (PQ)s outstanding. Between then and 11 November 2005, a total of 1,324 parliamentary questions were tabled to the Department for International Development, of which there were eight unanswered questions.

South Asia Earthquake

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the outcome of the conference in Islamabad on 19 November to consider further international assistance in relation to the South Asia earthquake. [32145]

Hilary Benn: I refer my right hon. Friend for Oxford, East to the Written Ministerial Statement I made on 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 104–06WS.

Trade Negotiations (Developing Countries)

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking under the UK presidency of the EU to assist the participation of developing countries in trade negotiations. [31494]

Mr. Thomas: I refer the hon. member for Ceredigion to the response I gave on 19 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1065–66W to my right hon. Friend for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith).

Western Sahara

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to help the people in the Western Sahara. [31204]

Hilary Benn: DFID has no bilateral aid programme in the Western Sahara.

World Trade Organisation

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what measures the UK presidency of the EU has taken to achieve a favourable outcome for developing countries from the Doha development round. [30977]

Mr. Thomas: I refer my hon. friend to the response I gave to my right hon. Friend the Member for Oxford, East (Mr. Smith) on 19 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1065–1066W.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Pensioners

16. **Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he is taking to improve the situation of women pensioners. [31697]

Mr. Timms: We have made a number of changes that are improving women's pension position. Pension credit is helping millions of pensioners on low incomes, two-thirds of whom are women. And the state second pension is extending second-tier pension rights, for the first time, to women who are caring for young children or a disabled adult.

We realise that, despite these successes, more needs to be done. Fairness is one of the key tests for a lasting pensions settlement for the 21st century. That is one reason why we published our report "Women and Pensions: The evidence", to provide a basis on which to build consensus on the way forward and achieve fair outcomes for women.

We are looking forward to the recommendations of the Pensions Commission on Wednesday. We will look to build on our successes in helping women pensioners when we come forward with proposals for reform next year.

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of pensioners are eligible for means-tested benefits. [31695]

Mr. Timms: It is estimated that around a half of pensioners living in private households in Great Britain are eligible for means-tested benefits.

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much on average pensioners in Wales receive in state pensions and benefits; and if he will make a statement. [32567]

Mr. Timms: The latest available information is in the following table.

Average benefit income including state pension 2001–04

£

	Pensioner couples	*Single pensioners*
Wales	182	129
Great Britain	173	126

Note:
Based on average of three years of results from 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04 Family Resources Survey uprated to 2003–04 prices.
Source:
Family Resources Survey

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of female pensioners in Wales are entitled to the full basic state pension; and if he will make a statement. [32568]

Mr. Timms: The information is not available in the requested format. The number of female pensioners in Wales who are in receipt of a full basic state pension as at 31 March 2005 is 177,900. This represents 49 per cent. of women in Wales who are getting any state pension or graduated retirement benefit.

Notes:
1. Data are taken from a 5 per cent. extract of Pension Service Computer System. Figures are subject to a degree of sampling variation. They are also adjusted to be consistent with the overall caseload from the Work and Pension Longitudinal Study.
2. The figure for the number of recipients is rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. A full basic state pension (£79.60 in 2004–05) is paid to those who fully satisfy the contribution conditions either in their own right or where applicable, on the basis of their late or former spouse's contributions.

Source:
DWP Information Directorate 5 per cent. sample.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of women pensioners in Tamworth constituency are *(a)* in receipt of a full basic state pension, *(b)* in receipt of a basic state pension of (i) 75 per cent. to 99 per cent., (ii) 50 per cent. to 74 per cent., (iii) 25 per cent. to 49 per cent. and (iv) 1 per cent. to 24 per cent. of the value of a full basic state pension and *(c)* not entitled to any basic state pension. [29293]

Mr. Timms: The information is not available in the form requested as population estimates are not available at constituency level. The information in the table shows the number of women in receipt of basic state pension in Tamworth constituency.

Percentage of basic state pension	*Number of women as at 31 March 2005 in Tamworth constituency getting basic state pension*
100 per cent.	4,400
75 per cent. to 99 per cent.	700
50 per cent. to 74 per cent.	3,700
25 per cent. to 49 per cent.	[1]400
Between 24 per cent. and 1 per cent.	0
Total	9,100

[1] Based on very few sample cases and subject to a wide degree of sampling variation.

Notes:

1. Data are taken from 5 per cent. sample, therefore figures are subject to a degree of sampling variation. They are also adjusted to be consistent with the overall GB and overseas caseload from the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
4. A basic state pension is not normally paid to someone who is entitled to less than 25 per cent. of a full basic state pension.
5. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant Office for National Statistics postcode directory.
6. A full basic state pension as at 31 March 2005 was £79.60.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate 5 per cent. sample.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of women pensioners in Gravesham constituency are *(a)* in receipt of a full basic state pension, *(b)* in receipt of a basic state pension of (i) 75 per cent. to 99 per cent., (ii) 50 per cent. to 74 per cent., (iii) 25 per cent. to 49 per cent. and (iv) 1 per cent. to 24 per cent. of the value of a full basic state pension and *(c)* not entitled to any basic state pension. [28377]

Mr. Timms: The information is not available in the form requested as population estimates are not available at constituency level. The information in the table shows the number of women in receipt of basic state pension in the Gravesham constituency.

Percentage of basic state pension	*Number of women as at 31 March 2005 in Gravesham constituency getting basic state pension*
100 per cent.	4,900
75 per cent. to 99 per cent.	900
50 per cent. to 74 per cent.	4,200
25 per cent. to 49 per cent.	[1]500
Between 24 per cent. and 1 per cent.	0
Total	10,700

[1] Based on very few sample cases and subject to a wide degree of sampling variation.

Notes:

1. Data are taken from 5 per cent. sample, therefore figures are subject to a degree of sampling variation. They are also adjusted to be consistent with the overall GB and overseas caseload from the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
4. A basic state pension is not normally paid to someone who is entitled to less than 25 per cent. of a full basic state pension.
5. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant Office for National Statistics postcode directory.
6. A full basic state pension as at 31 March 2005 was £79.60.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate 5 per cent. sample.

Incapacity Benefit

17. **Mr. Ellwood:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on incapacity benefit reform. [31698]

Margaret Hodge: The numbers of people claiming incapacity benefits has been falling for the first time in nearly 30 years, with a drop of 41,000 in the year to May 2005.

Our reforms of the benefit will build on this success by introducing the strong rights and appropriate responsibilities sorely lacking in the present system where long-term inactivity was actively created to cover for a failing economy.

Our benefit reform will continue the success of our ground-breaking Pathways to Work pilots that have already resulted in nearly 20,000 job starts. We are going to look at what works and introduce a national system that will, for the first time, help to fulfil the aspirations of the nearly 9 in 10 people coming onto incapacity benefit who want to work again.

22. **Mrs. Dorries:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what role he expects the private and voluntary sectors to play in his reform of incapacity benefit. [31704]

Margaret Hodge: Helping people on incapacity benefits back to work requires the concerted effort of all sectors working in partnership. The success of our ground breaking Pathways to Work pilots has shown what can be achieved with this approach. We will be using the lessons and best practices learnt in these pilots in the development of our welfare reform policy.

Child Support Agency

18. **Julia Goldsworthy:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many cases of maladministration there have been by the Child Support Agency over the last eight years. [31699]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information the hon. Member is requesting is not held for all of the last eight years. However, since April 2002, 706 cases of maladministration have been found by the Parliamentary Commissioner for Administration and 1,334 by the Independent Case Examiner.

In the period 1 December 2001 to 10 November 205, a total of 35,558 special payments for maladministration were made by the agency.

Maladministration ranges all the way between an unanswered letter and failure to collect maintenance.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what estimate he has made of the change in the annual maintenance payments of the Child Support Agency which would result from full compliance of all assessed claims in Scotland; [31631]

(2) what the backlog of Child Support Agency claims made by claimants resident in Scotland was under *(a)* the old system and *(b)* the new system for each month since January 2004; [31633]

(3) what estimate he has made of the *(a)* annual running costs of the Child Support Agency in Scotland and *(b)* annual savings in benefits in Scotland as a consequence of Child Support Agency maintenance payments for each year since 1996; [31634]

(4) what the average time taken is to process new Child Support Agency maintenance claims made by claimants resident in Scotland. [31635]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many non-resident parents there are with outstanding Child Support Agency cases where the main source of income comes from self-employment; in how many of these cases money has been received since 1997; and what the average amount is of maintenance paid by *(a)* non-resident parents overall and *(b)* non-resident parents who are self-employed. [18784]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty to Mr. David Laws dated 28 November 2005:

In reply to your parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the chief executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many non-resident parents there are with outstanding Child Support Agency cases where the main source of income comes from self-employment; in how many of these cases money has been received since 1997; and what the average amount is of maintenance paid by *(a)* non-resident parents overall and *(b)* non-resident parents who are self-employed.

Information relating to outstanding Child Support applications cannot be broken down by employment status. This is because cases may not have reached the point in the information gathering process where the employment status details are obtained. Where such applications are outstanding, no maintenance will have been received.

Over the quarter ending August 2005, across all schemes, the average amount of maintenance received per case in which maintenance was due (via the collection service) was 328. The average amount of maintenance paid per case in which the non-resident parent was self-employed was 449.

Notes:

1. Quarterly figures are provided because this is consistent with the Agency's compliance measurement. It also takes account of the variations in NRP payment patterns which make it difficult to produce an accurate average over a shorter time frame
2. This excludes cases for which no maintenance was due via the collection service (e.g. cases with a nil liability and maintenance direct).
3. The figures quoted relate to the average amount of maintenance received per case, as opposed to the value of the average calculation. A non-resident parent can pay maintenance in respect of more than one case.
4. The figures for the self-employed presented reflect the status of the non-resident parent currently held on the system as of the last intervention by the Agency. This will not necessarily reflect the current status of the non-resident parent if the Agency has not been informed of (or not yet actioned) a change of circumstances.
5. Figures are rounded to the nearest pound.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the ratio between the annual costs of the Child Support Agency and the annual maintenance paid through the Agency has been in each quarter since 1995–96; and if he will make a statement. [21443]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty to Mr. David Laws, dated 28 November 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the ratio between the annual costs of the Child Support Agency and the annual maintenance paid through the Agency has been in each quarter since 1995–96; and if he will make a statement.

The figures in the table below are given on an annual basis, as reported in the Annual Report and Accounts. The information is not held on a quarterly basis. The table shows the ratio of net administration costs to maintenance paid. The net administration costs cover all activities, including both the assessment and collection of maintenance.

	Agency annual costs (£ million)	*Maintenance paid (£ million)*	*Ratio*
2004–05	325.60	578.70	1 :1.8
2003–04	323.00	580.09	1 :1.8
2002–03	294.30	570.69	1 :1.9
2001–02	290.40	526.80	1 :1.8
2000–01	250.00	498.86	1 :2.0
1999–2000	260.30	457.44	1 :1.8
1998–99	231.20	389.96	1 :1.7
1997–98	225.90	298.80	1 :1.3
1996–97	224.50	207.75	1 :0.9
1995–96	199.30	128.63	1 :0.6

I hope you find this information helpful.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when the National Audit Office last signed off the Child Support Agency's accounts; and if he will make a statement. [21446]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty to Mr. David Laws, dated 28 November 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, when the National Audit Office last signed off the Child Support Agency's accounts.

Both the Agency Administration and Client Funds Accounts were signed by John Bourn, Comptroller and Auditor General of the National Audit Office, on 15 July 2005 and published on 20 July 2005.

I hope you find this helpful.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his Department's *(a)* target and *(b)* latest performance is for the time taken to process new Child Support Agency maintenance claims. [21449]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty to Mr. David Laws, dated 28 November 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his Department's *(a)* target and *(b)* latest performance is for the time taken to process new Child Support Agency maintenance claims.

The Child Support Agency currently has not set a target time for processing applications. This is because the Agency currently has a backlog of work and is endeavouring to clear this as quickly as the necessary information becomes available.

At the end of September 2005, the average age of new-scheme applications at clearance[1] was 180 days (26 weeks).

Of those applications that had been cleared, 25 per cent. took 6 weeks or less; 22 per cent. took between 6 weeks and 3 months; 22 per cent. between 3 and 6 months; 18 per cent. between 6 months and a year; and 14 per cent. took a year or more. These figures exclude 80,000 applications that came through the Jobcentre Plus interface and have been cleared, but for which insufficient management information exists to enable age at clearance to be determined.

I hope you find this helpful.

[1] An application is defined as cleared if the case is closed, a maintenance calculation has been carried out and a payment arrangement between the parent with care (PWC) and the non-resident parent is in place, the PWC is identified as claiming Good Cause or subject to a Reduced Benefit Decision or the application is identified as being a change of circumstances on an existing case as opposed to a new application.

Disabled People (Civil Rights)

19. **Mrs. Hodgson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps the Government have taken to improve the civil rights of people with disabilities; [31701]

Mrs. McGuire: The Disability Discrimination Act 2005, which starts to come into force from 5 December, provides important new rights in areas such as transport, education, access to private clubs and community participation. It delivers our commitment to comprehensive and enforceable civil rights for disabled people.

Financial Assistance Scheme

20. **Anne Main:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the financial assistance scheme. [31702]

Mr. Timms: The official notification period for pension schemes to apply to the Financial Assistance Scheme began on 1 September 2005. The Secretary of State will lay before Parliament a report on the operation of the Financial Assistance Scheme for each financial year. In particular the report must deal with the number of people who have received assistance payments and the total amount of such payments.

The first report will cover the period 1 September 2005 to 31 March 2006.

In addition, we have said that we shall review the operation of the Financial Assistance Scheme including its funding, in the next spending review.

Pensions

21. **John Bercow:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the rate at which the state pension will be uprated in 2006–07. [31703]

Mr. Timms: The rates of state pension from April 2006 will be announced shortly (as part of the general uprating statement).

However, we have given a commitment that the basic state pension will be increased by at least 2.5 per cent. or in line with the Retail Prices Index if higher.

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will link the value of the basic state pension to average earnings. [31334]

Mr. Timms: I refer the hon. Member to the written answer I gave the hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Donaldson) on 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1678W.

Occupational Health Strategy

23. **Miss Begg:** To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what work is being done with external organisations to deliver the occupational health strategy. [31705]

Margaret Hodge: The engagement of stakeholders, particularly organisations representing healthcare professionals, employers and employees, was an essential element in the development of the Health, Work and Well-Being strategy published last month. The successful delivery of the strategy will depend on this continued engagement and close partnership working.

Child Support Cases

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the written statement of 20 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 103WS, whether the 260,000 child support cases yet to be cleared include the backlog of new scheme cases mentioned by the Independent Case Examiner in her annual report 2004–05. [18789]

Mr. Plaskitt: The type of new scheme cases described by the Independent Case Examiner in her annual report 2004–05 are included in the 260,000 child support cases yet to be cleared, as referred to in the written statement made by my right hon. Friend the former Secretary for Work and Pensions (Mr. Blunkett) on 20 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 103WS.

Council Tax

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what arrangements his Department has made to publicise the arrangements for claiming the £200 council tax rebate among those not eligible for winter fuel payment. [30740]

Mr. Timms: We are running an extensive publicity campaign which includes advertisements in both national and regional press. We have posters displayed in, and leaflets available from a variety of venues including doctor's surgeries, Citizen Advice Bureaux and benefit offices. Information is also available on the Pension Service website and from the winter fuel payment helpline.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when pensioners in Hendon will receive their financial support for council tax bills due for 2005; how many pensioners in Hendon he expects to receive this help; and if he will make a statement. [31448]

Mr. Timms: The £200 payment to help with council tax bills is being issued with the winter fuel payment. Payments commenced in early November and will continue until Christmas. Eligible people who do not receive a winter fuel payment will need to make a claim which must be received by 30 March 2006. We expect around 11,000 pensioners residing in Hendon will receive the £200 payment.

Inactive Benefits

Mr. Love: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many recipients of inactive benefits moved back to work in 2004–05. [31700]

Margaret Hodge: The Government's successful stewardship of the economy has ensured a steady and concurrent growth in employment. This has meant we have been able to support people who had not previously looked for a job to move into the jobs market. Over the last year the number of people classed as economically inactive, excluding students, has fallen by 180,000.

Pension Service

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many letters have been sent by the Pension Service this year advising pensioners to pay outstanding contributions in national insurance in order to increase the total value of their pensions; how many responses have been received from pensioners; how many responses had been processed at 31 October; how many responses had been received but are yet to be processed at 31 October; what the average time period is for fully processing one of these payments; and if he will make a statement. [28727]

Mr. Timms: Over a 12 month period from September 2004, 414,427 deficiency notice letters were issued by the Pension Service to pensioner customers in Great Britain and abroad. As at 31 October, 191,756 customers had responded.

As at 31 October, 26,433 customers had been awarded state pension for the first time or received arrears and an increase in their state pension. 31,370 responses were awaiting action from the Pension Service to calculate potential entitlement or revise the pension award and make payment. The Pension Service was awaiting further information on 9,207 responses from, for example, the customer or partner agencies.

76,214 customers had responded indicating that they did not wish to take any action. Not everyone will be better off by paying deficient years nor do all decide to progress their initial inquiry to payment stage.

On average, once a customer has paid their voluntary contributions, they can expect the Pension Service to make a payment in eight weeks.

The remaining information is not held in the form requested.

Winter Fuel Allowance

James Brokenshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many complaints his Department has received in the last month concerning non-payment of winter fuel allowance claims at post offices owing to receipt of insufficient cash. [32385]

Mr. Timms: We are aware of a small number of isolated incidents where customers have not received all the money that was available to them because of insufficient post office funds.

This Department and Post Office Ltd. are working closely together and sharing information to ensure that customers are able to collect this year's winter fuel payment from post office branches.

TREASURY

Capital Gains Tax

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he last assessed the merits of using capital gains tax relief to encourage new landlords to offer alternative accommodation to retiring farm tenants; and what his conclusions were. [32581]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer my right hon. Friend the Paymaster General gave him on 21 November 2005, *Official report*, column 1571W.

Child Trust Fund Vouchers

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many Child Trust Fund vouchers have *(a)* been issued, *(b)* been invested and *(c)* failed to be invested in the Bridgend county borough council area; and if he will make a statement. [32344]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The information requested is available only at disproportionate cost. UK-wide information on the number of Child Trust Fund vouchers issued and the number of accounts opened are published on the HMRC website at http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/child_trust_funds/child-trust-funds.htm. The latest set of figures was published on 31 August 2005. Data showing activity to 20 November will be published on the 30 November 2005.

Nick Herbert: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of child trust vouchers issued have not been invested by parents. [31887]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: UK-wide information on the number of Child Trust Fund vouchers issued and the number of accounts opened are published on the HMRC website at http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/child_trust_funds/child-trust-funds.htm.

The latest set of figures was published on 31 August 2005. Data showing activity to 20 November will be published on the 30 November 2005.

Civil Service

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total operating expense of the UK civil service was in the last period for which figures are available; how many civil servants are employed in the UK; and what the rates were in each year since 1997. [32203]

Mr. Des Browne: Spending on gross and net controlled administration costs for Whitehall Departments is shown in table 4 of the Public Expenditure Outturn White Paper 2004–05 (Cm 6639) which has been put in the Library of the House.

Administration costs does not include MOD. However, the MOD civil pay bill for 2004–05 can be found in the MOD 2004–05 annual report (HC464).

Spending on administration by the devolved Administrations is a devolved matter.

Data on civil service employment levels can be found in table 1 of the National Statistics quarterly publication "Public Sector Employment First Release", published on the ONS website. This publication includes figures since 1997. The latest release can be found at the following web address http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/psc0905.pdf.

Economic and Monetary Union

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Romford of 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 879W, on economic and monetary union, what the pay grades of the civil servants concerned are; and what estimate he has made of the man hours per week each spends on the work in question. [32045]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: As a range of officials from across the Treasury contribute to this work, disaggregated information of the kind requested is not available.

EU Budget

Mr. Francois: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the UK's net contribution to the EU budget was in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06; and what he expects it to be in 2006–07. [31862]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The UK's net contribution to the EC Budget in 2004–05 can be found in footnote 1 to Table 2 of the "Provisional Expenditure Outturn" White Paper (Cm 6639) published in July 2005. The Government's latest estimates for 2005–06 and 2006–07 can be found in Table 3.2 of the "European Community Finances" White Paper (Cm 6580) published in June 2005.

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how often financial transfers were made from the UK Treasury to contribute to the Government's share of the EU budget in each of the last three years; what mechanisms are used; and what the last sum transferred was. [32194]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The UK, like every other member state, makes two contributions to the EC budget each month. The first of these is made on the first working day of each month and relates to VAT-based and GNI-based contributions and also takes account of the UK abatement. The second payment is made on the first working day after the 19th of each month and relates to traditional own resources (e.g. customs duties). Payments are made direct from the consolidated fund into a European Commission account held in the UK and administered by HM Treasury under Section 2(3) of the European Communities Act 1972. The latest payment was made on 21 November 2005 and was for £153 million.

Finance Act (No. 2)

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what measures he has put in place to assess the impact on business and inward investment in the UK of the measures contained in the Finance Act (No. 2) 2005. [28612]

Dawn Primarolo: The measures contained in Finance Act 2005 meet the Government's objectives for a modern and fair tax system which encourages work and saving, keeps pace with developments in business practices and the global economy and provides the foundation for building world-class public services.

The Government keep all taxes under review, ensuring they continue to meet these objectives, and any changes to taxation are considered as part of the normal Budget process.

Framework for National Statistics

Paul Clark: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the review of the Framework for National Statistics. [33324]

Mr. Gordon Brown: Having reviewed the Framework for National Statistics, we will publish plans by early in the New Year to legislate to make the Office for National Statistics independent of government, making the governance and publication of official statistics the responsibility of a wholly separate body at arms length from government and fully independent of it. We propose to legislate for:

the creation of an independent Governing Board for the Office for National Statistics, with delegated responsibility for meeting an overall objective for the statistical system's integrity;

the appointment of external members to the Board, drawn from leading experts in statistics and including men and women from academia and business; and

a new accountability to Parliament through regular reporting by the Board to explain and to be questioned by the Treasury Select Committee on their performance.

Incorrect Tax Demands

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what mechanisms are in place to compensate people for expenses they incur in challenging incorrect tax demands. [31645]

Dawn Primarolo: There are long-standing published procedures under which HMRC will give consideration to reimbursing the additional expenses customers incur directly as a result of mistakes and unreasonable delays caused by the Department. These are set out in the code of practice 1 and notice 1000, available on the HMRC website.

Inter-generational Equity

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment his Department has made of the inter-generational equity of the current tax and benefits system; and if he will make a statement. [31290]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Treasury's long-term public finance report provides an assessment of long-term fiscal sustainability and the inter-generational fairness of current policies. An updated version of the long-term public finance report will be published alongside the pre-Budget report on December 5.

Maldives (Asset Seizures)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will *(a)* freeze the bank accounts and *(b)* seize the assets of members of the Government of the Maldives in response to human rights abuses. [30906]

Dr. Howells: I have been asked to reply.

The Government has no current plans to impose sanctions, such as the freezing of assets and bank accounts, or travel bans against members of the Government of the Maldives. Sanctions are most appropriate where existing efforts at dialogue and co-operation are not able to lever positive progress. We note recent moves from the Government of the Maldives to establish dialogue with all political parties. We look forward to seeing early progress on democratic reform.

We are, however, seriously concerned about the human rights situation in the Maldives. We continue to raise those concerns, including in September when the British High Commissioner in Colombo accredited to the Maldives did so personally with President Gayoom. The High Commissioner and his deputy also separately made representations to the Maldivian Foreign Minister in late October. We will continue to do so.

Mortgage Loans

John Mann: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average new mortgage loan was in *(a)* the UK and *(b)* East Midlands in each of the last five years. [32310]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The average value of loans for house purchases are available on the Office for the Deputy Prime Minister' website, and are reproduced as follows.

Average new mortgage loan (£)

	UK	*East Midlands*
2000	70,606	57,839
2001	76,258	61,005
2002	84,489	71,074
2003	98,254	84,913
2004	109,920	95,459

Source:
ODPM and Survey of Mortgage Lenders

National Debt

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the size is of the national debt; and what the cost of servicing it was in the last period for which figures are available. [32191]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Outturn figures for public sector net debt and the cost of servicing debt are available on the Office for National Statistics website: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/psf1105.pdf and http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Expodata/Spreadsheets/D8885.xls (Series ANLO).

Red Diesel (Derogation)

Bob Spink: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to ask the European Union for an extension of the current derogation allowing the use of red diesel for leisure purposes; what *(a)* representations he has received and *(b)* discussions he has held on the extension; if he will list the bodies he will be consulting on the extension; and when the consultation will commence. [31260]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Member to what I said on the Floor of the House on 26 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 865W.

We have received a number of representations on this subject and officials from HM Revenue and Customs have discussed the issues concerning the expiry of the derogation with a number of stakeholders including the Royal Yachting Association and the British Marine Federation. These discussions have been very helpful and are continuing.

Stamp Duty Land Tax

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of stamp duty land tax returns were not processed in 2004–05 resulting in fines being levied, broken down by region. [31925]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The following table lists the number of land transaction returns received by the Rapid Data Capture Centre at Netherton between April and October 2005 and the number which were returned to sender without being processed as the form omitted basic details. A regional breakdown is not available.

2005	*Total received*	*Total rejected*	*Percentage rejected*
April	136,436	3,381	2.48
May	147,221	3,127	2.12
June	163,109	3,390	2.08
July	152,174	3,993	2.62
August	174,845	4,513	2.58

2005	Total received	Total rejected	Percentage rejected
September	148,555	4,387	2.95
October	155,356	4,359	2.81
Cumulative total	1,077,696	27,150	2.52

Under stamp duty land tax an automatic penalty will be imposed if a completed land transaction return and payment of the tax due are not received until after 30 days from the effective date of the transaction.

In addition there are returns which are not returned to sender but which cannot be processed without further information being supplied. Such returns, if the original return is delivered on time, do not result in the imposition of a penalty if the information requested is supplied after the filing date.

Stamp Office

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many calls were made to the Stamp Office inquiry line in the last period for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* region and *(b)* reasons for call. [31924]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: A table giving a quarterly breakdown of the number of calls taken on the stamp taxes inquiry line since 1 December 2003 is included in an answer I gave to the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South (Mr. Hancock) on 10 October 2005 at column 318W. Detailed analysis of regional origins of, and reasons for, these calls is not available.

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the efficiency of the Data Process Unit at the Stamp Office; and if he will make a statement. [31926]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Carmarthen East and Dinefwr (Adam Price) on 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 722W.

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many full-time equivalent staff have worked *(a)* in the tax credit office and *(b)* on the tax credit helpline in each of the last 12 months; [18641]

(2) how many staff have been employed on the tax credit helplines in each month since April 2003; and if he will make a statement. [19292]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is as follows:

(a) The number of full-time equivalent (FTE) staff employed in the TCO over the last 12 months is around that shown in the following table:

	Staff numbers[1]
2004	
September	2,500
October	2,400
November	2,200
December	2,200
2005	
January	2,200
February	2,300
March	2,400
April	2,400
May	2,500
June	2400
July	2,300
August	2,300

[1] Full-time equivalent.

(b) The number of FTE staff employed to work on the dedicated tax credit helpline in each of the last 12 months is detailed in the following table. In addition, HMRC can use another 1,150 FTE staff to answer tax credits calls at peak times.

The number of full time equivalent staff employed on tax credits helplines in each month since April 2003 is detailed in the following table. In addition, HMRC can use another 1,150 staff (FTEs) to answer tax credits calls at peak times.

	Staff numbers[1]
2003	
April	1,750
May	1,700
June	1,600
July	1,600
August	1,800
September	1,700
October	1,600
November	1,900
December	2,300
2004	
January	2,400
February	2,400
March	2,600
April	2,700
May	3,200
June	3,200
July	3,200
August	3,300
September	3,300
October	3,300
November	3,200
December	3,100
2005	
January	2,900
February	2,800
March	2,900
April	3,100
May	3,200
June	3,250
July	3,200
August	3,400
September	3,400

[1] Full-time equivalent.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many complaints he has received regarding miscalculated tax credit sums; how many people have had to pay back money after their tax credits were miscalculated; how much money has been overpaid as a result of problems with the tax credits system; and how much overpaid money from tax credit miscalculations *(a)* has been recovered and *(b)* remains to be recovered. [23212]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs does not hold information on the number of complaints received or the value of overpayments that specifically relate to the miscalculation of tax credits awards.

For the value of overpayments, I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given to the hon. Member for St. Albans (Anne Main) on 13 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 428.

The Department's Code of Practice 26, "What happens if we have paid you too much tax credit?" describes their approach to overpayments and is available on the internet at: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/leaflets/cop26.pdf

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recommendations have been made by HM Revenue and Customs Internal Audit in relation to the gathering of information on the possible targeting of tax credits by organised criminals; and if he will make a statement. [24587]

Dawn Primarolo: It would be inappropriate to disclose information about measures to counter tax credit fraud, as this would prejudice HMRC's ability to prevent or detect crime, recover fraudulently claimed tax credits and prosecute those involved.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost of paying tax credit was as a percentage of each pound of tax credit paid in each year since 1999; and what the capital costs of administration of working tax and child tax credits have been to date. [26815]

Dawn Primarolo: The following table shows the cost of paying tax credit as a percentage of each pound of tax credit, which can be found in table 1 of the Annual Report and Accounts 2004–05.

	Percentage
1999–2000	3.29
2000–01	2.94
2001–02	2.53
2002–03	[1]2.21
2003–04	2.96

[1] Excludes costs of preparing for child and working tax credits, if these are included the ratio is 4.58 pence per pound paid.

Note:

A figure for total tax credits payments in 2004–05 and the cost of managing and paying tax credits can be found in note 3.

Department for Work and Pensions' figures show the cost of managing and paying family credit was £66 million in 1996–97, £59 million in 1997–98 and £72 million in 1998–99. In these three years total expenditure on family credit was: £2,084 million, £2,326 million and £2,429 million. These figures imply that the cost per £ paid of administering family credit was broadly in line with that for tax credits at about 3 pence.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many families have been contacted as part of the Inland Revenue's tax credit outreach programme; how many awards have been adjusted in-year as a result of contact; and when the next wave of contacts will begin. [30006]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs are undertaking a long-term pilot to identify the most successful ways of encouraging customers to keep their records up to date. The pilot aims to contact 15,000 customers in writing and 15,000 customers by telephone on three separate occasions between July 2005 and February 2006.

The first two waves of contact are now complete and the third is due to start in late January/early February 2006.

Information from analysis of the first wave, which took place in July 2005, shows that HMRC contacted 15,000 people in writing and around 7,500 by telephone. HMRC found that, as a result, around 1,200 additional families notified a change of circumstances that led to a change in their entitlement.

Analysis of the second wave will be completed in January 2006 and a further report, following the third wave, is due in April/May 2006. A final analysis will take place after the renewals cycle for 2005–06 awards is complete.

Tax Revenue

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total tax revenue collected by the Government from British taxpayers and businesses was in 2004–05. [30098]

John Healey: Table C8 in Budget 2005 provides details of total tax revenue for the UK.

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the total tax revenue collected by the Government from *(a)* taxpayers in Wales and *(b)* businesses in Wales was in 2004–05; [30099]

(2) what estimate he has made of the percentage of Government revenue during the year 2004–05 which was derived from businesses and taxpayers in Wales. [30100]

Dawn Primarolo: The following figures from the ONS 2005 publication of household income show estimates of income tax, council taxes and vehicle taxes paid by households in Wales and the United Kingdom for 2003. They were produced by ONS for the estimation of sub-national gross disposable household income and were published in April 2005.

Taxes paid by households in 2003 [1]

	Estimate
Wales (£ million)	4,742
United Kingdom (£ million)	137,255
Wales percentage of total	3.5

[1] Taxes paid by households and non-profit institutions serving households.

No corresponding information is available on taxes paid by organisations or on other taxes paid by households. Information for 2004 is not yet available.

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the proportion of UK tax revenues raised in Wales in each of the last 10 years. [31384]

Dawn Primarolo: For years from 1997,1 refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Leominster (Bill Wiggin) on 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1914–15W.

The information for years 1995 and 1996 are as follows:

Estimate of taxes paid by households[1]

£ million

	1995	*1996*
Wales	3,052	3,187
United Kingdom	86,252	87,070

[1] Taxes paid by households and non-profit institutions serving households.

These figures show estimates of income taxes, council taxes and vehicle taxes paid by households and were produced by ONS for the estimation of sub-national gross disposable household income (GDHI). Sub-national GDHI was published in April 2005. No corresponding information is available on taxes paid by organisations, or on other taxes paid by households.

Valuation Office Agency

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what depreciation policy the Valuation Office Agency will apply to the recently purchased desktop valuation software system. [28620]

Dawn Primarolo: The Valuation Office Agency depreciates all of its in-house software on a straight line basis over 10 years and this policy will also be applied to the Automated Valuation Model (AVM) software.

Welsh Assembly (Funding)

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much funding was allocated to the Welsh Assembly in the form of a block grant under the Barnett formula in each tax year since 1997–98. [30102]

Mr. Des Browne: Information on the Welsh Assembly's DEL and grant are published in Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses, the most recent version of which was published in April 2005 (Cm 6521), and the Wales Office Estimates. Further details can also be found in the Wales Office departmental reports.

Working Tax Credit

Anne Milton: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many working families tax credit applications are being processed; [17686]

(2) how many working tax credit applications being processed were received *(a)* up to six months ago and *(b)* more than six months ago. [17687]

Dawn Primarolo: Working families tax credit was replaced by the child tax credit and the working tax credit in April 2003.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Arts Funding

David Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much Arts Council funding has been provided to organisations in the city of Cambridge in the last five years. [31581]

Mr. Lammy *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* The following information provided by Arts Council England provides a breakdown of the information requested.

£

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*Total*
Regular funding for organisations	864,948	1,081,285	1,225,195	1,349,224	1,422,954	5,943,606
Other funding for regularly funded organisations including grants for the arts and recovery	591,895	381,518	878,848	1,333,910	606,461	3,792,632
Regional arts lottery programme (November 2000 to July 2003)	[1]457,070	421,452	—	—	421,452	
Grants for the arts—organisations (£25,000 and above)	—	—	—	467,628	242,753	710,381
Total	1,456,843	1,4628,03	2,525,495	3,150,762	2,272,168	10,868,071

[1] 2000–02 available only as a countywide figure—not included in final totals.

In addition, the Junction has received £5,529,608 in capital grants up to 2004–05. The total Arts Council England funding to organisations in Cambridge during the period was £16,397,679.

British Library

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many redundancies are planned for the British Library. [32215]

Mr. Lammy: The British Library anticipates there will be 47 redundancies during the remainder of the financial year 2005–06. A further reduction in posts of 60 is planned for financial year 2006–07.

Broadcasting Standards

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent discussions she has had with *(a)* Ofcom and *(b)* the BBC about the screening of *(a)* sex, *(b)* violence and *(c)* bad language on television. [32366]

James Purnell: Decisions on broadcast programme standards are a matter for Ofcom, the BBC and S4C to determine independently of Government, according to the provisions of the Broadcasting and Communications Acts.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State was briefed by Ofcom about their proposals for the regulation of standards in broadcast content prior to publication of the new programme code which came into effect on 25 July.

Civil Service Relocation (Scotland)

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many departmental civil service jobs have been relocated to Scotland in each year since 2001. [32374]

Mr. Lammy: None.

Departmental Expenditure

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much her Department has spent on sports and recreation projects in *(a)* West Yorkshire and *(b)* Normanton constituency since 2001. [31561]

Mr. Caborn: The table sets out the funding for sport and recreation projects that has been made available in the West Yorkshire region and the Normanton constituency since 2001 from both lottery and Exchequer sources.

£

	Lottery	*Exchequer*
West Yorkshire	33,401,776	[1]2,035,176
Normanton constituency	473,403	—
Total	33,875,179	2,035,167

[1] £2,035,167 includes £1,630,167 Community Club Development Programme (CCDP) funding; this funding is not broken down beyond the regional level, so it is not possible to say how much, if any, was spent in the Normanton constituency. The £2,035,167 also includes two projects (£50,000 Active School Development Officer and £60,000 Groundwork Trust) which were awarded to the Wakefield area of the West Yorkshire region. Details of Exchequer funding are not available at constituency level.

Departmental Finance

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the real terms percentage increase in allocated resources for her Department *(a)* was for the period 1997–98 to 2004–05 and *(b)* is estimated to be between 2005–06 and 2007–08 (i) for each period and (ii) for each year. [31035]

Mr. Lammy: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) do not have comparable figures for 1997–98 and 1998–99. The real terms percentage increase year-on-year of allocated resources for the DCMS for 1999–2000 through to 2007–08 are as follows:

	Percentage
1999–2000	5.9
2000–01	0.9
2001–02	7.6
2002–03	14.9
2003–04	4.4
2004–05	3.2
2005–06	2.9
2006–07	1.9
2007–08	0.9

For the six-year period 1999–2000 to 2004–05 the increase was 35.5 per cent. and within the period 2005–06 and 2007–08 the expected increase will be 2.9 per cent.

Departmental Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many staff in her Department have been relocated into London and the South East in each of the last five years for which records are available. [31771]

Mr. Lammy: No staff from the Department have been relocated into London and the South East over the last 5 years.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to relocate staff in her Department and related agencies into London and the South East. [31772]

Mr. Lammy: There are no plans to relocate staff from the Department or the Royal Parks Agency into London and the South East.

Departmental Websites

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will take steps to ensure the Department's websites attain the W3C AAA standard of accessibility for people with visual and other disabilities; and if she will set a target date for this standard to be achieved by. [30963]

Mr. Lammy: My Officials are currently working to attain W3C AA standard for all its websites. The main website is being re-developed and we aim to achieve AAA compliance by 2007.

Digital Broadcasting

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her most recent estimate is of the date by which households across Tamworth constituency will be able to receive digital terrestrial broadcasts. [32027]

James Purnell: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has confirmed the regional timetable for digital switchover; it will take place between 2008 and 2012 by ITV region in the following order:

2008—Border

2009—West Country, HTV Wales, Granada

2010—HTV West, Grampian, Scottish Television

2011—Yorkshire, Anglia, Central

2012—Meridian, Carlton/LWT (London), Tyne Tees, Ulster

(Further details can be found at www.digitaltelevision.gov.uk)

Digital Switchover will enable coverage for digital terrestrial television to reach the same level as that of the current analogue signals. It will take place in the Tamworth constituency (Central region) in 2011.

Engagements

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what plans she has to visit Coventry in the next 12 months. [31427]

Tessa Jowell: I have no plans to visit Coventry at present.

English Heritage

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the income was from all sources at the English Heritage properties at *(a)* Stonehenge, *(b)* Old Sarum and *(c)* Wardour Castle in each of the last five years. [31343]

Mr. Lammy: Earned income at these three sites is as follows:

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Stonehenge	3,839,138	3,602,585	3,924,347	4,825,050	5,154,289
Old Sarum Castle	242,172	240,418	219,395	212,213	203,778
Old Wardour Castle	41,141	53,123	67,986	81,774	83,618

This includes income from admissions, retail, catering, corporate events and membership subscriptions (paid at the sites).

Government Art Collection

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer of 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1136W, on departmental spending, if her Department will publish the guidelines issued to the Government Art Collection relating to the purchase of art. [31353]

Mr. Lammy: The Government Art Collection (GAC) is part of DCMS; its acquisition policy is guided by the advisory committee on the GAC, which is a non-departmental public body. This meets three times a year, members being both independent and ex-officio, including three national collection directors.

The Department does not issue guidelines to the GAC relating to the purchase of works of art. There is a formal acquisitions policy approved by the advisory committee and the DCMS management board and I am arranging for copies of that document to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Licensing Applications

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what guidance she has issued on the circumstances that would require a person holding a charity fundraising event in their *(a)* home and *(b)* garden to need to apply for a licence. [31242]

James Purnell: My Department has not issued any specific statutory guidance, however it has issued supplementary advice and guidance on its website in respect of garden fêtes and this information can be found at:

www.culture.gov.uk/alcohol_and_entertainment/

The provisions of the Act mean that garden fêtes, or functions or events of a similar nature, are exempt from the requirement for a licence when providing public entertainment provided they are not being promoted or held for purposes of private gain. However, if alcohol or late night refreshment is to be sold, a licence will be required for those activities. These events would generally require a temporary events notice.

National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what review has been carried out of the effectiveness of the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts. [32288]

James Purnell: On 25 February 2004 the National Audit Office (NAO) published the findings of its value for money investigation of the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts. The NAO found that

> "NESTA has established generally sound approaches to selecting which projects to support and to managing its portfolio of awards and two of its three funding programmes have done well to generate interest and applications."

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) whether she plans to change the emphasis placed on *(a)* science, *(b)* technology and *(c)* the arts by the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts; [32289]

(2) whether she plans to amend the aims of the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts; and if she will make a statement. [32290]

James Purnell: Pursuant to Section 17 (3) of the National Lottery Act 1998 my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State can only make such amendments by order at the request of NESTA. To date, no such requests have been received.

NESTA's role will continue to be to support and promote talent, innovation and creativity in the fields of science, technology and the arts. NESTA has full autonomy to determine the emphasis in each area.

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the return on investment generated by the National Endowment for Science, Technology and the Arts has been in each year since its inception. [32293]

James Purnell: The return on NESTA's investments is listed as follows for both Fund A (NESTA's core endowment, invested on their behalf by the Commissioners for the Reduction of the National Debt in accordance with NESTA's Financial Directions) and Fund B. (the Endowment's income, invested by NESTA), for each year for which audited figures are available.

£000

	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Fund A	11,618	11,599	9,006	8,005	9,189	12,852
Fund B	161	591	656	-3,089	2,658	2,191
Bank interest	20	23	49	47	70	90
Total	11,799	12,213	9,711	4,963	11,917	15,133

National Lottery

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether lottery monies may be used to fund community sports and leisure centres. [33149]

Mr. Caborn: Yes, lottery monies may be used to fund community sports and leisure centres.

Sick Leave

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many of her Department's employees who are within one year of the official retirement age are on extended sick leave. [32604]

Mr. Lammy: There are no employees in the Department on extended sick leave who are within one year of the official retirement age.

Sport England

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much funding Sport England has committed to projects for 2005–06; and how much funding has been allocated by her Department for those projects in that year. [32209]

Mr. Caborn: As at month six (September), a total of £188,650 million has been committed to projects for 2005–06. This is broken down as £35,370 million Exchequer, and £152,650 million lottery funding.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is only responsible for the allocation of Exchequer funding to Sport England which, for 2005–06 awards, is £58,469 million.

Television Access Services (Ofcom Code)

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the use of sanctions by Ofcom on broadcasters which do not meet their targets under the Ofcom Code on Television Access Services; and what discussions she has had with the chief executive of Ofcom on such sanctions. [31962]

James Purnell: Ofcom has powers to impose sanctions if it believes that a broadcaster has breached licence obligations, including those relating to compliance with the Code on Television Access Services. Compliance with licence requirements is a statutory obligation.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has had no recent discussions with the chief executive of Ofcom on the use of such sanctions.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many of the broadcasters that are covered by the Ofcom Code on Television Access Services are on track to meet their targets for television access services in 2005. [31963]

James Purnell: The matter raised is the responsibility of Ofcom, as independent regulator. Accordingly, officials have asked the Chief Executive to respond directly to the hon. Member. Copies of the letter will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Television Licences

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many households in Houghton and Washington, East are in receipt of free television licences. [32872]

James Purnell: TV Licensing, who administer free television licences for people aged 75 or over as agents for the BBC, are not able to provide geographical breakdowns of the number of free licences issued. However, the number of households with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in the Houghton and Washington, East constituency in 2004–05 was 4,490, according to Department for Work and Pensions records.

Tennis Courts

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what guidance she has issued to local authorities on making their tennis courts available free of charge to young people. [31330]

Mr. Caborn: I have issued no such guidance.

Leisure services are a discretionary area of local authority provision and as such it is up to individual local authorities to make a service free of charge if they so wish, taking into account the needs of their local communities.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Article 133 Committee Meetings

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if the Government will make the outcomes of the Article 133 committee meetings it has chaired during its EU presidency available on the presidency website. [29455]

Ian Pearson: No. However, the Council Secretariat publishes outcomes from the Article 133 Committee in accordance with Council Regulation 1049/2001 (Regulation of the European Parliament and Council regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents). These documents can be accessed through the Council's website: http://ue.eu.int.

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list for each member state the *(a)* full and *(b)* deputy representative of the Article 133 Committee of the Council of Ministers. [29460]

Ian Pearson: Details of those attending meetings of the Article 133 Committee are not published; and information relating to the identity of individuals is an issue for the respective member states. It is therefore not appropriate for the UK to publish a list of representatives from other member states.

The UK's full member of the Article 133 Committee is Edmund Hosker, Director of World Trade, DTI. The UK's deputy member of the Article 133 Committee is Ray Symons, Head of the EU Trade Negotiations Unit, DTI.

Bio-fuels Industry

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what grants will be available for those producers who wish to build new plant to supply the British bio-fuels industry. [32284]

Malcolm Wicks: There are no grants available from the Department of Trade and Industry towards the capital cost of building new plants to supply the transport bio-fuels industry. There may however be support available through Regional Selective Assistance. Support for research and development into transport biofuels may also be available under the Department's Technology Programme.

Transport biofuels benefit from a duty reduction of 20 pence per litre, and the Department of Transport has recently announced its intention to bring forward a Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation to further stimulate the market for transport biofuels.

Carbon Dioxide Capture/Emissions

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research he has evaluated on turning captured carbon dioxide back into calcium carbonate. [30925]

Malcolm Wicks: DTI has noted work carried out by the IEA, IPCC and EPSRC which all concluded that the mineralization of carbon dioxide into solids such as calcium carbonate had scale-up problems, but may be regarded as a long-term option for carbon dioxide sequestration.

Stephen Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent estimate the Government have made of the carbon dioxide emissions of the building, maintenance and decommissioning of new *(a)* onshore wind farms and *(b)* offshore wind farms over (i) 10, (ii) 20 and (iii) 50 years; and if he will make a statement. [25666]

Malcolm Wicks: The House of Lords Science and Technology Committee's Fourth Report on Renewable Energy Practicalities included an estimate of the energy payback from wind farms and other technologies.

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the likely impact on the timetable for reducing carbon dioxide emissions of commencing building work on new nuclear power stations in the 2005–06 year. [31500]

Malcolm Wicks: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has said that the Government will be publishing proposals on energy policy next year. In developing these proposals, we will be looking at the impact of new nuclear build on helping us to meet our energy White Paper goals, including reducing carbon dioxide emissions. The review will be examining a wide range of options for helping us meet these goals.

Carbon Trust Survey

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 9 November 2005, question reference 23735, if he will place in the Library a copy of the Carbon Trust's survey findings on energy efficiency. [28769]

Alan Johnson: DTI have made arrangements for the Carbon Trust report to be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Carpal Tunnel Syndrome

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects the Medical Reference Panel to decide on the eligibility claims for carpal tunnel syndrome associated with vibration white finger claims where the diagnosis followed the initial medical examination. [30828]

Malcolm Wicks: This issue remains under discussion between the Department and the claimants' solicitors. We are working to resolve this matter in order to avoid the need to refer the issue to the Medical Reference Panel at all.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (Compensation)

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many chronic obstructive pulmonary disease claims were submitted later than the official cut-off date of 31 March; and what the name of the claim handler and solicitor was in each case. [29482]

Malcolm Wicks: 269 claims were received by the Department's claims handlers, Capita, after the cut-off date of 31 March 2004. These claims are listed by solicitor in the following table.

Representative	*Post cut-off*
AC White	0
AMS Law	19
Andersons	0
Arthur Smith	1
Avalon	1
Bakewells	1
Barber and Co	1
Barrats	0
BBH	1
Beecham Peacock	0
Ben Hiare Bell	0
Beresfords	8
Birchall Blackburn	25

Representative	*Post cut-off*
Blackett Hart	0
BRM	7
Browell Smith	68
Canter Levin	0
Corries	4
Crombie Wilkinson	0
D W Carr and Co	0
Duffy Toshner and Co	1
Frank Alien Pennington	1
Forbes	0
Freeman Johnson	0
Furley Page	2
George Mills	0
Gorman Hamilton	1
Graysons	1
HFT Gough	0
Hartley and Wolstenholme	0
Hattersleys	0
Hilary Meredith	0
Holmes and Hill	0
Hopkins	2
Ingrams	5
Irwin Mitchell	0
Jack Thomley	2
Jordans	0
Keeble Hawson	0
Kidd Spoor Harper	4
Latham and Co	5
Law Direct	2
Legal Warehouse	2
Lopian Wagner	1
Malcolm C Foy	0
Marrons	1
McConville O'Neill	1
Mark Gilbert Morse	1
Mills Kemp and Brown	1
MLM	2
Morisons	2
Mortons	1
Moss	4
Murray Hamilton and Charmers	1
Nelsons	1
OH Parsons	3
Pannone and Partners	0
Pattinson and Brewer	0
Pinto Potts	0
Platt and Fishwick	0
Popperells	1
Raleys	30
Recompense	2
Reeds	0
Rowlands	0
RSC McDonald	1
Ryan Carlisle Thomas	0
Shaw and Co	1
Sidney Shields	0
Simpson Millar	4
Sparke Elmore	4
Stuart Bell and Associates	3
Thompsons	15
Thomson and Co	1
Tilly Bailey Irvine	0
Towells	0
Tracey Barlow Furniss and Co	0
Treanors	1
TS Edwards	0
UDM	7
W Brook and Co	1
Wake Smith	2
Wareing and Co	1
Watson Burton	3
Unknown	9
Total	269

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many claims handlers and solicitors *(a)* had been working in the Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease scheme prior to the announcement of the cut-off date and *(b)* began offering their services after the announcement of the cut-off date; and how many of each category failed to submit claims by the cut-off date. [29483]

Malcolm Wicks: 516 claimants' representatives firms had submitted claims in the Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease scheme before the cut-off date was announced; 141 submitted their first claims after the announcement and a further 20 submitted their first claim after the cut-off date.

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list *(a)* the names of solicitors and claims handlers who have represented clients under the chronic obstructive pulmonary disease scheme, *(b)* the number of cases handled by each organisation, *(c)* the number of complaints against each organisation and *(d)* the month and year in which each organisation began operating within the scheme. [29484]

Malcolm Wicks: 657 claimants' representatives firms have submitted claims under the COPD scheme. A table containing the answers to *(a)*, *(b)* and *(d)* above will be placed in the Libraries of the House. Complaints against solicitors are not a matter for the Department but for the Law Society.

Huw Irranca-Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what *(a)* legal and *(b)* financial assistance is available to an individual who believes that a solicitor or claims handler under Department's chronic obstructive pulmonary disease scheme was negligent in failing to submit a claim before the cut-off date for the scheme. [29485]

Malcolm Wicks: If an individual believes that a solicitor or claims handler under the Department's chronic obstructive pulmonary disease scheme was negligent in failing to submit a claim before the cut-off date, then the Law Society should be able to provide names of specialist solicitors who may be able to advise that individual as to whether he or she has a claim in law. It would not be appropriate for the Department to provide legal advice in relation to the conduct of any such potential claims. Alternatively, he or she may also consider seeking independent legal advice from a citizens advice bureau or a local law centre, who would be able to discuss the matter free of charge.

Clear Skies Programme

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what representations he has received from the micro renewables industry on ensuring continuity of support to community scale projects under his Department's clear skies programme; [27768]

(2) what assessment he has made of the commercial impact of the UK micro renewables sector of the decision to confirm 4 November as the final deadline for community applications to the Clear Skies programme. [27947]

Malcolm Wicks: We worked closely with industry on the last round of community applications to Clear Skies; they were aware of the final round for seven months. In response to representations from industry we have brought forward £750,000 of the low carbon buildings programme £30 million budget in order to allow further householder applications. We will continue to support community projects when the Low Carbon Buildings programme starts in April 2006, subject to EU state aids clearance.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* schools and *(b)* other educational institutions received funding under the Clear Skies programme. [30483]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is as follows.

(a) I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Lewisham, Deptford (Joan Ruddock) on 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1342W.

(b) Four other education institutions have received grant funding under Clear Skies.

Coal Freighting

Gordon Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much coal mined in Scotland was transported by *(a)* rail and *(b)* road freight in each of the last five years. [30894]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department does not collect this data.

Departmental Programmes

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when was the final deadline for community applications to the Department's Clear Skies programme; and from which date community applications to the Low Carbon Buildings programme will be accepted. [30482]

Malcolm Wicks: The final deadline for community applications to Clear Skies was 4 November. It is not possible to give an exact date of when applications to the new Low Carbon Buildings programme will be accepted. The programme is due to start April 2006, subject to EU state aids clearance, and it is expected that applications will be accepted shortly after.

Electricity Demand

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent assessment he has made of the proportion of electricity demand in the United Kingdom in *(a)* 2006, *(b)* 2010, *(c)* 2015 and *(d)* 2020 that will be met by electricity generated using (i) gas, (ii) coal, (iii) nuclear power and (iv) renewable fuels. [30775]

Malcolm Wicks: DTIs most recent assessment of the future proportion of electricity demand is contained in the following table.

Percentage

	2005	*2010*	*2015*	*2020*
Gas	37	41	47	58
Coal	32	26	23	16
Nuclear	22	18	11	7
Renewables	4	11	16	15
Other	4	3	3	3
Total	100	100	100	100

Energy Costs

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent assessment he has made of the effects of energy costs on competitiveness in the UK; and if he will make a statement. [29755]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government take the recent increases in energy prices very seriously, and particularly their impact on the competitiveness of UK industry. In January this year the Department set up the Gas Prices Working Group with the Energy Intensive Users Group and Ofgem, with the remit of examining the workings of the gas market and developing ideas for improving its operation. The group has now agreed a list of action points for the short to medium term, such as maximising gas supplies, encouraging demand side response and pursuing energy market liberalisation in the EU.

The impact on UK businesses of increases in gas and electricity prices will depend on a variety of factors, including how much gas or electricity a particular company uses, the degree of their exposure to spot and forward prices and the duration of high prices. It will also be affected by the energy prices paid by their competitors. A further sector-specific issue is whether they are in a competitive market where international trade sets the price or in a sector where prices are determined more locally and rising energy costs could be passed on.

In making decisions about phase 2 of the EU emissions trading scheme the Government are determined to minimise the impact on the UK's international competitiveness. The evidence to date suggests that the impact of the scheme on electricity prices in the UK is around the average for the EU as a whole.

Despite recent rises, UK gas and electricity prices for industrial users at July 2005 were at or below the EU median. However, individual companies will have agreed commercially confidential contract terms and prices which might differ from these averages. There is anecdotal evidence that, for very large users of gas, gas prices in the UK are above those on the continent, as they buy gas at wholesale prices. On 16h May DTI held a seminar with major users to discuss forward gas prices. We and Energywatch are planning a further seminar with smaller users on 30 November 2005 to discuss energy purchasing strategies.

Energy Imports

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list contracts in place for the import of live energy into the UK. [30899]

Malcolm Wicks: This is a commercially confidential matter. Historical information about actual energy imports can be found in the Digest of UK Energy Statistics, which is available at http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/inform/dukes/dukes2005/index.shtml and also in the Libraries of the House and from TSO.

Energy Supply

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps the Government have taken to promote the generation of energy closer to the point of consumption. [24211]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government have taken a number of measures to support the development of small and micro generation technologies connected to the distribution networks close to the point of demand. Not least of these was the creation of the industry-wide Distributed Generation Coordinating Group (DGCG) which operated over a three-year period to November 2004 and which initiated a range of projects designed to address barriers to the integration of distributed generation. Building on the valuable work of the DGCG, the DTI together with Ofgem established in January 2005 the Electricity Networks Strategy Group (ENSG), which looks more widely at issues relating to the electricity networks while maintaining a focus on the development of distributed generation.

In addition, to the above activities, the Department provides financial support to industry-led projects aimed at increasing the deployment of distributed generation via its technology programme.

EU Anti-dumping Measures

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with the Department for International Development on the effects of EU anti-dumping measures on developing countries. [30499]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* Officials in the Department and the Department for International Development discuss the impact which anti-dumping measures may have on developing countries.

Export Credits Guarantee Department

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the Export Credits Guarantee Department's (ECGD) negotiating position at the OECD Working Group on Export Credits and Credit Guarantees' negotiations for revisions to the Action Statement on Bribery and Officially Supported Export Credits; and what new measures the ECGD believes should be included in this Action Statement. [28568]

Ian Pearson: ECGD's historic commitment to securing agreement to enhanced standards in the OECD Action Statement on Bribery and Officially Supported Export Credits is well-known. The deadline for comments on ECGD's interim response to its anti-bribery and corruption consultation was 18 November. ECGD is considering the representations it has received to assist it in formulating a final response. Once ECGD's final response is published, the UK will be able to take a position at the OECD Working Group on Export Credits and Credit Guarantees' negotiations for revisions to the action statement.

First-class Mail

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of first class mail has been delivered the next day in each of the Northern Ireland Royal Mail area offices in Northern Ireland in 2005. [32525]

Barry Gardiner: This is an operational matter for Royal Mail and the Chief Executive has been asked to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Flexible Working

Mr. McGovern: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many respondents to the February 2005 consultation document "Work and Families: Choice and Flexibility" gave a response to question 22; and what proportion of those responses were supportive of the case for extending the right to request flexible working to parents of older children; [32718]

(2) how many respondents to the February 2005 consultation document "Work and Families: Choice and Flexibility" gave a response to question 20; and what proportion of those responses were supportive of the case for extending the right to request flexible working to carers of adults. [32719]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government received 79 responses to question 20 of the Work and Families consultation, which asked what the case is for extending the right to request flexible working to carers of adults. Of these responses just over 90 per cent. were supportive of extending the law to carers of adults.

The Government received 67 responses to question 22 of the Work and Families consultation, which asked what the case is for extending the right to request flexible working to parents of older children. Of these responses 80 per cent. were supportive of extending the law to parents of older children.

Gas Production/Supplies

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the levels of *(a)* North sea and *(b)* Irish sea gas production were in each of the past five years. [30898]

Malcolm Wicks: Annual gross gas production figures over the past five years are shown in the following table.

Million cubic metres

	North sea	*Irish sea*	*Total*
2000	99,970	15,151	115,121
2001	96,271	14,765	111,036
2002	94,913	13,906	108,819
2003	94,199	14,069	108,268
2004	87,865	13,170	101,035

Source:
These data are derived from the same source as table F2 of the Digest of UK Energy Statistics (DUKES) 2005.

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will assess the merits of stipulating a requirement for gas wholesalers to contract for a minimum supply percentage from outside the UK's own resources to guarantee supply levels through interconnectors and liquid natural gas shipments. [31497]

Malcolm Wicks: The regulatory/commercial framework for the gas supply industry, overseen by Ofgem, gives strong financial incentives for companies to have sufficient gas supplies, on a day-by-day basis, to meet their contractual commitments. It is in companies' interests to source gas supplies from a diverse range of sources and supply routes.

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the total imported gas capacity in millions of cubic metres which will be available per average day in each quarter from Q1 2006 to Q4 2008. [31498]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is available within my right hon. Friend's "First Report to Parliament on Security of Gas and Electricity Supply in Great Britain" (July 2005). This can be found on the DTI's energy website: http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy and in the Libraries of the House.

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the likely *(a)* average price and *(b)* total gas consumption within the UK for each quarter from Q1 2006 to Q4 2008. [31499]

Malcolm Wicks: Wholesale gas prices will vary on a daily basis, determined by market conditions. The Department has not made forecasts of quarterly gas prices.

The Department's scenarios for future gas consumption were reported to Parliament in my right hon. Friend's "First Report to Parliament on Security of Gas and Electricity Supply in Great Britain" (July 2005). This can be found on the DTIs website:

http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy

International Trade Agreements

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action his Department is taking within the European Union to ensure developing countries are not required to open their markets through international trade agreements. [27397]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* The UK regularly presses its position on trade in discussion with other EU member states and with the European Commission. The Government believe that:

no demands for market liberalisation should be made of LDCs;

although properly designed and sequenced trade liberalisation in developing countries has great potential to spur development, developing countries themselves have to be convinced of the case for particular reforms;

special and different treatment should be available for developing countries. This should include less than full reciprocity in reduction commitments, and acceptance that developing countries need flexibility to plan and sequence liberalisation in line with national development plans and poverty reduction strategies.

Liquefied Gas Imports

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the projected levels are of liquefied gas scheduled to be imported into the UK for the next three years. [30901]

Malcolm Wicks: Great Britain has one operational LNG (Liquefied Natural Gas) import terminal, at Isle of Grain. Two additional terminals, at Milford Haven, are scheduled to commission in 2007–08. Their projected import capacities are published in my right hon. Friend's "First Annual Report to Parliament on Security of Gas and Electricity Supply" (July 2005), available at: http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/publications/policy/sec_supply_first_report.pdf.

The actual flows of gas are a commercial matter.

Low Carbon Buildings Programme

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects to set the date of the first funding round for the Low Carbon Buildings programme. [27766]

Malcolm Wicks: The new low carbon buildings programme will start in April 2006, subject to EU state aids clearance. We expect to set a date for the first funding round early next year, once a management contractor is in place.

Manufacturing

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent assessment he has made of manufacturing industry in Staffordshire. [29373]

Alun Michael: At the start of 2004, the latest year for which figures are available, there were 24,710 VAT registered businesses in Staffordshire of which 2,505 (10.1 per cent.) were manufacturing businesses. This picture is broadly similar to 2003 when 2,560 VAT registered businesses were manufacturers out of a total of 24,370 (10.5 per cent.).

During 2003 150 new manufacturers registered for VAT out of 2,460 new registrations (6.1 per cent). In the same year 200 manufacturers de registered out of a total number of de registrations of 2,125 (9.4 per cent.).

Business Link Staffordshire provided general advice and assistance to 2,057 manufacturing businesses in 2004–05, nearly 20 per cent. more than the previous year (1,718) and 226 business received more detailed advice (the figure the previous year being 224). Since its creation, the Manufacturing Advisory Service (MAS) has provided assistance to 518 businesses in Staffordshire, including Stoke on Trent and during the last year it has responded to 165 enquiries in Staffordshire, conducted 109 manufacturing reviews, and referred 84 manufacturers to other programmes. Businesses benefiting from MAS assistance were spread across Staffordshire including Cannock, Cheadleton, Gailey, Uttoxeter, Tamworth, Stafford, Rugeley and Penkridge.

Micro-bikes

Kerry McCarthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will take steps to ensure that

retailers of micro-bikes make clear to customers the full legal position on the use of micro-bikes at the point-of-sale. [19356]

Hazel Blears: I have been asked to reply.

Where micro-bike nuisance has been identified as a problem locally, we would expect a local strategy to address it. This could involve the local police working with retailers to ensure that customers are aware of the law on the use of micro-bikes.

Mineworkers' Damages

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the basis is of payment to solicitors acting as the claimants' group representing mineworkers' damages claims; and what sums were paid to the group as a whole in performing this function in each year since 1998. [29039]

Malcolm Wicks: As defendants in litigation cases, the Department is required to meet the legal costs of the co-ordinating group of claimants' solicitors. Figures for sums paid are listed as follows:

	Total paid (£ million)
1999	10.8
2003	1.6
2004	7.3
2005	1.3

These include costs for the original litigation.

Newspapers and Magazines

Angela Watkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will ask the Competition Commissioner to review the news and magazine market. [31624]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* The question of whether or not a market should be referred to the Competition Commission for in depth investigation is initially a matter for the Office of Fair Trading (OFT) to consider. The respective powers of the OFT and Ministers to make references to the Competition Commission are set out in sections 131 and 132 of the Enterprise Act 2002. The OFT has been looking at the newspaper and magazine market in the context of its work to consider the compatibility with the law of distribution agreements for newspapers and magazines. The OFT published a provisional opinion on this matter in May 2005. A final opinion is unlikely to issue until early 2006.

Nightshifts

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what *(a)* steps his Department is taking and *(b)* discussions his Department has had with other Government Departments on protecting employees from the possible adverse effects of nightshift work. [31656]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Department for Trade and Industry implemented the Working Time Regulations in October 1998. These include limits on working time for night workers, free health assessments for night workers, and other provisions related to patterns of work. The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) was given powers by the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry under the Working Time Regulations 1998 to enforce working time limits and health assessment requirements (for night workers).

DTI and HSE work closely on Working Time Regulation issues, helping to ensure effective implementation and enforcement of the Working Time Directive.

DTI has provided training for HSE's Working Time Officers and Infoline Contact Centre staff, to improve further the quality of information to inquirers.

Nuclear Energy

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department is taking to ensure the nuclear energy option remains open. [31509]

Malcolm Wicks: Maintaining nuclear skills and a research base are key areas for maintaining nuclear power as an option for the future.

Cogent Sector Skills Council was launched in March 2004. It is taking a strategic view of the nuclear sector to ensure that education and training can meet the nuclear employers current and future needs.

Opportunities for fission research are available as part of the Research Council's "Towards a Sustainable Energy Economy" initiative. Up to £6 million is being made available over four years.

The UK is continuing to participate in the development of the next generation of reactors through the Generation IV International Forum (GIF) international research programme. DTI funding of £5 million a year has been set aside in 2006–07 and 2007–08.

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate his Department has made of the time between ordering and completion of a new build nuclear energy power station. [31510]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has carried out no assessment on the time taken to build a new nuclear power station since publication of the 2003 Energy White Paper.

The following papers, which include a timeline on new nuclear build, were prepared for the DTI's Energy Advisory Panel and contributed to the "keeping the nuclear option open" work on the Energy White Paper:

KNOO Scoping Paper (EAP 11.06.02—P3)

KNOO Summary Paper (EAP 01.10.02—P3)

KNOO Miniprojects

These papers were placed in the Libraries of the House at the start of this year in response to a written parliamentary question from the hon. Member for Blaenau Gwent (Peter Law) on 23 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 648W.

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what arrangements he plans to make for an informed public debate on new nuclear build; and if he will make a statement. [31519]

Malcolm Wicks: As part of our general policy to focus on the climate, reliability of energy supplies and affordability for the customer, the Prime Minister has said that we will be publishing proposals on energy policy next year. We will make an assessment of all options, including civil nuclear power. The arrangements, including mechanisms for consultation, for the review are still being considered. The terms of reference will be announced shortly.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much nuclear energy he expects to be produced in the United Kingdom by 2020. [31714]

Malcolm Wicks: The current estimate for the percentage of electricity produced by nuclear generation in 2020 is 7 per cent. of the total.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the implications for the Government's renewables policy from the decision to reassess the role of nuclear energy. [31715]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government remain committed to their renewables target and to the Renewables Obligation, as well as the goals set out in the energy White Paper. In announcing that proposals on energy policy will be brought forward next year, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister made clear that the Government would be examining all options for meeting our longer-term goals, including civil nuclear power. We expect to announce the terms of reference of the review shortly.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he made of the merits of making provision for nuclear power when introducing into Parliament the Bill for the Energy Act 2004. [31716]

Malcolm Wicks: The July 2002 White Paper, "Managing the Nuclear Legacy: A strategy for action" set out Government proposals for reforming nuclear clean up through the creation of a new public body—the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA), and for reconstituting the UKAEA Constabulary (ABAC) as a standalone force independent of the nuclear industry.

In part 1 of the Energy Act 2004 provisions were made regarding the Civil Nuclear Industry.

There were primarily two areas which the Act made provision for:

1. The establishment of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA). The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) was established on 1 April 2005, giving it responsibility for driving forward the clean-up of 20 UK civil nuclear sites.

2. The establishment of the new Civil Nuclear Police Authority, which is responsible for the establishment and maintenance of the new Civil Nuclear Constabulary. This authority is directly accountable to the Secretary of State and these changes have provided improved governance arrangements and greater transparency.

Nuclear Inspectorate

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment has been made of the effectiveness of fines levied by the Nuclear Inspectorate on polluters in preventing *(a)* further incidences of pollution by the polluters and *(b)* incidences of pollution from others who have not previously polluted; what changes are planned; and if he will make a statement. [27793]

Malcolm Wicks: Incidents at nuclear sites giving rise to environmental pollution are generally investigated by the Environment Agency (England and Wales) or SEPA (Scotland), though joint investigations with the Nuclear Installation Inspectorate are carried out if the circumstances demand it. Prosecution cases relating to environmental pollution incidents are usually taken by the appropriate environment agency.

In cases of environmental pollution there are no statutory limits on the level of fines that a Crown court can impose. However, fines are only one of the adverse impacts of prosecution that serve as deterrents to potential offenders. The Environment Agency publicises cases where companies have received heavy fines in its annual "Spotlight on Business Performance" publication to ensure the message is received by others.

The Environmental Audit Committee considered the issue of fines and sentencing practice in 2004 and recommended that fines should be raised for environmental crimes. (House of Commons, Environmental Audit Committee: Environmental Crime and the Courts. Sixth Report of Session 2003–04). The Environment Agency has indicated that it is in broad agreement with this recommendation.

Oil Stocks

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether there is a difference between the levels of compulsory strategic oil stocks required to be held by companies refining in the UK and those that import; and what discussions have taken place regarding the retaining of a differential under plans to simplify UK compulsory strategic oil stockholding arrangements. [31776]

Malcolm Wicks: The UK meets its international obligations to hold stocks of oil for use in the event of disruption of supplies by imposing obligations on commercial companies. These obligations are currently based on companies' deliveries into final consumption, and we impose a heavier obligation on oil company refiners than on other companies.

Under our proposed new system, where the obligations will be based on products from refineries or entering the UK as imports, our aim is to establish a system which is fair to all parties, transparent and simple to administer. My Department issued a public consultation on the future of the UK oil stocking system in December 2003 and has since then had a series of discussions of this and other issues with interested business sectors.

Pakistan

Mr. Malik: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if the Government will encourage the European Union to suspend anti-dumping duties imposed on the export of bed linen from Pakistan. [27470]

Ian Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister is contacting the member states of the European Union and Trade Commissioner Peter Mandelson, seeking support for the suspension of anti-dumping duties on exports of bed linen from Pakistan.

Mr. Malik: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if the Government will urge the European Union to include Pakistan in its Generalised System of Preferences Plus scheme, following the earthquake. [27472]

Ian Pearson: The UK is fully committed to doing what we can to help Pakistan recover from the impact that the earthquake has had on its industry. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has written to EU Heads of State to encourage them to consider trade measures which could assist Pakistan following the earthquake. These trade measures include the Generalised System of Preferences Plus scheme, among others.

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking during the UK presidency of the EU *(a)* to extend to Pakistan the benefits of inclusion in its generalised system of preferences plus scheme and *(b)* to suspend anti-dumping duties imposed on the export of bed linen from Pakistan to the EU. [30457]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The UK is fully committed to doing what we can to help Pakistan recover from the impact that the earthquake has had on its industry. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has written to EU Heads of State to encourage them to consider trade measures which could assist Pakistan following the earthquake. These trade measures include the generalised system of preferences plus scheme and suspension of anti-dumping duties imposed on the export of bed linen from Pakistan.

Mr. Malik: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1352W if he will use the EU presidency to press for Pakistan to be included in the Generalised System of Preferences scheme. [30780]

Ian Pearson: The UK is fully committed to doing what it can to help Pakistan recover from the impact of the recent earthquake. To this end, my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister has written to all other EU Heads of Government to encourage them to consider supporting aid and trade measures which could assist in this.

Post Offices

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what funding the Government plan to continue to allocate to facilitate the operation of post offices after 2008. [29965]

Barry Gardiner *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The Government have made it clear that it will make informed decisions about the longer-term future of the rural post office network in light of the Post Office Ltd. Report into their trials of new and innovative means of delivering postal services to rural communities. The report is due to be delivered to Government by the end of this year. This will be considered alongside analysis of the network currently being conducted.

Mary Creagh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what is the cost of the deposit of bond needed to open a new post office. [28266]

Barry Gardiner *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* This is an operational matter for Post Office Ltd (POL). I have therefore asked, the chief executive of POL, to provide a direct reply to the hon. Member.

Postcodes

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of *(a)* the number of errors and *(b)* the number of properties not identified in the Postcode Address File (i) in 2005 and (ii) in the 2001 Census. [30115]

Barry Gardiner: The management of the Postcode Address File (PAF) is an operational matter for Royal Mail. I have therefore asked the Chief Executive of Royal Mail, Adam Crozier, to provide a direct reply to the hon. Member.

I understand from the Office for National Statistics that the PAF was not used directly as the basis for the enumeration of the 2001 Census. The enumeration planning was conducted using the August 1998 version of the AddressPoint, which is an Ordnance Survey product that uses the PAF.

Power Stations

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he plans to extend the operational life cycles of current UK based *(a)* oil, *(b)* gas, *(c)* coal and *(d)* nuclear power stations. [30900]

Malcolm Wicks: This is a commercial decision for the owners of those power stations. It falls to them to seek the necessary permissions for such extensions.

Protection of Trading Interests Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females have been (i) charged and (ii) convicted in England and Wales of offences under sections (A) 1 and (B) 2 of the Protection of Trading Interests Act 1980 in each year since 1984. [28268]

Ian Pearson: No persons, either male or female, have been either arrested or convicted under any Article of the UK's Protection of Trading Interests Act since its introduction in 1980, and subsequent revision in 1996.

Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals Directive

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions his Department's officials have had with representatives of the World Trade Organisation on the provisions of the EU's registration, evaluation and authorisation of chemicals directive. [29445]

Ian Pearson: The Department has not held any discussions with the World Trade Organisation (WTO) on the above matter. The proposed Regulation on Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals (REACH) is a proposal for European Community legislation and responsibility lies with the European

Commission to ensure that the WTO and its members are aware of the proposal and, where provided, have the opportunity to comment.

The Commission notified the WTO membership about REACH under the Technical Barriers to Trade (TBT) Agreement on 21 January 2004. This notification was followed up with a series of bilateral meetings between the Commission and WTO members on 30 June 2004. The Commission subsequently provided a formal response on 21 October 2004 to comments received from WTO members in reply to the TBT notification. DTI officials were in attendance at the meetings of the TBT Committee where the EC's notification of REACH was discussed.

Renewable Energy

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to support *(a)* schools and *(b)* other community ventures with regard to renewable energy projects. [30484]

Malcolm Wicks: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for North Norfolk (Norman Lamb) on 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1356W.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the *(a)* technical, *(b)* economic and *(c)* environmental effects of operating an offshore wind facility in conjunction with a wave power facility. [30916]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has made no assessment of the technical, economic and environmental effects of operating an offshore wind facility in conjunction with a wave power facility. This is primarily a matter for renewable developers.

Rover (Former Employees)

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of how many former workers at Rover are in full-time employment; what their average earnings are; how many are claiming unemployment benefit; and of these how many are in *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time education. [28571]

Alun Michael: On 8 April the Secretary of State announced the creation of the Rover Task Force to decide how best to allocate the Government support package being provided and oversee its effective implementation. Some, but not all of the requested information is being monitored by the Rover Task Force, and I can provide the following details:

> Of those 6,160 Rover and supplier employees made redundant as a result of MG Rover and 344 former supplier workers have now found jobs.
>
> As regards training, a total of 3,677 training plans have been developed, 3,411 former employees have been booked on courses and 2,260 have started training courses.

There is, of course some overlap between, on the one hand, those booking and starting training and on the other, those undertaking training and those starting work.

Service Liberalisation

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on EU plans to introduce compulsory targets for service liberalisation in developing countries. [31652]

Ian Pearson: The EU proposal on services aims to substantially improve market access. It recognises a distinction between developed and developing countries in setting targets and the need for balance in the negotiations.

The UK's established preference is for a settlement that avoids all new mandatory requirements on developing countries to liberalise services. We will continue to work towards this goal. We are particularly determined to ensure the maintenance of flexibilities to reflect the individual circumstances of developing countries and preserve members' ability to respond to targets based on their own national policy objectives.

Social Enterprises

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to encourage the growth of social enterprises in the most deprived areas of Tamworth constituency. [29374]

Alun Michael: In July 2002 the DTI published the Government's social enterprise strategy: 'Social Enterprise: A Strategy for Success'. The Government's vision is of

> "dynamic and sustainable social enterprise strengthening an inclusive and growing economy."

The strategy sets out how successful social enterprises can play an important role in helping deliver on many of the Government's key policies.

In 2004, Advantage West Midlands funded the development of a framework to guide investment in the social enterprise sector over the next 10 years and the resulting West Midlands social enterprise framework, provides a West Midlands perspective to the DTI's national social enterprise strategy. The framework is designed to assist social enterprises across the West Midlands.

Within the last two years Business Link Staffordshire has provided intensive support to 47 social enterprises and basic information to many more. The way that the Business Link code their services make it impossible for these statistics to be disaggregated within Staffordshire. Supporting the growth of social enterprises within Tamworth and the rest of Staffordshire will remain an important part of the Business Link's support and development of Staffordshire businesses.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many initiatives in *(a)* Staffordshire and *(b)* Tamworth have been awarded funding from the Phoenix Development Fund; and if he will extend funding to encourage the growth of social enterprises in disadvantaged communities. [29375]

Alun Michael: The Phoenix Development Fund awarded funding to two projects in Staffordshire. There are no projects covering the Tamworth area. Business support activities and funding for social enterprises, are now part of the remit of regional development agencies,

who seek to promote the growth of enterprises, including social enterprise, in the parts of their region that lag economically as well as the region as a whole, on the basis of the regional economics strategy.

Organisation with which have receive Phoenix funding in Staffordshire include:

Arch (North Staffs) (community enterprise and homelessness), received £239,000 (completed)

Business Link Staffordshire (social enterprises in disadvantaged communities) received £221,000 (completed)

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many new jobs have been created through social enterprise in *(a)* Staffordshire and *(b)* Tamworth since 1997; [29376]

(2) how much Government funding social enterprises in *(a)* Staffordshire and *(b)* Tamworth have received in (i) the 2005–06 financial year and (ii) in 2004–05. [29377]

Alun Michael: Our support for social enterprise is provided through the Regional Development Agency in each region. To date, Advantage West Midlands, has invested more than £5 million on almost 100 regional and sub regional initiatives to support social enterprise. It has not been possible to disaggregate those project statistics on a sub regional level and AWM has not distinguished between jobs created by social and other enterprises. It has therefore not been possible to provide separate information on job creation in social enterprises.

A key example of the assistance that has been provided through the projects is the advantage community loan fund which provides access to loans for community, social and 'not for profit' enterprises.

Telephone Preference Service

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions his Department has had with the Information Commissioner's Office regarding the enforcement of breaches of the telephone preference service; and if he will make a statement. [28554]

Alun Michael: Officials from this Department regularly discuss the enforcement of the TPS with the Information Commissioner's Office.

Tidal Power

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the development of tidal lagoon facilities in United Kingdom waters to generate electricity. [30764]

Malcolm Wicks: Tidal lagoons, as with other forms of large-scale barrage, are technically feasible and are applications of available and well understood technologies. The technology has a potential to contribute to the UK's renewable energy targets and is eligible for support through the renewables obligation. The environmental impacts and economies of any proposed scheme would need to be assessed by the developers and planning authorities on a case-by-case basis.

UK Trade and Investment

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether his Department has commissioned further research by Ernst and Young following their preliminary findings on the expenses of employees in UK Trade and Investment. [28662]

Ian Pearson: The Department has not commissioned further research by Ernst and Young.

UK-US Trade

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average tariff levied on *(a)* agricultural and *(b)* non-agricultural products (i) from the UK to the US and (ii) from the US to the UK was in 2004–05. [30498]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* Tariffs for the UK are those set at the European Union level. The latest data available is reported as follows—2004 for the United States and 2005 for the EU. These are average applied tariffs, obtained from the World Trade Organisation Statistical database.

(a) (i) average agricultural tariff applied by the US: 6.8 per cent.

(a) (ii) average agricultural tariff applied by the EU: 5.9 per cent.

(b) (i) average non-agricultural tariff applied by the US: 3.3 per cent.

(b) (ii) average non-agricultural tariff applied by the EU: 4.0 per cent.

Wave Energy

Joan Ruddock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 305W, on wave energy, whether he plans to support the Ocean Wave Master via the Marine Renewables Development Fund. [31201]

Malcolm Wicks: In January 2005 the Department published proposals for the allocation of the £50 million 'Marine Renewables Deployment Fund' that will support the continued development of the marine renewables sector.

At the core of those proposals was a £42 million Wave and Tidal Stream Energy Demonstration Scheme for which the eligibility criteria are available on the DTI website. The demonstration scheme is expected to commence in the first quarter of 2006 and to receive applications on set dates throughout the year. It will be for device developers to demonstrate that they meet the eligibility criteria for the demonstration scheme. As the allocation of funding is on a competitive process it is not possible at this stage to allocate funds to individual proposals.

The balance of Marine Renewables Deployment Fund will support underpinning research into the impacts of the demonstration projects (up to £2 million) and infrastructure projects (up to £6 million).

Wind Farms

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has received objections

from National Air Traffic Services to the proposed development of the Gwynt Y Mor offshore wind farm in North Wales. [29272]

Malcolm Wicks: No application for consent has been received in respect of the proposed Gwynt y Mor offshore wind farm and, there is, therefore, no formal objection process in place. However, I am aware that National Air Traffic Services (NATS) has considered the potential impact of the project as part of its initial review of all round 2 offshore wind farm projects.

NATS will be consulted on any consent application that is received by the Department and will be able to prepare their formal response in the light of the information contained in the environmental statement which will be submitted by the developer in support of its application.

WTO Negotiations

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the likely effect of the EU's most recent offer in the World Trade Organisation trade negotiations on *(a)* applied EU non-agricultural tariffs and *(b)* services trade liberalisation. [29490]

Ian Pearson: The EU's second offer sought agreement on a simple Swiss tariff formula for industrial goods. This is a non-linear, harmonising formula that is effective at reducing high tariffs and peaks and narrowing tariff escalations. Such a formula would lead to a substantial improvement in real market access through cuts in the applied duties of developed and more competitive developing countries, on the understanding that developing countries should do less. The UK is working hard within the EU to ensure no new obligations are imposed on LDCs and that any NAMA agreement for developing countries respects the principle of less than full reciprocity and maximises Special and Differential Treatment. We recognise the importance for developing countries of maintaining flexibility.

The EU proposal on services aims to substantially improve market access, and recognises a distinction between developed and developing countries in setting targets and the need for balance in the negotiations. The UK's established preference is for a settlement that avoids all new mandatory requirements on developing countries to liberalise services, and we will continue to work towards this goal. We are particularly determined to ensure the maintenance of flexibilities to reflect the individual circumstances of developing countries and preserve members' ability to respond to targets based on their own national policy objectives.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will press for trade justice rather than free trade at the meeting of the World Trade Organisation in Hong Kong in December. [29523]

Ian Pearson: In his open letter of 2 November to the Trade Justice Movement, the Secretary of State emphasised our commitment to securing the best possible deal for developing countries at Hong Kong.

For ease of reference I set out the full text of his letter here:

This has been a big year for international development. In June, Gordon Brown's deal with world finance ministers cancelled large chunks of the debt that has crippled the poorest countries and held back their development. In July, at the G8 summit in Gleneagles, the Prime Minister secured an agreement that pledged $50 billion extra in aid.

The third crucial area with which to tackle world poverty is fairer trade. The World Trade Orgapisation talks in Hong Kong in December offer an opportunity for the world community to address the imbalances in the world trading system and to deliver an outcome that will enable developing countries to trade their way out of poverty.

Trade offers huge potential for developing countries. Inequities in the world trading system disadvantage poor countries. Boosting Africa's share of world trade by just 1 per cent. could deliver seven times as much income as the whole continent currently gets in aid. So increasing the opportunity to trade is vital. But there are risks in trade liberalisation for developing countries—dislocation, job losses and income volatility—if it is done too quickly and not as part of a broader development strategy. So we oppose forced liberalisation.

Today, as thousands of campaigners are lobbying Parliament to make poverty history by delivering trade justice, I want to record Government's support for your objective of no forced liberalisation. We want to ensure better access to Western markets, as well as removing the hidden barriers to trade faced by developing countries and other inequalities that remain in the world trading system.

The Trade Justice Movement is asking the UK government to use its influence within the EU to deliver on four key concerns:

Stop pushing poor countries to open their economies through world trade talks. We agree. The UK believes that developing countries should not be forced to open up their markets either through trade negotiations or aid conditionality.

Respect poor countries' right to decide on trade policies to help end poverty and protect their environment. We agree. It is for developing countries to make their own decisions on the timing, pace, sequencing and product coverage of any market opening in line with their own national development plans and poverty reduction strategies.

Allow developing countries to shape trade policies that protect vulnerable farm sectors and promote national industries. We agree. A pro-development agreement at Hong Kong should include meaningful provision for special and differential treatment, including special products, that enables developing countries to promote food security, rural development and the protection of livelihoods.

Allow countries to choose the best policies for poor people and the environment in services such as water, health and education. We agree. We strongly support the current voluntary arrangement for trade in services precisely because it allows liberalisation of services to take place in a way that supports national development plans. In the run up to Hong Kong, we are pushing other developed countries to ensure that the Hong Kong deal gives developing countries the flexibility that they need to plan and sequence trade reform in line with their national development plans. It may not be possible to deliver all that we would like to see, but we are committed to use our influence to secure the best possible deal for developing countries.

It will be challenging to build the consensus around a package at Hong Kong that truly delivers on the promises of the Doha Development Agenda, but, as the Prime Minister has said, we will not let this opportunity pass without a monumental struggle.

WTO Talks

Mr. Willetts: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what specific aims and objectives the Government will press the EU to take up at the World Trade Organisation talks in Hong Kong. [30103]

Ian Pearson: The Government are committed to achieving an ambitious package at the Sixth World Trade Organisation Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong that is pro-development will allow a conclusion to the round by the end of 2006 and helps build—through liberalising developed world markets—a more competitive European economy.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what units are planned to be deployed to Afghanistan in 2006; and on what date. [31421]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* On current plans, the Headquarters Group of the Allied Rapid Reaction Corps and supporting forces will deploy to Afghanistan to command the International Security Assistance Force from May 2006 to February 2007. Joint Force Harrier personnel, predominantly from IV (AC) Squadron, Royal Air Force, will remain in Kandahar until February 2006 when they are planned to be relieved by 1 (F) Squadron. Work to prepare for a possible commitment of British forces to Southern Afghanistan in 2006 is also under way but, as I made clear in my recent statement of 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 41–42WS, no final decisions have yet been made on such a deployment.

Army Board

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 28 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1259W, which case the Army Board requested the Attorney-General to review; and on what date. [26128]

Mr. Touhig: The answer of 28 October stated that on one occasion the Army Board had requested the Attorney-General to review a case. In fact, the Army Board as a formed body did not request that review and has requested no other review. Rather on 25 March 2004, the Adjutant-General, who is a member of the Army Board, requested that the case involving Trooper Williams of 2nd Battalion Royal Tank Regiment be passed to the Attorney-General. The request came after discussion with other senior army officers. Ministers were not involved in the decision to make the request for referral.

Avian Influenza

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he has taken to provide vaccines for the armed forces in the event of an epidemic of avian influenza. [30354]

Mr. Touhig: On 20 July, the Department of Health (DH) announced its intention to purchase a limited amount of H5N1 vaccine as part of its ongoing preparations for a possible influenza pandemic in humans and the Ministry of Defence is ensuring that these plans take account of Defence needs. The MOD has ordered H5N1 vaccine from the DH, who have noted our requirement and included it in the tender bid. However, supplies of this vaccine are not currently available. Nor is it known with certainty that it would give protection against an influenza pandemic should the pandemic strain be a variant of the H5N1 influenza that is currently circulating in birds.

The current MOD policy with respect to offering flu vaccine is based on the NHS policy of only offering it to specific groups of personnel (such as key workers in the Defence Medical Services), in accordance with guidelines in the Department of Health Green Book "Immunisation Against Infectious Disease".

Civil Service Relocation

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the capitation cost is of *(a)* relocating a civil servant in his Department on public interest terms and *(b)* an average redundancy compensation payment for non-mobile civil servants. [31865]

Mr. Ingram: Both transfer and redundancy costs are dependent upon a wide range of individual factors and arithmetic averages are likely to be of limited relevance and, potentially, misleading if applied to any single site closure or relocation programme.

However, in answer to part *(a)*, the Department does use an overall average figure of £28,000 as an approximate guide to the costs that might arise when a mobile civil servant moves home at public expense. It is important to understand that this figure is a UK average and covers a span from the relatively inexpensive transfer of a single non-householder (costing around £5,000) up to a married owner occupier (costing some £36,000). But when individual moves are in prospect, the actual costs will depend upon the relative housing costs within the existing and new areas as well as upon the individual personal circumstances of those being transferred. Where a transfer is made to a new location within what is deemed to be reasonable daily travel of the existing home, the value of the allowances paid will generally be lower.

Turning to part *(b)*, the provision of a meaningful redundancy cost is equally problematic. This is because the amount paid will depend on factors such as length of service, salary and age. To illustrate this, in a recent redundancy exercise involving 17 non-mobile civil servants, the highest total redundancy liability cost was £77,000 and the lowest was £1,000. The overall average for that particular exercise was £24,500.

Commissioner Reports

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1565W where the reports of *(a)* the Office of Surveillance Commissioners and *(b)* the Information Services Commissioner are made publicly available; what estimate he has made of the cost of inspections by HM Inspector of Constabulary; and what budget provision has been made to meet the costs. [31662]

Mr. Ingram: The reports on the service police produced by the Office of the Surveillance Commissioners and Information Services Commissioner refer to police investigations, operations and/or procedures, and for this reason their reports are not made publicly available.

We are still discussing with HMIC the possibility of inspections and in advance of any agreement it is not possible to say what costs will arise. No specific funds have been set aside for any inspection that may be agreed.

Defence Aviation Repair Agency

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what assessment he has made of the likely effect the closure of the fast jet business at the Defence Aviation Repair Agency St. Athan will have on his Department's ability to meet a sudden increase in workload; [29223]

RAF Bases

(2) what assessment he has made of the capacity at the RAF's bases at *(a)* Cottesmore and *(b)* Marham to deal with a sudden increase in (i) Harrier and (ii) Tornado maintenance work. [29222]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The concentration of logistic support 'forward' to MOBs is specifically designed to provide the flexibility to absorb urgent tasking in addition to scheduled maintenance and future upgrade work. Indeed RAF Cottesmore is currently undertaking additional maintenance of Harrier GR7 aircraft in support of operational flying in Afghanistan.

Departmental Estate

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which buildings and sites used by his Department and related agencies *(a)* have ceased to be used in the last year and *(b)* will be closed under current plans for relocation. [31781]

Mr. Touhig: The information requested is currently being obtained from a number of separate sources and will take a little time to collate. I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Departmental Finance

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the real terms percentage increase in allocated resources for his Department *(a)* was for the period 1997–98 to 2004–05 and *(b)* is estimated to be between 2005–06 and 2007–08 (i) for each period and (ii) for each year. [31030]

Mr. Ingram: The period 1997–98 to 2004–05 covers the transition from cash accounting to resource accounting and budgeting (RAB). Using figures on a comparable basis, the defence budget has grown over the period 1997–98 to 2004–05 by 2.6 per cent. in real terms.

For the period 2005–06 to 2007–08, the real terms percentage increase in the Defence total departmental expenditure limits is predicted to be 2.7 per cent. The annual average growth for each year of this period is 1.4 per cent.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the programmes covered by the capital commitments which are contracted for, but not provided for, in 2004–05. [32712]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 555W, to the right hon. and learned Member for Devizes (Mr. Ancram).

Falkland Islands (Land Mines)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress is being made in clearing landmines from the Falkland Islands. [31915]

Mr. Ingram: Under the Ottawa Convention, the United Kingdom is required to clear all anti-personnel mines from its territory by March 2009. The only UK territory affected is the Falkland Islands. Discussions are taking place with the Government of Argentina to agree a joint feasibility study, including a field survey of the Islands. A decision on how to proceed will be made once the results of the feasibility study are known.

Helicopters

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many RAF helicopters have been cannibalized over the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [31027]

Mr. Ingram: Cannibalisation is a recognised and long standing activity within the repair and maintenance function. Cannibalisation may apply as much to an uninstalled assembly, for example an engine, as it does to the platform itself and refers to the removal of components of any size down to a single nut.

The number of RAF helicopters which have been cannibalised is not held centrally. Records are only maintained on the total number of times cannibalisation has taken place. The following table shows this information, by aircraft type, for the period November 2004 to October 2005.

Aircraft type	*Total cannibalisations in last 12 months*
RAF Chinook	742
RAF Merlin	243
RAF Puma	368
RAF Sea King	246

Income Tax

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent assessment he has made of the likely impact of allowing service men and women not to be liable for income tax during operational tours, with particular reference to retention. [29606]

Mr. Touhig: No such assessment has been made. The long-standing rule recognised by successive governments is that crown servants, including members of the armed forces, are chargeable to income tax on their Government salaries wherever they are serving.

Iraq

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* servicemen and *(b)* servicewomen from Welsh regiments have been (i) killed and (ii) wounded in military service in Iraq since 20 March 2003. [29393]

Mr. Touhig: Three members of Welsh Regiments serving in Iraq have died or been killed while on Operation TELIC, but owing to the nature of the operation, centralised casualty data have not routinely included the unit with which injured members of armed forces serve.

Landing Ships Dock Project

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the decision was taken to replace the Integrated Project Team leader for the Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) project. [29781]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* A decision to change the Integrated Project Team leader for the Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) project was made on 28 October 2005.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his reasons were for changing the Integrated Project Team leader for the Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) project. [29782]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* It is not Ministry of Defence policy to discuss the specifics of individual official's appointments.

Military Airfields

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer to the right hon. and learned Member for North-East Fife (Sir Menzies Campbell) of 17 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1415W, on military airfields, if he will list the occasions in the last five years when his Department has recorded the pilot and aircraft details of aircraft transiting through military airfields. [31590]

Mr. Ingram: The information requested has not been recorded centrally over the last five years and could be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

Nuclear Weapons

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with the US Administration on the replacement of Trident. [32350]

John Reid: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for New Forest East (Dr. Julian Lewis) on 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 560W.

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his plans to facilitate a national debate on the replacement for Trident. [32351]

John Reid: I have nothing to add to the answer that I gave to the Member for Berwickshire, Roxburgh and Selkirk (Mr. Moore) on 14 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 619W.

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimates he has made of the likely cost of replacing Trident, broken down by cost of new *(a)* platforms, *(b)* delivery systems and *(c)* warheads. [32352]

John Reid: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer that I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Pendle (Mr. Gordon Prentice) on 20 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1217W.

Poland

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans the Royal Navy has to conduct joint exercises with the Polish navy. [30824]

Mr. Ingram: Under current plans, the Royal Navy expects to participate in six multinational exercises alongside the Polish navy in 2006, and in NATO's exercise Noble Mariner, which will take place in Poland in 2007.

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the specific time scales are for measurement of each aspect of performance against 2004 public service agreement target number 6. [29934]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence provides quarterly reports to the Treasury on performance against public service agreement (PSA) targets. PSA performance is also reported to the House in the spring and autumn performance reports and the annual report and accounts as appropriate.

RAF Bases

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people are employed in a *(a)* military and *(b)* civilian capacity at RAF Leeming. [30981]

Mr. Ingram: In the answer which I gave to the hon. Member on 7 April 2005, *Official Report*, column 1763W, I said that there were approximately 1,570 service posts and 280 civilian posts at Leeming. The figure for service posts covered the main station establishment, but not the lodger units there. Including these units, the service posts figure would have been 1,800.

On a like-for-like basis, the current figures are approximately 1,590 service and 270 civilian posts. The reduction in service posts from 1,800 to 1,590 is primarily the result of the disbandment of XI(F) Squadron on 31 October 2005.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when RAF Leeming first became operational for Royal Air Force purposes. [30982]

Mr. Ingram: RAF Leeming became operational as a Royal Air Force bomber station in July 1940.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the implications for *(a)* employment at RAF Leeming and *(b)* the local economy of (i) the closure of the base and (ii) its conversion to an army base. [30983]

Mr. Ingram: As I previously advised the hon. Member on 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 626W, RAF Leeming has a future and a number of strands of work beyond the Defence Airfields Review could benefit the station. No decisions have yet been made.

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what the cost was of the relocation of work from Harrogate and RAF Swanton Morley to RAF Wyton that took place between 1994 and 1996; [31867]

(2) if he will place in the Library a copy of the Post Project Evaluation for the relocation of works from Harrogate to RAF Wyton which took place between 1994 and 1996. [31866]

Mr. Touhig: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Recruitment (Fiji)

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Fijian citizens have been recruited by the British armed forces since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [30931]

Mr. Ingram: The number of Fijian nationals recruited by the United Kingdom regular Army from civilian life between 1 January 1997 and 30 September 2005 is 2,125.

Historic nationality data for the naval service and the RAF cannot be provided as data are not centrally held in individual records.

Security/Defence Review

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will undertake a comprehensive security and defence review; and if he will discuss with the Foreign Secretary linking such a review with a review of foreign policy. [32348]

John Reid: The Ministry of Defence routinely reviews long term security and defence policy and does so in consultation with the Foreign Commonwealth Office and other Government Departments.

Skyguard Survey

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish the results of the Skyguard survey in the Cwmifor area. [32266]

Mr. Touhig: The Defence Flying Complaints Investigation Team (DFCIT) are tasked to carry out covert monitoring operations using a Skyguard radar system to monitor low flying military activity. The DFCIT has not released the outcome of the Skyguard survey for the Cwmifor area at present, as the results are still being analysed. I will write to the hon. Member as soon as the results are available and will place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Territorial Army

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the Territorial Army Infantry private soldiers available for Operation Telic 7 on 1 June remained available following the deployment, broken down by regiment. [29535]

Mr. Touhig: This information is not held centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Trident

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost was of the Trident missile system in 2004–05. [30330]

John Reid: In 2004–05, the capital and operating costs of the Trident nuclear deterrent, including the costs for the Atomic Weapons Establishment Aldermaston, were just under 4 per cent. of the Defence budget.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what studies his Department has undertaken on a possible replacement for the UK's Trident nuclear missile capability; whether information from the studies will be placed in the public domain; and if he will make a statement. [31629]

John Reid: Initial preparatory work is being undertaken by officials on possible options for any replacement of the UK's nuclear deterrent capability. However, while decisions are likely to be necessary in the current Parliament, they are still some way off and Ministers have not yet begun to consider the position on this issue in any detail. It is therefore premature to speculate on the range of options that might be available and when and how we might place additional information in the public domain.

Vanguard Submarines

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the impact of *(a)* changed operational practices of the Vanguard type submarines and *(b)* changed strategic circumstances in which they are deployed. [32354]

John Reid: The operational posture of Vanguard-class submarines, including a reduced day-to-day alert state with a reduced load of warheads, detargeted missiles and a normal 'notice to fire' of several days, was set out in the 1998 strategic defence review. This posture remains appropriate to the strategic environment.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

1911 Census

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 6W, what the *(a)* statutory and *(b)* other basis is for the 100-year census closure policy. [30155]

Ms Harman: Requests to view information contained in the 1911 census returns are considered under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. So far it has not been

possible to grant any requests received because they have all been covered by the S.41 exemption relating to breach of confidence.

The Government believe that a closure period of 100 years strikes the correct balance between the right of citizens to have information about themselves kept confidential and the rights of family historians and other researchers to have access to that information.

Since 1981 explicit assurances have been given on census forms that the returns will be kept confidential for 100 years. Opening the 1911 census before 100 years have elapsed could undermine public confidence in those assurances.

Asylum Law Provision

Mr. McGovern: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many legal providers have gained accreditation to operate in the field of asylum law since April 2004 in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wales, *(c)* Scotland and *(d)* Dundee. [32717]

Bridget Prentice: The Immigration and Asylum Accreditation Scheme was introduced in April 2004 in England and Wales. As at 24 November 2005 there were 1,555 accredited caseworkers including 22 caseworkers registered with suppliers in Wales. Legal aid is a devolved matter but I understand that while the Law Society of Scotland operates an accreditation scheme in various types of law this does not cover immigration and asylum law. I understand the Law Society of Scotland's records show that there are 112 firms that provide a service in immigration and nationality law, four of which are based in Dundee.

Mr. McGovern: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many asylum cases have been undertaken by lawyers who had *(a)* gained accreditation and *(b)* not gained accreditation since April 2004. [32730]

Bridget Prentice: The Legal Services Commission records claims by contracted supplier and not individual caseworker and therefore it is not possible to specify the number of cases undertaken by accredited caseworkers since 1 April 2004.

The Immigration and Asylum Accreditation Scheme was introduced in April 2004 and was fully implemented in August 2005. Any contracted supplier who from 1 August uses non-accredited caseworkers to perform work on new cases in the immigration category is not eligible to claim for this work and contract sanctions may be enforced. The Legal Services Commission has terminated or is in the process of terminating the immigration contracts of suppliers who do not have the requisite accredited staff.

Compensation Claims

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidance her Department has given local authorities on handling compensation claims. [29713]

Ms Harman: The Department has not issued any guidance to local authorities on handling compensation claims. We are coordinating a programme of work across Government to stop a compensation culture developing and to improve the compensation system for people with a valid claim. Part of that work involves encouraging defendants such as local authorities to resist bad claims. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is one of the Departments involved in this work.

Correspondence

Clare Short: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when she will reply to the letter of 23 May from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood (acknowledgement reference 184337–1) regarding Birmingham magistrates court. [32275]

Ms Harman: I am sorry that the hon. Member has not received a response to her letter. I have now sent a reply.

Courts Service Estate Review

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list the *(a)* national, *(b)* regional and *(c)* area level reports published as part of the HM Courts Service National Estate Review. [31008]

Ms Harman: I am continuously reviewing the provision of court estate across England and Wales to see that it is satisfactory. There are no such published reports.

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans she has for the consultation process on the review of courts within South Wales, with particular reference to the Cabinet Office code of practice on consultation. [31009]

Ms Harman: I am continuously reviewing the provision of court estate across England and Wales. Should I propose a change to that provision that requires consultation, I shall carry out a consultation in full accordance with the Cabinet Office code of practice on consultation.

Data Protection

John Hemming: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will increase individuals' rights under the Data Protection Act 1998. [30686]

Ms Harman: The Data Protection Act 1998, which accurately reflects the requirements of the Data Protection Directive (Directive 95/46/EC), puts in place a firm regulatory structure to ensure the legitimate processing of individuals' personal data. It provides substantial rights for individuals in respect of their personal data, including the right of subject access, the right to prevent processing likely to cause damage or distress, the right to prevent processing for the purposes of direct marketing, rights in relation to automated decision-making, compensation for failure to comply with certain of the Act's requirements, and the right to have data rectified, blocked, erased or otherwise destroyed in certain circumstances. The Freedom of Information Act 2000 also extended individuals' right of subject access, in respect of all public authorities, to include a much wider range of non-computerised records. We currently have no plans to review the Act.

John Hemming: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the *(a)* number and *(b)* average size of awards by the courts for compensation for breaches of the Data Protection Act 1998 was in the last year for which figures are available. [30687]

Ms Harman: The information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Salaries

Mike Penning: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list the 10 highest-paid employees in her Department, broken down by *(a)* job title and *(b)* salary including bonuses; and whether the individual concerned is (i) a civil servant and (ii) a contractor in each case. [27574]

Bridget Prentice: It is not possible to provide the information in the way requested without revealing the identity of those concerned. I can, however, confirm that the eight highest paid senior civil service staff in the DCA and its agencies earn in excess of £120,000, as follows:

Salary range	*Number of staff*
£120,000 to £129,999	4
£130,000 to £139,000	1
£140,000 to £149,999	1
£150,000 to £159,999	2

Bonus payments in addition this year for these employees have ranged from nothing to £14,000.

All of these salaries are contained within the senior civil service pay ranges and paid in accordance with the arrangements for civil service reward, details of which can be found at http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/index.asp.

The two other highest paid employees in the DCA are specialists employed on a fee paid basis for particular projects whose daily remuneration is £800 and £2,100 retrospectively.

Departmental Spending

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much the Department spent on items of art in 2004–05. [23477]

Bridget Prentice: My Department has not incurred any expenditure on items of art in 2004–05. This will be confirmed once the Department's resource accounts are published.

EU Citizen Franchise

Mr. Bone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many citizens of EU member states other than the UK exercised their right under Article 19 of the Treaty Establishing the European Community to vote at the last European, parliamentary and local elections within the United Kingdom. [31071]

Ms Harman: No record is kept of categories of electors who cast votes in UK elections based upon nationality. Elections are conducted on the basis of the relevant electoral register which does not identify the nationality of electors. Whilst there is no definitive data on turnout among electors of different national groups, the Office for National Statistics compiles and publishes each year the annual register of those entitled to vote in elections in the UK. Resident citizens of the Irish Republic or of other EU States like Cyprus and Malta that are also members of the Commonwealth are included indistinguishably with British citizens in the register of parliamentary electors. The register of local electors reveals that as of 1 December 2003 the number of citizens of other EU states who were eligible to vote in June 2004 at local elections in Great Britain was 407,145. No separate record is kept of such EU citizens who have opted to vote in the UK rather than in the state of which they are nationals at European parliamentary elections.

Freedom of Information Act

Mr. Heald: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 13 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 593W, on the Freedom of Information Act, what guidance has been produced on the status of non-judicial inquiries not established under the Inquiries Act 2005 as public authorities under the Freedom of Information Act 2000. [23636]

Ms Harman: My Department has not produced specific guidance on the status of non-judicial inquiries not established under the Inquiries Act as public authorities under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

My Department has produced general guidance on coverage of the Act, which is publicly available on our website. It is not possible to produce specific guidance on the coverage of non-judicial inquiries not established under the Inquiries Act as they will be established in a number of different ways.

It is possible that most non-judicial inquiries will not be public authorities or part of other public authorities and so not covered by the Act. However, once an inquiry has been completed, its records are generally held by a public authority, such as a Government Department or the National Archives and become subject to the Act.

Human Rights Act

Mr. Cash: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs in what circumstances she would propose amendments to the Human Rights Act 1998. [32379]

Ms Harman: It is necessary from time to time to make amendments to the Human Rights Act 1998 consequential upon new legislation. For example, if the United Kingdom becomes party to any further Protocols of the European Convention on Human Rights, it may also be desirable to amend the Human Rights Act to append any new substantive rights to those listed in Schedule 1 of the Act. Otherwise, I do not intend to propose any amendments to the Human Rights Act at this time.

IT Projects

Dr. Cable: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many of the IT projects costing over £1 million in use in her Department and introduced since 1997 have been scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee; and if she will list them. [26608]

Ms Harman: The only IT project costing over £1 million in use in her Department and introduced since 1997 which has been scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee is Libra, which supplies modern IT services and infrastructure for the magistrates courts.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many IT projects which cost over £1 million and were introduced since 1997 are in use in her Department. [26609]

Ms Harman: For my Department, expenditure on IT Projects in excess of £1 million since 1997 is contained within three separate contracts, namely LOCCS, the Libra contract and ARAMIS.

LOCCS refers to Local County Court Systems which provide operational IT systems to Her Majesty's Court Service.

Libra provides case management and Office Automation to magistrates courts, and it will deliver a standardised IT system.

ARAMIS is the Accounting Resource and Management Information System which provides accounting, financial, HR/payroll and management information services to the Department.

Legal Aid

Susan Kramer: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many solicitors in Richmond-upon-Thames borough and the Royal borough of Kingston-upon-Thames provide legal aid services for *(a)* housing, *(b)* social welfare, *(c)* mental health, *(d)* employment, *(e)* family and *(f)* criminal defence; and if she will make a statement. [31439]

Bridget Prentice: The Legal Services Commission contracts with suppliers throughout England and Wales to provide a range of legal and advice services across different categories of law.

The following numbers of contracted suppliers currently undertake legal aid work in Richmond-upon-Thames borough and the Royal borough of Kingston-upon-Thames:

	Richmond-upon-Thames	*Kingston-upon-Thames*
Housing	5	7
Social Welfare[1]	5	7
Mental Health	5	6
Employment	5	7
Family	1	3
Criminal defence	3	3

[1] 'Social Welfare' includes the contract categories 'Debt', 'Welfare Benefits' and 'Community Care'.

The Commission does not hold information about the number of solicitors employed in each office. Solicitors located in other areas may regularly undertake legal aid work in Richmond-upon-Thames and Kingston-upon-Thames.

Lyons Inquiry

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 753W, on the Lyons Inquiry, whether her Department has given guidance to the Lyons Inquiry on whether it is regulated by the Freedom of Information Act. [22326]

Ms Harman: No guidance was issued to the Lyons Inquiry by my Department.

Small Claims (Personal Injuries)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs which organisations she plans to consult as part of the review of personal injuries limits for small claims. [31595]

Ms Harman: The Department for Constitutional Affairs to date has published two reports on the effects of the Civil Procedure Rules of April 1999, "Emerging Findings, an early evaluation of the Civil Justice Reforms" published in 2001 and "Further Findings, a continuing evaluation of the Civil Justice Reforms" published in 2002. Both reports concluded that it was still too early to provide a definitive view on costs with data difficult to obtain and conflicting anecdotal evidence. Where there was evidence of increased costs, the causes were difficult to isolate.

The Civil Justice Reforms were intended to divert cases from litigation or to ensure litigated cases are better prepared and provide more information relative to liability and quantum, so that an opponent could make a better informed offer to settle. This has resulted in the front loading of costs. However, it has enabled more cases to settle earlier, and where cases settle at an earlier stage the overall costs may be lower.

Staff Discipline

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many employees have been dismissed by her Department in each of the past five years for which figures are available. [29048]

Bridget Prentice: The number of employees dismissed over the last five years for the Department are:

	Number
2001	33
2002	42
2003	57
2004	56
2005	59

These figures are for the period April to March for each of the years shown.

Voter Registration

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will introduce individual voter registration. [30164]

Ms Harman: The Electoral Administration Bill, currently before Parliament, includes provision for the collection of personal identifiers such as individual signatures and dates of birth at the point at which a person registers to vote.

In order that the effect of this policy may be tested in order to obtain evidence as to whether it should be implemented or not, the Bill provides for personal identifiers to be first piloted at a local level, with the results to be evaluated by the Electoral Commission.

TRANSPORT

2012 Olympics

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he has taken to ensure that the arrangements for transport for the 2012 Olympics will meet the requirements of the Olympic family. [31467]

Ms Buck: Our plans are based on the experience of previous host cities. 50 per cent. of athletes will be just five minutes from their venues and 75 per cent. less than 15 minutes. Olympic Family Transport plans will be supported by an Olympic Route Network (ORN) between the main venues, facilities and accommodation. A dedicated fleet of coaches and cars will run on this network, and one some 100 km there will be dedicated Olympic lanes. Following experience of Athens and Sydney, fines will be used to ensure that the network functions effectively.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to ensure that the Olympic delivery authority will be able to ensure that transport for spectators will be fully accessible. [31555]

Ms Buck: A key objective for Olympic transport is achieving an accessible and inclusive Games for every client group.

A Games mobility service based on the successful Manchester Commonwealth Games model, will operate throughout both Olympic and Paralympic Games. Among other things, this service will provide pre-booking of various forms of wheelchair, bookable access to individual electric buggies, provision of wide access at airport-style security screening, appropriate signposting, audio-visual information provision and induction loops at stations.

The Olympic delivery authority will consult with the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee to ensure that their plans for Olympic transport meet the accessibility needs of all spectators.

In terms of the national picture and access to venues outside of London, all full-size single and double deck buses must be compliant with the Public Service Vehicle Access Regulations by 2016–17. This allows operators to achieve the full economic life from the fleet which existed before the regulations come into effect. To ensure the industry is well placed to meet these end dates, we have negotiated a voluntary agreement with the industry that 50 per cent. of the full size bus fleet should be low-floor and accessible by 2010. This should be sufficient for us to ensure fully accessible transport to all Olympic venues during the 2012 Games.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps the Olympic Delivery Authority is taking to ensure that transport for spectators and Olympic family members will be fully accessible by those with disabilities. [30988]

Ms Buck: One of the key objectives for Olympic transport remains achieving an accessible and inclusive games for every client group. A games mobility service based on the successful Manchester Commonwealth games model, will operate through-out both Olympic and Paralympic games. Among other things, this service will provide pre-booking of various forms of wheelchair, bookable access to individual electric buggies, provision of wide access at airport-style security screening, appropriate signposting, audio-visual information provision and induction loops at stations.

We are accelerating the creation of accessible networks of rail, tube and surface transport. Transport for London is continuing to work to ensure that as many stations as possible will be accessible, with a target of at least 25 per cent. of underground stations having step free access by 2010.

All buses in London will be wheelchair accessible well before 2012. And the London taxi fleet has, of course, been wheelchair accessible since 2000.

In terms of the national picture and access to venues outside of London, all full-size single and double deck buses must be compliant with the public service vehicle access regulations by 2016–17. This allows operators to achieve the full economic life from the fleet which existed before the regulations come into effect. To ensure the industry is well placed to meet these end dates, we have negotiated a voluntary agreement with the industry that 50 per cent. of the full size bus fleet should be low-floor and accessible by 2010. This should be sufficient for us to ensure fully accessible transport to all Olympic venues during the 2012 games.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what funds are available to pay for any cost over-run in the construction of transport infrastructure and services in connection with the 2012 Olympics. [30989]

Ms Buck: The Government's aim is to keep a tight grip on costs and ensure that there is no over-run. We expect specific projects to be managed rigorously and with clear accountability. The major schemes, which underpinned the Olympic bid and to which we were committed regardless of the bid's success, are either funded by the Department directly or by the Mayor through his five year investment plan. In addition, the Olympics is funding a number of specific additional transport schemes which are paid for from either the £2.375 billion public sector funding package or through revenue raised by the London Organising Committee for the Olympic Games (LOCOG).

In the unlikely event of an over-run arising for these specific Olympic schemes, a memorandum of understanding, agreed with the Mayor, makes it clear

that any shortfall will be dealt with in a sharing arrangement with the Mayor and additional National Lottery funding.

A21

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to reduce the accident rate for vehicles on the A21 in East Sussex; and if he will make a statement. [31542]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* Each year an annual road safety review is undertaken for the A21. The review has identified a programme of works to improve safety.

This year the programme includes preparatory work for a safety scheme at Flimwell Cross Roads. The scheme will introduce signals at the junction for right turns and is due to be completed in summer 2006. Further safety work is also planned for next financial year at Ashdene Services near Hurst Green to improve right turns at the entrance to the [illegible]s.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what funding has been made available for public consultation on the proposed A21 upgrade by the Highways Agency. [32144]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency have allocated for 2005–06 £855,000 to fund preparation work, including public consultation, for the A21 upgrade.

A417/419

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) why the ministerial commitment to resurface noisy concrete surfaces in relation to the A417/419 Swindon to Gloucester road has been dropped; whether this was a uniform decision for all the roads listed in the original decision; and whether the Government will consider *(a)* new claims for blight from noise and *(b)* further remedial measures in relation to the A417/419; [32507]

(2) whether the A417/419 Swindon to Gloucester road will be resurfaced in the normal maintenance schedule; and whether the design, build, finance, operate provider will be responsible for the costs. [32508]

Dr. Ladyman: Following detailed scrutiny of departmental and the Highways Agency's budgets, Ministers agreed that the resurfacing of roads ahead of a maintenance need, for noise alleviation reasons, would not be allocated funding. This was a uniform decision across the entire motorway and trunk road network in England and is now the position up to 2007–08.

The Government cannot consider new claims for blight from noise as the noise assessments on which original blight claims were based, assumed a worst case and any noise insulation or compensation has already been provided on that basis.

While the Highways Agency will continue to consider remedial measures, these will have to take their turn in the regional priorities for trunk road improvement schemes.

The A417/A419 will be re-surfaced when maintenance need dictates and, if this is during the life of the DBFO contract, then the DBFO company will carry out the work and be responsible for the costs.

Air Navigation Order

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he plans to publish regulatory changes to the Air Navigation Order. [32536]

Ms Buck: The Air Navigation Order 2005 (S.I. 1970/2005) came into force on 20 August 2005. Copies may be obtained from the Stationery office (ISBN 0–11–073253–7).

Air Travel Levy

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the administrative cost to *(a)* the Government and *(b)* airlines of compliance with a £1 levy scheme collected through the same means as air passenger duty. [31454]

Ms Buck: In its advice to the Government, published on 22 September 2005, the Civil Aviation Authority said that a £1 levy could be implemented in such a way that it does not impose a large compliance cost either on airlines or tour operators, or the CAA. The Government has not made an estimate of these costs.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the time that it would take for a £1 levy air passenger protection scheme to become self-financing from inception. [31455]

Ms Buck: The Government has not made an estimate of the time it would take for a £1 levy scheme to become self-financing. However, in its advice to the Government, published on 22 September 2005, the Civil Aviation Authority said that a £1 levy would have to be applied for three to five years in order to build up a reserve fund of £250 million.

Aircraft Environmental Effects

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will reply to the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution's report "The Environmental Effects of Civil Aircraft". [31551]

Ms Buck: The Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution's (RCEP) report "The Environmental Effects of Civil Aircraft in Flight" was their response to the Government's 2002 consultation on the future development of air transport in the UK. The Secretary of State for Transport met the chairman of the RCEP, Sir Tom Blundell, in March 2003 to discuss the report. The report was one of over 500,000 responses to the consultation, which informed decisions on "The Future of Air Transport" White Paper published in December 2003.

Airline Failures

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the

number of UK passengers stranded overseas as a result of failure of UK and European airlines in each year since 2000. [31491]

Ms Buck: When EUjet failed in July 2005 about 12,000 of its customers were overseas and had to make other arrangements to return to the UK. As stated to the House of Commons Transport Committee on 2 November 2005, the Government was not called upon to repatriate any of these individuals. The Department does not hold data on previous incidents.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research he has undertaken on the extent to which pop-up messages on websites of UK airlines warn customers they are not financially protected in the event of the airline's insolvency. [31492]

Ms Buck: The Department of Transport is currently in the process of discussing with airlines the provision of website information on financial protection. A number of them have said they will include relevant advice so that customers will see it during the on-line booking process.

Automatic Number Plate Recognition

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 11 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 759W, on automatic number plate recognition, what the reasons were for the inaccuracies in the Driver Vehicle Licensing Authority database; what the nature of each type of inaccuracy was; and what percentage of the total number of inaccuracies each type of inaccuracy represented. [31517]

Dr. Ladyman: The answer of 11 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 759W, on automatic number plate recognition, quoted figures from the assessment of Project Laser 2, a 13 month pilot project which commenced in June 2003. The inaccuracies in the data supplied by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) related primarily to the timeliness of information about vehicles that were evading Vehicle Excise Duty. At this time, DVLA often experienced delays of up to six weeks in the receipt of vehicle licensing information from post offices, resulting in vehicles being stopped unnecessarily. This timeliness issue has now been addressed through the introduction of an electronic link between DVLA and post offices and electronic vehicle licensing. Moreover, the data was conveyed to individual police forces via CD Rom and so was necessarily out of date. The police now have access to live data, and this facility is being rolled out to all forces. Those forces that still receive data on CD Rom currently do so every two weeks, soon to be weekly.

An assessment of accuracy of the DVLA databases conducted between May and September 2005 indicates that 97.4 per cent. of vehicle keepers can now be traced from information supplied by DVLA.

A database of vehicles with a valid MOT certificate is currently being created and is expected to be completed in 2007, as MOT computerisation is rolled out to all MOT garages and a full year cycle of MOT testing is complete.

The Motor Insurance Database is maintained by the insurance industry. The Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 has given police access to the database, enabling them to identify uninsured vehicles. The insurance industry is investing significant resource in improving accuracy and timeliness of their database.

Blue Badge Scheme

Kerry McCarthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 29 June 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1552–53W, to the hon. Member for Sutton and Cheam (Mr. Burstow), on the Blue Badge Scheme, when he expects to bring forward draft regulations. [31567]

Ms Buck: Draft regulations incorporating a number of changes to the Blue Badge Scheme are currently being finalised. We intend to consult on the draft regulations early next year and to implement them as soon as we can once that process is complete.

Buses

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what obligations his Department places on bus companies to consult local residents about *(a)* changes in bus routes and *(b)* the establishment of new bus routes. [31614]

Ms Buck: Regulations require the operator of a local bus service to provide the Traffic Commissioner and all relevant local authorities with at least 56 days notice when they intend to introduce or vary the timetable or route of a registered local bus service.

In addition to the statutory requirements the Bus Partnership Forum has agreed a voluntary Service Stability Code which provides for more notice to be given to the local authority when changes are planned.

The notice period provides local authorities with time to consider the impacts of the changes in service levels and the need for any necessary promotional or publicity activities. We do encourage all parties to work together to ensure the interests of passengers and the community are taken into account.

Consultants

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how much his Department has spent on information technology consultants in each year since 1998; [25625]

(2) how much his Department has spent on transport consultancy services in each year since 1998. [25626]

Ms Buck: The Department was formed in May 2002. A breakdown of spend by the Department and its executive agencies is shown in the following table:

£

Financial Year	*IT consultants*	*Transport consultants*
DfT(C)[1]		
2002–03	283,792	[2]—
2003–04	5,252,861	[2]—
2004–05	6,914,935	[2]—
2005–06	3,598,656	[2]—

£

Financial Year	IT consultants	Transport consultants
VOSA[3]		
2002–03	n/a	n/a
2003–04	1,084,383	195,147
2004–05	424,390	195,028
2005–06	388,242	134,446
DVLA[4]		
2002–03	1,038,000	0
2003–04	1,511,000	0
2004–05	1,823,000	0
2005–06	512,000	0
MCA	0	0
Highways Agency[5]		
2002–03	4,887,110	30,610
2003–04	6,619,772	637,518
2004–05	7,130,722	937,972
2005–06	4,115,598	668,592
VCA		
2002–03	108,519	0
2003–04	81,026	0
2004–05	70,396	0
2005–06	50,509	0
DSA[6]		
2002–03	n/a	[2]
2003–04	113,140	[2]
2004–05	552,253	[2]
2005–06	101,938	[2]

[1] Committed spend. The 2002–03 figure for IT consultancy may be understated due to changes in the accounting system when the Department was created. The effect of this is that many IT consultancy orders were charged to a general consultancy code and cannot now be identified separately without incurring disproportionate costs. Transport consultancy is not currently recorded separately in the central Department's accounting system.

[2] Information not recorded in this format.

[3] VOSA was formed in April 2003.

[4] Spend on IT consultancy is not recorded separately by DVLA. The figures are the total spend with known IT consultants.

[5] Highways Agency spend for 2002–03 may be understated because of the difficulty in matching categories to those used in previous accounting system.

[6] DSA changed to a new accounting system in 2003–04. Information in respect of prior years is not readily available.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what mechanisms are in place to assess the effectiveness of consultant-led projects in his Department; what sanctions are available to penalise consultants who run unsuccessful projects; how many projects conducted by consultants were assessed as unsuccessful in each year since 2000; and what sanctions were imposed in each case. [29060]

Ms Buck: The Department follows Office of Government Commerce (OGC) best practice programme, project and contract management procedures. Programmes and projects are subject to OGC's Gateway process which provides assurances at critical stages of a programme or projects lifecycle, and is applicable to programmes and projects managed by both internal and external resources.

The Department's internal guidelines also stipulate that consultancy assignments should be reviewed on completion to assess whether goals and objectives have been achieved, and to ensure that any lessons learnt are disseminated and incorporated in the Department's management systems.

By following best practice, the Department seeks to eliminate unsuccessful projects. Where a consultant fails to deliver the specified outcomes, they may be required to pay liquidated damages, the contract may be terminated, or payment withheld. The consultant may also be required to meet any additional costs incurred in completing the project.

Details of how projects are resourced and the outcome of any assessment against project-specific success criteria, together with details of any sanctions imposed on any consultants involved, are not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Salaries

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the 10 highest-paid employees in his Department, broken down by *(a)* job title and *(b)* salary including bonuses; and whether the individual concerned is (i) a civil servant and (ii) a contractor in each case. [27436]

Ms Buck: The salary bands (including bonuses) and the numbers in each band for the senior civil servants in my Department are given in the Department for Transport Annual Report 2005 Table B3. The salaries for contractors/consultants are not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many staff in his Department were *(a)* civil servants, *(b)* contractors and *(c)* other staff in each year since 1997. [27442]

Ms Buck: The civil servant staffing levels for the Department are contained in Table C of Civil Service Statistics. Civil Service Statistics is available in the Library of the House.

The numbers of contractors and other non-civil servants is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Websites

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to ensure the Department's websites attain the W3C AAA standard of accessibility for people with visual and other disabilities; and if he will set a target date for this standard to be achieved by. [30957]

Ms Buck: The Cabinet Office Government website guidelines, which govern the conduct of Government websites, specify that 'All UK Government websites are expected to achieve, as a minimum, and adhere to the single 'A' (Priority 1 items) level'.

Considerable effort is spent in improving the accessibility of all the DfT family of websites. DfT gov.uk sites comply with single 'A' and the majority are working toward achieving 'AA'. This is an ongoing process, as standards for accessibility evolve and change. As such there is no target date to achieve 'AAA'.

The Department regards achieving 'AA' throughout our websites as a benchmark. All of the DfT family of sites fulfil at least some of the criteria needed for 'AAA' rating.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many requests for information have been received other than from the police and local authorities under Regulation 27 of the Road Vehicles (Registration and Licensing) Regulations 2002 (SI 2002/2742) citing reasonable cause in each month since the regulations came into force; how many were *(a)* acceded to and *(b)* refused in each month; if he will list the private companies who secured information in this way; and what the total financial receipts obtained by the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency from this process have been. [31879]

Dr. Ladyman: The following figures represent the number of requests accepted monthly under the 'reasonable cause' provisions since 2002 are:

2002–03

Month	*Number*
April	75,641
May	76,890
June	60,349
July	77,963
August	65,530
September	73,498
October	77,836
November	74,323
December	56,357
January	80,331
February	71,895
March	77,772

2003–04

Month	*Number*
April	71,757
May	71,100
June	71,537
July	79,375
August	66,316
September	74,859
October	79,440
November	70,721
December	67,043

2003–04

Month	*Number*
January	74,317
February	76,663
March	86,535

2004–05

Month	*Number*
April	77,051
May	73,464
June	84,318
July	78,633
August	76,032
September	80,289
October	79,138
November	86,984
December	71,524
January	85,196
February	78,318
March	89,613

Current year

Month	*Number*
April	82,889
May	85,117
June	88,589
July	93,659
August	85,997
September	100,548
October	84,882

The number of requests refused is not available.

A list of all the private companies that secure information this way is not available. Requests are considered on a case-by-case basis. However, a list of private car parking enforcement is available. A list has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Revenue collected for all requests handled since 2002 is around £9 million.

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the national performance targets are for Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) offices and test centres; and what the performance of DVLA offices and test centres in Devon and Cornwall has been against those targets. [32058]

Dr. Ladyman: The following table shows the performance of the Exeter and Truro offices against the relevant internal targets for the current financial year.

Percentage

	April 2005	*May 2005*	*June 2005*	*July 2005*	*August 2005*	*September 2005*	*October 2005*	*Year to date*
Cherished Transfer. Target 95 per cent. in seven days								
Exeter	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Truro	98.56	99.04	98.76	97.22	97.62	97.8	99.39	98.34
Customer complaints—to acknowledge all complaints. Target 100 per cent. in one day								
Exeter	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Truro	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0
Customer complaints—to provide substantive response to all complaints. Target 10 days								
Exeter	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	55.0
Truro	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	66.05

[1] Figures are recorded as year to date only due to the low numbers received.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what was the total number of private cars in London registered with the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority in *(a)* 1999–2000 and *(b)* 2004–05. [31882]

Dr. Ladyman: At the end of December 1999 there were 2,162,000 cars owned privately in the Greater London area. At the end of December 2004 the figure had risen to 2,365,000.

Emergency Procedures (Test Exercises)

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library the results which do not relate to terrorist attacks of bi-national exercises to test emergency procedures held on *(a)* 15 April 2004 at Folkestone Fire Station (UK COMEX), *(b)* 30 June 2004 on the French side of service tunnel (VALEX) and *(c)* 19 September 2004 (UK led annual exercise BINAT 15). [30445]

Derek Twigg: The reports of these exercises do not distinguish the results in this way. The exercises test the emergency services' response to particular sets of circumstances regardless of whether those circumstances are assumed to have resulted from an accident or terrorist attack. The reports are matters for the UK and French emergency services and Eurotunnel rather than the Department.

Fuel Sales

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* petrol stations and *(b)* other outlets sell (i) diesel and (ii) petrol that has a renewable content in each region. [32301]

Dr. Ladyman: We are aware of around 100 outlets selling biodiesel, usually in a blend of 5 per cent. with fossil diesel. These are listed by region on the Energy Savings Trust's website at http://www.est.org.uk/fleet.

Following the introduction of a 20p per litre fuel duty derogation in January, on average around 7 million litres of bioethanol is being sold in the UK each month. It is blended at up to 5 per cent. with fossil petrol in line with fuel quality standards. We understand that this fuel is being sold at 100 or so outlets in the South East of England, but retailers are generally not distinguishing the fuel as renewable and we therefore do not have precise information on the number of outlets selling it.

Light Rail and Trams

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will list the light rail and tram schemes approved by his Department since 1998; and what conditions were attached to each; [25617]

(2) what agreement he has entered into in respect of light rail schemes in relation to contingency funding for cost overruns for each scheme since 1998; and if he will place copies of such agreements in the Library. [25643]

Derek Twigg: Since 1998, the Department has approved the following schemes:

Manchester Metrolink renewals and capacity enhancements;

Merseytram Line 1;

Leeds Supertram;

South Hampshire Rapid Transit;

Midland Metro Phase 1 extension (City Centre and Brierley Hill Lines);

Manchester Metrolink extensions;

Tyne and Wear Metro Sunderland extension;

Nottingham Express Transit;

Manchester Metrolink renewals and capacity enhancements

Conditional approval was granted in 2005. The approval letter was issued on 28 July 2005 with the following conditions:

Government funding was capped at £58 million (in cash terms). Any inflationary risks as a result of delay to the scheme would be for GMPTE to meet.

Government funding was conditional upon the whole scheme being delivered as set out in the proposals sent to the Department by GMPTE.

If at any time prior to full approval the promoters found that the agreed funding would not be sufficient to carry out the work set out in their proposal, they must, at that point, let the Department know and discuss with the Department the implications.

If the promoters found that the funding profile set out in the letter was no longer workable, they must let the Department know at that point and discuss with the Department the implications.

Full approval would not be given until final prices had been fixed and process and risk allocations were known. A request for full approval would need to include:

Details of the tender exercise and any resulting changes to the proposal.

That the key elements remained unaltered

The promoters approach to monitoring and evaluation.

The total costs, including that required from Government (which the Department expected to be no more than £58 million), and

Availability of other financial contributions.

Merseytram Line 1

Provisional approval was granted in 2002. The approval letter was issued on 19 December 2002 with the following conditions:

An updated appraisal would have to be prepared if the authority obtained TWA powers.

A cap of £170 million (in cash terms) would be set on central Government contributions.

Were the public sector costs to increase above the current estimate of £225 million, the entirety of the excess would have to be met through local sources.

DfT would need to obtain assurances at the appropriate time from Section 151 officers of the authorities contributing towards the costs that they had considered the impact of potential cost overruns on the future finance of the authority and, as a matter of judgment, were satisfied that it would be affordable, bearing in mind that the Government contribution would be capped.

Leeds Supertram

Full approval was granted in 2001. The approval letter was issued on 28 March 2001 with the following conditions:

The local contribution would be 25 per cent. of the amount of public sector funding.

The final amount of public sector support would only be known once the tendering process had been completed. Once tenders had been received, the promoters would need to agree with the Department and Treasury the amount of public sector funding required. If the public sector funding requirement was more than the cap of £355 million (in present value terms), the promoters, the Department and Treasury would need to consider the available options, including whether the project should proceed as currently planned.

South Hampshire Rapid Transit

Full approval was granted in 2001. The approval letter was issued on 28 March 2001 with the following conditions:

> The local contribution would be 25 per cent. of the amount of public sector funding.
>
> The final amount of public sector support would only be known once the tendering process had been completed. Once tenders had been received, the promoters would need to agree with the Department and Treasury the amount of public sector funding required. If the public sector funding requirement was more than the cap of £170 million (in present value terms), the promoters, the Department and Treasury would need to consider the available options, including whether the project should proceed as currently planned.

Midland Metro extensions

Provisional approval was granted in 2000. The approval letter was issued on 12 December 2000 with the following conditions:

> An updated appraisal would have to be prepared if the authority obtained TWA powers.
>
> Final approval would depend on whether an updated economic appraisal confirmed that the scheme represented good value for money and on satisfactory funding arrangements being agreed.

Manchester Metrolink extensions

Full approval was granted in 2000. The approval letter was issued on 19 July 2000 with the following conditions:

> Local contribution would be increased to meet any increase in the public sector funding requirement resulting from higher capital costs or a lower concession value at the end of the tendering process compared to the assumptions set out in the approval letter, or from lower than assumed developer contribution.
>
> In cases where the public sector funding requirement was increased by more than 10 per cent., GMPTE, the Department and the Treasury would need to consider the available options, including whether the project should proceed as currently planned.

Once it became apparent that the tender bids would come in significantly above the previously anticipated funding requirement, the Department agreed that the public sector contribution would be increased to £520 million (in cash terms). This followed confirmation from the section 151 officers of each district council that, as a matter of professional judgment, they were satisfied that the contributions that would fall to be made by their authorities were affordable. They had borne in mind that the Government's contribution was capped at £520 million (in cash terms). A letter was sent to the promoters on 20 December 2002 with the following conditions:

> If the net public sector costs exceeded £520 million, GMPTE would meet the entirety of the excess.
>
> Government would not be prepared to make any additional contribution towards the cost of the scheme.

Tyne and Wear Metro Sunderland extension

Full approval was granted in 1999. The funding allocation was set out in the Tyne and Wear settlement letter on 16 December 1999. No separate approval letter was issued.

Nottingham Express Transit

Full approval was granted in December 1998. The approval letter was issued on 5 January 1999. It confirmed that the project would be issued with PFI Credits of £167 million following contract signature if the project went forward as planned. In August 1999, the Department agreed an increase in public sector funding of £10 million. This was provided on the basis that:

> No further Government funds would be provided for the project.
>
> If the negotiations failed to reach financial close by the end of August, the Council or Arrow would have to bear any resulting costs or interest increases themselves.
>
> As this was a PFI funded scheme, the Department would need to be satisfied that the necessary value for money criteria had been met and that the risk transfer was acceptable.

No further agreements were made in regards to contingency for cost over runs.

Light Rail Schemes

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the local authorities which he has required to give legally binding unconditional financial undertakings as a condition of approval for light rail in their area. [31871]

Derek Twigg: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for Knowsley, North and Sefton, East (Mr. Howarth) today [UIN 25617].

London Underground

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he plans to meet the Mayor of London to discuss the renegotiation of the public private partnership deal for London Underground. [28394]

Ms Buck: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State regularly meets the mayor.

There is no intention to re-negotiate the PPP and the Government remains committed to the 30-year contracts. The first of three 'periodic reviews', built into the PPP contracts at seven and a half yearly intervals, will be completed in 2010. This provides an opportunity for LU to review its output requirements under the contracts, but is not a review of the PPP structure itself.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the total legal and administrative costs since 1997 have been of changes to the status of London Underground. [32193]

Ms Buck: Since 1997 the major changes to London Underground have been the implementation of the Public Private Partnership and its transfer to Transport for London.

The National Audit Office, in their report "London Underground PPP: Were they good deals?" and their evidence to the Public Accounts Committee (PAC) (published in the PAC's Seventeenth Report of Session 2004–05 "London Underground Public Private

Partnerships") have provided detailed breakdowns of the London Underground's costs for the PPP. These can be summarised as:

Breakdown of London Underground's PPP costs

£ million

Activity (Consultants/advisers)	*Cost*
Legal (Freshfields)	29.2
Commercial (PricewaterhouseCoopers)	21.4
Reorganisation (Arthur Anderson)	13.8
Reorganisation—Engineering (PA Consultants)	12 5
Engineering advice (Ove Arup)	6
Miscellaneous (project management, audit, insurance, property, pensions, technical and other advice)	26.5
Internal costs	61
Discounting by National Audit Office	-10
Unsuccessful bid costs	25
Tube Lines successful bid costs	134
Metronet successful bid costs	116
Total	455.4

The Department's costs in relation to the PPP and transfer of London Underground are provided in the following table. These do not include the Department's internal costs such as staff and accommodation.

£

Activity	*Adviser*	*Cost*
Review of LU grant requirement and value for money review	Ernst & Young	884,000
Advice on PPP	Partnerships UK	652,000
Legal advice—PPP	Herbert Smith	15,000
Legal advice—judicial reviews	Treasury Solicitors	47,000
Legal advice—pensions	Herbert Smith	40,000
Miscellaneous	Various	125,000
Total		1,763,000

M2

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) between which dates the M2 motorway has been free of roadworks since 1985; [32382]

(2) upon which sections of the M2 roadworks are in progress within the seven-mile coned-off section between junction 6 and Brenley Corner; [32383]

(3) when he expects work on the M2 motorway between junction 6 and Brenley Corner to be complete. [32384]

Dr. Ladyman: During the past 20 years, the M2 motorway was free of major roadworks in 1985, 1986, 1992, 1995 and 1997.

There are currently no road works on the M2 between junction 6 and Brenley Corner (junction 7). However, there is one set of roadworks on the M2 between junctions 5 and 6, which is approximately four miles in length and another separate set of roadworks between junctions 4 and 5, which is 1.6 miles long.

The roadworks between junctions 5 and 6 are due for completion on the 30 November 2005.

The roadworks between junctions 4 and 5 are to be completed in two phases. The first phase is programmed to complete on 17 December 2005 to ensure there are no roadworks on the M2 over Christmas and the new year. The second phase will commence on 7 January 2006 and is due for completion by the end of February 2006.

Media Relations

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much his Department spent on external media relations in each year since 2001. [29576]

Ms Buck: The Department has press officers who handle much of its media relations with the support of the Government News Network in the regions. In addition, the Department spent the following amount in each year since it was established on consultancy fees for external media relations, primarily to support our marketing activities, for example the THINK! road safety campaign.

£

	DfT	
	Central	*Agencies*
2002–03	496,004	302,250
2003–04	357,146	503,788
2004–05	438,210	373,328

Merseytravel

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the efficiency and stability of Merseytravel. [31872]

Derek Twigg: It is primarily for the Merseyside Passenger Transport Authority, whose members are drawn from the districts, to assess these matters.

The Department has assessed progress in delivering the first Merseyside local transport plan (which is a partnership between Merseytravel and the district councils). This has been assessed as being either 'well above average' or 'above average' in each of the last three years. Merseytravel has been designated as a centre of excellence for transport planning and for delivering its transport plan.

Millward Brown Group

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much his Department has paid to Millward Brown Group for consultancy advice in each year since 1997. [31179]

Mr. Darling *[holding answer 22 November 2005]:* The Department was formed in May 2002. The Department has made no payments to Millward Brown Group for consultancy advice.

In common with other public and private sector organisations we do undertake research to understand the effectiveness of our communications. My Department has bought media research services from Millward Brown at a total cost of £248,031.40 since the creation of DfT to date. The reports are available on the Department's web site at: http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_foi/documents/divisionho mepage/041073.hcsp.

Ministerial Engagements

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library a list of the ministerial engagements of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, the hon. Member for Halton since 1 June to date. [25618]

Derek Twigg: I have carried out a wide range of ministerial engagements including meeting MPs and delegations from their constituencies. I have held discussions with a range of stakeholders including cycling organisations, local councils, rail organisations, light rail groups, unions and train operating companies.

I have made various visits related to the rail industry and to promote cycling. I have also made visits to the European Parliament.

Mobile Phones

Susan Kramer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the number of accidents caused by drivers using hand-held mobile phones since January 2003. [31435]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not available. However, from 1 January 2005, information on contributory factors to accidents have been collected for personal injury road accidents reported at scene by a police officer. One of the factors is "driver using mobile phone". Subject to quality tests, first results should be available in autumn 2006.

Motorways (Litter)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what assessment he has made of the level of litter on motorways in Kent; [31198]

(2) what the arrangements are for the removal of litter from *(a)* motorways and *(b)* trunk roads in Kent; [31199]

(3) what measures are in place to monitor the effectiveness of litter removal on motorways and trunk roads in Kent. [31232]

Dr. Ladyman: In Kent the Highways Agency is responsible for litter picking on the motorway network and the A2 from its junction with the M25 to the M2 Junction 1 with local authorities responsible for the remainder of the trunk road network.

The Highways Agency monitors the level of litter as part of its routine inspection regime to ensure that it complies with the code of practice set out in the Environmental Protection Act 1990.

Although general performance targets for litter collection have been met there has been a site-specific problem identified on the A2 at Gravesend. Litter at this location has now been removed and a new contractor employed to remedy any future reoccurrence.

Night Flights

Susan Kramer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the impact of night flights from and to Heathrow airport on the London economy. [31460]

Ms Buck: The Government's consideration of the economic impact of night flying takes account of the combined effects on the national economy of night flights at the designated airports, Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted.

A broad statement on the economic importance of night flying at the designated airports was made in the draft regulatory impact assessment published in the stage two consultation document on night flying restrictions at Heathrow, Gatwick and Stansted, published on 10 June 2005,

We acknowledged in the stage two consultation that responses to the stage one consultation had not provided a comprehensive picture of the economic impact of night flights and of night restrictions. The stage two consultation therefore made a specific request for further information to inform the Government's decision-making. The consultation closed on 16 September 2005 and the Department for Transport is analysing responses from consultees.

Pedestrian Deaths

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many pedestrian deaths in road accidents there were where the pedestrian had over 100 mgs of alcohol per 100 mls of blood in each year since 1997; and what percentage of all pedestrian road accident deaths in *(a)* England and *(b)* each region this represents in each case. [32007]

Dr. Ladyman: Information on the blood alcohol levels of pedestrians is available for less than half of those who died in personal injury road accidents. The proportions of fatally injured pedestrians aged 16 or over with a blood alcohol level of over 100 mg/100 ml out of those for whom a blood alcohol level has been provided by the coroners are shown in the following tables.

Estimated percentage of pedestrian fatalities aged 16 and over with more than 100 mg of alcohol per 100 ml of blood

Table A: England 1997–2003

	Percentage over 100 mg/100 ml	*Sample size*[1]	*Total number of pedestrian fatalities aged 16 and over*[2]
1997	31	332	716
1998	34	296	687
1999	36	293	662
2000	31	285	658
2001	35	266	627
2002	39	262	618
2003	33	256	613

Table B: English Government office regions 1997–2003 combined

	Percentage over 100 mg/100 ml	*Sample size*[1]	*Total number of pedestrian fatalities aged 16 and over*[2]
North East	43	94	228
North West and Merseyside	32	288	708
Yorkshire and Humberside	32	238	479
East Midlands	36	210	408
West Midlands	36	192	490
Eastern	34	213	428
South East	38	296	658
London	27	285	828
South West	38	174	354
England	34	1,990	4,581

[1] The number of pedestrian fatalities aged 16 and over for which blood alcohol data are available.
[2] Includes cases where age was not reported.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* pedestrians, *(b)* cyclists, *(c)* motorcyclists, *(d)* car drivers and *(e)* car passengers have been (i) injured and (ii) killed in Staffordshire in road traffic accidents in each of the past six years for which figures are available. [32010]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of pedestrians, cyclists, motorcyclists, car drivers and car passengers killed and injured in personal injury road accidents in the county of Staffordshire, excluding Stoke on Trent Unitary Authority for the years 1999–2004 are shown in the table.

Staffordshire[1]

	Pedestrians		*Cyclists*		*TWMV*		*Car drivers*		*Car passengers*	
	Killed	*Injured*[2]	*Killed*	*Injured*[2]	*Killed*	*Injured*[2]	*Killed*	*Injured*[2]	*Killed*	*Injured*[2]
1999	9	386	4	307	5	280	16	2,213	10	1,253
2000	12	455	0	245	11	351	20	2,262	11	1,208
2001	13	464	2	244	6	313	31	2,307	18	1,258
2002	5	363	2	205	12	363	20	2,222	8	1,255
2003	15	377	1	198	15	412	23	2,217	14	1,099
2004	10	370	1	199	13	350	28	2,211	11	1,147

[1] Excluding Stoke on Trent Unitary Authority.
[2] Includes serious and slight injuries.

Project Cyclamen

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps have been taken to implement Project Cyclamen on the monitoring of road transport for illicit radioactive material; what has been the costs to date of this implementation; and whether the principles of protection established via experience with the project are being developed to apply to monitoring other modes of transport. [28898]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I have been asked to reply.

Programme Cyclamen is a cross-governmental counter-terrorism initiative, which began in April 2003. It uses fixed detection portals at UK borders and mobile screening units covering all traffic types to detect and deter the illicit importation of radiological materials into the UK. The mobile units will be deployed primarily at UK borders, but can also be deployed inland. We cannot go into the specific details of the programme, but are working with key stakeholders to ensure that the impact of operations on legitimate traffic is kept to a minimum. For security reasons, we do not generally disaggregate spending on specific counter-terrorism measures or projects.

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) when 2004 public service agreement target number four will be fully specified; [29803]

(2) when 2004 public service agreement target number one will be fully specified. [29805]

Dr. Ladyman: The information is as follows.

Congestion target specifications

The congestion target for urban roads (Department for Transport PSA 4) was published on 5 July 2005 in the Department's public service agreement. The target is that,

> "by 2010–11, the ten largest urban areas will meet the congestion targets set in their Local Transport Plan relating to movement on main roads into city centres".

Local authorities will publish final local transport plans containing targets in March 2006, so the public service agreement target for urban congestion will be fully specified then.

The congestion target for strategic roads (Department for Transport PSA 1) was fully specified in the Technical Note published on 28 July 2005. This document is on the Department's website at: www.dft..gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_about/documents/page/dft_about_030578–01.hcsp#P61_1195.

Quality Contract Schemes

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many quality contract schemes have been given ministerial approval since the introduction of the scheme in the Transport Act 2000. [31615]

Ms Buck: We have to date received no applications for a bus quality contracts schemes for approval.

Railways

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions he has had with train operating companies on passenger safety on late night services. [30730]

Derek Twigg: The Department liaises with train operating companies on personal safety issues for both passengers and staff through regular meetings and relevant research project steering groups.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many rail passengers used *(a)* Birmingham New Street, *(b)* London Victoria and *(c)* Liverpool Lime Street station in 2004. [32560]

Derek Twigg: The latest complete-year data published by Network Rail for these stations covers the 2004–5 financial year. Birmingham New Street was used by 30.5 million passengers, London Victoria by 92.5 million passengers and Liverpool Lime Street by 12.8 million passengers.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the levels of crime have been on the railways since 1997; and what measures his Department has taken to minimise these levels. [27944]

Derek Twigg: The number of crimes recorded by the British Transport police on the railways (excluding London Underground) from April 1998 is shown in the following table.

Financial year	*Number of crimes recorded*
1998–99	57,395
1999–2000	57,521
2000–01	55,610
2001–02	59,594
2002–03	63,404
2003–04	65,051
2004–05	63,377

Note:
Data is not available prior to April 1998, as the comparison is not meaningful due to a change in Home Office counting rules.

In 1998 we launched the Secure Stations Scheme, which is designed to improve security at overground and underground stations for passengers and staff, and we have recently published guidance on improving personal security on trains. Also we are continuing to raise the profile of transport crime among Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships.

The British Transport police (BTP) play an important role in keeping Britain's railways safe and secure, and pleasant to use. The force works closely in partnership with those who manage the railway, staff and tenants, and local police forces. It also takes a lead in combating the antisocial behaviour that can impact so much on those who use and work on the railway.

I recently launched South Eastern trains' team of railway enforcement officers which has been accredited under the RSAS. The Department encourages the participation of all TOCs in this scheme.

Mr. Alan Reid: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on ministerial responsibility for maintaining and improving the railway infrastructure in Scotland. [32654]

Derek Twigg: The railway infrastructure is owned and managed by Network Rail. The Secretary of State is responsible for the legislative framework for the provision and regulation of railway services including rail safety. The Scottish Parliament have legislative competence over the promotion and construction of new railways wholly within Scotland. The Railways Act 2005 provides for the specification of network outputs and financing of infrastructure costs in Scotland to be the devolved executive responsibility of the Scottish Ministers.

Road Charging (Tyne and Wear)

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) whether Tyne and Wear authorities will be required to implement *(a)* road charging and *(b)* pricing schemes as part of their proposals to reduce congestion; [31574]

(2) whether road charging is being considered for any part of the A1 Western Bypass in Newcastle and Gateshead. [31575]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* As my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced today, the Tyne and Wear authorities have bid successfully for pump priming funding, to support the development of innovative packages of measures to tackle congestion. All of the seven bidders which are to receive pump-priming funding propose to explore the feasibility of road pricing in their areas among other demand management options. This work will help inform the development of a coherent national framework for road pricing. We are not however requiring the implementation of any particular scheme or solution.

Road Gritting

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the cost of road traffic accidents on *(a)* gritted and *(b)* un-gritted roads in each year since 2000, broken down by local authority area. [32647]

Dr. Ladyman: Although the Department for Transport does not hold information on actual costs incurred as the result of road accidents, it does estimate the value of prevention of road accidents in its annually published "Highways Economics Note No.1". Estimates for the total value of prevention of all road accidents 2000–04 are as follows:

Estimated total cost

	£ million
2004	18,004
2003	18,094
2002	17,760
2001	17,420
2000	16,959

The Department is unable to provide information on costs disaggregated by local authority and by gritted and un-gritted roads as this data is not collated centrally.

The Department strongly recommends that local highway authorities carry out winter maintenance in accordance with section 13 of "Well-maintained Highways: Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management" published by the UK Roads Liaison Group earlier this year.

Road Safety

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much his Department spent on road safety in each year between 1994 and 2004; and what percentage of the budget of his Department was in each year. [29894]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department for Transport was formed in July 2002. Around £40 million (0.5 per cent.) in 2002–03 and £42 million (0.4 per cent.) in 2003–04 was spent on road safety against the departmental expenditure limits of £8.8 billion and £10.8 billion respectively. These figures exclude expenditure on the national safety camera programme, which is funded from fine revenue from speed and red light offences. In addition, much of the expenditure by the Department's agencies and local authorities, which is funded through block funding by the Department, contributes to road safety.

Road Traffic

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what were the total vehicle miles driven in London by private motor cars in *(a)* 1999–2000 and *(b)* 2004–05. [31885]

Dr. Ladyman: The total vehicle miles driven in Greater London by private motor cars, including taxis, are available for calendar years only. The figures for each year since 1999 are shown in the following table:

Millions

	Vehicle miles
1999	16,644
2000	16,569
2001	16,559
2002	16,650
2003	16,389
2004	16,323

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many road traffic accidents were caused by drivers falling asleep in the last year for which figures are available; [31653]

(2) what steps the Government are taking to alleviate road traffic accidents caused by drivers falling asleep. [31654]

Dr. Ladyman: Research for the Department has established that driver sleepiness is a principle factor in around 10 per cent. of all accidents and about 15 to 20 per cent. of all accidents on motorways and other similar roads.

Separately, under a pilot scheme, 15 police forces collected data on contributory factors to accidents, 2000–04. The table shows the estimated proportion of accidents where driver fatigue was deemed to be a contributory factor.

Estimated[1] percentage of accidents where driver fatigue was a contributory factor: by severity: 2000–04

Percentage

	Fatal	*Serious*	*Slight*	*All accidents*
2000	5	2	1	1
2001	3	2	1	1
2002	3	2	1	1
2003	4	2	1	1
2004	4	2	1	1
2000–04	4	2	1	1

[1] Estimates are based on data from the pilot contributory factors scheme.

As a result of the pilot, from January 2005, police nationally are reporting contributory factor data.

The Department continues to research driver sleepiness topics and a publicity programme aims to help make drivers aware of the dangers of sleep related accidents using motorway variable message signs and through our THINK! publicity campaigns. Those include radio advertising, truck back advertising, partnership marketing and PR. Advice on how to avoid and combat driver tiredness is in the Highway Code and on the Department's THINK! road safety website at:

www.thinkroadsafety.uk/advice/drivertiredness.htm

A question on sleep disorders is included in the medical report that all lorry and bus drivers must submit when applying for a licence. In addition, those drivers who have a medical condition likely to cause them to fall asleep at the wheel are required by law to notify the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency. Following such a notification, an assessment is carried out to determine whether the driver should retain his or her licence.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the operation of the Road Traffic Reduction Act 1997. [29854]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department issued guidance, related to the Act, to local authorities for consultation in January 1998 and in final form in March 2000, as part of the 'Guidance on Full Local Transport Plans'. Local authorities outside London produced Road Traffic Reduction Act reports in 2000 as annexes to their first five year local transport plans and in London in association with their integrated transport plans.

Department of Transport guidance issued in December 2004 for the second five year local transport plans includes a requirement for authorities covering each plan areas to each set a target for area wide road traffic levels. The final second transport plans, including the targets, are due to be completed by local authorities outside London by March 2006.

Roads (East Sussex)

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to announce funding for the Bexhill to Hastings link road in East Sussex. [32148]

Dr. Ladyman: We are currently considering a request from East Sussex county council for a funding contribution towards the preparatory costs for the Bexhill to Hastings link road. We will be informing the council of our decision in due course.

Special Advisers

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the special advisers in post in his Department, broken down by pay band; and what the total budgeted cost to his Department of special advisers is for 2005–06. [29420]

Ms Buck: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office on 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1257W. Information relating to costs for 2005–06 will be published after the end of the current financial year.

Trains

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many trains were overcrowded in each region of the United Kingdom in each year between 1994 and 2004, broken down by train operating company; and what the average percentage of passengers in excess of capacity (PIXC Factor) was for each month in each case. [29033]

Derek Twigg: The Department does not hold information on how many trains were overcrowded by region in the UK.

Passengers in Excess of Capacity (PIXC) applies to weekday commuter trains arriving in London between 7.00 am and 9.59 am and those departing between 4.00 pm and 6.59 pm. The measure is derived from the number of passengers travelling in excess of capacity on

all services divided by the total number of people travelling, expressed as a percentage. PIXC counts are carried out once a year, on a typical week day during the autumn. I have placed the appropriate tables in the Library.

Transport for London

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the Government plan to reintroduce legislation to transfer responsibility for train services coming into Greater London to Transport for London. [29712]

Ms Buck: The Secretary of State for Transport is currently considering plans to consult on the possibility of extending the London Mayor's powers to include services to some stations just outside the Greater London Authority boundary. There are no plans to reintroduce legislation to transfer responsibility for train services coming into Greater London to Transport for London.

Transport Spending

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his Department's per capita spending is on *(a)* all transport, *(b)* light rail and tram schemes and *(c)* bus subsidies for each local authority area in England. [25624]

Ms Buck: The information requested is as follows.

(a) The Department does not hold information on all of its transport spend at local authority area level in England.

It does however allocate capital funding to local authorities[1] in England outside London. The per capita allocations[2] for 2004–05 as made in December 2003 are shown in table 1, which has been placed in the House Libraries. Some of the allocations relate to individual major projects, so for some authorities per capita allocations vary substantially between years.

[1] Per capita figures are shown for each metropolitan county as the Department allocates funding to both the county wide passenger transport authorities and the district councils. Combined figures are shown for a few other local authorities, as they have joint plans. The equivalent funding for London authorities is the responsibility of the London mayor.

[2] The figures include funding for capital highways maintenance, the integrated transport block (for improvement schemes each costing less than £5 million) and for major transport projects (excluding light rail, which is covered elsewhere in this answer). These are allocations not actual spend—authorities have flexibility to spend more or less—and some parts of the allocations were conditional on further progress being made on particular projects.

(b) For light rail in 2004–05, the Department provided:

£6 million for Leeds Supertram—£2.85 per capita in the West Yorkshire area;

£9.7 million for Manchester Metrolink—£3.82 per capita in the Greater Manchester area;

£4.2 million for Merseytram line 1—£3.08 per capita in the Merseyside area; and

£18 million for Tyne and Wear Metro—£16.58 per capita in the Tyne and Wear area.

The Department does not directly fund light rail in London and so it is not possible to calculate the per capita spending on light rail schemes in London.

(c) Most of the public funding support for bus services outside London is provided either to operators or through the revenue support grant, administered by ODPM, and is not identifiable at local authority level. The Department does provide some grants directly to local authorities for bus services and the per capita distribution of these in 2004–05 is shown in table 2, which has also been placed in the Libraries of the House.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Chagos Islands

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department is taking to expedite a visit of Chagos Islanders to the Chagos Islands. [32185]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office, via the British high commission in Port Louis is currently exploring with the Government of Mauritius the possibility of chartering a Mauritian vessel for a humanitarian visit by members of the Chagossian community to the Chagos Islands in the first half of 2006. The high commission remains in regular contact with the leader of Chagos Refugee Group, Olivier Bancoult, over the logistics for the visit.

Civil Service Relocation (Scotland)

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many departmental civil service jobs have been relocated to Scotland in each year since 2001. [32258]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: While the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has not relocated any civil service jobs to Scotland since 2001, UK Trade and Investment will be re-locating some 12 posts from London to Glasgow during 2006. UK Trade and Investment is the lead Government organization that supports companies in the UK trading internationally and overseas companies seeking to locate in the UK. It is a joint FCO and the Department of Trade and Industry organisation and draws its staff from both Departments.

Departmental Websites

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will take steps to ensure the Department's websites attain the W3C AAA standard of accessibility for people with visual and other disabilities; and if he will set a target date for this standard to be achieved by. [30966]

Ian Pearson: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) follows Government policy on publication on the web which means following the guidelines for UK Government websites and compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Version 1. Neither these guidelines, e-Accessibility communications from

the European Union or advice from the RNIB have ever suggested that Government websites should attain and maintain Level AAA.

The FCO websites have been designed to be as accessible as possible in line Government guidelines, which currently indicate that websites should meet Level A of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines that is the Priority One Checkpoints. They also identify a significant number of the Priority Two and Priority Three Checkpoints, from the Level AAA requirement, that have been deemed to be best practice. For example FCO websites use access-keys (P3 Checkpoint 9.5), provide a site map (P3 Checkpoint 13.3) and search facilities (P3 Checkpoint 13.7).

EU Budget

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress of European Union budget discussions. [31425]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The UK presidency has completed formal bilateral consultations on the EU budget for 2007–13 with all member states, as well as Romania and Bulgaria. EU Foreign Ministers have also now had substantive discussions on this issue at the General Affairs and External Relations Councils on 7 November and 21 November. On the basis of those discussions, the UK presidency will table comprehensive proposals in early December, and work towards agreement at the European Council on 15–16 December. As my right hon. Friend, the Foreign Secretary told the European Parliament on 16 November, significant changes will be needed to the proposals tabled in June if we are to reach agreement.

EU Committees

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representation the United Kingdom has on the EU's Article 133 Committee. [30502]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Article 133 Committee is a council body established under Article 133 of the EC treaty to assist the Commission in the conduct of the EU's trade policy. The committee is attended by one representative of each EU member state as well the European Commission and the General Secretariat of the Council of the EU.

The Article 133 Committee meets weekly—once a month in full members format, with attendance by the senior trade official of each member state and three times a month in deputy members format, with attendance by less senior officials. It meets also, although less regularly, in specific sectoral formations, namely services, textiles and steel.

The UK's full member of the Article 133 Committee is Edmund Hosker, Director of World Trade, the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). The UK's deputy member of the Article 133 Committee is Ray Symons, Head of the EU Trade Negotiations Unit, DTI.

EU Trade Policy Meetings

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the EU Commission to publish the minutes of EU trade policy meetings. [30497]

Mr. Douglas Alexander *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The General Secretariat of the Council of the European Union publishes outcomes from the Article 133 Committee in accordance with Council Regulation 1049/2001 (Regulation of the European Parliament and Council regarding public access to European Parliament, Council and Commission documents). These documents can be accessed through the Council's website at http://ue.eu.int. Outcomes from the Article 133 Committee that lead to proposals for EU legislation are agreed by the Council and subject to the normal procedures for parliamentary scrutiny.

European Court of Human Rights

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has received a copy of the Internal Auditor's Report on the European Court of Human Rights; and if he will place a copy in the Library. [32372]

Dr. Howells: I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office has received a copy of the Council of Europe's Internal Auditor's report on the European Court of Human Rights.

As the report is classified confidential by the Council of Europe, we are currently unable to place a copy in the Library. However, we are seeking permission from the Secretary General of the Council of Europe to have this document de-classified. If this request is granted, it will allow us to place a copy of the report in the Library of the House.

Festivals

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department took to celebrate and promote the events of *(a)* Ramadan, *(b)* Diwali and *(c)* Chinese new year in 2005. [31169]

Dr. Howells: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) took the following steps to celebrate and promote:

Ramadan: an evening reception at the FCO to mark Eid-al-Fitr (the end of Ramadan) on 22 November 2005. I also hosted a lunch to mark Eid-al-Fitr.

Diwali: no event hosted by the FCO. However, an official attended a Diwali event hosted by the Hindu Forum Britain at the House of Commons on 27 October 2005 and officials attended a Diwali reception hosted by the Home Office on 14 November 2005. On 11 November a senior FCO official met the President of the Hindu temple at Bhaktivedanta Manor and lit a candle of remembrance on behalf of the FCO for victims of the recent New Delhi bombings.

Chinese new year: an evening reception at the FCO, hosted by my hon. Friend the then FCO Minister of State (Bill Rammell), on behalf of my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, on 9 February 2005.

The FCO intends to host a multi-faith reception in early in 2006.

Foreign Office Appointments (Advertisements)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which Foreign Office appointments, other than the post of UK Ambassador to the Holy See, have been advertised in *(a) The Economist, (b) The Guardian, (c) The Daily Telegraph, (d) The Independent* and *(e) The Times* in the past five years; which of these were also advertised in national newspapers of Scotland; and if he will make a statement. [29589]

Dr. Howells: As the information requested is lengthy, a list will be placed in the Library of the House.

Global Fund

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the EU will be able to give further funding to the Global Fund under external action. [30263]

Mr. Thomas: I have been asked to reply.

The EU (including the EC) is the largest contributor to the Global Fund providing US$2.4 billion up to 2005. At the Global Fund replenishment conference in September 2005 a number of EU donors, including the European Commission, were unable to announce firm pledges for the full two-year period (2006–07) due to the timing of their budgetary procedures. Nevertheless US$2 billion was pledged by EU countries excluding the EC. The European Commission's 2006 budget is still being finalised and the Financial Perspectives governing the budget from 2007 are yet to be agreed. We expect the details of the Commission's communication about thematic programmes in the next Financial Perspectives, which proposes that a human and social development programme would address health including AIDS issues, will be discussed early next year.

The EU set out their political commitment to future financing of the Global Fund in the Council Conclusions of May 2005. DFID will continue to encourage donors to do as much as they can to substantially increase their contributions to the Global Fund. A follow-up conference will be held in June 2006 to secure additional pledges to meet the Global Fund's resource needs in 2006–07.

Human Rights

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what formal procedures are in place within his Department for taking into account for the purposes of UK foreign policy the human rights record of a country. [31864]

Ian Pearson: Human rights are "mainstreamed" within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). British missions abroad, geographic and relevant functional departments in London, are asked to monitor the human rights situations of the countries they are accredited to or work with, and to reflect this in their policy advice to Ministers, their project work and wider engagement with those countries. Mainstreaming is underpinned by regular training on human rights issues for FCO staff, and by support and advice from the FCO's Human Rights, Democracy and Governance Group.

Iraq

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many of the 13,500 detainees held by multi-national forces in Iraq are under the age of 18 years; and if he will make a statement. [29046]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 23 November 2005]:* The number of security internees fluctuates due to the continuous review and release programme and the continuing need to detain individuals for imperative reasons of security. On 18 November 2005, the UK did not hold any individuals under the age of 18 years of the total (33) held by the UK. The US Government has told us that, on 14 November 2005, they were holding approximately 250 security internees who are aged under 18 years old.

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many detainees held by multi-national forces in Iraq have been transferred to other countries; and to *(a)* which countries and *(b)* what authorities such detainees have been transferred. [29047]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 23 November 2005]:* We are not aware that any security internees have been transferred from Iraq to other countries.

Israel

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has apologised to his Israeli counterpart for the incident involving General Almog at Heathrow airport on 11 September. [31060]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary spoke with the Israeli Foreign Minister Silvan Shalom in September this year. He stated that this had been a private prosecution and that the Government had not played a role in issuing the arrest warrant for General Almog. The Foreign Secretary apologised as a matter of courtesy.

We are committed to honouring our international obligations under the Geneva Conventions.

Maldives

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the human rights of prisoners of conscience in the Maldives, with particular reference to *(a)* Mohamed Nasheed and *(b)* Jennifer Latheef. [29038]

Dr. Howells: The Government monitor developments in the Maldives closely. We make clear our concerns about democracy and human rights to the Government of the Maldives. The British high commissioner in Colombo accredited to the Maldives did so personally, to President Gayoom in September. The high commissioner and his deputy also separately made representations to Foreign Minister Dr. Ahmed Shaheed in late October.

The British high commission in Colombo is also active in co-ordinating EU action locally. As Presidency, we led an EU fact-finding mission to the Maldives in August that met Government Ministers,

officials and detainees, including Mohamed Nasheed. An EU statement issued on 2 September emphasised the Maldivian authorities' responsibility to uphold the right of political parties to meet freely and to carry out peaceful political activities. It noted the seriousness of the charges against detainees, calling for due process and making clear that the credibility of trials would come under close scrutiny. We will continue bilaterally and with our EU partners to underline to the Government of the Maldives its democracy and human rights obligations.

We strongly support continued democratic political reforms in the Maldives. We welcomed the legalisation of political parties in June 2005. We are, however, seriously concerned by the Government of the Maldives approach towards the opposition, including the trials of Mohamed Nasheed and Jennifer Latheef, which appear to have political motivations. Freedom of association and expression are essential to the reform process. I discussed these cases with Mohammed Latheef (father of Jennifer Latheef), the Maldivian Democratic Party's (MDP) Chief Spokesman on 8 November. Mohammed Latheef told me that, in spite of the manner of her incarceration, her treatment by the Maldivian authorities was of an acceptable standard. I trust this will continue to be the case. I assured him of the UK's support for the democratic reform process and human rights in the Maldives. I underlined the importance of the MDP remaining engaged and peacefully committed to the democratic process. We welcome recent moves from the Government of the Maldives to establish dialogue with the MDP. We look forward to seeing early progress. We commend the offices of the Commonwealth Secretary-General's Special Envoy in this regard.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will take steps to stop the supply of *(a)* arms and *(b)* other weaponry to the Maldives. [30908]

Dr. Howells: We monitor the supply of arms and weaponry through export controls. The respect of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the country of final destination is one of the key criteria. Export licences will not be issued if there is a clear risk that the proposed export might be used for internal repression. The UK has no current plans to impose sanctions, such as an arms embargo, against the Government of the Maldives. We are, however, seriously concerned about the human rights situation in the Maldives. We continue to raise those concerns bilaterally and with EU partners.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place an immediate travel ban on members of the Government of the Maldives entering the United Kingdom. [30910]

Dr. Howells: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave today (UIN 30906).

Niger

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Niger concerning the reported persecution of Christians in Niger State since the imposition of Shariah law. [30603]

Ian Pearson: We are concerned by all incidents of inter-religious conflict and violence in Nigeria, including persecution of individuals on the grounds of their religious belief.

Representatives of the British high commission in Abuja regularly raise such issues with both the federal and state authorities when they come to our attention and are verified.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Niger concerning the reported attack on and torture of the Christian convert Sardauna Anaruwa Sashi by police officers in Niger State in September. [30604]

Ian Pearson: The case of Sardauna Anaruwa Sashi had not previously been drawn to our attention, either through the Nigerian media or by human rights organisations based in Nigeria.

We are concerned by all incidents of inter-religious conflict and violence, including persecution on the grounds of religious belief. We will undertake inquiries in order to verify the reports of this case and, if necessary, will make representations to the Federal Nigerian Government or the Government of the State of Niger.

Overseas Missions

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many *(a)* embassies, *(b)* high commissions and *(c)* consulates the United Kingdom operates; and how many it operated in 1997. [30504]

Dr. Howells: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) currently operates 102 embassies, 42 high commissions and 99 consulates and trade offices. In 1997 the FCO operated 99 embassies, 46 high commissions and 92 consulates and trade offices. Like any well-run organisation, the FCO continues to move its resources flexibly in line with UK interests.

Pakistan (Earthquake)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what response the EU has made to the recent earthquake in Pakistan. [30267]

Mr. Thomas: I have been asked to reply.

On 8 October, an earthquake measuring 7.6 on the Richter scale devastated the Muzaffarabad area of northern Pakistan, around 60 miles north-northeast of Islamabad. Approximately 30,000 square miles were severely damaged causing the destruction of 90 per cent. of buildings in the worst hit areas. The death toll has reached nearly 75,000, with approximately 70,000 injured. Nearly 2.5 million people have lost their houses.

The European Union's civil protection mechanism was activated on 8 October and operated for two weeks until the immediate search and rescue operation was over. Search and rescue teams from member states including the UK arrived within 36 hours and helped save many lives. The presidency had a representative in Islamabad from 10 October, co-ordinating assistance through this mechanism.

The European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO) despatched staff on 8 October, and within 72 hours the European Commission had made €3.6 million available for humanitarian relief operations. A further €10 million has been committed by the EC. The funds have already helped to deliver items including tents, blankets, bedding, water, food and medical supplies to the affected areas. The European Commission has requested a further €80 million (€30 million for humanitarian and €50 million for reconstruction) from the EU budgetary authorities. In addition to the €93.6 million from the European Commission, EU member states have pledged over €500 million for humanitarian and reconstruction activities.

The presidency issued two official statements in the first few days after the earthquake expressing the EU's condolences and willingness to provide as much assistance as possible. The earthquake was discussed in October at meetings with Heads of Government, Finance, Foreign and Development Ministers. I represented the Council of Ministers at the 19 November donor conference in Islamabad and reported back to the 21–22 November General Affairs and External Relations Council in Brussels. At that meeting, Development Ministers agreed on the urgent need to provide practical support to the survivors of the earthquake and the importance of continuing to strengthen the international community's capacity to respond to major natural disasters.

Predictive Diallers

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many calls were made from call centres in his Department in 2004–05 using predictive diallers; how many such calls resulted in contact being made with the recipient without a Government agent available to talk to them; and what assessment he has made of the likely impact of Ofcom's policy on silent calls on the use of predictive diallers in departmental call centres. [28171]

Dr. Howells: The call centres operating within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office do not deal directly with the public and do not use predictive dialling facilities.

Royal Family (Visits)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 754W, on Prince of Wales (United States visit), what was the cost of the private jet used to convey HRH the Prince of Wales and the Duchess of Cornwall between Washington DC and New York during their recent visit to the United States; and whether this sum was included in the £330,000 referred to. [31870]

Dr. Howells: It is not possible to break down the cost for flying between Washington and New York. The aircraft for the Prince of Wales and Duchess of Cornwall's visit to the USA was put out to tender on the basis of a set itinerary which included flying London-New York-Washington-New Orleans-San Francisco-London. I can confirm that the cost of the journey between New York and Washington was included in the £330,000 referred to in the answer my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary gave my hon. Friend on 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 754W.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what unofficial visits abroad by the royal family over the past 12 months have involved *(a)* overnight stays at UK ambassadors' residences and *(b)* receptions (i) hosted and (ii) attended by his Department's staff; and if he will make a statement. [32734]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The information is as follows.

Working visit by the Earl of Wessex to the Czech Republic 18–19 July 2005: Reception at the residence for Duke of Edinburgh's Award in the Czech Republic.

Working visit by the Duke of Kent to Washington on behalf of Imperial War Museum 10–12 May 2005: Overnight stay and reception at the residence.

Working visit on behalf of the International Olympic Committee by the Princess Royal to Singapore 3–9 July 2005: Her Royal Highness attended a reception at the residence.

Private visit by Princess Alexandra to Austria 18–22 November 2005: Her Royal Highness stayed at the residence and attended charity reception at the residence in aid of children in Ethiopia (Bohm Trust).

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what official visits abroad are planned for members of the royal family in each of the next six months; and if he will make a statement. [32735]

Dr. Howells: An announcement has already been made on the Royal website concerning the Duke of York's forthcoming official visit to Egypt from 28–30 November 2005. Proposals and dates for other official visits overseas by members of the royal family are kept under constant review. It is not the practice to announce such visits until they are firm and all parties concerned have agreed that they can proceed.

Saddam Hussein Trial

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whose responsibility it is to ensure the protection of *(a)* prosecution and *(b)* defence lawyers involved in the trial of Saddam Hussein; and if he will make a statement. [29045]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 23 November 2005]:* The prosecution of Saddam Hussein is being conducted under the Iraqi domestic legal process and therefore the Iraqi Government is responsible for the security of its citizens, including the prosecution and defence lawyers at the trial.

Sir Christopher Meyer

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether Sir Christopher Meyer submitted the manuscript of his recent book to his Department for *(a)* comment and *(b)* clearance; and if he will make a statement. [26840]

Mr. Straw: Under the diplomatic service regulations, which are based on home civil service codes of conduct, all former ambassadors remain bound by a continuing duty of confidentiality after they have left Crown employment. The regulations require that former members of the diplomatic service should consult their Department before writing memoirs based on their experience and should submit any part of them which draws on official information or experience for clearance by their Department before publication. Departments are required to assess texts for any harm to national security or defence; international relations; and confidential relationships within Government. The first two categories are based on the Official Secrets Act. The third category broadly reflects the common law of confidence. These categories were established in 1976 following the Report of the Committee of Privy Counsellors on Ministerial Memoirs, chaired by Lord Radcliffe, which also set a period of 15 years for maintaining confidences within Government. In practice there is a high threshold to establish a breach of the regulations, which are based as much upon well established conventions and standards of conduct expected of all civil servants as on actual legal obligation.

In the case of Sir Christopher Meyer's memoirs, there was no prior consultation by the author with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) before he entered into a commitment with a publisher and began writing. Following the appearance of a trailer for the book on the Amazon website in May, Sir Christopher Meyer was contacted by the FCO, reminded of the publication rules and repeatedly asked to submit his text to the Department when completed. In the event his book was only submitted to the Cabinet Secretary for comment by his publisher on 7 October, some four weeks before planned publication on 10 November.

The Cabinet Office sent a copy of the book to the FCO and both Departments reviewed it against the standard criteria for clearing publications under the rules. The judgment, with which I agreed, was made on the particular facts of this case that no changes should be sought primarily because the book posed no national security risk; it contained nothing substantially new which we judged would harm relations with the US; and nothing was specifically identified that was considered so damaging as to require consideration of legal action.

However, in his letter of 4 November to the publisher, the Cabinet Secretary made it clear that, while the Government had no comments to make on the book, it was disappointing that a former diplomat should disclose confidences gained as a result of his employment. The Cabinet Secretary stated that it was not the Government's responsibility to check the accuracy of remarks attributed to individuals in the book and emphasised that his response should not be taken to indicate any form of official or unofficial approval of the book. A copy of the Cabinet Secretary's letter has been placed in the Library of the House.

By deciding to write and publish this book, Sir Christopher Meyer has broken the trust placed in him as a former servant of the Crown. As I have already said publicly, it is completely unacceptable for former senior civil servants or diplomats to break such trust in this way. It undermines the key relationship between civil servants and Ministers. It is greatly to be regretted that Sir Christopher Meyer has chosen to reveal the substance of conversations with individuals at the centre of sensitive issues, especially as those individuals would not have expected that information to be revealed so soon after the event or in such terms. His disclosures fall well below the standard of discretion expected of former Officials and the conventions set out in the Radcliffe report.

I note from the comment on this book to date that this view is shared across a very wide political and public spectrum. It has also led to very great concern among the whole of the diplomatic service. The General Secretary of the PDA—the senior civil and public servants' union—has described the book as utterly wrong and a fundamental breach of trust and confidentiality. The Chairman of the Diplomatic Service Association has called Sir Christopher Meyer's action in publishing

> "wholly inconsistent with the high standards of professionalism and integrity of which the service is and should be justifiably proud."

As many have said, including their noble Lords on 17 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1187–89, this case calls into question the effectiveness of current publication rules, which depend for much of their effect on norms of conduct and behaviour rather than laws. I am currently examining the relevant diplomatic service regulations with a view to making changes so as to ensure that they more accurately reflect the overall purpose of the regulations and conventions in this field. I hope to make an announcement soon. There is also a wider Government review under way as well as one by the Public Administration Select Committee.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether his call for Sir Christopher Meyer to resign as head of the Press Complaints Commission *(a)* was made in his ministerial capacity and *(b)* represents Government policy. [31620]

Mr. Straw *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* I set out the Government's position on the book in the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Pendle (Mr. Prentice) today (UIN 26840). My view is that the publication of Sir Christopher Meyer's memoirs also raises questions about his role as Chairman of the Press Complaints Commission, as I said in the course of the Today programme on Radio 4 on 11 November.

Uganda

Mary Creagh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Ugandan President following the arrest of the opposition leader Dr. Kiiza Besigye on 14 November. [30554]

Ian Pearson: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Boston and Skegness (Mark Simmonds) and my hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk (Eric Joyce) on 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1901W. Subsequently, my noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa (Lord Triesman of Tottenham) also spoke to the

Foreign Minister Kutesa on 17 November regarding the situation, and on 18 November, the UK issued a statement on the situation on behalf of the EU.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the implications of the arrest of Kiiza Besigye in Uganda. [30606]

Ian Pearson: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Boston and Skegness (Mark Simmonds) and my hon. Friend the Member for Falkirk (Eric Joyce) on 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1901W and to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Wakefield (Mary Creagh) today (UIN 30554). The UK, in common with our EU partners, views with deep concern the arrest of the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) leader, Dr. Kiiza Besigye, and 22 others on charges including treason. The move to a pluralist democratic system in advance of the next elections in February or March 2006 is seen by the EU as a crucial step in the political development of Uganda. In this regard, the EU is concerned that all parties should be able, and be seen to be able, to compete in a fair and transparent manner. The UK therefore calls for the due legal process and protection guaranteed under the Ugandan Constitution to be made fully available to Dr. Besigye and the others charged, and for those charged to be granted an early, free and transparent trial.

Mr. Streeter: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Uganda about the recent imprisonment of presidential candidate Dr. Kizza Besigye. [31863]

Ian Pearson: I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave the hon. Member for Boston and Skegness (Mark Simmonds) on 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1901W, and my hon. Friend the Member for Wakefield (Mary Creagh) and hon. Friend the Member for Stroud (Mr. Drew) today (UIN 30554 and 30606). The British high commissioner also raised this issue with the Ugandan Prime Minister on 23 November 2005.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adult Education

Kelvin Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the change in the level of enrolment on adult education courses in further education colleges in 2005–06; and whether she took this information into account when deciding funding priorities for adult education courses in *(a)* 2006–07 and *(b)* 2007–08, as set out in her Department's Press Notice 2005/0123. [23609]

Bill Rammell: Although detailed individual learner data about the current year, 2005/06, was not available when deciding funding priorities for 2006–08 we and the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) had initial information, based on local intelligence, available for the beginning of the academic year. The funding priority work was informed by local LSCs' planning data and trend from earlier years.

At Risk Register

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children died due to mistreatment by an adult responsible for their care in each year since 1989; and how many were on the at risk register at the time. [26432]

Maria Eagle: The Commission for Social Care Inspection (CSCI) collect information on the number of deaths, illness and other events under Regulation 37 of the Care Homes Regulation 2001. Although CSCI's Regulation and Inspection of Notifiable Incidents database captures this information it is not possible to give a breakdown on the number of children that have died due to mistreatment by an adult responsible for their care as the database does not collect data by this specific category.

Details are shown as follows of the number of children and young people on child protection registers at 31 March since 1989.

Children on child protection registers at 31 March each year since 1989: England

Numbers[1]

	All children[2]	*Boys*	*Girls*
1989	41,200	19,700	21,400
1990	43,600	21,100	22,500
1991	45,300	22,200	23,100
1992	38,600	18,800	19,700
1993	32,500	16,000	16,400
1994	34,900	17,400	17,400
1995	35,000	17,600	17,200
1996	32,400	16,200	16,000
1997	32,400	16,400	15,700
1998	31,600	16,000	15,500
1999	31,900	16,000	15,600
2000	30,300	15,400	14,600
2001	26,800	13,700	12,900
2002	25,700	13,300	12,200
2003	26,600	13,600	12,700
2004	26,300	13,500	12,500

[1] Figures for the years 1989 to 1998 have been estimated and are derived entirely from those councils responding in sufficient detail.

[2] Figures may not add due to rounding and the 'all children' figures including unborn children.

Building Schools for the Future Programme

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether assets, buildings and developments that are conventionally financed rather than by private finance initiative under the 'Building Schools for the Future' programme will be subject to the facilities management and maintenance arrangements agreed by local education partnerships. [32414]

Jacqui Smith: It is for the local authority as commissioner of services to determine the scope of services that it wishes the Local Education Partnership to be responsible for, including the provision of facilities management arrangements for conventionally procured schools.

Bullying

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures are in place to ensure that head teachers thoroughly investigate and act upon incidents of bullying; and if she will make a statement. [32076]

Jacqui Smith: We attach a high priority to helping schools prevent and combat bullying: it is a serious problem which puts the emotional well-being and educational achievement of pupils at risk. All schools should treat bullying seriously and take steps to combat it promptly and firmly whenever and wherever it occurs.

Since September 1999, head teachers of maintained schools have been under a duty to draw up measures to prevent all forms of bullying among pupils; this should include the making of rules and provision for enforcing them. Our detailed guidance "Don't Suffer in Silence" offers further advice on strategies and approaches schools can utilise in investigating and responding to incidents of bullying, alongside those that can be used preventatively. Additionally, many local authorities provide guidance on anti bullying to their schools to supplement and localise the guidance issued by the DfES nationally.

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many cases of bullying were recorded in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in Cumbria in each year since 1997; and what the average figures were for English county councils. [32119]

Jacqui Smith: As data on bullying are not collected centrally, we do not have statistics relating to incidents of bullying at primary and secondary schools in Cumbria, nor average figures for England. Schools and local authorities are increasingly carrying out local surveys of children and young people's views of bullying to inform the development of their anti bullying strategies. Bullying cases do appear to be reported more often now than before but we have no hard evidence that bullying is increasing or that it is affecting more children.

However, any level of bullying is too high and we are determined to help schools tackle the problem. Our guidance "Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence", the anti-bullying charter and the anti-bullying website www.dfes.gov.uk/bullying offer detailed advice on preventing and addressing bullying. Additionally, we have undertaken a number of public awareness campaigns, including anti bullying week, to encourage and support children to 'tell someone' and seek help if they are being bullied.

Consultants/Special Advisers

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* consultants and *(b)* special advisers were employed by her Department in each year since 1997; what the cost of each was in each year; and if she will make a statement. [27422]

Maria Eagle: The number of consultants engaged by my Department is not collected centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Within the Department for Education and Skills the cost of consultancy charged to administration budgets in each year since 1997 was:

	£ million
1997–98	4.0
1998–99	5.0
1999–2000	3.7
2000–01	4.3
2001–02	5.0
2002–03	4.5
2003–04	4.7
2004–05	3.9

The total cost of consultancy charged to programme budgets from November 2004 to March 2005 (five months) was £4.4 million. The cost charged to programme budgets before November 2004 was not recorded centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Consultancy in this context is defined as investigating problems, providing analysis or advice, or assisting with the development of new systems, new structures or new capabilities within the organisation.

For special advisers, I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by the Minister for the Cabinet Office on 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1257W.

Contact Orders

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research her Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated (i) on how many (A) mothers and (B) fathers do not comply with contact orders after separation and (ii) what the reasons are for non-compliance. [28424]

Bridget Prentice: I have been asked to reply.

This information is not collected in the form requested. The Government have commissioned substantial research into residence and contact disputes in court. This research indicates that almost a quarter of cases lasted over a year or arose following previous proceedings, indicating that families could be experiencing difficulties with the contact arrangements in the original order. Court file analysis has shown that almost a quarter of cases have two or more repeat applications and about a third of these are the result of enforcement issues, while over a half are instead driven by the need to have a previous order updated. The Government intend to commission further research into how the courts deal with contact disputes and the court orders made.

Damages

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the 10 largest amounts of damages paid out by her Department in the last year for which figures are available, indicating in each case the nature of the claim. [27723]

Maria Eagle: No damages have been paid out by the Department for Education and Skills in the last year.

Domestic Violence

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action she *(a)* has taken and *(b)* plans to take to ensure that statutory agencies provide appropriate protection for children who have experienced domestic violence. [30721]

Maria Eagle: The Government recognise the strong links between child protection concerns and domestic violence. We have published guidance, for all statutory agencies and other organisations and individuals with a relevant interest, in our inter-agency guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children' (1999).

'Working Together' helps to support the integration of effective local practice and stresses that everyone working with women and children should be alert to the frequent inter-relationship between domestic violence and the abuse and neglect of children. Working Together is being revised and updated and this includes further reinforcing the messages on the links of domestic violence and child protection.

The 'Every Child Matters: Change for Children' programme will improve the welfare of all children by putting in place arrangements for earlier and more effective assessment and intervention for vulnerable children, including those affected by domestic violence.

Education (Tamworth)

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* classroom assistants and *(b)* full-time equivalent classroom assistant posts there were in schools in the Tamworth constituency in each year since 1997. [27488]

Jacqui Smith: The following table provides the full-time equivalent number of teaching assistants in maintained sector schools, including pupil referral units, in the Tamworth Constituency in January of each year.

The number of full-time equivalent teaching assistant posts in Tamworth is not collected centrally.

Full-time equivalent number of teaching assistants[1] in maintained sector schools[2] including pupil referral units, in the Tamworth constituency[3]

	Teaching assistant FTE
1997	110
1998	120
1999	140
2000	140
2001	170
2002	150
2003	210
2004	230
2005	230

[1] Includes teaching assistants, special needs support staff and ethnic minority support staff.

[2] Includes maintained and non-maintained special schools.

[3] Data for 2001 may be affected by misclassification of support staff roles following major changes to information systems.

Note:

Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

Annual School Census.

Education Research

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research her Department has undertaken to compare the economic benefits of investing in 14 to 19 education with investment in adult education; and if she will make a statement. [27949]

Bill Rammell: The Department has commissioned a wide range of independent academic research into the economic benefits of education and skills and it is an important part of the Department-funded Centre for the Economics of Education (CEE) work programme. Investments in 14 to 19 and adult education may encompass a variety of different types of provision and therefore, any direct comparison of investments in each would have to include all of these different types of learning and the qualifications which they result in. Moreover, investments made in 14 to 19 and adult education are typically complementary rather than competing.

The economic returns for young people attaining qualifications at school are high with average returns to five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C estimated at 28 per cent. for males and 24 per cent. for females while two or more A levels earn an average return of 15 per cent. for both sexes (McIntosh, 2004).

While attainment rates at 14 to 19 are improving, there is still a stock of older adults in the labour force with low level or no qualifications that would benefit from access to learning in order to attain qualifications.

Returns to adult training are more varied with some low-level NVQs generating low or no returns for some individuals. However, the returns to low-level NVQs are higher in certain sectors, when gained in the workplace and for particular groups. For example, adults who undertake their NVQ level 2 through workplace training gain a 6 to 7 per cent. return compared to an individual with no qualifications. (Dearden at el, 2004). In light of this evidence the Government have introduced Employer Training Pilots, which subsidise employers to train low skilled employees to obtain a basic skills or first level 2 qualification. At the end of October 2005, the pilots had signed up 25,938 employers and 213,422 employees and 107,059 learners had successfully completed their learning. Evaluation has shown very high rates of employer and employee satisfaction and a range of benefits are reported by both. On 2 December 2004, the Chancellor announced in his Pre-Budget Report that there will be a National Employer Training Programme, to be rolled-out from April 2006. The programme will be applying the lessons learned from the successful Employer Training Pilots and give employers the opportunity to access publicly funded support to training their low skilled workers.

There is a current emphasis on improving qualification design to ensure consistently high returns for all qualifications by enhancing the role of employers in shaping provision through Sector Skills Agreements, Centres of Vocational Excellence and National Skills Academies.

Improving the qualification level of the adult labour force also benefits the economy in terms of improving our relative productivity performance at an international level. O'Mahony and de Boer (2002) estimate that up to 20 per cent. of our productivity gap with France and Germany can be explained by the UK's relatively low skills levels. There are also wider benefits from learning in terms of improved health, reduced crime and increased social cohesion. The Department funds the Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning which has produced some estimates of these benefits.

Faith Schools

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many non-religious state *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools gained faith school status in each year since 1997. [31931]

Jacqui Smith: Non-religious schools cannot gain faith school status. It is possible for a non-religious school to close and for a new faith school to be established on the same site. This would require the following process. There must be local consultation followed by the publication of linked statutory proposals to close the school and open a new faith school. There would then follow a six-week period during which objections/ expressions of support may be registered. The school organisation committee would then consider the proposals taking into account a number of factors including the views of local parents and the community. If the committee could not reach unanimous agreement, the proposals would pass to the schools adjudicator to make a decision. Approved proposals must be implemented. Before 1999 these decisions were made by the Secretary of State.

The number of non-religious state primary and secondary schools that have closed and been replaced by faith schools in each year since 1997 is given in the following table:

	Primary	*Secondary*	*Total*
1997	0	0	0
1998	0	1	1
1999	1	1	2
2000	0	0	0
2001	2	1	3
2002	1	5	6
2003	6	3	9
2004	3	3	6
2005	5	2	7
Total	18	16	34

Free School Meals

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of children receiving free school meals achieved five A*-C grades in *(a)* grammar schools, *(b)* non-selective schools, *(c)* academies, *(d)* city technology colleges, *(e)* foundation schools and *(f)* faith schools in (i) 2002, (ii) 2003, (iii) 2004 and (iv) 2005 where the proportion of children entitled to free school meals was (A) five per cent. and less, (B) greater than five but equal to and less than nine per cent., (C) greater than nine and equal to or less than 13 per cent., (D) greater than 13 per cent. and less than or equal to 21 per cent., (E) greater than 21 per cent. and less than or equal to 35 per cent., (F) greater than 35 per cent. and equal to or less than 50 per cent. and (G) more than 50 per cent. of the school's pupil numbers. [24282]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is given for 2002, 2003 and 2004 in the following tables. Figures for 2005 are not yet available.

Percentage of free school meal (FSM) pupils[1] achieving 5+ A-C at GCSE and equivalent[2] in 2002 by school type and percentage of pupils eligible for FSM*

		Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) in school						
		Number of schools						
Type of school	*Total number of schools[3]*	*0>—5.0 FSM*	*5.1—9.0 FSM*	*9.1—13.0 FSM*	*13.1—21.0 FSM*	*21.1—35.0 FSM*	*35.1—50.0 FSM*	*50.1 or more FSM*
Grammar[4]	123	112	9	1	1	0	0	0
Non-selective[5]	2,922	367	615	485	576	487	286	106
Academies[6]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
City Technology Colleges[6]	13	0	4	2	4	3	0	0
Foundation[6]	472	140	111	79	83	43	13	3
Faith[7]	501	92	111	92	87	69	37	13

		Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) in school						
		Percentage of FSM pupils[1] attaining 5+ A-C grades*						
Type of school	*Total number of schools[3]*	*0>—5.0 FSM*	*5.1—9.0 FSM*	*9.1—13.0 FSM*	*13.1—21.0 FSM*	*21.1—35.0 FSM*	*35.1—50.0 FSM*	*50.1 or more FSM*
Grammar[4]	123	94.0	95.8	83.3	100.0	—	—	—
Non-selective[5]	2,922	38.1	30.6	27.3	24.0	21.8	22.8	27.4
Academies[6]	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
City Technology Colleges[6]	13	—	70.8	84.0	83.9	65.6	—	—
Foundation[6]	472	55.0	34.4	29.0	24.7	27.4	26.6	41.9
Faith[7]	501	52.2	37.2	31.1	32.1	29.3	27.3	28.0

[1] Pupils aged 15 at the beginning of the academic year (i.e. 31 August 2001) that are known to be eligible for free school meals (FSM) from the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC).
[2] These figures include GCSEs and GNVQs only.
[3] These figures only include schools with at least one 15-year-old pupil eligible for free school meals (FSM).
[4] Grammar schools are community, voluntary aided, voluntary controlled and foundation schools with a selective admissions policy.

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[5] Non-selective schools are all maintained mainstream schools without a selective admissions policy.
[6] Figures for academies, city technology colleges and foundation schools are also included in the figures for Grammar and non-selective schools.
[7] Faith schools are all maintained mainstream schools with a listed religious character in the Annual School Census in 2002. Faith schools are also included in the figures for Grammar and non-selective schools.

Percentage of free school meal (FSM) pupils[1] achieving 5+ A-C at GCSE and equivalent[2] in 2003 by school type and percentage of pupils eligible for FSM*

		Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) in school						
		Number of schools						
Type of school	*Total number of schools[3]*	*0>—5.0 FSM*	*5.1—9.0 FSM*	*9.1—13.0 FSM*	*13.1—21.0 FSM*	*21.1—35.0 FSM*	*35.1—50.0 FSM*	*50.1 or more FSM*
Grammar[4]	136	124	10	1	1	0	0	0
Non-selective[5]	2,912	398	647	467	555	495	244	106
Academies[6]	3	0	0	0	0	0	3	0
City Technology Colleges[6]	15	0	4	3	4	4	0	0
Foundation[6]	475	153	112	75	79	40	13	3
Faith[7]	509	103	118	87	84	71	33	13

		Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) in school						
		Percentage of FSM pupils[1] attaining 5+ A-C grades*						
Type of school	*Total number of schools[3]*	*0>—5.0 FSM*	*5.1—9.0 FSM*	*9.1—13.0 FSM*	*13.1—21.0 FSM*	*21.1—35.0 FSM*	*35.1—50.0 FSM*	*50.1 or more FSM*
Grammar[4]	136	91.3	90.2	62.5	95.7	—	—	—
Non-selective[5]	2,912	36.2	30.1	26.6	23.3	22.3	23.9	29.6
Academies[6]	3	—	—	—	—	—	14.1	—
City Technology Colleges[6]	15	—	65.1	79.4	88.4	63.7	—	—
Foundation[6]	475	46.5	32.1	25.6	23.8	27.1	24.4	41.2
Faith[7]	509	49.2	37.4	33.1	29.8	27.8	34.1	33.2

[1] Pupils aged 15 at the beginning of the academic year (i.e. 31 August 2001) that are known to be eligible for free school meals (FSM) from the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC).
[2] These figures include GCSEs and GNVQs only.
[3] These figures only include schools with at least one 15-year-old pupil eligible for free school meals (FSM).
[4] Grammar schools are community, voluntary aided, voluntary controlled and foundation schools with a selective admissions policy.
[5] Non-selective schools are all maintained mainstream schools without a selective admissions policy.
[6] Figures for academies, city technology colleges and foundation schools are also included in the figures for Grammar and non-selective schools.
[7] Faith schools are all maintained mainstream schools with a listed religious character in the Annual School Census in 2002. Faith schools are also included in the figures for Grammar and non-selective schools.

Percentage of free school meal (FSM) pupils[1] achieving 5+ A-C at GCSE and equivalent[2] in 2004 by school type and percentage of pupils eligible for FSM*

		Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) in school						
		Number of schools						
Type of school	*Total number of schools[3]*	*0>—5.0 FSM*	*5.1—9.0 FSM*	*9.1—13.0 FSM*	*13.1—21.0 FSM*	*21.1—35.0 FSM*	*35.1—50.0 FSM*	*50.1 or more FSM*
Grammar[4]	132	118	12	2	0	0	0	0
Non-selective[5]	2,931	397	651	477	563	480	256	107
Academies[6]	11	0	0	0	0	2	7	2
City Technology Colleges[6]	14	0	4	3	4	3	0	0
Foundation[6]	484	154	113	72	89	41	12	3
Faith[7]	510	101	126	85	85	63	40	10

		Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) in school						
		Percentage of FSM pupils[1] attaining 5+ A-C grades*						
Type of school	*Total number of schools[3]*	*0>—5.0 FSM*	*5.1—9.0 FSM*	*9.1—13.0 FSM*	*13.1—21.0 FSM*	*21.1—35.0 FSM*	*35.1—50.0 FSM*	*50.1 or more FSM*
Grammar[4]	132	91.2	86.4	91.7	—	—	—	—
Non-selective[5]	2,931	39.2	30.4	26.5	25.0	23.8	25.9	32.6
Academies[6]	11	—	—	—	—	44.4	20.6	7.5
City Technology Colleges[6]	14	—	70.7	70.5	88.9	72.2	—	—
Foundation[6]	484	51.9	32.1	26.8	25.5	29.4	25.2	43.7
Faith[7]	510	53.6	38.0	33.2	32.8	30.6	36.0	27.6

[1] Pupils aged 15 at the beginning of the academic year (i.e. 31 August 2001) that are known to be eligible for free school meals (FSM) from the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC).
[2] These figures include GCSEs and GNVQs only.
[3] These figures only include schools with at least one 15-year-old pupil eligible for free school meals (FSM).
[4] Grammar schools are community, voluntary aided, voluntary controlled and foundation schools with a selective admissions policy.

[5] Non-selective schools are all maintained mainstream schools without a selective admissions policy.
[6] Figures for academies, city technology colleges and foundation schools are also included in the figures for Grammar and non-selective schools.
[7] Faith schools are all maintained mainstream schools with a listed religious character in the Annual School Census in 2002. Faith schools are also included in the figures for Grammar and non-selective schools.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of children are eligible for free school meals in *(a)* primary non-faith schools, *(b)* secondary non-faith schools and *(c)* faith schools, broken down by (i) Church of England, (ii) Catholic, (iii) Jewish, (iv) Muslim, (v) Sikh, (vi) Hindu and (vii) other category of faith school. [31506]

Jacqui Smith: The available information is given in the table. In January 2005 there were no maintained Hindu schools.

Maintained primary and secondary schools[1]: number and percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals by religious character of school as at January 2005—England

	Primary			Secondary		
	Number on roll[2]	*Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals[2]*	*Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals[3]*	*Number on roll[2]*	*Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals[2]*	*Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals[3]*
Total	4,205,670	713,680	17.0	3,317,590	465,520	14.0
Number religious character	3,000,460	565,650	18.9	2,793,930	401,560	14.4
Church of England	775,680	85,020	11.0	168,960	18,230	10.8
Roman Catholic	405,430	60,610	15.0	320,390	43,430	13.6
Methodist	4,540	650	14.4	[4]—	[4]—	[4]—
Other Christian faith[5]	9,620	1,210	12.6	27,320	1,610	5.9
Jewish	8,690	250	2.9	5,490	300	5.5
Muslim	800	250	31.5	790	280	35.3
Sikh	210	20	8.0	430	40	10.3
Other	230	20	8.4	290	70	23.3

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Includes dually registered pupils.
[3] The number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals expressed as a percentage of the school population.
[4] Not applicable, no schools of this type.
[5] Includes schools of mixed denomination or other Christian beliefs.
Note:
Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10. There may be discrepancies between the sum of constituent items and totals as shown.
Source:
Annual Schools Census

Further Education

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will reform career development loans to make them more accessible to further education students; and if she will make a statement. [31821]

Bill Rammell: Career development loans (CDLs) already provide support to students in further education (FE). We are aiming to test changes to CDLs to ensure that they are better able to support the aims of the 2003 Skills Strategy "21st Century Skills: Realising Our Potential", and in particular to make them more accessible to FE learners. We will be testing these new arrangements in 2006/07 and 2007/08 and evaluation of the outcomes will contribute to reform of the programme for the future.

Graduate Teachers Programme

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether she plans to reform the Graduate Teachers Programme; and if she will make a statement. [31877]

Jacqui Smith: No. The Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP) scheme has been a highly successful initial teacher training programme that continues to attract and recruit large numbers of new high quality trainees, many of whom train in secondary priority subjects and who are employed in schools in areas that find the recruitment of new teachers more difficult. During 2004/05 more than 5,400 new trainees were recruited on to the GTP scheme.

Learning and Skills Council

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the actual expenditure was of the Learning and Skills Council in each year since its inception, broken down into *(a)* the categories in the grant letter of the relevant year and *(b)* the categories set out in the grant letter of November 2005. [30813]

Bill Rammell: The following tables set out the information requested.

(a) Expenditure from 2001–02 to 2004–05 by the categories in the relevant grant letter[1]

Budget line	*Expenditure (£ million)*
Financial year 2001–02	
Young People	2,411.5
Adults	2,243.7
Infrastructure (includes Capital)	463.4
Administration	249.1
Total	5,367.7

(a) Expenditure from 2001–02 to 2004–05 by the categories in the relevant grant letter[1]

Budget line	*Expenditure (£ million)*
Financial year 2002–03	
Young People	4,057.3
Adults	2,427.2
Standards, Initiatives and Capital	737.5
Administration	236.7
Total	7,458.7
Financial year 2003–04	
Learning Participation	6,272.1
School Sixth Forms	1,525.40
Local Intervention and Development	231.3
Capital	283.0
Administration	238.1
Total	8,549.9
*Financial year 2004–05**	
Learning Participation	6,548.7
School Sixth Forms	1,654.8
Local Intervention and Development	125.9
Capital	372.3
Administration	232.9
AME	20.8
Total	8,955.4

(b) Expenditure from 2001–02 to 2004–05 by the categories in the 2006–07 grant letter[1]

£ million

Budget line £000s/financial year	*Actual spend 2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
A. Participation	4,459.1	6,128.7	7,177.1	7,578.5
School Sixth Forms	0.0	1,399.1	1,525.5	1,654.8
16–19 FE	1,831.7	1,881.6	2,227.9	2,355.6
Workbased Learning	684.6	816.8	1,065.5	1,104.7
19 plus FE (includes LEA non-PCDL activity)	1,789.3	1,830.6	2,090.1	2,137.6
National Employer Training Programme/ETP	0.0	7.1	32.7	89.0
Personal and Community Development Learning (PCDL)	153.5	193.5	235.6	236.8
Learners with Learning Disabilities and/or Difficulties	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Ufl/learndirect	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
B. Learner Support and Development	512.7	860.3	851.7	750.8
Learner Support Funds	82.4	132.1	161.8	151.5
14–19, Skills and Quality Reform Capacity and Infrastructure	430.3	728.2	689.9	599.4
C. LSC Capital	146.8	233.0	283.0	372.3
D. LSC Administration	249.1	236.7	238.1	232.9
Total DEL expenditure	5,367.7	7,458.7	8,549.9	8,934.6
AME expenditure	0.0	0.0	0.0	20.8
Grand total	5,367.7	7,458.7	8,549.9	8,955.4

[1] The categories used in the various grant letters have changed from year to year, mainly because the line for Young People and Adults were merged into Learner Participation and new lines for Capital, School Sixth forms and Local Intervention and Development were introduced.

Source:

The LSC expenditure totals up to 2003–04 are consistent with LSC published Annual Accounts. For 2004–05 the expenditure is as signed off by the NAO and contained on the Annual Report and Accounts which are due to be laid before Parliament on 28 November and issued more widely a few days later.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of the money saved by changes to the structure of the Learning and Skills Council will *(a)* remain in the further education budget and *(b)* be allocated to further education colleges; and if she will make a statement. [31819]

Bill Rammell: The LSC has announced its funding plans for the academic years 2006/07 and 2007/08 through its document "Priorities for Success". The plans include a significant transfer of funds out of centrally-held budgets in both the DfES and LSC for consolidation into core sector funding and they reflect an assessment of efficiency savings. They will deliver an estimated 3 per cent. cash increase on allocations to colleges, schools and providers in each of 2006/07 and 2007/08. There will be variations around this average and the LSC will be working with individual colleges, schools and providers over the coming months on the implications for their own budgets.

The LSC is embarking upon a major transformation programme that will make it a smaller, more dynamic and more customer-focused organisation. It is currently in the process of consulting on the programme and will be developing its detailed plans once the consultation period has concluded.

Literacy

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on progress with the review of the National Literacy Strategy. [32046]

Jacqui Smith: The National Literacy Strategy—now part of the Primary National Strategy—was introduced in 1998. Parts of the Primary National Strategy will be affected by the Rose review of best practice in the early teaching of reading and the renewal of the non-statutory frameworks for teaching literacy and maths. The Rose review will report in early 2006. The new frameworks will be available for schools in September 2006. The framework for teaching literacy will reflect the conclusions of the Rose review.

Looked-after Children (Safeguards)

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the evidential basis was for the statement in her Department's guidelines Safeguarding Children in Whom Illness is Induced or Fabricated by Carers with Parenting Responsibilities, on the likelihood of it being the correct explanation for a child's symptoms is the involvement of carers and that the case should be referred to social services. [30688]

Maria Eagle: The Government's guidance, "Safeguarding Children in Whom Illness is Fabricated or Induced" (2002), focuses on children when there is a concern that the child is or is likely to suffer harm as a result of their carer inducing or fabricating illness. The key issue is the impact of fabricated or induced illness on the child's health and development, and consideration of how best to safeguard the child's welfare. The guidance emphasises the importance of carefully evaluating the child's signs and symptoms of illness in order to understand the reasons for them and that profe sionals should be open to all possible explanations. The question refers to the consultation version of this guidance, the final version of which has an amended title and content. The sentence in question sets out the process that should be followed when there is a concern that illness in a child might be being induced or fabricated. It relates to the previous section on the medical evaluation of a child's signs and symptoms.

Marshall Aid/Scholarships

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the operation of *(a)* the Marshall Aid Commemoration Act 1953 and *(b)* the Marshall Scholarships Act 1959. [29842]

Ian Pearson: I have been asked to reply.

The Marshall Aid Commemoration Act 1953 and the Marshall Scholarships Act 1959 form the basis of the operation of the Marshall Scholarships Scheme. The scheme is functioning well and in full compliance with both Acts.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much her Department spent on Marshall scholarships in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [29843]

Ian Pearson: I have been asked to reply.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has allocated the following funding, as Grant in Aid, to the Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission, in order to provide and manage the Marshall Scholarships scheme:

£

	Total
2005–06	2,178,000
2004–05	2,083,784
2003–04	1,962,000
2002–03	1,960,915
2001–02	1,833,743
2000–01	1,694,610
1999–2000	1,661,097
1998–99	1,518,000
1997–98	1,486,000
1996–96	1,401,000

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females were refused scholarships under the Marshall Aid Commemoration Act 1953 in 2004–05; and what the reason for the refusal was in each case. [29845]

Ian Pearson: I have been asked to reply.

Of the 828 unsuccessful candidates for the 2004–05 competition, 396 were men and 432 were women.

A total of 871 applications for scholarships were received and 43 scholarships were awarded, of which 23 were awarded to men and 20 were awarded to women.

We cannot offer the reason for refusal in each case because to do so would require us to provide personal details of applicants and would incur disproportionate costs.

Milwaukee Charter Schools Programme

Dr. Whitehead: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions her Department has held with representatives of the education sector in the state of Minnesota, US. [31015]

Bill Rammell: In March 2005, a delegation of teachers, principals and Minnesota State Education Officials visited the UK to meet local education authorities and schools in Southwark and Milton Keynes. In addition, the group held discussions with representatives from the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, the Office for Standards in Education, the National Association of Educational Inspectors, Advisers and Consultants and the Department for Education and Skills. The aim of the visit was to discuss best practice in policy relating to course content, teaching methods and other instructional strategies in schools with diverse student populations.

Shortly afterwards, a group of teachers from Milton Keynes visited Minnesota to learn about good practice in the provision of English as an Additional Language (EAL) programming in the US. The visit was part of the Teachers' International Professional Development Programme (TIPD), funded by DfES and managed by the British Council.

MORI Poll

Kelvin Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will publish the results of the MORI poll entitled Attitudes to Fees in Further Education, conducted during September and referred to in her Department's Press Notice 2005/0123. [23622]

Bill Rammell: In line with my Department's standard practice on research findings these results were published on the Department's website on 11 November 2005.

New Schools

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* community, *(b)* voluntary aided, *(c)* voluntary controlled, *(d)* academy and *(e)* foundation schools have been opened in each of the last eight years, broken down by local education authority; and how many places there were in each school. [29261]

Jacqui Smith: Some 1,016 maintained primary and secondary schools have opened since January 1997, as follows:

	County[1]	*Grant maintained*	*Community*	*Voluntary aided*	*Voluntary controlled*	*Foundation*	*Academy*
1997	54	14	0	10	7	0	0
1998	64	0	0	9	4	0	0
1999	94	1	0	11	3	0	0
2000	46	0	42	13	6	0	0
2001	17	0	98	24	10	1	0
2002	3	0	81	17	7	2	2
2003	0	0	83	15	11	1	9
2004	0	0	94	23	5	1	6
2005	0	0	82	21	12	3	10
Total	278	15	480	143	65	8	27

[1] Opened prior to September 1999 (i.e. before the current Schools Framework was introduced.

The figures include schools that have opened as a result of an amalgamation or local reorganisation of schools and also those where the school has opened in place of a closing school e.g. to gain a religious character or a fresh start school.

A further table detailing the new schools by year, school category, local authority and number of places has been placed in the Library.

Ofsted Ratings

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of *(a)* faith schools and *(b)* non-faith schools have been awarded a (i) grade 3, (ii) grade 4 and (iii) grade 5 rating by Ofsted inspectors. [31607]

Jacqui Smith: This is a matter for Ofsted. HM Chief Inspector, David Bell, has written to my hon. Friend and a copy of his letter has been placed in the Library.

Letter from David Bell to Dr. Ashok Kumar, dated 24 November 2005:

Your recent parliamentary question has been passed to me, as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector, for reply.

Dr Ashok Kumar (Middlesbrough South & East Cleveland): To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, what percentage of *(a)* faith schools and *(b)* non-faith schools have been awarded a (i) grade 3, (ii) grade 4 and (iii) grade 5 rating by Ofsted inspectors.

The tables attached show the percentage of schools by different levels of effectiveness, by faith and non-faith school, inspected during the academic year 2004/05. In addition to the specific grades you asked for, I have included 'grade 6', no schools fell into the 'grade 7' category.

A copy of this reply has been sent to Jacqui Smith and will be placed in the Library of both houses.

Overall effectiveness of primary schools: 2004/05

Percentage

	Faith schools	*Non-faith schools*
Effective (grade 3)	48	50
Fairly effective (grade 4)	26	28
Ineffective (grade 5)	4	4
Very ineffective (grade 6)	[1]—	1

[1] Indicates less than 0.5 per cent. but greater than 0.

Overall effectiveness of secondary schools: 2004/05

Percentage

	Faith schools	*Non-faith schools*
Effective (grade 3)	40	45
Fairly effective (grade 4)	27	23
Ineffective (grade 5)	4	5
Very ineffective (grade 6)	1	2

Note:
No primary or secondary schools were graded 7 2004/05.

Pay Restructuring

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she expects to introduce pay restructuring into schools; and if she will make a statement. [31874]

Jacqui Smith: Reforms to teachers' pay, which include the replacement of management allowances with teaching and learning responsibility payments and the introduction of a new excellent teacher grade, will come into effect from 2006. Schools have a three year period from the beginning of 2006 in which to implement these changes. It is for individual schools to apply these reforms in accordance with their three-year implementation plan, at a pace which best suits their needs, following a review of their staffing structures.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of staff morale following the announcement of the proposal to restructure pay in schools; and if she will make a statement. [31875]

Jacqui Smith: The reviews of staffing structures currently under way build on work force remodelling and enable the introduction of pay reforms. These have been developed with the co-operation and agreement of representatives of teachers and support staff who work in social partnership with the Department, and in line with recommendations from the independent School Teachers' Review Body. The reviews are a vital development providing a focus on raising the standards of teaching and learning in schools and rewarding teachers appropriately and fairly. With our partners we will continue to monitor the implementation of these changes.

Physical Education

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what definition she uses of high quality physical education and school sport in respect of the 2004 Public Service Agreement target number 9. [29179]

Jacqui Smith: The document, "High Quality PE and Sport for Young People" (DfES/DCMS, March 2004), provides a detailed description of the outcomes of high quality physical education and school sport. For the purposes of the joint DfES/DCMS PE and school sport public service agreement target, high quality PE and school sport produces young people with the skills, understanding, desire and commitment to continue to improve and achieve in a range of PE, sport and health-enhancing physical activities, in line with their abilities.

A further document, "Do You Have High Quality PE and Sport in Your School?" (DfES/DCMS, January 2005), helps teachers to use the pupil outcomes of high quality to carry out self evaluation of the quality of PE and sport they provide. Copies of these documents have been placed in the house Libraries.

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what recent assessment she has made of the attainability of 2004 public service agreement target number 10; [29197]

(2) what assessment she has made of the attainability of the 2004 public service agreement target number 7. [29180]

Jacqui Smith: Progress against the Department's outstanding public service agreements (PSAs) was most recently reported in the 2005 departmental report, published in June 2005, together with the Department's assessment towards achievement of the targets. A copy of the departmental report is available from the House of Commons Library. Further progress will be reported in the 2005 autumn performance report due to be published later this year.

Provisional results for 2005 GCSE and equivalent examinations were published in a statistical first release (SFR) on 20 October 2005. The data show 55.7 per cent. of pupils achieved five or more GCSE or equivalent at grades A*-C. This represents an increase of two percentage points compared with 2004 and an increase of 10.6 percentage points compared with 1997.

Provisional results for 2005 key stage 3 tests were published in an SFR on 8 September 2005. The data show 74 per cent. of pupils achieved level 5 and above in English; 74 per cent. in mathematics; 70 per cent. in science; and 69 per cent. in ICT. The corresponding figures for 2004 are: 71 per cent.; 73 per cent.; 66 per cent. and 67 per cent. respectively. In 1997, 57 per cent. of pupils achieved level 5 and above in English; 60 per cent. in mathematics; 60 per cent. in science; and 50 per cent. in ICT.

The numbers of schools below key stage 3 and GCSE and equivalent floor targets will be published in early 2006.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the timescales are for the achievement of all aspects of 2004 Public Service Agreement target number 14. [29199]

Bill Rammell: The precise wording of the 2004 Public Service Agreement target number 14 is:

> "By 2010, increase participation in higher education towards 50% of those aged 18 to 30; and also make significant progress year on year towards fair access; and bear down on non-completion rates".

Only the first part of the target, on increasing participation, has a specific timescale. We measure the other aspirations year-on-year.

Reasoning

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the progress of the uniTEST trial; and whether the national launch is planned for 2007. [31932]

Bill Rammell: The UniTEST is a new test of aptitude for higher education, being developed jointly by Cambridge Assessment and the Australian Council for Educational Research. On the basis of information provided by Cambridge Assessment, I understand that the first small-scale trial of the test took place on 22 September 2005 and that their current plans are to carry out a validity study early in May 2006 with a view to offering the test from 2007 to higher education institutions who wish to participate.

Richmond-upon-Thames Group Schools Project

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the *(a)* capital value and *(b)* total value is of the private finance initiative project for the Richmond-upon-Thames group schools project; and what percentage of the contract is attributable to capital value. [27112]

Jacqui Smith: The Richmond-upon-Thames group schools PFI project involved six primary schools, two of which were new build and four of which were re-modelled and expanded. The schools became operational in September 2004. According to information supplied by the local authority, whose contract this is, the capital value of the project was £23.8 million. The term 'total value' is usually taken to mean the total amount of

payments to be made during the term of the contract; this is a commercial matter between the local authority and its private sector partner and we do not hold this information. The project was supported by central Government with the allocation of £16.77 million in PFI credits.

School Admissions

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations she has received from schools on the consultation period for the proposed change in admissions procedures; and if she will make a statement. [31873]

Jacqui Smith: The consultation period for the revised codes of practice for school admissions and school admission appeals complied with Cabinet Office guidelines. From 130 responses received from schools, only 17 expressed some concern that the consultation covered the summer break, although more than half of the overall period did not.

School Councils

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of schools allow pupil participation in the running of the school through school councils. [25659]

Jacqui Smith: The Department for Education and Skills does not collect this data. The Government's commitment to the role of school councils is reflected in the recently published White Paper, "Higher Standards, Better Schools For All". The Government are working closely with School Councils UK, to produce guidance for primary schools. The guidance for secondary schools will also be updated to give stronger encouragement for school councils to be engaged in decision-making. We have asked School Councils UK to establish a network for schools and their councils to talk to each other and share good practice. School councils have a vital role to play, alongside better parental engagement, in promoting schools as strong community institutions.

School Finance

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the number of *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in Tamworth which will have a budget surplus in the 2005–06 financial year. [32011]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not yet available. The Department is due to collect the section 52 outturn data relating to the 2005–06 financial year from October 2006.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the extent is of the funding gap between schools and colleges; and what plans the Government have to close this gap. [32359]

Bill Rammell: The Secretary of State announced on 16 November 2005 our plans for narrowing the funding gap between school sixth forms and further education (FE) colleges for like-for-like 16–19 provision. We recognise that the funding gap will not be easy to close but we have taken some important steps in the funding package we announced on 21 October 2005. We have confirmed that for young people in FE in 2006/07 we will match the schools' minimum funding guarantee, which will be announced later this year. We estimate that this, together with other measures to correct technical anomalies, will reduce the gap from 13 per cent. to 8 per cent. by 2006/07. From 2008 we will look to bring consistency to the treatment of student retention and achievement across school sixth forms and colleges which we expect to narrow the gap by a further 3 per cent. Beyond that we will work to establish a common funding approach across the two sectors as part of the Learning and Skills Council's agenda for change.

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the financial surplus or deficit for each *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school in each education authority in England was in each year since 1997. [32657]

Jacqui Smith: The information can be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

School Pupils

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school age children there were in each local education authority in (i) 1990, (ii) 1997, (iii) 2000 and (iv) 2005; what the forecasted figures are for each authority in each year from 2006 to 2016; and if she will list the assumptions behind those forecasts. [30803]

Jacqui Smith: Information on the number of pupils in primary and secondary schools for 1990, 1997, 2000 and 2005 has been placed in the Library.

Local authorities provide the Department with forecasts of pupil numbers as part of the annual surplus school places survey. The forecasts cover four years for primary pupils and seven years for secondary pupils. For the purposes of this exercise all schools, including middle deemed schools are categorised as either primary or secondary schools.

The forecast figures for each authority from 2006/07 to 2007/08 (primary schools) and 2006/07 to 2010/11 (secondary schools) have been placed in the Library. We do not collect authorities' assumptions behind these forecasts.

School Transport

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of school transport costs associated with the proposals contained in the Education White Paper. [31815]

Jacqui Smith: The White Paper proposes legislation to improve home to school travel and transport arrangements in three main respects:

By placing a general duty on local authorities to support choice and flexibility of educational provision, to assess the travel and transport needs of all pupils, and promote safe and sustainable travel to school;

By extending entitlement to free home to school transport for low income families (for secondary aged pupils to any one of the three nearest suitable schools, where the distance travelled is between two and six miles; and for primary aged pupils aged over eight, to their nearest school where this is more than two miles from their home);

By enabling a small number of local authorities to propose Pathfinder schemes to test innovative approaches to home to school transport to support school choice, reduce the distances pupils are expected to walk to school, and increase the proportion of pupils travelling by sustainable means.

The estimated cost of the new general duty is £4 million per annum; the extension of entitlement for low income families is estimated to be £40 million per annum; and the Department will support Pathfinder schemes with £4 million pump priming and annual revenue support building up over several years to £12 million. Full costings and related assumptions will be included in the Regulatory Impact Assessment that will accompany the Bill.

School Trips

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people under the age of 18 years have been killed in accidents during school trips in each of the last five years; and how many of these were killed while undertaking adventurous activities. [32115]

Jacqui Smith: The numbers of pupils under 18 years from schools in England dying from accidental injuries on educational visits in the last five years are as follows:

	Number
2005	1
2004	2
2003	2
2002	2
2001	7

One fatality occurred during a climbing, caving, trekking or water activity safety-inspected by the Government. One further fatality occurred during an activity overseas which the Government would have inspected in the UK.

Schoolchildren (Financial Assistance)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if she will take steps to provide assistance to children who are eligible for free school meals with the costs of *(a)* school uniforms and *(b)* school sports wear; [31331]

(2) if she will issue guidance to schools on limiting the cost of school uniforms. [31355]

Jacqui Smith: Local authorities have discretionary powers to provide school clothing and/or school clothing grants. They set their own eligibility criteria. Individual local authorities decide whether to provide grants, as they are best placed to determine the level of need in their area.

Current DfES guidance on school uniform advises governing bodies to give high priority to cost considerations when they set their school uniform policy. It advises that they should keep costs to a minimum by, for example, ensuring that uniform includes generic products that can be purchased in supermarkets and high street stores. It also states that no school uniform should be so expensive as to leave pupils or their families feeling socially excluded.

Schools (Hemel Hempstead)

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* teachers and *(b)* full-time equivalent teaching posts there were in schools in Hemel Hempstead constituency in each year since 1997. [25563]

Jacqui Smith: The table provides the full-time equivalent number of teachers in service in maintained sector schools, including pupil referral units, in Hemel Hempstead constituency in each January since 1997.

The number of full-time equivalent teaching posts in Hemel Hempstead is not collected centrally.

Full-time equivalent number of teachers in maintained sector schools[1], including pupil referral units, in Hemel Hempstead constituency

	Teachers FTE
1997	830
1998	850
1999	860
2000	850
2001	880
2002	890
2003	910
2004	900
2005	930

[1] Includes maintained and non-maintained special schools.

Note:
Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:
Annual School Census.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what property her Department owns in Hemel Hempstead constituency. [25564]

Maria Eagle: The Department does not own any property in Hemel Hempstead.

Schools Inspection Framework

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she expects to introduce the new inspection framework; what representations have been made to her by schools on this framework; and if she will make a statement. [31876]

Jacqui Smith: The new school inspection framework was published in July 2005 and came into effect from September 2005. The framework, and the new inspection arrangements more generally, were subject to extensive consultation and trialling, and received widespread support from schools, parents and others.

The Childcare Bill introduced on 8 November 2005 includes provision for a reformed and simplified inspection and regulation regime for early years. Subject to parliamentary approval, this will lead to changes in the inspection framework for all settings, including schools, catering for children aged 0 to 5 from 2008. There will be full consultation on the development of these new arrangements.

Special Advisers

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the special advisers in

post in her Department, broken down by pay band; and what the total budgeted cost to her Department of special advisers is for 2005–06. [29411]

Maria Eagle: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by the Minister for the Cabinet Office on 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1257W.

Information relating to costs for 2005–06 will be published after the end of the current financial year.

Special Needs Schools

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many special needs schools have been established since 1997. [19374]

Maria Eagle: 298 schools have been established or registered to admit children with special educational needs since 1997.

This figure includes local authority maintained special schools—community special or foundation special schools; non-maintained special schools, which are run by charities or charitable trusts; independent special schools which are approved by the Department to make provision for pupils with SEN; and other independent schools that are registered with the Department as catering wholly or mainly for children with statements. Before a child with special educational needs can be placed at the latter, the Secretary of State's consent is required.

Teachers

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average pay of *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school teachers holding (i) education degrees, (ii) master's degrees and (iii) doctorates was in 2004–05. [31382]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not held in the format requested.

Information on the average salary of teachers gaining qualified teacher status through undergraduate (education degrees) and post graduate (PGCE) routes into teaching was published by the department on 27 October 2005. The information was collected from a sample of teachers between three and a half and four years after they completed their undergraduate degrees in 1999. This shows that the average salary of teachers trained by the undergraduate route was £23,000 for primary teachers and £24,300 for secondary teachers. The figures for teachers with PGCEs were £20,700 and £21,900 respectively. The teachers may have entered teaching immediately after graduating or may have delayed entry. Teachers qualifying with a PGCE will generally have entered service later than those qualifying through undergraduate routes and will be on a lower point of the teacher's pay scale.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the number of teachers who have a second source of income from work other than teaching. [31933]

Jacqui Smith: No such estimate has been made.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* schools and *(b)* local education authorities have submitted representations on planning, preparation and assessment time since the beginning of the autumn term. [32114]

Jacqui Smith: We and the National Remodelling Team (NRT), together with our partners on the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group (WAMG), have engaged with a large number of schools and local authorities over our workforce reform programme—including on planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time for teachers.

The latest information indicates that almost every school has successfully introduced PPA time. NRT and WAMG are working to address the handful of schools that still need support.

Temporary Classrooms (Gravesham)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many temporary classrooms are in use for lessons in schools in Gravesham. [32634]

Jacqui Smith: Data supplied to the Department by Kent local education authority in 2003 showed 87 temporary buildings at schools in Gravesham. Where these buildings are used for teaching, they may accommodate one or more classrooms.

Central Government capital support for investment in schools has increased from under £700 million in 1996–97 to £5.5 billion this year and will rise further to over £6.3 billion by 2007–08. Progress is being made year-by-year in improving the quality of the school building stock. The bulk of schools capital is now allocated by formula to authorities and schools so that they can address their local priorities, including the replacement of decayed temporary accommodation, on which we have set a high priority.

Truancy

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils were recorded as having at least one incident of truancy in 2004–05. [31391]

Jacqui Smith: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Rugby and Kenilworth on 24 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1652.

Under-achievement

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact of the home literacy environment upon underachievement *(a)* nationally and *(b)* by children from low socio-economic backgrounds. [26091]

Jacqui Smith: There is strong evidence on the importance of the home literacy environment for the achievement of children from all social backgrounds. Family learning schemes set up by the Adult Literacy and Basic Skills Agency in the mid 1990's, which focused on families with parents with poor literacy skills, resulted in sustained, statistically significant improvements in writing for both parents and children, and associated increases in their levels of confidence[1].

More generally, parental involvement in the form of at-home good parenting, which includes encouragement and participation in learning, has a significant positive effect on children's achievement. This is true even after all other factors shaping attainment have been taken into account. The impact is evident across all social classes and all ethnic groups. Good parenting helps shape the child's self concept as a learner and encourages high aspirations[2].

The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education Study found that the children whose parents actively engaged them in educational activities did better at the end of key stage 1[3]. Seventy per cent. of parents read to their children and almost three quarters think their role in their children's education is important[4]. However, the Skills for Life Survey showed that parents with lower literacy levels are much less likely to help and less likely to be confident in helping their children with reading[5]

In the light of such evidence the Department is actively supporting the development of literacy provision for adults, including family learning, within its Skills for Life programme. Other steps being taken to improve the home literacy environment for parents and their children from low socio-economic backgrounds in particular are outlined in my response to PQ no. 26092.

[1] Assessments include: Brooks et al "Family literacy work" Basic Skills Agency 1996.

[2] Desforges, C & Abouchaar A "The Impact of Parental Involvement, Parental Support and Family Education on Pupil Achievement and Adjustment: A Literature Review". Research Report 433 DfES 2003.

[3] Sylva, K et al "The Effective Provision of Pre-School Education (EPPE) Project: Final Report" Sure Start/IoE 2004.

[4] Moon et al "Parental Involvement in Children's Education" Research Report 589 DfES 2004.

[5] Williams et al "The Skills for Life Survey: A national needs and impact survey of literacy, numeracy & ICT" Research Report 490 DfES 2003.

University Grants

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of students from *(a)* Tamworth, *(b)* Staffordshire and *(c)* England beginning university in the 2005/06 academic year are in receipt of a grant from their local education authority. [31793]

Bill Rammell: The numbers of new entrants to higher education in 2004/05 domiciled in Staffordshire, and England, in receipt of a statutory grant are shown in the table.

	Number
Staffordshire	1,900
England	108,100

Notes:

1. Grants included are the Higher Education Grant, Adult Dependent Grant, Care Leavers Grant, Childcare Grant, Disabled Students Allowance (equipment, non-medical helpers, general, or travel), Lone Parents Grant, and Parental Learning Allowance.

2. Numbers have been rounded to the nearest hundred.

Source:

Student Loans Company.

Data are not available at a constituency level. Data for 2005/06 will be available in summer 2006.

The percentage of students receiving a grant is not calculable as the corresponding underlying population data for 2004/05 will not be available until early 2006.

University League Tables

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the effect of published university league tables on the recruitment by universities of *(a)* home and EU students and *(b)* international students. [32423]

Bill Rammell: None. The Government neither produce nor endorse any university league tables. But demand from all groups of students has risen to record levels with an extra 400,000 students accepted in 2005 to enter UK higher education institutions. We believe demand is helped by publicly available information about the performance of higher education institutions.

Victoria Centre, Gravesham

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been allocated to the Victoria Centre in Gravesham for adult education in 2006–07. [31200]

Bill Rammell: The Department has allocated more than £2.5 billion for adult education in 2006–07. This includes some £1,933 million for adult further education, £230 million for NETP/ETP, £210 million for personal and community development learning and £202.7 million for adult work based learning.

On the 21 October, I wrote to all MPs setting out the Government's strategic direction for the learning and skills sector for the coming period. The purpose of the announcement was to ensure the 2006/07 funding allocations process began with a clear and concise message on the principles that will underpin funding over the next two years.

While total funding going into the learning and skills sector will increase over the next two years there is a need to rebalance spending toward priority areas which include helping disadvantaged adults gain basic and level 2 skills for employability and progression to level 3.

As the allocations process for 2006/07 has only just begun we do not know how much funding will be allocated locally. However, allocations for FE and personal and community development learning to Kent county council, which the Victoria Centre is part of, will reflect our priorities.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Abuse (Insurance Premiums)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much has been paid in insurance premiums by local authorities in relation to complaints of *(a)* sexual and *(b)* physical abuse arising out of residence in (i) care and (ii) residential schools in each year since 1992. [28791]

Maria Eagle: I have been asked to reply.

My Department does not hold this information.

Affordable Housing Units

Margaret Moran: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many affordable housing units expected to be built or procured through the Housing Corporation Approved Development Programme and Challenge Fund in the East of England Region will be *(a)* mixed funded social rented housing, *(b)* temporary social rented housing, *(c)* homebuy general market purchase, *(d)* homebuy general new build, *(e)* mixed funded low cost home ownership for sale, *(f)* miscellaneous works to registered social landlord stock, *(g)* reimprovements to rented RSL stock, *(h)* works only rehabilitation of rented RSL stock, *(i)* works only rehabilitation of RSL stock for sale, *(j)* intermediate rent for key workers, *(k)* homebuy market purchase for key workers, *(l)* homebuy new build for key workers, *(m)* mixed funded sale for key workers, *(n)* right to acquire, *(o)* voluntary purchase grant, *(p)* starter home initiative, *(q)* do-it-yourself shared ownership and *(r)* temporary intermediate and market rent housing in (i) 2005–06, (ii) 2006–07 and (iii) 2007–08; and how much he expects to be spent on each category in each year. [30633]

Yvette Cooper: The following tables show the latest estimated completions and expenditure in the East of England region for 2005–06 through the Housing Corporation Approved Development Programme, including Challenge Fund, for categories from *(a)* to *(r)*. Funding and completions are not directly comparable, as funding will relate to projects running, not necessarily units completed, in any one year.

Estimated completions for East of England region in 2005–06

		Units
(a)	Mixed funded social rent	2,415
(b)	Temporary social rent	5
(c)	Homebuy market purchase	189
(d)	Homebuy new build	3
(e)	Mixed funded for sale	592
(f)	Miscellaneous works to RSL stock	8
(g)	Reimprovements to RSL rented stock	12
(h)	Works only rehabilitation of RSL rented stock	2
(i)	Works only rehabilitation of RSL stock for sale	0
(j)	Intermediate rent for key workers	73
(k)	Homebuy market purchase for key workers	676
(l)	Homebuy new build for key workers	0
(m)	Mixed funded for sale for key workers	139
(n)	Right to acquire	6
(o)	Voluntary purchase grant	0
(p)	Starter home initiative	0
(q)	Do-it-yourself shared ownership	0
(r)	Temporary intermediate and market rent housing	0

Estimated expenditure in East of England region for 2005–06

		£ million
(a)	Mixed funded social rent	67.216
(b)	Temporary social rent	0.049
(c)	Homebuy market purchase	5.708
(d)	Homebuy new build	0.004
(e)	Mixed funded for sale	6.005
(f)	Miscellaneous works to RSL stock	0.154
(g)	Reimprovements to RSL rented stock	0.207
(h)	Works only rehabilitation of RSL rented stock	0.002
(i)	Works only rehabilitation of RSL stock for sale	0.000
(j)	Intermediate rent for key workers	3.838
(k)	Homebuy market purchase for key workers	27.495
(l)	Homebuy new build for key workers	0.235
(m)	Mixed funded for sale for key workers	3.610
(n)	Right to acquire	0.072
(o)	Voluntary purchase grant	0.000
(p)	Starter home initiative	0.000
(q)	Do-it-yourself shared ownership	0.000
(r)	Temporary intermediate and market rent housing	0.000

For 2006–07 and 2007–08 Regional Housing Boards have made recommendations to Ministers for the allocation of Regional Housing Pots funds. The Eastern Regional Housing Board has recommended that from their allocation of £432 million for the two years a total of £356 million should be allocated to the provision of affordable housing. However, the exact distribution of funding between programmes for 2006–08 will not be known until the completion of the Housing Corporation's bidding process.

In August 2005 the Housing Corporation launched the bidding round for the 2006–08 Affordable Housing Programme (AHP). This invited both registered social landlords and non-registered bodies to apply for funds to develop affordable housing based on priorities set by the Regional Housing Boards. The outcome of this bidding round will not be known until early in 2006.

Cabinet Appointment

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the estimated cost to his Department is in 2005–06 of making the Minister of Communities and local government a Cabinet Minister. [28746]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Information about the level of individual ministerial salaries is available in the Library of the House.

Compulsory Purchase Orders

Margaret Moran: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many compulsory purchase orders have been made on empty properties by *(a)* Luton council and *(b)* the local authority recorded as the best performing in each of the last three years. [30636]

Yvette Cooper: Luton borough council has, in the last three years, made one compulsory purchase order on an empty property.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not collect data on the number of compulsory purchase orders made each year by local authorities.

Consultants

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total cost to his Department was of hiring consultants in the last year for which figures are available; how many consultants were hired; and from which firms. [32197]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The total cost of consultants hired during the financial year 2004–05 was £79,831,087.

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The number of consultants hired by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 9 June 2005, *Official Report*, columns 666–69W to my hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell).

Correspondence

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many letters *(a)* he and *(b)* the Minister of Communities and local government have written since May. [28749]

Jim Fitzpatrick: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister has written over 800 letters and my right hon. Friend the Minister for Communities and local government has written over 1,600 letters since May 2005.

The Cabinet Office, on an annual basis, publishes a report to Parliament on Departments' and Agencies' performance on handling Members' and peers' correspondence. The Report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005, *Official Report*, column 137WS.

Council Bungalows

Ben Chapman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance he has issued to local authorities on eligibility for those other than pensioners for housing in council-owned bungalows. [31335]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not issued guidance to local authorities on this matter.

It is for local authorities to ensure that they make the best use of their stock to meet the housing needs in their district, including accommodation which is accessible or readily adapted for use by people with access needs.

Local authorities must give reasonable preference to certain categories of people when allocating social housing, including those who need to move on medical and welfare grounds. The legislation has recently been amended to make clear that "medical and welfare" grounds include grounds relating to a disability. This was intended to ensure that people with access needs are given appropriate priority for social housing; and that accessible housing is allocated to those who need it most.

Council Tax Revaluation

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the Valuation Office Agency is continuing to collect *(a)* dwelling house codes and *(b)* value significance codes data, following the postponement of the council tax revaluation. [29710]

Mr. Woolas: Listing officers of the Valuation Office Agency continue to collect data as required, as part of their statutory responsibility to maintain valuation lists for council tax purposes.

Design for Manufacture Competition

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 876W to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman), on Design for Manufacture competition, how many of the 430 affordable homes being built on former NHS sites under the Design for Manufacture competition will be *(a)* social rented units, *(b)* for sale under a shared equity scheme and *(c)* for sale at £60,000. [28821]

Yvette Cooper: In my answer of 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 876W, to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman), I stated the anticipated numbers of affordable housing units expected on each of the ten sites within the Design for Manufacture competition. It will not be possible to provide precise breakdowns of housing types and tenures until all final bids have been received and evaluated for all the sites, and planning processes completed.

Successful developers were announced by the Deputy Prime Minister on 3 November 2005 for four of the Design for Manufacture sites. This included Renny Lodge in Newport, Pagnell which is 1.5 ha of former NHS land that is now within English Partnership's hospital sites programme. It is proposed that it will have a housing mix of 21 social rented units, 21 built at a construction cost of £60,000, with the balance out of a total of 68 units being for open market sale. The preferred developer here is SIXTYK Consortium led by Crest Nicholson.

There are three other former NHS land sites in the competition: Park Prewett in Basingstoke, Linton in Maidstone and Rowan in Merton, London. Preferred developers for these sites are yet to be selected. However, it is envisaged that a good proportion of the homes on these site will be social for rent or other forms of affordable housing or shared ownership.

English Partnerships is also looking at including homes built through Design for Manufacture in its First Time Buyers Initiative, making some of the houses for sale available for first time buyers under which eligible people will be able to purchase an initial equity stake in the homes, with the residual equity held by English Partnerships. The number of first time buyer homes on each site has not yet been agreed.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 807W, to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman) on Design for Manufacture Competition, what English Partnerships' *(a)* estimated base valuations were for each of the sites under the Design for Manufacture Competition and *(b)* estimate was of projected sales prices for the mix of homes on each site. [28842]

Yvette Cooper: In my answer of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 807W, given to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman), I stated that English Partnerships has carried out base valuations of the sites before the commencement of the competition, which included an estimate of projected sales prices for the mix of homes. Currently, preferred developers have only been announced for four of the 10 sites and these legal agreements are being developed. Announcements

will be made about the preferred developers for the remaining six sites in the near future. Thus, at this stage of the competition with final negotiations for the sites yet to complete, the precise valuations and estimates for each site remain commercially confidential. The final sales prices of individual homes will be determined by the developers in due course according to the local market circumstances that apply to each site.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and English Partnerships are working to prepare a publication drawing out the lessons that have been learned from the Design for Manufacture Competition. This publication will include information about costs and values. We aim to publish this document in the spring of 2006.

English Partnerships

Vera Baird: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how much funding English Partnerships has allocated to local authorities in the Tees Valley for each of the next five years; [29514]

(2) which local authorities in Tees Valley have been in receipt of funding from English Partnerships in each of the past five years, broken down by amount. [29530]

Yvette Cooper: Distribution of English Partnerships investment nationally and including that in the Tees Valley is a matter for English Partnerships' Board, in accordance with their annual corporate plan priorities as approved by Ministers. Discussions are currently under way with English Partnerships on their future national programme and priorities for the years 2005–06 to 2008–09. Once these planning round discussions have been finalised, which is likely to be in the next two months, and Ministers have agreed English Partnerships corporate plan a summary of the plan will be published. Funding for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's programmes, including English Partnerships, for 2008–09 to 2010–11 will be dependent on the results of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007.

The following allocations have been made to local authorities within Tees Valley Regeneration in each of the last five years (all figures rounded to nearest £000):

	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06 (annual forecast)*
Middlesbrough BC	269,000	23,000	1,452,000	2,459,000	19,000
Hartlepool BC	0	116,000	621,000	1,429,000	1,760,000
Stockton BC	812,000	250,000	1,127,000	5,826,000	3,143,000
Redcar and Cleveland	0	0	0	4,000	0
Darlington BC	0	0	0	0	0

In addition, English Partnerships has made the following investments in the local authority areas within Tees Valley Regeneration (all figures rounded to nearest £000):

	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06 (annual forecast)* [1]
Middlesbrough BC	5,619,000	2,356,000	923,000	324,000	[1]2,760,000
Hartlepool BC	1,000	706,000	105,000	126,000	[1]453,000
Stockton BC	1,207,000	2,503,000	5,190,000	2,995,000	[1]1,487,000
Redcar and Cleveland	0	0	0	0	0
Darlington	0	0	177,000	1,639,000	[1]217,000

[1] There could be adjustments in the figures in 2005–06 between the two tables, as it is possible some spend for the remainder of the year on projects might be taken forward through allocation to the local authority rather than invested directly by English Partnerships.

Vera Baird: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) whether English Partnerships funding is allocated *(a)* on a per capita basis to individual local authorities in the Tees Valley and *(b)* on a competitive bid basis to individual projects; [29527]

(2) what guidance he has issued on the relationship between the use of English Partnerships funding and private funding for council development projects; and whether the criteria for council development allow English Partnerships wholly to fund a building project; [29531]

(3) what the criteria are for grant funding by English Partnerships, with particular reference to the use of private finance. [30621]

Yvette Cooper: English Partnerships' funding is not allocated on a per capita basis to individual local authorities, nor through invitations to local authorities to bid in funding competitions. English Partnerships allocates its funding in accordance with its annual corporate plan and the priorities therein, as approved by Ministers. Investment decisions on specific projects are made in relation to a number of criteria, namely: the fit with their corporate plan; their available budgets; the quality and value for money of any proposed project; and its effectiveness in meeting sustainable communities objectives and the regeneration needs of the area. When considering the value for money of any proposed scheme, whether and to what extent the scheme attracts private sector investment, is among the factors which are taken into account. Attraction of private sector investment is also one of English Partnerships' key corporate targets.

There is no guidance specifically on the relationship between the use of English Partnerships funding and private funding for council development projects. When assessing projects, English Partnerships follows guidance by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, "Assessing the Impact of Spatial Interventions: Regeneration, Renewal and Regional Development".

which covers guidance on assessing interventions in a way that rigorously identifies value for money. It also follows HM Treasury's Green Book "Appraisal and Evaluation in Central Government".

English Partnerships may exceptionally wholly fund a project if it meets English Partnerships' criteria including fulfilling value for money considerations. In general, however, English Partnerships delivers its lead role in facilitating development through partnering with a range of public, voluntary and private sector bodies. Partnering allows for more efficient use of public and private sector investment, as well as bringing in a wider skills and experience base. It assists English Partnerships in focusing its activity where it can add most value and helps it to avoid replicating activities of the private sector or other public or voluntary bodies.

As regards the use of private finance, whenever English Partnerships supports regeneration development projects it generally aims to involve the market, and private sector investment, to the greatest extent possible. Private sector investment and involvement are often more likely to ensure that a regeneration project can be self-sustaining in the long term, allows for more efficient use of public and private investment, and ensures that risks can be borne and managed by those best placed to bear them.

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what consultation he plans to hold with hon. Members on the future of English Partnerships. [30119]

Yvette Cooper: English Partnerships' status and functions were last reviewed in 2001–02 and the results announced in July 2002. The outcome confirmed English Partnerships' new role as a key delivery agency in the Government's sustainable communities agenda and the national regeneration agency for our towns and cities, an ongoing role which is still fully relevant. There are no plans for a further review of English Partnerships at this point in time, nor to consult Members or other stakeholders on its future.

Festivals

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what measures his Department took to celebrate and promote the events of *(a)* Ramadan, *(b)* Diwali and *(c)* Chinese New Year in 2005. [31162]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister values the diversity of its staff and promotes awareness of religious festivals and events. The Equality and Diversity Unit provide information on the ODPM intranet about six major faiths: Buddhism, Christianity, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, and Sikhism. This includes information about the major festivals which is regularly reviewed and updated. The Intranet also provides information about prayer rooms in ODPM. The Equality and Diversity Unit make available to staff a number of SHAP calendars of religious festivals every year. The most recent issue of the in-house Office magazine included a 'lifestyle' article on Diwali.

For the past two years, ODPM has organised a programme of seminars which have included seminars on faith communities. These were well attended and raised awareness of the positive contribution faith groups make to building sustainable communities. The seminars were accompanied by an exhibition which included stands and information on the major faith groups.

Furthermore, the ODPM coordinated a fire safety campaign to raise awareness of key fire safety issues with the celebrating communities during the 2005 religious festivals of Diwali and Eid Ul Fitr. Similar activity is also planned for the forthcoming 2006 Chinese new year.

Fire Services

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost of maintaining existing radio systems used by the fire and rescue authorities was in each of the last five years. [30632]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The fire and rescue services (FRS) are responsible for normal maintenance to existing radio systems carried out either by FRS staff or contractors. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not retain this cost information centrally. In addition, in England and Wales there is a programme of work to replace higher risk items of FRS existing wide area radio systems, thereby ensuring that they continue to be operationally effective until they can be replaced by the national wide area radio system, Firelink. Expenditure on operational continuity by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister amounts to £54,000 in 2002–03, £652,000 in 2003–04 and £5,220,000 in 2004–05.

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the recent firemen's strike in the East Midlands area. [29901]

Jim Fitzpatrick: There has been no recent strike in East Midlands. The hon. Member probably intends to refer to the current strike in West Midlands.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the cost to each local authority of regional fire control rooms over the first three years of operation; and how these costs will be met. [31710]

Jim Fitzpatrick: No estimates of these costs are available at the present time. This is because some elements of overall project costs are not yet confirmed—such as those relating to the technology/infrastructure services—and because the way in which costs will be apportioned to Fire and Rescue Authorities has not yet been agreed. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's financial models show that when established the new system will cost substantially less than the current arrangements. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will fund any net increased costs during the transition period in line with the New Burdens principle.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much the Government have spent in the last five years on the fire control centre for London. [31788]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Nothing. The fire control centre for London is paid for by the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority.

Firelink Project

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total cost to his Department of consultants used for the Firelink Project was; and how many consultants have been employed to date. [30630]

Jim Fitzpatrick: For the period August 2002 to October 2005, the total costs of consultants employed on the Firelink project is just under £11 million. As of 19 November 2005 there were 30 consultants employed on the Firelink project. The number of consultants varies dependent on which stage the project is at.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list those areas of England and Wales that will not be covered by the Firelink project. [31102]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Firelink will provide coverage where it has been agreed with the fire and rescue services as being essential for operational purposes. The Firelink contractor has a responsibility to meet these agreed coverage levels.

Greenbelt (Bournemouth)

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the future of Bournemouth's greenbelt. [30353]

Yvette Cooper: The South West regional assembly—as the regional planning body—are working to prepare the new regional spatial strategy for the south west which will look at housing need in the period to 2026. However, no proposed planned housing figures or locations for development have been made by either the regional assembly, the strategic planning authorities or the Government.

Home Information Packs

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the likely mean cost of producing a home information pack, including taxation. [24675]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister estimate that the average cost of producing a home information pack for a 1930s semi-detached house in average condition located in a provincial town will be just under £700 including VAT (£653 excluding VAT). This amount, however, is not all an additional cost for consumers as the only new document to be required under the home information pack proposals is the home condition report. Most of the information is currently paid for by the buyer. In addition we estimate there will be considerable savings on failed transactions which currently cost consumers £1 million a day in total.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what information will be included in home information packs to protect home-buyers from purchasing property on contaminated land. [30153]

Yvette Cooper: The draft home information pack regulations provide that the pack must include a search report that records the result of an inspection of the register of contaminated land that local authorities are required to maintain under the Environmental Protection Act 1990. The draft regulations also provide that the pack may include additional search reports relating to actual or potential environmental hazards, including contaminated land. The draft regulations are currently out to consultation until 30 December 2005.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister in what percentage of house transactions *(a)* flood reports and *(b)* contaminated land reports were used in the latest year for which figures are available. [30154]

Yvette Cooper: The Government do not collect these figures.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with mortgage providers on the proposed home information packs; and whether mortgage providers have indicated to him that they will be willing to lend on the basis of a home condition report. [31557]

Yvette Cooper: The Government have been working closely with the Council of Mortgage Lenders and their members in the development of the Home Condition Report and the associated certification arrangements for Home Inspectors, to ensure that lenders can have confidence in the report and that it contains the information they need to generate valuations for mortgage purposes. Lenders will have a legal right to rely on the Home Condition Report. The Council of Mortgage Lenders has indicated that lenders are likely to use the report in the majority of cases. This will reduce significantly the number of cases where lenders require a separate inspection of the property and will mean reduced costs for home buyers.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the likely number of homebuyers who will commission more detailed surveys than the Home Condition Report after the introduction of home information packs. [31560]

Yvette Cooper: Only a very small proportion of home buyers (our research suggests less than three per cent.) obtain a detailed building survey. Indications from the industry suggest this is not likely to change significantly when home information packs are introduced from June 2007. The Home Condition report in the pack will provide for prospective buyers a mid-range survey report on the condition of the property. This will involve a level of inspection similar to that for the current Homebuyer Survey and Valuation Report provided by Chartered Surveyors. Home buyers and their lenders will have a right to rely on the Home Condition Report, which will provide substantially more information about the property than a lender's valuation inspection report upon which most home buyers currently rely.

HomeBuy Scheme

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether any of the Government's HomeBuy schemes are planned to be piloted in Tamworth. [29383]

Yvette Cooper: At the present time it is not possible to say whether any of our new HomeBuy schemes will be piloted in Tamworth. I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for North East Milton Keynes on 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1697W.

The limited number of early Social HomeBuy pilots starting this year, in advance of the Housing Corporation's National Affordable Housing Programme for 2006–08, do not include any provision in Tamworth.

Housing

Mr. Betts: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total capital receipts generated from right-to-buy sales were in *(a)* Sheffield and *(b)* Yorkshire and Humber in each year since 1980. [26402]

Yvette Cooper: The total capital receipts from right-to-buy sales of local authority dwellings in Sheffield and Yorkshire and the Humber in the years from 1996–97 onwards are tabulated as follows. These figures are net of discounts and are as reported by local authorities.

Capital receipts

£ million

	Sheffield	*Yorkshire and the Humber*
1996–97	7.6	59.8
1997–98	7.3	70.9
1998–99	7.4	75.8
1999–2000	9.6	96.1
2000–01	11.6	102.3
2001–02	21.8	145.0
2002–03	25.2	225.3
2003–04	46.6	298.5
2004–05	37.9	295.8

Source:
Quarterly P1(A/B) return received from local authorities.

The information for years prior to 1996–97 is not centrally available.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many applicants are on the Tamworth housing waiting list. [27485]

Yvette Cooper: The number of households on the Tamworth housing waiting list as at 1 April 2005 is 2,772.

Local authorities in England report the numbers of households on their housing waiting list as at 1 April in their annual Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix returns. Local authorities sometimes maintain a common waiting list with the housing association/s in their district. However, information is not held centrally where a housing association maintains a separate waiting list to the local authority.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what additional funding he has allocated to transport infrastructure to support the proposed housing developments in *(a)* Kent and *(b)* Gravesham. [28381]

Yvette Cooper: The Thames Gateway, of which the Borough of Gravesham is part, is a particular focus for growth as part of the Sustainable Communities Plan.

The Government believe it is important to have the right infrastructure in place to support new homes and jobs. The Department for Transport (DfT) is working closely with other Government Departments and agencies as well as local and regional partners to ensure that transport provision in Kent is properly planned alongside the other aspects of growth. Funding is being made available to enable this to happen.

Kent's 2005–06 Local Transport Plan (LTP) settlement of £26.3 million represents an increase of 37 per cent. from 2001–02. This money is used for maintenance and smaller schemes and it is for Kent county council to decide the proportion spent in Gravesham. Kent has also received capital funding of £41.6 million for major transport schemes over the same five year period through the LTP process. In addition, the Highways Agency is investing in ongoing major schemes, including the £138 million A2/A282 Dartford improvements, £110 million Swale Crossing and £16 million A2 widening. Kent will also benefit from billions of additional investment in rail, in particular through CTRL domestic services from 2009. Also the Crossrail bill is currently going through parliament.

Alongside mainstream DfT funding, additional money is being committed to Gravesham as part of the Thames Gateway programme. The innovative public transport scheme Fastrack has so far received £4 million from the ODPM Growth Areas Fund (from a total of £15.4 million for transport projects in Kent since 2003) and additional funding for the project is currently being considered. In addition £200 million is available through the joint DfT/ODPM Community Infrastructure Fund (GIF) for transport schemes that support housing delivery in the growth areas. Proposals for GIF are currently being assessed with a likely decision by the end of 2005.

The Government are aware of various assessments by local delivery organisations of the cost of transport infrastructure over the longer term. However, the Government have made no such assessment by area and it will continue to determine such investment in the context of the public expenditure cycle.

Kent will continue to have access to increased levels of transport funding. The South East Regional Transport Board will advise on the allocation of between £138 million and £150 million per year until 2010–11 for major South East transport schemes. This represents about 10 per cent. of the funds that will be spent on transport in the region over that period. Furthermore, the DfT committed £600 million to transport schemes across the Thames Gateway for the three years following the 2004 spending review. It will also be crucial that the private sector make a significant contribution to help ensure the appropriate transport infrastructure is put in place to serve the new and exiting developments.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will allow councils to sell privately owned properties which fall into disrepair as a result of long-term disuse. [29157]

Yvette Cooper: Where a residential property has been left empty for longer than six months, provisions in the Housing Act 2004 will give local authorities the option to make an Empty Dwelling Management Order in order to secure the occupation of that property. However, where an Empty Dwelling Management Order has been made, ownership of that property does not transfer to the local authority, and nor therefore, the entitlement to sell. The making of an order may of course encourage an owner to sell voluntarily.

Existing legislation does provide public bodies, including local authorities, with the power to acquire ownership of privately owned property through compulsory purchase proceedings. Any local authority, responsible for acquiring private property through these proceedings would then be entitled to sell that property.

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many council properties were sold under the right-to-buy scheme by Dacorum borough council in each year since 1997. [30117]

Yvette Cooper: The numbers of council properties sold under the right-to-buy scheme by Dacorum borough council in each financial year since 1997–98 as reported by Dacorum are shown in the table.

Dacorum: right-to-buy sales

Financial year	*RTB Sales*
1997–98	261
1998–99	275
1999–2000	405
2000–01	262
2001–02	104
2002–03	214
2003–04	144
2004–05	64

Source:
Quarterly returns (P1B) to ODPM from local authorities

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* function and *(b)* powers of the Audit Commission's Housing Inspectorate are; and what its budget was in the last year for which figures are available. [30443]

Mr. Woolas: The Audit Commission has powers under section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999 to inspect a "best value" authority's compliance with Part 1 of that Act. Part 1 includes (among other things) a general duty on these authorities to make arrangements to secure the continuous improvement in the way that their functions are exercised, having regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness. In addition, the Audit Commission has powers in relation to registered social landlords under the Audit Commission Act 1998. Sections 41A and 41B of the Audit Commission Act 1998 provide the Audit Commission with powers to carry out inspections of registered social landlords in relation to the quality of the services they provide and the arrangements they have put in place to secure continuous improvement in the efficiency, effectiveness and economy of those services.

The Housing Inspectorate is part of the Audit Commission and undertakes its inspection activities under these powers. The expenditure for the Housing Inspectorate's activities for 2005–06 is projected to be £7.98 million. This is part of the Commission's overall budget of £224 million.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 11 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 839W, on housing, what definition he uses of relevant proprietor. [30666]

Yvette Cooper: Relevant proprietor is defined in section 132(4)*(c)* of the Housing Act 2004 as the person who holds the freehold estate in the dwelling or, in the case of a dwelling let under one or more leases with an unexpired term of seven years or more, the lessee under whichever of those leases has the shortest unexpired term.

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on large scale housing developments in Bournemouth. [30352]

Yvette Cooper: The South West regional assembly—as the regional planning body—are working to prepare the new regional spatial strategy for the south west which will look at housing need in the period to 2026. However, no proposed planned housing figures or locations for development have been made by either the regional assembly, the strategic planning authorities or the Government.

Inspection Regimes

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment the Government have made of the number of inspection regimes by which local authorities are regulated. [30444]

Mr. Woolas: The following bodies carry out inspections within local authorities in England:

Audit Commission (including the Housing Inspectorate)

Benefit Fraud Inspectorate

Office for Standards in Education

Commission for Social Care Inspection

Adult Learning Inspectorate

HM Inspectorate of Probation (Inspection of Youth Offending Teams)

Food Standards Agency

Health and Safety Executive

Office of the Surveillance Commissioner.

Significant progress has been made to better target inspections where they will do most good and to improve the timing and co-ordination of inspections. The effectiveness of inspection can still be improved, and we are working with all those who inspect local government to deliver this. The cost of these inspections are not borne by the local authorities directly.

IT Projects

Dr. Cable: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many of the IT projects costing over £1 million in use in his Department and introduced since 1997 have been scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee; and if he will list them; [26600]

(2) how many IT projects which cost over £1 million and were introduced since 1997 are in use in his Department. [26601]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) was created in May 2002. There have been seven ODPM IT projects with a value in excess of £1 million which produced systems that are currently in use in ODPM, and which came into live service after that date.

None have been scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee.

Licensing Act

Mark Hunter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the implications of the Licensing Act 2003 in determining the 2006–07 revenue support grant for local authorities in England. [30174]

Mr. Woolas: The Licensing Act 2003 devolves power to local authorities. The aim is to set the level of fees to cover local authorities' responsibilities under the Act.

There is currently an independent review panel looking into the fees local authorities are collecting as part of the Act. We are waiting for the report from the panel which will assess if the fees set centrally to cover any additional setting up costs local authorities are facing for administration, inspection and enforcement are adequate. We will shortly be announcing the provisional local government finance settlement, which will cover 2006–07 and 2007–08.

Living Over the Shop

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on funding for the Living Over the Shop organisation. [28827]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister awarded contacts to Living Over the Shop in June 2004 and June 2005 for consultancy advice on follow-up work to the report of the Housing Above Shops Task Force. Those contracts have concluded. Further consideration is being given to ways of to maximise use of the existing stock, including potential housing units from redundant commercial space.

Local Authority Funding

Mark Hunter: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the implications for local services in the event of an average increase of 1.5 per cent., not including education, to the 2006–07 revenue support grant to local authorities in England; and whether he would expect cuts to frontline services to ensue in such an event. [30175]

Mr. Woolas: The Government are committed to ensuring that local authorities can continue to deliver effective services without imposing excessive increases in council tax. We have yet to announce our proposals for the funding of revenue spending by councils in 2006–07. We have been working with the Local Government Association to identify the main pressures facing local authorities and how they can best be mitigated. We will shortly be announcing the provisional local government settlement for 2006–07 and 2007–08. It will then be up to individual authorities to set their budgets and council tax levels. It will not be possible for authorities to compare the increase in general grant to the increases provided in previous settlements because of the introduction of the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG). DSG is funded wholly through grant from Government, so council tax will fund higher proportion of other services.

Mobile Telephone Masts

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will take steps to bring mobile telephone masts of all sizes under stricter planning control; if he will apply the precautionary principle in doing so; and if he will make a statement. [31166]

Yvette Cooper: All ground based masts are already subject to planning control so that if the local authority considers that the development will pose a serious threat to amenity, it is able to refuse approval. For masts over 15 metres in height a planning application is required. For masts under 15 metres in height a prior approval application is required.

The Government have adopted the precautionary approach recommended by the Stewart Group.

National Brownfield Strategy

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the progress of the National Brownfield strategy in bringing hardcore derelict sites into use. [28894]

Yvette Cooper: English Partnerships has been asked to develop a National Brownfield strategy in its role as expert adviser on brownfield land. The strategy will provide for the first time a coherent national vision for the future development of brownfield land and will act as a toolkit for site owners and developers. Good progress is being made. English Partnerships is developing a pilot programme of feasibility studies on 14 brownfield sites to help inform development of the strategy, an initial programme of workshops with leading stakeholders has been completed and a wider public consultation is planned for early 2006.

Olympics

Vera Baird: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the likely impact of public funding for the 2012 Olympic Games on the availability of English Partnerships funding for projects in the Tees Valley over the next five years. [29762]

Yvette Cooper: No such assessment has been carried out in relation to public funding for the 2012 Olympic Games and projects in the Tees Valley. English Partnerships, working with the Urban Regeneration Companies, including Tees Valley Regeneration, decide which projects to support in accordance with their Corporate Plan priorities as approved by Ministers, their available budgets, the quality and value for money of any proposed project, and its effectiveness in meeting sustainable communities objectives and the regeneration needs of the area.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the Olympic precept will be excluded from his calculations for the purposes of capping local authorities' budgets. [29833]

Mr. Woolas: Capping is applied to an authority's own budget requirement, which would not include any precepts local authorities were required to raise on behalf of precepting authorities. The element that relates to the 2012 Olympic games will be precepted by the Greater London assembly (GLA). If the GLA was judged to have set an excessive budget requirement, it is the GLA which would be capped—not London boroughs.

No decisions have been taken about capping in 2006–07 and beyond, but the Government will not hesitate to use their capping powers to protect council taxpayers from excessive council tax increases in future years.

Public Sector Leasehold Working Party

David Lepper: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister who the members are of the Public Sector Leasehold Working Party; when it last met; when it is next scheduled to meet; if he will place in the Library and on his Department's website the minutes of its meetings; and what its programme of work is. [29522]

Yvette Cooper: The Public Sector Leaseholders Working Party last met in May 2003. The party is currently being reconstituted as a smaller but sufficiently representative group, to be known as the Social Sector Leaseholders Working Party, under the Chairmanship of the Leasehold Advisory Service (LEASE). LEASE has recently sent invitations to a range of representative bodies seeking membership and is currently awaiting responses. The first meeting, which will be arranged as soon as possible, is expected to take place early in the new year, and the minutes of the meetings will be placed on the LEASE website.

Regeneration (Liverpool)

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether a health impact assessment has been carried out into regeneration projects in Liverpool; and if he will make a statement. [31647]

Yvette Cooper: This is a matter for local partners. The local Pathfinder advise that the Housing Market Renewal Programme is currently being assessed for its health impacts and the city council's housing strategy has been assessed and the results published. Further assessments will be carried out on a project-by-project basis.

Retford and Worksop Fire Station

John Mann: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* fires and *(b)* road traffic accidents have been attended to by (i) Retford and (ii) Worksop fire station crews in each of the last five years. [32309]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Information on attendance for individual fire stations is not held centrally by the Office. The data tabled as follows was provided by Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service.

Fires and road traffic accidents attended by crews at Worksop and Retford fire stations, 2000–04

	Fires	*Road traffic accidents*
Worksop		
2000	540	85
2001	694	82
2002	791	108
2003	944	89
2004	633	76
Total	3,602	440

Fires and road traffic accidents attended by crews at Worksop and Retford fire stations, 2000–04

	Fires	*Road traffic accidents*
Retford		
2000	320	86
2001	324	81
2002	387	104
2003	511	105
2004	300	122
Total	1,842	498

Source:
Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service

Right-to-buy

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) if he will bring the maximum discount available under right-to-buy in areas of high demand for public sector rented accommodation into line with the £9,000 discount available to housing association tenants under their right to acquire. [30852]

(2) what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Housing (Right to Buy) (Limits on Discount) (Amendment) Order 2005 in helping areas facing housing pressure. [30853]

Yvette Cooper: The Housing (Right to Buy) (Limits on Discount) (Amendment) Order 2003 came into force on 27 March 2003. It reduced to £16,000 the maximum right-to-buy discount available to tenants in 41 areas in London and South of England that appeared to be under the greatest housing market pressure in terms of high levels of homelessness and high property prices. The Government are keeping the position on maximum right to buy discounts generally under review.

Shared Ownership

Andrew Selous: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many shared ownership dwellings there are in the South West Bedfordshire constituency. [29500]

Yvette Cooper: Figures are not available for the number of shared ownership dwellings for the South West Bedfordshire constituency. On 31 March 2005 there were 172 dwellings with ownership shared between the tenant and the registered social landlords in the South Bedfordshire district council area as reported in the Regulatory Statistical Return of the Housing Corporation.

Sir Christopher Meyer

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether his recent letter to Sir Christopher Meyer was sent in his official capacity; and if he will place a copy in the Library. [31539]

Jim Fitzpatrick: My right hon. Friend's letter expressed his personal view as Deputy Prime Minister. The Government's view was set out in the Cabinet Secretary's letter of 4 November which is in the Library of the House. My right hon. Friend has not placed his letter in the Library.

Staff Discipline

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many employees have been dismissed by his Office in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [29125]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was established following the Machinery of Government changes in May 2002. The data are, therefore, only available from this date.

The Department's staff handbook includes procedures for dealing with cases of misconduct, unsatisfactory performance and attendance. Dismissal is considered where after thorough investigation it is decided that the misdemeanour is of such a serious nature the member of staff can no longer work for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

The number of staff who were dismissed as a result of the implementation of these procedures were as follows:

	Number
2002	1
2003	1
2004	4
2005[1]	1

[1] To date

Telephone Masts

Anne Milton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many planning applications for mobile telephone masts in the Guildford constituency have been *(a)* granted, *(b)* granted on appeal and *(c)* refused in each year since 1997. [30188]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to my hon. Friend, the Member for Coventry, South (Mr. Cunningham) on 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1066W.

Temporary Accommodation (Families)

Tim Farron: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate his Department has made of the change in the number of families in temporary accommodation in the South Lakeland district council area since 2001; and what steps he is taking to reduce the number of families in temporary accommodation. [31552]

Yvette Cooper: Information provided quarterly by South Lakeland district council about its activities under homelessness legislation includes the number of households in temporary accommodation on the last day of the quarter, as arranged by the local authority. The number of these households which include dependent children or a pregnant woman has been collected since March 2002, and a summary of reported information is presented in the following table.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has made major progress in tackling the worst forms of homelessness—reducing rough sleeping by 75 per cent. since 1998, with reduction sustained at lowest recorded levels (2005 estimate-459), and ending the long-term use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families with children.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's strategy 'Sustainable communities: settled homes; changing lives' published in March 2005 sets out our aims to reduce homelessness further and halve the number of households in temporary accommodation by 2010.

The full version of the strategy is available in the Library of the House or on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at: www.homelessness.odpm.gov.uk

Households in accommodations[1] arranged by South Lakeland district council under the provisions of homelessness legislation

	All households	*Of which: containing dependent children*
31 March 2001	31	—
30 June 2001	44	—
30 September 2001	45	—
31 December 2001	43	—
31 March 2002	38	n/a
30 June 2002	38	22
30 September 2002	38	30
31 December 2002	45	36
31 March 2003	35	27
30 June 2003	32	19
30 September 2003	58	36
31 December 2003	62	42
31 March 2004	60	n/a
30 June 2004	60	n/a
30 September 2004	58	n/a
31 December 2004	62	37
31 March 2005	61	39
30 June 2005	67	46

n/a = Denotes information not reported.

[1] Households in temporary accommodation arranged by the local authority pending inquiries or after being accepted as homeless under the 1996 Housing Act.

[2] Includes households where an expectant mother is present.

Note:

Data on households containing dependent children has been collected from March 2002.

Source:

ODPM P1E Homelessness returns (quarterly)

Trees

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will publish the results of the survey on trees in towns and cities in England. [30308]

Yvette Cooper: Work is drawing to a close on the preparation of the final report on the project—"Trees in Towns II". The report, which assesses local authority resources and practices in tree planting and management as well as the quality and quantity of trees in towns and cities in England, will be published in due course.

Tyne and Wear Development Programme

Jim Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library the Tyne and Wear City Region Development Programme under the Northern Way; what the implementation and management arrangements are for the programme; and how hon. Members from the Tyne and Wear City Region and their constituents will be consulted on the programme. [32269]

Yvette Cooper: A copy of the Tyne and Wear City Region Development Programme (CROP) and its annexes can be found on the Northern Way website at http://www.thenorthernway.co.uk/cityregions.html

The Tyne and Wear CROP has been prepared by the Tyne and Wear City Region Working Group at the request of the Northern Way. The implementation and management of the CROP are a matter for the working group in discussion with the Northern Way. It is also a matter for the working group to make any decisions on how they further consult with their stakeholders on the programme.

Valuation Office Agency

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance the Valuation Office Agency has issued to its staff and contractors on the personal safety of inspectors conducting a valuation of a property. [30701]

Mr. Woolas: The Valuation Office Agency provides full information and training relating to the personal safety of staff who may need to carry out property inspections. No contractors are engaged on property inspection work.

NORTHERN IRELAND

11/1 Forms

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether a sponsored walk in aid of charity in a public place requires the submission, acceptance and consideration of an 11/1 form; whether in the absence of such a form the event would be deemed unlawful and liable to prosecution; and if he will make a statement. [31187]

Mr. Woodward: There is no legal or singular definition of a 'sponsored walk'. Sponsored walks may assume many different forms, some of which will take on elements which give rise to the appearance of a public procession. If this is the case then organisers of such walks should submit an 11/1 giving notice of their intention to hold an event which has all the critical elements of a public procession.

It is important to remember that organisers are not seeking permission to parade but are rather simply giving notification so that both police and public are made aware and may consider the implications of such a public event.

In the absence of a notification of a sponsored walk as a public procession, the police would evaluate each case in the round before considering whether or not it appeared to be a public procession and whether or not it was necessary to take a view from the Public Prosecution Service as to further action.

Adoption

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what average time adults have waited from application to completion of adoption proceedings of a child in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [32220]

Mr. Woodward: The average time adults have waited from application to completion of adoption proceedings of a child in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years is not available centrally.

Alcohol-related Deaths/Illness

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland under the age of 30 were treated for alcohol-related illnesses in each of the last five years. [31271]

Mr. Woodward: Information is not available on the number of people treated for alcohol-related illnesses. However, the number of admissions to hospital for alcohol-related illnesses is available. The table provides figures on the number of admissions to acute hospitals in Northern Ireland for people aged under 30 years with a primary or secondary diagnosis of an alcohol-related illness for each of the last five years for which data are available.

	Number of admissions[1] with an alcohol-related diagnosis
2004–05	842
2003–04	799
2002–03	805
2001–02	946
2000–01	959

[1] Discharges and deaths are used as an approximation for admissions. It is possible that any individual could be admitted to hospital more than once in any year and will thus be counted more than once as an admission.

Source:
Hospital Inpatients System

Binge Drinking

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what statistical evidence he has collated on whether binge drinking is affecting the number of mouth cancer cases in Northern Ireland. [31057]

Mr. Woodward: The Department has not collated any statistical evidence connecting the number of mouth cancer cases to levels of binge drinking. Incidences of lip, oral cavity and pharynx cancers in Northern Ireland has fallen steadily from 162 cases in 1993 to 127 cases in 2003.

Bus Passenger Numbers

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the change in bus passenger numbers on the Belfast to Londonderry route has been between 2000 and 2005. [31483]

Mr. Woodward: Translink has advised that the bus passenger numbers on the Belfast to Londonderry route are as follows:

	Passenger numbers
2003–04	514,171
2004–05	516,137

Complete figures for the present financial year are not available. However Translink has reported a 3 per cent. rise in passenger numbers on the corresponding period last year.

Translink has also advised me that bus passenger numbers for the period prior to 2003–04 are not immediately available. I shall write to the hon. Gentleman with the information as soon as possible.

Cancelled Operations

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cancelled operations there have been for each hospital with a theatre in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [32225]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not available.

Car Parks

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much in *(a)* euros and *(b)* sterling was taken at pay and display car parks under the control of the Department for Regional Development in Northern Ireland where euros are accepted as valid payment during the first six months of (i) 2004 and (ii) 2005. [31451]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Executive of Roads Services (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin to Mr. Gregory Campbell, dated 28 November 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding, how much in *(a)* euros and *(b)* sterling was taken at pay and display car parks under the control of the Department for Regional Development in Northern Ireland where euros are accepted as valid payment during the first six months of (i) 2004 and (ii) 2005. I have been asked to reply as these issues fall within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

In the first six months of (i) 2004 and (ii) 2005, car park ticket machines under the control of the Department for Regional Development, which accept both sterling and euro, have taken income as detailed in the following table.

Period	*Sterling*	*Euro*
January to June 2004	1,122,425.51	28,646.10
January to June 2005	1,293,917.85	44,691.63

I hope this information is helpful.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total *(a)* income taken as payment of car parking charges and *(b)* outgoings paid as salaries and other charges at Department for Regional Development car parks in Northern Ireland were in 2004. [31452]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin to Mr. Gregory Campbell, dated 28 November 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding what the total *(a)* income taken as payment of car parking charges and *(b)* outgoings paid as salaries and other charges at Department for Regional Development car parks in Northern Ireland were in 2004. I have been asked to reply as these issues fall within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

I should explain that Roads Service does not retain this information on a calendar year basis. However, the total income taken as payment for car parking charges in the financial year ending 31 March 2005 was £9,088,000. The total expenditure relating to car park activities for the same period was £8,782,000.

I hope this information is helpful.

Cardiac-related Emergencies

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cardiac-related emergency cases have been treated in hospitals in Northern Ireland in each year since 1995. [31970]

Mr. Woodward: The number of emergency admissions[1] to the cardiac surgery and cardiology specialties in hospitals in Northern Ireland in each year since 1995 is detailed in the following table.

[1] Discharges and deaths are used as an approximation for admissions. It should be noted that any patient could have been admitted more than once in any particular year and in more than one year.

	Total
1995–96	10,532
1996–97	10,865
1997–98	12,170
1998–99	13,246
1999–2000	14,388
2000–01	14,608
2001–02	14,120
2002–03	12,969
2003–04	13,708
2004–05	13,701

Source:
Hospital Inpatients System

Care Homes

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many beds were available in the Province in care homes on the last date for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [32089]

Mr. Woodward: At 31 March 2004 (the latest date for which information is available), there were 15,330 beds available in care homes in Northern Ireland. This information includes beds in residential and nursing homes, and beds in children's homes as well as those for adults.

Some people will always need more support than can be safely provided in their own home. For this reason residential care homes and nursing homes continue to play an important part in meeting people's care needs.

Civil Servants

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* Protestants and *(b)* Roman Catholics were employed in the Northern Ireland Office in each of the past five years. [30129]

Mr. Woodward: All NIO staff working in Northern Ireland, both Home civil servants and Northern Ireland civil servants, are monitored for community background

in compliance with the Fair Employment and Treatment (NI) Order 1998 monitoring regulations. The Department also has a small number of staff working in London whose community background is not monitored. The following figures relate to staff in Northern Ireland only.

	Protestant		*Roman Catholic*		*Non-determined*		
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Total*
2001	957	(70.1)	353	(25.9)	55	(4.0)	[1]1,365
2002	1,038	(68.8)	380	(25.1)	95	(6.3)	1,513
2003	1,082	(67.9)	428	(26.8)	84	(5.3)	1,594
2004	1,154	(68.4)	450	(26.7)	82	(4.9)	1,686
2005	1,205	(66.6)	528	(29.2)	77	(4.2)	1,810

[1] This relates to NICS staff only as figures for HCS staff in NI not available for 2001.

Cookstown

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for what reasons an area designated for education and recreation usage has now been turned over to the provision of a new police station for Cookstown. [14019]

Mr. Woodward: I am sorry for the delay in replying. This was caused by an administrative error.

The location of the proposed new police station at Cookstown is adjacent to the current station and is deemed to be in the most operationally effective location for the delivery of community policing within the Cookstown area.

The site does not encroach into any area designated for education or recreation purposes in the Cookstown Area Plan. However abutting the site along its south-western boundary are school grounds, which are designated as existing recreation/open space.

Delayed Discharges

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many delayed discharges for elderly patients due to non-availability of community-care packages there were in each health board area in 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [32098]

Mr. Woodward: The number of elderly (people aged 65 and over) who were regarded as delayed discharges during 2004–05 and whose reason for delay was "No place or care package available" is given in the following table for each Health Board area in Northern Ireland.

Delayed discharge is bad for patients and is an unnecessary drain on acute hospital resources. A key component of health and personal social services reform and modernisation plans is the development of a range of integrated primary and community care services, specifically designed to prevent inappropriate admission to hospital and to reduce unwarranted lengths of stay.

Health Board	*Number of delayed discharges*
EHSSB	155
NHSSB	140
SHSSB	47
NHSSB	47
NI total	389

Source:
Departmental Monthly Return DD1

District Policing Partnership

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost of each district policing partnership in Northern Ireland was in each of the last three years. [30136]

Mr. Woodward: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Belfast, East (Mr. Robinson) on 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1632W.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what expenses have been claimed by elected representatives on each of the local district policing partnerships in each of the last three years; [30137]

(2) what expenses have been claimed by independent members of each of the local district policing partnerships in each of the last three years. [30138]

Mr. Woodward: The Policing Board has advised me that the following figures show the total expenditure on elected and independent members allowances and travel and subsistence expenses for each DPP in the last three years. The Board does not hold a breakdown of figures between elected and independent members and to gather this information would be at disproportionate cost.

£

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Antrim	7,215	49,984	52,153
Ards	8,678	55,229	54,960
Armagh	7,457	56,543	53,783
Ballymena	8,121	56,320	51,476
Ballymoney	7,987	51,132	50,958
Banbridge	7,011	49,571	48,978
Belfast	16,406	100,017	92,128
Carrickfergus	6,770	38,301	42,335
Castlereagh	8,144	46,497	44,189
Coleraine	10,299	51,476	52,068
Cookstown	5,644	40,610	41,267
Craigavon	9,151	51,099	51,384
Derry	6,115	51,451	50,679
Down	8,064	49,860	50,421
Dungannon and South Tyrone[1]	4,176	0	10,324
Fermanagh	9,555	54,509	53,724
Larne	7,207	45,690	42,310
Limavady	5,655	43,102	42,643
Lisburn	10,498	47,302	50,326
Magherafelt	4,114	51,464	48,113
Moyle	6,319	45,546	44,071
Newry and Mourne	10,577	55,286	54,083
Newtownabbey	4,166	50,806	52,714
North Down	3,879	50,540	52,170
Omagh	6,270	42,020	42,336

£

	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Strabane	6,921	41,260	40,264
Total	196,399	1,275,615	1,269,857

[1] Dungannon and South Tyrone DPP was established December 2004. Initial training took place in 2002–03.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been paid to consultants and agencies organising conferences for district policing partnerships in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years. [30139]

Mr. Woodward: The Policing Board has advised me that any conferences arranged for DPPs by the Northern Ireland Policing Board have been organised in-house and no money has been paid to consultants or agencies in relation to organising this work.

Doctors and Nurses

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* doctors and *(b)* nurses there were per head of population in Northern Ireland, broken down by health board, in each year since 1998. [31949]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is provided in the following tables.

Doctors employed within the NI HPSS per 1,000 head of population by health board area by year as at 30 September

	Northern board	Eastern board	Southern board	Western board
1998	1.00	2.36	1.26	1.33
1999	0.88	2.25	1.13	1.24
2000	0.89	2.35	1.21	1.28
2001	0.89	2.46	1.17	1.29
2002	0.91	2.63	1.20	1.35
2003	0.98	2.78	1.24	1.46
2004	1.01	2.90	1.31	1.52
2005	1.13	3.00	1.33	1.57

Notes:
1. The Mid-year HSSB Civilian Population Estimate for 2005 was not available, therefore the Mid-year HSSB Civilian Population Estimate for 2004 was used for 2005.
2. Doctors include all Medical Staff employed within the NI HPSS at the following grades: Consultants, Associate Specialists, Staff Grade, Specialist Registrars, PRHOs, SHOs, Hospital Practitioners, General Medical Practitioners and Medical Officers.
3. These figures exclude Primary Care General Practitioners.
Sources:
Doctor headcount figures: Human Resource Management System.
Civilian population figures: Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency.

Qualified nurses employed within the NI HPSS per 1,000 head of population by health board area by year as at 30 September

	Northern board	Eastern board	Southern board	Western board
1998	5.63	9.96	6.77	7.14
1999	5.59	10.04	6.78	7.29
2000	5.77	10.26	6.81	7.31
2001	5.84	10.28	6.77	7.20
2002	5.91	11.01	6.80	7.70
2003	6.18	11.60	7.17	8.10
2004	6.38	11.87	7.35	8.50
2005	6.45	12.10	7.52	8.75

Notes:
1. The Mid-year HSSB Civilian Population Estimate for 2005 was not available, therefore the Mid-year HSSB Civilian Population Estimate for 2004 was used for 2005.
2. Qualified Nurses include Midwives and Health Visiting Staff.
3. These figures exclude Bank Staff who fill staffing shortfalls to maintain service delivery.
4. Nursing figures are not available for staff working in General Practice Surgeries and are therefore not included.
Sources:
Nursing headcount figures: Human Resource Management System.
Civilian population figures: Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency.

Domestic Violence

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funding has been made available to support victims of domestic violence and their children in *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* Upper Bann in each of the last five years. [31285]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not available either by constituency or for Northern Ireland as a whole. Victims of domestic violence are supported by a range of agencies depending on their needs but individual cases of domestic violence are not tracked at present by the agencies involved, for example, within the criminal justice system and the health and social services. A new strategy for addressing tackling domestic violence in Northern Ireland, "Tackling Violence at Home", was launched in October 2005. As the strategy is implemented, it should be possible in the future to track cases and associated costs across a range of public services.

It is estimated, however, that the direct cost of services provided to victims (through the police, criminal justice system, health and social services care, housing support and civil legal cases) could amount to about £90 million each year in Northern Ireland. It is estimated that the loss of economic output in Northern Ireland due to the suffering of domestic violence victims could amount to a further £90 million each year. These estimates are based on an extrapolation of 2004 research figures for England and Wales on a pro-rata population basis.

Drugs Rehabilitation

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funding has been made available for drugs rehabilitation in *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* Upper Bann in each of the last five years. [31286]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested on funding for drug rehabilitation is not available centrally.

Rehabilitation is an integral part of all drug and alcohol treatment whether community or inpatient based. The cost of this generic rehabilitation cannot be disaggregated from the total costs of such programmes. The majority of drug rehabilitation can and does take place in the community as part of an overall community care and rehabilitation programme. Within each health and social services board area provision exists to refer individuals to residential rehabilitation centres outside Northern Ireland if deemed to be clinically appropriate.

Early Release

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many prisoners released early under the provisions of the Belfast Agreement have subsequently been convicted of serious offences in Northern Ireland. [32252]

Mr. Woodward: Of the 447 persons released 'early' on their sentences under the Northern Ireland (Sentences) Act 1998, available information indicates that 28 have been subsequently convicted of further offences in Northern Ireland.

Electoral Fraud

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the impact of the arrangements in Northern Ireland which allow electoral registration officers to consult Department for Work and Pensions databases as part of measures to tackle electoral fraud. [27580]

Mr. Hanson: The Chief Electoral Officer has written to the hon. Member. The text of the letter is as follows:

"The process is one in which an extract of the registration information held in respect of every elector in Northern Ireland is compared against the DWP National Insurance Number (NINO) database using the NINO, date of birth and name provided on each individual registration form. There has been a full match in 94.6 per cent. of cases and the Electoral office is currently pursuing the reason for mismatches with the remaining 5.4 per cent. In many instances the mismatches have turned out to be simple transpositions on the part of electors, for example AB123465D being recorded at AB123456D.

The Electoral office is of the view that the use of the NINO and subsequent checking against the DWP database has led to an extremely accurate Register in Northern Ireland with few if any illegal duplications or phantom entries"

Failure to Stop after Accidents

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were proceeded against for the offence of failing to stop after an accident in each Police Service of Northern Ireland district in each of the last five years. [31951]

Mr. Hanson: The statistics provided in Table 1 include the offences of 'failing to stop—damage only' and 'failing to stop—injury', and are based on the PSNI District Command Unit in which an offender's address falls. Due to the lack of comparability of 1999 data, (based on crimes reported to 12 police divisions) figures for that year have not been included.

Data relating to 2004 will be available in early 2006.

Table 1: Persons prosecuted for failing to stop after an accident, by PSNI District Command Unit 2000–03[1]

	2000	2001	2002	2003
Antrim	5	0	4	5
Ards	7	3	4	6
Armagh	5	5	4	5
Banbridge	3	6	3	1
Belfast East	7	4	4	7
Belfast North	11	8	9	3
Belfast South	3	5	5	3
Belfast West	9	3	3	4
Ballymena	5	4	5	3
Ballymoney	0	2	1	0

Table 1: Persons prosecuted for failing to stop after an accident, by PSNI District Command Unit 2000–03[1]

	2000	2001	2002	2003
Carrickfergus	2	3	1	2
Coleraine	1	3	2	3
Cookstown	3	4	5	9
Craigavon	4	1	4	9
Castlereagh	4	3	6	3
Dungannon	7	5	6	4
Down	4	5	2	2
Fermanagh	2	6	7	3
Foyle	9	3	7	9
Larne	2	1	4	0
Limavady	4	2	1	0
Lisburn	10	9	3	11
Magherafelt	1	1	2	0
Moyle	2	0	2	0
Newtownabbey	5	6	5	9
North Down	3	3	4	4
Newry and Mourne	4	10	6	14
Omagh	3	5	7	9
Strabane	3	3	3	1
Missing[2]	6	6	5	3
Total	134	119	124	132

[1] Data are based on the police District Command Unit in which an offender's address falls. The District Command Unit structure became operational in April 2001. However, for the purposes of comparability with later years, figures for 2000 and the first quarter of 2001 are also based on the 2001 DCU structure.

[2] Missing data relate to those offenders for which DCU information is not available.

Fireworks and Bonfires

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many injuries associated with fireworks and bonfires there were over the recent Halloween period; and what the figures were in each year since 2001 broken down by health board area. [32097]

Mr. Woodward: Information on the number of people who sustained injuries associated with bonfires is not available. Information on the number of people injured as a result of fireworks over the most recent Halloween period are not yet available. However, figures for the years 2001 to 2004 are available and are detailed in the following table for each Health Board area in Northern Ireland.

Number of patients reporting with firework injuries

	EHSSB	NHSSB	SHSSB	WHSSB	Total
2004	19	11	18	7	55
2003	13	7	14	11	45
2002	22	3	8	5	38
2001	50	26	38	22	136

Source:
Annual Departmental Return, FWK1.

GP Appointments

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many general practitioner appointments in Northern Ireland were not attended by members of the public in each of the last five years; and how many general practitioners in Northern Ireland are over 65 years of age. [31269]

Mr. Woodward: The information is as follows.

(a) The Department does not centrally hold information on missed appointments at GP surgeries. This could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

(b) As at 22 November 2005, there are 25 general practitioners over the age of 65 who are working in primary care. Some of these are partners in a general practice while others are sessional (locum) practitioners.

Health Professionals

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many dental *(a)* nurses, *(b)* hygienists and *(c)* therapists there were in Northern Ireland on the last date for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [32090]

Mr. Woodward: The vast majority of dental nurses, dental hygienists and dental therapists are employed by independent dental contractors, and statistical information on such staff is not held centrally.

Hospital-acquired Infections

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many deaths have been associated with hospital-acquired infections in Northern Ireland in the last five years. [31055]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not available.

Housing

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what proportion of South Antrim housing stock has been sold under the right-to-buy scheme since 1990. [31072]

Mr. Hanson: Approximately 47 per cent. (2,527) of the Housing Executive stock in the South Antrim area (5,370 in 1990) has been sold under its House Sales Scheme.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much his Department has allocated for social housing in each constituency of Northern Ireland in each of the past 10 years. [31959]

Mr. Hanson: The information is not available in the form requested. The following table shows the Department for Social Development's allocation to the Northern Ireland Housing Executive and registered housing associations for social housing in each of the past 10 years:

	Allocation (£ million)
1995–96	203.213
1996–97	218.290
1997–98	234.436
1998–99	263.073
1999–2000	256.458
2000–01	252.914
2001–02	264.678
2002–03	294.128
2003–04	306.887
2004–05	320.679

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many houses in the public sector in Northern Ireland are deemed inadequate by district housing offices due to poor heating and insulation. [32096]

Mr. Hanson: While 97 per cent. of public sector housing has some form of central heating and insulation, not all meet the decent homes thermal comfort criterion, because of its high specification compared to the former fitness standard. It is therefore estimated that some 33,680 houses in the public sector are deemed inadequate due to the standard of heating and insulation. However, the Department's objective is to ensure that the decent homes standard will be met by all public sector housing by 31 December 2010.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the change in the total value of *(a)* current and *(b)* past tenant arrears of the Northern Ireland Housing Executive has been since 1995. [32218]

Mr. Hanson: The following table details Northern Ireland Housing Executive's past and current tenant arrears between 1995 and 2005:

£ million

As at 31 March each year:	*Current tenants debt*	*Past tenants debt*	*Total debt*
1995	11.888	1.827	13.715
1996	11.270	1.715	12.985
1997	11.155	1.638	12.793
1998	10.833	1.658	12.491
1999	11.474	1.890	13.364
2000	12.327	2.269	14.596
2001	14.690	2.668	17.358
2002	15.310	3.717	19.027
2003	14.934	3.954	18.888
2004	14.639	4.442	19.081
2005	13.729	4.022	17.751

Motoring Offences

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many drivers were prosecuted for driving *(a)* without insurance and *(b)* while banned in each Westminster constituency in Northern Ireland in each of the last three years. [31051]

Mr. Hanson: Prosecution data cannot be readily broken down by Northern Ireland constituency. The statistics included in the table are based on the PSNI District Command Unit in which an offender's address falls.

Data relating to 2004 will be available in early 2006.

Table 1: Persons prosecuted for driving without insurance by PSNI District Command Unit 2001–2003[1]

	2001[2]	*2002*	*2003*
Antrim	78	98	96
Ards	121	139	119
Armagh	109	132	152
Banbridge	53	66	70
Belfast East	118	189	154
Belfast North	292	314	301
Belfast South	124	121	105
Belfast West	168	297	187
Ballymena	92	149	88

Table 1: Persons prosecuted for driving without insurance by PSNI District Command Unit 2001–2003[1]

	2001[2]	2002	2003
Ballymoney	49	56	58
Carrickfergus	70	77	79
Coleraine	88	129	93
Cookstown	76	87	63
Craigavon	145	235	271
Castlereagh	68	97	73
Dungannon	161	138	114
Down	132	146	124
Fermanagh	148	221	165
Foyle	361	316	353
Larne	64	91	59
Limavady	61	79	90
Lisburn	163	212	241
Magherafelt	66	88	L55
Moyle	26	52	41
Newtownabbey	113	135	131
North Down	102	182	120
Newry and Mourne	207	194	235
Omagh	180	181	147
Strabane	121	161	108
Missing[3]	82	126	97
Total	3,638	4,508	3,989

[1] Data are based on the police District Command Unit in which an offender's address falls.
[2] The District Command Unit structure became operational in April 2001. However, for the purposes of comparability with later years, figures for 2001 also include the period January to March.
[3] Missing data relate to those offenders for which DCU information is not available.

Table 2: Persons prosecuted for driving while disqualified by PSNI District Command Unit 2001–03[1]

	2001[2]	2002	2003
Antrim	20	17	17
Ards	28	31	41
Armagh	29	31	34
Banbridge	12	18	11
Belfast East	58	63	55
Belfast North	56	53	78
Belfast South	48	42	40
Belfast West	48	68	77
Ballymena	23	21	31
Ballymoney	7	14	22
Carrickfergus	21	9	16
Coleraine	20	22	22
Cookstown	7	13	12
Craigavon	37	51	64
Castlereagh	14	16	24
Dungannon	17	27	33
Down	25	20	38
Fermanagh	32	38	45
Foyle	79	75	69
Larne	16	13	15
Limavady	11	15	11
Lisburn	34	44	75
Magherafelt	5	17	13
Moyle	3	7	8
Newtownabbey	27	22	19
North Down	19	32	45
Newry and Mourne	35	39	25
Omagh	51	46	45
Strabane	21	32	16
Missing[3]	19	23	24
Total	822	919	1,025

[1] Data are based on the police District Command Unit in which an offender's address falls.
[2] The District Command Unit structure became operational in April 2001. However, for the purposes of comparability with later years, figures for 2001 also include the period January to March.
[3] Missing data relate to those offenders for which DCU information is not available.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many speeding fines in South Antrim remain unpaid. [31075]

Mr. Woodward: The Police Service of Northern Ireland do not record statistics by parliamentary constituency, but by District Command Unit. The available figures for Antrim DCU show that during the period 1 January 2005 to 30 September 2005, 821 endorsable fixed penalty notices were issued for excess speed and 110 of these remain unpaid.

Murders

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many persons convicted of murder in the Province during the current troubles in cases where all proceedings are complete *(a)* have been sentenced to terms of imprisonment of (i) less than five years, (ii) five to 10 years, (iii) 10 to 20 years and (iv) more than 20 years, *(b)* have been released otherwise than under the Belfast agreement having served terms of imprisonment of (A) less than five years, (B) five to 10 years, (C) 10 to 20 years and (D) more than 20 years and *(c)* have been released under the Belfast agreement having served terms of imprisonment of (1) less than five years, (2) five to 10 years, (3) 10 to 20 years and (4) more than 20 years. [29623]

Mr. Hanson: In relation to part *(a)* (i-iv) for persons sentenced to life imprisonment, further details regarding actual sentence length are not held within the NIO court datasets. Therefore, as a mandatory sentence of life imprisonment applies in the case of murder. Table 1 provides only the number of persons sentenced in each of the years for which data is currently available.

Table 1: Number of persons sentenced for murder: 1993 to 2003

	Number sentenced
1993	18
1994	17
1995	19
1996	13
1997	3
1998	17
1999	13
2000	13
2001	6
2002	14
2003	18

Notes:
1. Figures exclude attempts, aiding and abetting and conspiracy to murder.
2. 1993 is the earliest year for which data are available. Figures for 2004 will be available in early 2006.
3. The figures refer to all murders including non-paramilitary murders.

Source:
Northern Ireland Office

In relation to part *(b)* (A-D) for persons convicted of murder and released otherwise than under the Belfast agreement, available information indicates that 395 people have been released since 1975. Table 2 shows the time served by these prisoners. These figures include persons sentenced to be detained at the pleasure of the Secretary of State who were under 18 years of age at the

time of their offence. It is possible that not all of those recorded in the figures were convicted in Northern Ireland.

Table 2: Numbers of persons convicted of murder and released otherwise than under the Belfast agreement; 1975 to 2005 (November)

Time served	*Number of persons*
Less than 5 years	1
5 years to less than 10 years	21
10 years to less than 20 years	372
20 years or more	1
Total	395

Source:
Northern Ireland Prison Service

In relation to part *(c)* (1–4) for persons released under the Northern Ireland (Sentences) Act 1998, introduced following the Belfast agreement, available information indicates that a total of 146 persons convicted of murder have been released. Table 3 shows the time served by these prisoners. The figures include persons sentenced to be detained at the pleasure of the Secretary of State who were under 18 years of age at the time of their offence. It is possible that not all of those recorded in the figures were convicted in Northern Ireland. Persons released under the Northern Ireland (Sentences) Act 1998 from imprisonment following breach of licence for an earlier sentence for murder have not been included. Only time in custody served in Northern Ireland is included.

Table 3: Numbers of persons convicted of murder and released under the Belfast agreement; 1998 to 2005 (November)

Time served	*Number of persons*
Less than 5 years	13
5 years to less than 10 years	62
10 years to less than 20 years	70
20 years or more	1
Total	146

Source:
Northern Ireland Office

National Lottery

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the value of sales of *(a)* national lottery tickets and *(b)* scratch cards has been in Northern Ireland; and how much has been awarded to good causes in Northern Ireland by national lottery distributors. [31280]

Mr. Caborn: I have been asked to reply.

As of 19 November 2005 total national lottery sales in Northern Ireland (including scratch cards) since the national lottery began in 1994 are £1,324,847,489, of which £377,267,075 represent scratch card sales. For every £1 of national lottery sales, an average of 28p goes to good causes. According to data derived from the lottery awards database (which uses information supplied by lottery distributors), 8,789 awards totalling over £591 million in value have been made to projects in Northern Ireland since the national lottery began until 28 October 2005.

Necrotising Fasciitis

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland have *(a)* contracted and *(b)* died of necrotising fasciitis in each of the last five years. [32091]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is as follows:

(a) Information on the number of people who have contracted necrotising fasciitis in each of the last five years is not available.

(b) The following table gives the number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland in each year between 2000 and 2004 where necrotising fasciitis[1] was recorded on the death certificate.

Number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland with necrotising fasciitis[1] mentioned on the death certificate, 2000 to 2004

	Necrotising fasciitis[1]
2000	4
2001	2
2002	4
2003	3
2004[2]	1

[1] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision code M.72.5 for years 2001–04 and Ninth Revision code 729.4 for year 2000.
[2] Data for 2004 is provisional.

NICE Drug Assessments

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if the Government will issue interim guidance to primary care trusts in Northern Ireland concerning Velcade pending assessment by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. [30149]

Mr. Woodward: Velcade was licensed for use in all areas in the UK in 2004. It is thought that the NICE evaluation of Velcade will be completed during 2006.

Clinicians in NI can prescribe Velcade within the term of the license where the relevant trust and HPSS board have approved the relevant costs. There are no plans at present to issue specific guidance on this matter.

Nurses

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many nurses in Northern Ireland have reported sick with a stress related illness in each of the last five years. [32222]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is as follows:

	Number
2000–01	716
2001–02	832
2002–03	874
2003–04	864
2004–05	985

Note:
Newry and Mourne HSS Trust was unable to supply information in the timescale available.

Nursing Homes

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the change in numbers was of *(a)* registered nursing homes and *(b)* nursing home places in Northern Ireland between 1994 and 2004. [32566]

Mr. Woodward: Information on the numbers of registered nursing homes and nursing home places for the years 1995 (the earliest year for which information is available) and 2004, and the changes between these dates, is shown in the following table.

	Nursing homes	*Nursing home places*
1995	256	9,339
2004	254	9,312
Change 1995–2004	-2	-27

Notes:
Information is in respect of the position at 31 March each year. Figures are not available for the position in 1994, therefore figures for 1995 have been provided. The number of nursing homes in 2004 includes 88 dual registered homes (registered for provision of both residential and nursing care). The 2004 figure for nursing home places includes nursing places, but excludes residential places, in dual registered homes.

Office of the Police Ombudsman

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how many occasions officers from the Office of the Police Ombudsman used powers of arrest in each year since 2000. [28849]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested was provided by the Police Ombudsman and is as follows:

	Number
2000	—
2001	6
2002	6
2003	6
2004	2
2005	—
Total	20

Paramilitary Attacks

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many paramilitary-style attacks there were in each of the last 10 years; and in how many cases people were *(a)* apprehended and *(b)* convicted. [31938]

Mr. Woodward: The Police Service of Northern Ireland have advised that the only statistics held in relation to this matter can be found at the PSNI website: www.psni.police.uk and are set out as follows covering the years 1973 to 2005. All statistics are provisional at this stage and may be subject to minor amendment.

The police have been unsuccessful at holding anyone to account for such crimes—usually victims and witnesses are unwilling or unable to co-operate with police and therefore there is little the police can do.

Casualties as a result of paramilitary-style attacks, 1973 to 2005[1]

	Shootings			*Assaults*[2]			
	Total	*By loyalist groups*[3]	*By republican groups*[3]	*Total*	*By loyalist groups*[3]	*By republican groups*[3]	*Total casualties (shootings and assaults)*
1973	74	21	53	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1974	127	43	84	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1975	189	50	139	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1976	98	36	62	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1977	126	28	98	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1978	67	17	50	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1979	76	25	51	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1980	77	26	51	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1981	80	14	66	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1982	81	22	59	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1983	31	9	22	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1984	26	6	20	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1985	32	11	21	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1986	41	24	17	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1987	124	67	57	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1988	66	34	32	56	21	35	122
1989	161	65	96	51	23	28	212
1990	106	60	46	68	21	47	174
1991	76	40	36	62	22	40	138
1992	133	72	61	74	36	38	207
1993	85	60	25	41	35	6	126
1994	122	68	54	70	38	32	192
1995	3	3	0	217	76	141	220
1996	24	21	3	302	130	172	326
1997	72	46	26	156	78	78	228
1998	72	34	38	144	89	55	216
1999	73	47	26	134	90	44	207
2000	136	86	50	132	78	54	268
2001	186	121	65	146	93	53	332

Casualties as a result of paramilitary-style attacks, 1973 to 2005[1]

	Shootings			*Assaults*[2]			
	Total	*By loyalist groups*[3]	*By republican groups*[3]	*Total*	*By loyalist groups*[3]	*By republican groups*[3]	*Total casualties (shootings and assaults)*
2002	173	117	56	139	89	50	312
2003	156	101	55	149	103	46	305
2004	112	89	23	115	74	41	227
2004[4]	94	72	22	89	62	27	183
2005[5]	65	56	9	77	51	26	142

n/a = Not available.
[1] Updated on 14 October 2005.
[2] Beatings.
[3] Attribution is as perceived by PSNI based on the information available and does not necessarily indicate the involvement of a paramilitary organisation.
[4] To 30 September 2004.
[5] To 30 September 2005.

Parking Tickets

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many parking tickets were issued in Lurgan in each of the last five years. [31273]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is provided in the following table.

Fixed penalty notices issued for parking in Lurgan

	FPNs issued
2001	292
2002	289
2003	396
2004	252
2005 (to 31 October 2005)	675

Pathologists

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pathologists were employed in Northern Ireland *(a)* in 2000 and *(b)* on the latest date for which figures are available. [30218]

Mr. Woodward: Information is only available on pathologists employed within the NI HPSS. This information is provided in the following table.

Number of pathologists by speciality employed within in the NI HPSS in September 2000 and September 2005

Headcount

	September 2000		*September 2005*	
	Consultant	*Specialist registrars (consultant trainees)*	*Consultant*	*Specialist registrars (consultant trainees)*
Histopathology/ neuropathology/ cytopathology	33	9	34	13
Haematology	16	7	17	13
Medical microbiology	13	5	13	7
Chemical pathology	7	3	8	5
Immunopathology	1	1	1	0
Total	70	25	73	38

Source:
DHSSPS

Pensions

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people *(a)* are of pensionable age and *(b)* receive a state pension in Northern Ireland. [31960]

Mr. Hanson: There are 275,247 people of pensionable age in Northern Ireland, 263,770 people are receiving retirement pension.

Polling Stations (Disabled Access)

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps the Government are taking to improve conditions for disabled voters at polling stations in Northern Ireland. [30146]

Mr. Hanson: This issue is an operational matter and is the responsibility of the Chief Electoral Officer who has written to the hon. Gentleman. The text of the letter is as follows.

"The Electoral Office keeps all polling places under constant review to ensure that disabled voters have where possible the same facilities and ease of access as able bodied voters. Where facilities are less than satisfactory, the Electoral Office has been working with the owners of such properties and with the Equality Commission to help the owners address their obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act. Unfortunately, some alterations do take time and often there are no ready alternative venues in the locality.

All polling stations in Northern Ireland are equipped with the new style of polling booth which incorporates a compartment with a lowered writing shelf suitable for wheelchair users. Large print versions of the ballot paper are displayed in all polling stations and each is equipped with a selector device so that visually impaired electors can vote without assistance if they so choose".

Poverty Statistics

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* children and *(b)* pensioners were living in poverty in each constituency in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [31274]

Mr. Hanson: This information is not available in the form requested. It is estimated that the total numbers of children and pensioners in Northern Ireland living in households with income after housing costs below 60 per cent. of the UK median were as follows:

Number living in households with income below 60 per cent. of UK median income after housing costs

	2002–03	*2003–04*
Children	112,800	108,100
Pensioners	42,400	47,100

Note:
Incomes are adjusted to take account of household structure.
Source:
NI Family Resources Survey 2002–03, 2003–04

Prisoner Assaults

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* prisoners and *(b)* prison officers in Northern Ireland were the victims of an assault by a prisoner in each of the last five years. [31283]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is shown in the following table:

Financial year	*Assaults on prison officers by prisoners*	*Assaults on prisoners by prisoners*
2000–01	46	63
2001–02	43	102
2002–03	28	48
2003–04	36	50
2004–05	8	11
April 2005 to date	3	2
Total	164	276

Over the years the number of assaults has shown a downward trend.

Prisons

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average daily cost of keeping a person in prison in Northern Ireland was during the latest period for which figures are available. [30273]

Mr. Woodward: In 2004–05, the average daily cost per prisoner place was £235. The Northern Ireland Prison Service does not collate figures for the average cost per prisoner.

Prostate Cancer

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many men have been diagnosed with prostate cancer in Northern Ireland, broken down by Health Board area in each year since 2001. [32107]

Mr. Woodward: The following table details the number of incidences of prostate cancer (ICD-10 C61) in Northern Ireland by Health Board since 2001.

	Year of diagnosis		
	2001	*2002*	*2003*
EHSSB	206	249	259
NHSSB	132	149	172
SHSSB	89	121	145
WHSSB	104	111	124
Unable to assign to Health Board	12	18	15
Total	543	648	715

This information has been provided by the Northern Ireland Cancer Registry and is the most up to date currently available.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funding has been provided for information leaflets advising men to seek medical help should they experience symptoms of prostate cancer in the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [32108]

Mr. Woodward: No specific funding has been earmarked by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety for the provision of information leaflets on prostate cancer. However, the Chief Medical Officer's (CMO) report of 2003 included a short article on prostate cancer. This Report was issued with every copy of the three main Northern Ireland newspapers sold on a particular day. In the article, inter alia, doctors were advised to ensure that men who asked for a Prostate Specific Antigen (PSA) test were properly informed about it, including the benefits and downside of the test. In November 2003, in a CMO update, which is sent to all doctors in Northern Ireland, they were told about an information pack, "Prostate Cancer Risk Management Programme", available from the Department of Health (L). Included in this pack are a supply of information leaflets for men considering a PSA test. The CMO's report of 2004 reiterated this information.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the survival rates have been of men diagnosed with prostate cancer since 2001 in each Health Board area of Northern Ireland. [32109]

Mr. Woodward: The Northern Ireland Cancer Registry (NICR) do not routinely produce relative survival rates for any cancer, by Health Board of Northern Ireland. The most recent relative survival rates (1-year and 5-year) for prostate cancer for the whole of Northern Ireland are outlined in the table. These figures are based on patients diagnosed in the period 1996–99 and followed up to the end of 2002.

1 and 5-year relative survival rates (percentage) (95 per cent. Confidence Intervals in brackets) for cancer of the prostate (15 to 99 years)

Diagnostic period	*1996–99*
1-year (95 per cent. CI)	84.9 (82.7, 86.8)
5-year (95 per cent. CI)	62.9 (59.4, 66.3)

This information has been provided by the Northern Ireland Cancer Registry and is the most up to date currently available.

Rail Services

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average daily travel time by train was between Belfast and *(a)* Coleraine and *(b)* Londonderry in each month between January and October. [30470]

Mr. Woodward: The average daily travel time between Belfast and *(a)* Coleraine and *(b)* Londonderry in each month between January and October is outlined in the following table:

Hours/minutes

	Belfast Central to Londonderry	*Londonderry to Belfast Central*	*Belfast Central to Coleraine*	*Coleraine to Belfast Central*
January	02.17	02.13	01.28	01.28
February	02.19	02.15	01.30	01.30
March	02.17	02.13	01.28	01.28
April	02.16	02.12	01.27	01.27
May	02.15	02.11	01.26	01.26
June	02.12	02.08	01.23	01.23
July	02.17	02.13	01.28	01.28
August	02.17	02.13	01.28	01.28
September	02.17	02.13	01.28	01.28
October	02.17	02.13	01.28	01.28

Railways

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the cost of providing a passing loop in the Ballykelly area for trains between Coleraine and Londonderry. [32562]

Mr. Woodward: No estimate has been made of the cost of providing a passing loop in the Ballykelly area on the Coleraine to Londonderry line.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many complaints from rail passengers there have been about *(a)* timings and *(b)* refreshments on the service between Coleraine and Londonderry in 2005. [32564]

Mr. Woodward: Translink has advised that, in 2005, it has received 29 complaints relating to timings on the rail service between Coleraine and Londonderry and eight complaints relating to refreshment services on the Londonderry line.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total cost has been of vandalism to the new trains acquired by Northern Ireland Railways since their introduction. [32565]

Mr. Woodward: To date the total cost of vandalism on the new Class 3000 fleet is £123,826.

Release under Licence

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people released under licence as part of the Belfast Agreement have *(a)* subsequently been re-arrested under the terms of their licence and *(b)* been re-released early. [32137]

Mr. Woodward: 15 persons who were released 'early' on their sentences under the Northern Ireland (Sentences) Act 1998 have subsequently had their licences suspended under the terms of the Act. One of these has since been released 'early' again on a Sentences Act licence.

Reoffending

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of young offenders re-offended in Northern Ireland in each year since 2001. [30131]

Mr. Hanson: Information is not available in the form requested. The most recent information available on reconviction rates for both juveniles and adults in Northern Ireland has been published by the Northern Ireland Office in two statistical bulletins in March 2005 ("Adult Reconviction in Northern Ireland 2001" and "Juvenile Reconviction in Northern Ireland 2001"). Copies of these bulletins are available in the Library.

Seconded Police Officers

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many members of the Police Service of Northern Ireland are on secondment to other police services. [31272]

Mr. Woodward: There are currently 17 members of the Police Service of Northern Ireland on secondment to other police services.

Sexual Health

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cases of sexually transmitted infections were diagnosed in each year since 1998, broken down by health board. [31958]

Mr. Woodward: The total number of recorded instances of sexually transmitted infections in each Health Board is not available. However, the total number recorded in Northern Ireland is available and is shown in the following table for the years 1998 to 2004.

	Number of sexually transmitted infections
1998	8,986
1999	10,169
2000	11,172
2001	11,300
2002	11,868
2003	11,547
2004	11,481

Notes:
1. The number of instances of sexually transmitted diseases is measured according to the number of attendances at Genito-Urinary Medicine clinics.
2. These totals contain conditions whose mode of transmission is not solely sexual.

Source:
Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre Northern Ireland (CDSC(NI)).

Sex Offenders

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many sex offenders are imprisoned in Northern Ireland. [31284]

Mr. Woodward: As of 24 November 2005 there were a total of 164 prisoners being held by the Northern Ireland Prison Service for offences under Schedule 3 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, of whom 135 have been sentenced and 29 are on remand.

Specialist Nurses

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what funding has been provided for additional specialist nurses to sufferers of *(a)* ulcerative colitis and *(b)* Crohn's disease in Northern Ireland. [32254]

Mr. Woodward: No recurrent funding has been specifically provided for additional specialist nurses to sufferers of ulcerative colitis or Crohn's Disease. However, funding of £30,000 has been provided for a Community Nursing Redesign Pilot Project, which is looking at a community nurse-led service to develop chronic disease management for patients with colorectal illnesses including ulcerative colitis and Crohn's disease. In addition, there are a number of trusts who employ "gastroenterology related" specialist nurses, part of whose remit is caring for patients with these conditions.

Terrorist-related Murders

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many terrorist related murders remain unsolved in Northern Ireland. [32136]

Mr. Woodward: There are almost 2,000 unsolved terrorist related murders in Northern Ireland.

Tonsil and Adenoid Removals

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children aged under 16 years in each health board area in Northern Ireland were discharged from hospital after removal of tonsils or adenoids in each of the last 12 months. [31950]

Mr. Woodward: The number of children aged under 16 years, in each health board area in Northern Ireland, discharged from hospital following a tonsillectomy or adenoidectomy, in each month during 2004–05 (the latest year for which information is available), is shown in the following table:

Discharges following a tonsillectomy or adenoidectomy performed on children aged under 16

Number

Month of Discharge	*EHSSB*	*NHSSB*	*SHSSB*	*WHSSB*	*Unassigned*
2004					
April	67	54	54	24	3
May	82	38	51	34	4
June	72	52	48	26	3
July	70	32	38	47	1
August	66	43	44	30	4
September	70	48	62	29	2
October	88	35	56	33	1
November	103	41	47	38	8
December	73	27	43	25	4
2005					
January	80	25	50	33	10
February	58	40	52	32	6
March	81	40	48	76	4

Under-age Drinking

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many prosecutions were brought against *(a)* public houses and *(b)* nightclubs in Northern Ireland for supplying alcohol to under-age purchasers in each of the last three years. [30691]

Mr. Hanson: It is not possible to identify separately prosecutions brought against public houses and those against nightclubs. The prosecutions included in the table are for the offences of "selling intoxicating liquor to a minor" and "licensee selling intoxicating liquor to minor" also meaning that the prosecutions could be against any licensed premises and not just public houses or nightclubs.

It should be noted that the court data is recorded on a principal offence rule, so that where proceedings involve more than one offence dealt with at the same time, only the principal offence is recorded (i.e. that attracting the most severe penalty).

The figures cover the period 2001 to 2003 (2003 being the most up-to-date available). Data relating to 2004 will be available in early 2006.

Prosecutions for supplying alcohol to under-age purchasers 2001 to 2003

	Number of prosecutions
2001	1
2002	4
2003	5

Source:
Northern Ireland Office

Water Supplies

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average levels of reservoir water supplies in Northern Ireland during October were in each of the last five years. [32219]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Executive of Water Service (Mrs. Katharine Bryan) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Mrs. Katharine Bryan to Mr. Gregory Campbell, dated 28 November 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about the average levels of reservoir water supplies in Northern Ireland during October in each of the last five years (32219). I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Water Service.

Water Service has 21 impounding reservoirs which provide a maximum usable storage capacity of around 63,700 megalitres. The average water levels during October, as a percentage of the total maximum reservoir useable storage, for each of the last five years, are as follows:

	Percentage
2001	59.7
2002	83.6
2003	57.5
2004	79.9
2005	70.8

Impounding reservoirs provide just under 50% of total water supplies. The remaining supplies come from Loughs (mainly Lough Neagh), rivers and borewells. Current water supply levels in the reservoirs are considered satisfactory.

Travellers

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on unauthorised Traveller encampments in Northern Ireland. [31984]

Mr. Hanson: I am aware of the impact of unauthorised encampments on settled communities, and I appreciate the desire for measures to deal with the affects of such unauthorised encampments. It was for this reason the Unauthorised Encampments (Northern Ireland) Order 2005, was introduced and it includes provisions aimed at combating unauthorised encampments. However, the operation of the order cannot be fully effective if sufficient sites for Travellers are not available. Accordingly, I have decided to defer bringing the substantive provisions of the order into effect until I am satisfied that an adequate number of transit sites is operational in Northern Ireland.

I am pressing the Housing Executive to ensure the necessary sites are available as soon as possible. I anticipate that five sites will be operational by next summer by which time I will review the situation with a view to enabling the necessary provisions. I believe this represents a fair and balanced approach.

HEALTH

0870 Numbers

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the occasions in the last five years on which 0870 telephone numbers have been used by her Department as contact numbers for members of the public; and how much revenue was received from the use of 0870 contact numbers in each of the last five years for which records are available. [24465]

Jane Kennedy: The Department is aware that a publications order line intended for national health service and social care professionals is sometimes used by members of the public.

Otherwise, the Department has not used any 0870 telephone numbers as contact numbers for members of the public during this period.

999 Calls (Response)

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many 999 calls were first responded to by *(a)* St. John's ambulances and *(b)* other non-NHS organisation ambulances in (i) England and (ii) each ambulance trust in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [27048]

Mr. Byrne: Information on St. John's ambulances and other non-national health service ambulance organisations is not collected centrally.

Abortion

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the submissions to the Lane Committee on Abortion are in the public domain; and if she will make a statement. [30409]

Caroline Flint: The report of the committee on the working of the Abortion Act, chaired by the hon. Mrs. Justice Lane DBE, was published in 1974. A list of those who submitted evidence was published at the time but the report states that

> "All written and oral evidence and answers to questionnaires were invited on the basis that they would be treated as confidential to the Committee."

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the files held by her Department relating to the *(a)* Abortion (Amendment) Bill of the 1974–75 Session and *(b)* Abortion (Amendment) Bill of the 1976–77 Session are in the public domain; and if she will make a statement. [30410]

Caroline Flint: The files relating to these Bills are not in the public domain.

Adolescent Mental Health

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many adolescent mental health beds there are in *(a)* Kent and *(b)* each county in England; and if she will make a statement. [29287]

Mr. Byrne: Information is not available in the form requested.

The 2004 child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) mapping exercise collected information on the number of beds commissioned for tier 4 in-patient care. It found that 665 beds had been commissioned in England and of these seven had been commissioned by the CAMHS partnerships in the Kent and Medway strategic health authority area. Further details of the mapping data can be found at www.camhsmapping.org.uk/.

Because the data were collated with reference to the commissioning body, the beds will not necessarily be in the same area.

Alzheimer's Disease

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will take steps to ensure that people with Alzheimer's disease have access to *(a)* clinically effective and *(b)* cost effective drug treatment on the NHS; [26396]

(2) what discussions she has had with professional bodies about the impact of withdrawing drug treatments for people with Alzheimer's disease from NHS prescription. [26394]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* This is a matter for the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE).

NICE has not issued final revised guidance on drugs for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease. Until it does so, the guidance it issued in 2001 remains in force and those benefiting from the drugs in question will continue to do so. NICE is currently reviewing its guidance.

Avian Influenza

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of potential fatalities from avian influenza before the population has been fully vaccinated. [21597]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Avian influenza is a disease which mainly affects birds, with infrequent cases in those people who are closely exposed to infected poultry. As of 9 November 2005 only 125 people have been infected by avian flu, all of them in Asia where people live very closely with poultry. Of those, 64 have died. There have been no confirmed cases of human to human transmission.

Our present strategy is risk based and there is no evidence that there is at present an elevation of risk to United Kingdom (UK) poultry workers. Because there is a very low risk to humans in the UK. We are not planning to vaccinate the population against the current circulating strain of avian influenza.

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research the Department is funding to assess the pathogenicity of the H5NI virus; and if she will make a statement. [19232]

Mr. Bradshaw: I have been asked to reply.

Defra currently fund a wide ranging programme of research that is aimed toward improving our understanding of Avian influenza (AI) and effective methods of its prevention and control.

An important aspect of this is to understand the pathogenesis of the disease.

Within the research programme, projects are currently underway to examine the pathogenesis and transmission characteristics of the virus within poultry. Other projects are addressing the issue at a more fundamental level, to examine the genetic characteristics of the virus that associate with pathogenicity and cross species transmission.

The Department currently spend £463,000 per annum on Avian influenza research.

Bournemouth and Christchurch NHS

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the costs of running Bournemouth and Christchurch NHS Trust have been in each of the last five financial years. [30331]

Caroline Flint: Information showing data for 2000–01 to 2004–05, which is the latest year for which information is available, is shown in the table.

Running costs are not identified within the accounts of national health service trusts. Figures shown are the total operating expenses of the Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals NHS Trust, which is closest to the information requested.

Total operating expenses of the Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals NHS Trust

	£000
2000–01	96,993
2001–02	106,117
2002–03	118,520
2003–04	129,097
2004–05	148,152

Note:
This trust moved to Foundation status as of 1 April 2005 and so comparable figures will not be available from the Department for 2005–06.
Source:
Audited summarisation schedules of the Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals NHS Trust

Breast Cancer

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many women in England aged 40 to 49 years with a family history of breast cancer received a mammogram in the last 12 months; [27335]

(2) how many women there are in England aged 40 to 49 years with a family history of breast cancer. [27336]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Data on the number of women aged 40 to 49 in England and Wales who have a family history of breast cancer and the number of these women who received a mammogram in the last year are not collected centrally. However, we do know that the proportion of cases of breast cancer that have an inherited component is small, at less than 10 per cent. of total cases.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) published a clinical guideline on familial breast cancer in May 2004. They recommended that women at moderate risk or greater should receive annual mammography. NICE estimated that an annual surveillance service for women aged 40 to 49 years at a moderate or greater risk of familial breast cancer would require an additional 21,000 mammograms a year.

NICE clinical guidelines are covered by the Department's developmental standards, standards which the national health service is expected to achieve over time. The Healthcare Commission has responsibility for assessing progress towards achieving these standards.

Cancelled Operations/Appointments

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on progress towards reducing cancelled operations and appointments at NHS units in the Hemel Hempstead constituency in the last 12 months. [30118]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information relating to the number of cancelled appointments in national health service units within the Hemel Hempstead constituency is not held centrally.

The following table shows the number of cancelled operations at West Hertfordshire hospitals NHS trust, of which Hemel Hempstead constituency is a part, over the last 12 months.

Number of cancelled operations at West Hertfordshire hospitals NHS trust.

West Hertfordshire hospitals NHS trust	*Number of last minute cancellations for non clinical reasons in the quarter*	*Number of patients not admitted within 28 days of cancellation on the day of surgery*
2005–06		
Quarter 1	99	22
2004–05		
Quarter 4	160	38
Quarter 3	189	30
Quarter 2	153	27
Quarter 1	164	29

Notes:
1. A last minute cancellation is one that occurs on the day the patient was due to arrive, after they have arrived in hospital or on the day of their operation. For example, you are to be admitted to hospital on a Monday for an operation scheduled for the following day (Tuesday). If the hospital cancels your operation for non-clinical reasons on the Monday then this would count as a last minute cancellation. This includes patients who have not actually arrived in hospital and have been telephoned at home prior to their arrival.
2. Some common non-clinical reasons for cancellations by the hospital include: ward beds unavailable; surgeon unavailable; emergency case needing theatre; theatre list over-ran; equipment failure; admin error; anaesthetist unavailable; theatre staff unavailable; and critical care bed unavailable. These examples are based on information from the Modernisation Agency's Theatres Project and do not necessarily cover all non-clinical reasons.
Source:

QMCO

Cancer Screening

Frank Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which institutions in the NHS are responsible for surveillance of the accuracy and integrity of *(a)* breast and *(b)* cervical cancer screening arrangements. [30475]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* Quality assurance in the national health service breast screening programme and the NHS cervical screening programme aims to maintain standards and continue improvement in the performance of all aspects of the programmes in order to ensure that women have access to a high quality service wherever they live. Quality assurance has always been a fundamental part of the programmes.

Responsibility and resources for screening quality assurance rest with the Regional Directors of Public Health, who have all the necessary authority to secure quality assurance. Where necessary they are able to close screening units down which fail to meet national standards.

The Government spends £8 million per year on quality assurance for the breast and cervical screening programmes. Eight regional quality assurance reference centres provide the service, overseen nationally by the NHS cancer screening programme.

Care Homes

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many care homes *(a)* exceeded, *(b)* met, *(c)* almost met and *(d)* failed to meet (i) the national minimum standard for complaints procedures and (ii) Regulation (A) 5 and (B) 6 of the Care Home Regulations 2001 in each of the last five years. [22378]

Mr. Byrne: I understand from the Chair of the Commission for Social Care Inspection, that data is collected on how care homes are meeting the national minimum standards. How care homes have met these standards is shown in the tables. Regulations 5, 5A and 6 set out requirements on information to be provided to the service users. Regulation 22 sets out requirements for the complaints procedure. Compliance with these regulations is a legal condition that must be met in order for a home to be registered.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many beds in care homes there were in *(a)* Hertfordshire and *(b)* Dacorum in each year since 1997; and if she will make a statement. [27772]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The number of beds in Hertfordshire in each year since 1997 is shown in tables one and two. Data for Dacorum are not collected separately but are included in the Hertfordshire figures.

Table one shows the number of care home places open in Hertfordshire for adults aged 18 and over, at 31 March for the years 1997 to 2001. Table two shows the number of care home places registered for adults aged 18 and over, at 31 March for the years 2003 to 2005.

Data for 2001 and 2002 are not available. The data from before 2002 are not comparable to the data after 2002. This is because the Department's data up to 31 March 2001 are based on the number of care homes open as at 31 March, whereas the Commission for Social Care Inspection data from 1 April 2002 are based on the number of care homes registered as at 31 March.

Table 1: Number of care home places open for adults aged 18 and over in Hertfordshire 1997–2001[1]

Rounded numbers

At 31 March	*Number of places*
1997	7,000
1998	8,100
1999	8,600
2000	8,800
2001	[2]—

[1] Includes residential homes, nursing homes and mental nursing homes.
[2] Not available.
Note:
Residential care home places relates to Hertfordshire council with Social Services responsibilities; nursing home places relate to East and North Hertfordshire and West Hertfordshire Health Authorities.
Source:
RA and RH(N)

Table 2: Number of care home places registered for adults aged 18 and over in Hertfordshire

Rounded numbers

At 31 March	*Number of places*
2003[1]	7252
2004	7342
2005	7419

Note:
Excludes some local authority homes which were open but not registered.
Source:
CSCI

Carers

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) who the lead official is in respect of matters relating to carers within the Department; [28604]

(2) to whom representations and submissions on good practice in relation to carers should be addressed within her Department; [28607]

(3) what steps she is taking to *(a)* co-ordinate and *(b)* monitor the implementation of the national carers strategy; and who within her Department is responsible in each case. [28608]

Mr. Byrne: The Department is tackling the issue of carers support identified in the national carers strategy across a broad front. We are investing a substantial sum to help councils support carers with short breaks and other services. The carers grant is worth £185 million in 2005–06 and will continue at this rate until at least 2007–08. We also continue to fund and work closely with carers organisations.

The Department has also supported legislation which gives carers more rights including, for the first time, the right to an assessment of their own needs independent of the service user.

In addition, we recognised the need to strengthen and update the carers performance indicator in order to collect better data on support for carers.

Within the Department, responsibility for carers policy falls to the Policy Management Unit in the Care Services Directorate.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the likely impact on carers of the work of the Social Care Institute for Excellence. [28605]

Mr. Byrne: The Social Care Institute for Excellence have recently designed and published an on line guide primarily for the social care managers and practitioners responsible for the implementation of the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004. The essential steps and many of the practice points throughout the guide will be useful to those responsible for strategic planning and commissioning. Practitioners will need the support of senior and line managers and an appropriate framework to enable them to help carers. The guide will also be useful for carers, people who use social services and professionals from other organisations that support carers.

This work is in addition to SCIE's "Practice guide on assessing the mental health needs of older people", which was published in January 2003. This guide gives an overview of information and current practice to all those involved in assessing the social care needs of older people with mental health needs. It supports the fundamentals of good assessment practice, giving access to the information and skills that inform sound judgments in the support of service users and carers. It shows users and carers where they can find out more and what they are entitled to expect from their contact with assessors.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to monitor the *(a)* implementation and *(b)* impact of the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004. [28606]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 23 November 2005 to the hon. Member for Torbay (Mr. Sanders), *Official Report*, column 2103W.

Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the budget deficit is for each hospital in the Cheshire and Merseyside strategic health authority. [26378]

Mr. Byrne: The latest financial year for which the audited financial information of all national health service organisations, strategic health authorities, primary care trusts and NHS trusts, is available is 2004–05. The final position for NHS trusts for 2004–05 in the Cheshire and Merseyside SHA is shown in the following table.

£000

NHS trust name	*Retained surplus/(deficit)*
Southport And Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust	(1,189)
The Cardiothoracic Centre—Liverpool NHS Trust	0
Royal Liverpool Broadgreen Hospitals NHS Trust	0
Aintree Hospitals NHS Trust	7
Liverpool Women's Hospital NHS Trust	7
St. Helens And Knowsley Hospitals NHS Trust	9
Mersey Care NHS Trust	9
Royal Liverpool Children's NHS Trust	10
Walton Neurology Centre NHS Trust	10
Cheshire And Wirral Partnership NHS Trust	13
Mersey Regional Ambulance Service NHS Trust	15
East Cheshire NHS Trust	24
Wirral Hospital NHS Trust	25
The Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Trust	31
Clatterbridge Centre For Oncology NHS Trust	32
5 Boroughs Partnership NHS Trust	38
North Cheshire Hospitals NHS Trust	84

Note:
A copy of this information is available in the Library. It is also available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/FreedomOfInformation/ClassesOfInformation/fs/en

Source:
Audited NHS Trust Summarisation Schedules 2004–05.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans are being considered by Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority for the reconfiguration of acute trusts; who has been consulted on such plans; when it is intended to discuss such plans with hon. Members; and what public consultation will be undertaken before decisions are taken. [30715]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 22 November 2005]:* The Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority (SHA) reports that it has commissioned independent consultants to work with national health service trusts to develop a coherent strategy that would enable all organisations in its area to achieve foundation trust status. At this time, the SHA does not have any plans to re-configure the acute trusts in its area.

Child Epilepsy

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the incidence of child epilepsy; and what courses of treatment have been made available in the last three years. [29532]

Mr. Byrne: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has estimated that there are between 4,000 and 14,000 new consultations per year in the United Kingdom for epilepsy in children.

The NICE guidance, "The diagnosis and care of children and adults with epilepsy" published in October 2004, and "Newer drugs for epilepsy in children", published in April 2004 contain information on the latest treatments. Copies are available at NICE'S website at www.nice.org.uk.

Child Protection

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department is taking to link designated professional staff for the protection of children from abuse and neglect to Local Safeguarding Children Board areas. [27240]

Mr. Byrne: Consultation on revising the Government guidance on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, "Working Together to Safeguard Children" finished on 28 October. The Government plan to publish a revised version. The guidance is expected to make it clear that designated health professionals are a key part of local safeguarding arrangements and are a vital source of professional advice on child protection matters to other professionals, the primary care trust (PCT) and to the local authority children's services departments. Chapter three of that guidance is about the role of local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs), which will be set up under sections 13–16 of the Children Act. Each strategic health authority, PCT, NHS trust or NHS foundation trust will be required to link up with the local authority and other key stakeholders, as set out in the Children Act 2004, who cover the same areas in order to establish a LSCB by April 2006.

Community Health Council Buildings

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list former Community Health Council buildings still used by health authorities; and what their current use is in each case. [28737]

Jane Kennedy: No former community health council buildings are used by strategic health authorities.

Consultant Referrals

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the operation of the Department's 17 weeks maximum waiting time for consultant to consultant referrals. [18584]

Mr. Byrne: The current waiting time target of 17 weeks does not include consultant to consultant referrals, but relates to the maximum waiting time from general practitioner referral to a first outpatient appointment with a consultant. However, by December 2008 no patient will have to wait more than 18 weeks from general practitioner referral to start of hospital treatment.

The Department recently launched a listening exercise on the principles and definitions underpinning the 18 week commitment which will run until 8 December 2005. This includes proposals on the management of consultant to consultant referrals. Copies of this document are available in the Library.

The Department will publish the final principles and definitions in early 2006.

Continuing Care

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research she has commissioned on the trends in the *(a)* duration of a continuing care episode and *(b)* the cost of providing continuing care since NHS continuing care was introduced; and what research she has evaluated in this area. [28701]

Mr. Byrne: Research has not been commissioned on these particular areas because their unpredictable nature makes it extremely difficult to establish any useful trends.

There is no way to estimate with any precision the average duration of an episode of this type. Durations are likely to vary considerably, ranging from individuals with a life expectancy of just a few days, to those who remain in continuing care for extended periods. Costs associated with providing continuing care will also vary greatly between individuals, their care packages and location.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much Hampshire county council pays to fund each continuing care patient. [29187]

Caroline Flint: Nothing. Continuing care is paid for by the relevant primary care trust.

Dentistry

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 260W, on dentistry, for what reasons the figures for NHS dentists in each primary care trust were not provided; and when she will provide the figures. [26139]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The figures for national health service dentists in each primary care trust were not provided because this is not information that is collected by the Department.

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists have left the NHS *(a)* in each year since 1995 and *(b)* in 2005 to date; what research her Department has undertaken into the main reasons for leaving; and what action her Department is taking to reduce these numbers. [26806]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the table.

Number of dentists who have left the general dental services (GDS) and personal dental services (PDS) in England as at 30 September each year

	Leavers
1995	910
1996	821
1997	947
1998	972
1999	1,037
2000	1,206
2001	1,207
2002	1,352
2003	1,236
2004	1,224
2005	1,097

A dentist is assumed to have left the national health service if they had an open GDS or PDS contract in September of the previous year but no GDS or PDS contract in September of the specified year.

The Department is introducing a major package of reforms from April 2006 that will allow primary care trusts to commission local dental services and more fully reflect local oral health needs. The reforms are also designed to make NHS dentistry more attractive to dentists by reducing their work load, providing the stability of a guaranteed annual NHS income, and offering more opportunities for preventative work.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of five-year-olds in West Lancashire have no decayed, filled or missing teeth. [28142]

Mr. Byrne: From the last NHS survey in 2003–04, 52 per cent. of five-year-old children in West Lancashire Primary Care Trust (PCT) were found to have no decayed, missing or filled teeth. This compares with 58 per cent. in 2001–02. In Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic Health Authority area the figure was 49.2 per cent. in 2003–04 and in England as a whole 61.3 per cent. None of the PCTs water supply is fluoridated.

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department is taking to *(a)* recruit and *(b)* retain dentists who register new NHS patients with particular reference to Braintree constituency. [21807]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department, as part of its recruitment of dentists from Poland, placed a dentist in a practice in Witham this summer.

Witham, Braintree and Halstead primary care trust (PCT) has received significant financial growth to expand local dental services under personal dental services (PDS) agreements, which now cover 16 per cent. of practices. The PCT has received £1.142 million growth funding for PDS in 2005–06. Not all these PDS agreements have yet started to accept patients.

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 12 September, *Official Report*, column 2670–71W, to the hon. Member for Northavon (Steve Webb), on NHS dentistry, whether her Department plans to collect this information centrally from primary care trusts from next April. [24104]

Ms Rosie Winterton: From next April, the responsibility for commissioning dental services will pass to local primary care trusts (PCTs). PCTs will set contracts with dentists for national health service services and at the same time agree the number of units of dental activity (UDAs) which the dentist should perform over the course of a year as part of that contract. This will provide PCTs with a measure of the overall commitment of their local dentists to NHS dental services, which could be used in the future to measure the overall commitment to the NHS. The Department has no current plans to monitor centrally the amount of time dentists in a PCT spend treating NHS patients.

Departmental Directors

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Health who the Director of Human Resources is in her Department; what relevant specialist qualifications he or she holds; and what the details are of his or her career to date. [26323]

Jane Kennedy: Dr. Anne Rainsberry is the Head of Corporate Human Resources in the Department. Dr. Rainsberry joined the civil service in 2001 after 15 years in the national health service. She is a member of the Chartered Institute of Personal Development (CIPD) and has worked in human resource for 19 years.

Andrew Foster CBE is the Director of Workforce in the Department's health and social care directorate. Mr. Foster spent 10 years in the NHS before joining the Department in 2001. He is a Fellow of the CIPD.

Departmental Vehicles

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many vehicles for which the Department is responsible are fitted with retreaded tyres. [17985]

Jane Kennedy: For information on the use of retread tyres in vehicles provided to the Department by the Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA) I refer the hon. Member to the letter of 11 October 2005 which he received from the Chief Executive of the GCDA, reference UIN15087 and UIN15088. Copies of this letter are available in the Library.

In addition to vehicles provided by the GCDA, the Department currently leases six vehicles. The policy of the schemes through which these cars are leased is that retread tyres are not used.

Direct Mail Contracts

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many contracts for direct mail were signed by her Department in *(a)* 2005–06 to date and *(b)* 2004–05; and what the value was in each case. [27816]

Jane Kennedy: The Department does not currently hold this type of information. It could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Erythropoietin

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence expects to publish the new appraisal consultation document for the use of erythropoietin in the treatment of cancer treatment-induced anaemia; [30303]

(2) why the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence has decided to review its appraisal consultation document for the use of erythropoietin in the treatment of cancer treatment-induced anaemia. [30304]

Jane Kennedy: I understand that the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) decided to review its appraisal consultation document on the use of erythropoietin at the second meeting of the independent advisory committee on technology appraisals. At the meeting, it was decided that some reanalysis of the evidence may be required. The project

specification for this work is currently being finalised and will be published on NICE's website at www.nice.org.uk shortly.

NICE expects to publish the new appraisal consultation document for erythropoietin in May 2006.

Funding (Milton Keynes)

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding was allocated by her Department to Milton Keynes for *(a)* capital projects and *(b)* revenue funding in each of the last five years. [23505]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Capital and revenue allocations are made to national health service organisations, strategic health authorities (SHAs) primary care trusts (PCTs) and NHS trusts and are not allocated on a constituency basis. The tables show the NHS bodies within the Milton Keynes area that have received capital and revenue funding.

Operational capital is allocated to all NHS trusts and PCTs. The funding is provided to maintain and enhance their existing capital stock. The allocations for the organisations in the Milton Keynes PCT area are shown in table 1.

Table 1. Allocations for Milton Keynes PCT

£000

Organisation	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06
Milton Keynes PCT	407	456	516
Milton Keynes General Hospitals NHS Trust	2,195	2,505	2,835
South Buckinghamshire NHS Trust	2,398	2,586	2,767
Stoke Mandeville Hospital NHS Trust	2,194	2,347	2,512
Buckinghamshire Mental Health NHS Trust	936	1,069	1,209
Two Shires Ambulance NHS Trust	1,009	1,080	1,155

Strategic capital is allocated to strategic health authorities to support larger scale investments. The allocations for the Thames Valley SHA is shown in table 2.

Table 2: Allocations for Thames Valley SHA

	£000
2003–04	20,612
2004–05	26,211
2005–06	28,172

Note:
Comparisons between allocations rounds cannot be made, for the following reasons:
Revenue allocations were made to health authorities for the period 2000–01 to 2002–03;
Changes are made to the weighted capitation formula for each allocations round, therefore, comparisons would not be on a like with like basis;
2003–06 revenue allocations were made direct to PCTs, for the first time, and were on a three yearly basis; and
2006–08 is the first year that Primary Medical Services (PMedS) were incorporated onto revenue allocations.

Prior to 2003–04, the Department allocated all NHS capital to the eight regional offices who had responsibility for distributing this funding to their health authorities.

NHS capital allocations have not been made for 2006–07 onwards.

The most recent round of revenue allocations, covering 2006–07 and 2007–08 was announced in February 2005. Revenue allocations made to Milton Keynes PCT for this period is shown in table 3.

Table 3: Revenue allocations to Milton Keynes PCT for 2006–07 and 2007–08

	£000
2006–07 allocation	247,043
2007–08 allocation	277,919
2 year increase	55,573
Increase over 2 years (percentage)	25.0

The 2003–04 to 2005–06 revenue allocations to PCTs were announced in December 2002. Revenue allocations made to Milton Keynes PCT for this period is shown in table 4.

Table 4. Revenue allocations to Milton Keynes PCT for 2003–04 to 2005–06

	£000
2003–04 allocation	167,638
2004–05 allocation	183,498
2005–06 allocation	200,679
3 year increase	47,844
Increase over 3 years (percentage)	31.30

Gas and Electricity Supplies

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 11 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 816W, on gas and electricity supplies, which NHS sites in England have interruptible energy contracts; how many NHS sites there are in England; what the length is of the period of notice which the energy supplier must give NHS sites under the contracts concluded by the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency before supplies are interrupted; and if she will make a statement on the contingency plans her Department has made to maintain energy supplies to all NHS sites this winter. [30733]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The number of national health service interruptible sites which are on centrally arranged purchasing and supply agency (PASA) contracts is 109 sites. A list of all sites is in the following table. There are approximately 15 to 20 other NHS sites on interruptible contracts that are not procured centrally.

NHS PASA has centrally arranged contracts for gas and electricity for approximately 6,500 NHS sites.

NHS sites on PASA contracts are on Transco interruptible contracts, not commercial contracts. They will only be asked to stop using supplies if there is a risk to the network, this varies from commercial contracts which are based on interruption or turn down at the supplier's request based on price. It is the supplier's responsibility to pass on notice to interrupt from Transco to the site, and the site would be expected to be given four hours' notice.

In line with shifting the balance of power, sites have responsibility for local contingency arrangements, and some sites have alternative fuels that can be used in the event of an emergency. At a national level the Department is in regular communication with suppliers and the DTI emergency planning group to ensure that needs and requirements of the NHS are recognised in the event of an emergency.

Gas supply	Trust name	Branch name	Address 1	Address 2	Address 3	Town
Interruptible	Aintree Hospitals NHS Trust	University Hospital Aintree	Longmoor Lane			Liverpool
Interruptible	Airedale NHS Trust	Airedale General Hospital	Skipton Road			Keighley
Interruptible	Barnet PCT	Edgware Community Hospital	(Boiler House)			Edgware
Interruptible	Barnsley Hospital NHS Foundation Trust	Barnsley District General Hospital	Gawber Road			Barnsley
Interruptible	Barts and The London NHS Trust	London Chest Hospital	Bonner Road	Bethnal Green		London
Interruptible	Barts and The London NHS Trust	London Hospital (Whitechapel)	Whitechapel			London
Interruptible	Barts and The London NHS Trust	St. Bartholomews Hospital	West Smithfield			London
Interruptible	Basildon and Thurrock University Hospitals NHS Trust	Basildon Hospital	Nethermayne			Basildon
Interruptible	Benenden Hospital Trust	Benenden Hospital	Goddards Green Road	Benenden		Cranbrook
Interruptible	Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust	Princess Royal Hospital	Lewes Road			Haywards Heath
Interruptible	Bromley Hospitals NHS Trust	Princess Royal University Hospital	Farnborough Common			Orpington
Interruptible	Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Addenbrookes Hospital	Hills Road			Cambridge
Interruptible	Cambridge University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	Fulbourn Hospital	Cambridge Road	Fulbourn		Cambridge
Interruptible	Camden PCT	St. Pancras Hospital	4 St Pancras Way			London
Interruptible	Chelsea and Westminster Healthcare NHS Trust	Chelsea and Westminster Hospital	Carillion Services	369 Fulham Road		London
Interruptible	City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Trust	Sunderland Royal Hospital	Kayll Road			Sunderland
Interruptible	Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Trust	Countess of Chester Hospital	Countess of Chester Health Park	Liverpool Road		Chester
Interruptible	County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	Bishop Auckland General Hospital	Cockton Hill Road			Bishop Auckland
Interruptible	County Durham and Darlington Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	Marrion Centre and Main Kitchen	Darlington Memorial Hospital	Hollyhurst Road		Darlington
Interruptible	East and North Hertfordshire NHS Trust	Lister Hospital	Coreys Mill Lane			Stevenage
Interruptible	East Kent Hospitals NHS Trust	Kent and Canterbury Hospital	Ethelbert Road			Canterbury
Interruptible	East Kent Hospitals NHS Trust	Queen Elizabeth The Queen Mother Hospital	St. Peters Road			Margate
Interruptible	East Kent Hospitals NHS Trust	William Harvey Hospital	Kennington Road	Willesborough		Ashford
Interruptible	East Somerset NHS Trust	Yeovil District Hospital	Higher Kingston			Yeovil
Interruptible	East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust	Conquest Hospital	The Ridge			St. Leonards on Sea
Interruptible	East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust	Eastbourne D G H	Kings Drive			Eastbourne
Interruptible	Epsom and St. Helier NHS Trust	Epsom General Hospital	Dorking Road			Epsom
Interruptible	Epsom and St. Helier NHS Trust	St. Helier Hospital	Wrythe Lane			Carshalton
Interruptible	Frimley Park Hospitals NHS Trust	Frimley Park Hospital	Portsmouth Road	Frimley		Camberley
Interruptible	Gateshead Health NHS Trust	Queen Elizabeth Hospital	Old Durham Road			Gateshead
Interruptible	George Eliot Hospital NHS Trust	George Eliot Hospital	College Street			Nuneaton
Interruptible	Good Hope Hospital NHS Trust	Good Hope Hospital	Rectory Road			Sutton Coldfield
Interruptible	Guy's and St. Thomas' Hospital Trust	Guy's Hospital	Boiler House	Great Maze Pond		London
Interruptible	Guy's and St. Thomas' Hospital Trust	St. Thomas' Hospital	Works Dept	Basement East Wing	Lambeth Palace Road	London
Interruptible	Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust	Charing Cross Hospital	Fulham Palace Road	Hammersmith		London
Interruptible	Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust	Hammersmith Hospital	150 Du Cane Road	Hammersmith		London

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Gas supply	Trust name	Branch name	Address 1	Address 2	Address 3	Town
Interruptible	Harrogate Health Care NHS Trust	Harrogate District Hospital	Lancaster Park Road			Harrogate
Interruptible	Hillingdon Hospital NHS Trust	Hillingdon Hospital	Pield Heath Road			Uxbridge
Interruptible	Ipswich Hospital NHS Trust	Ipswich Hospital	Heath Road			Ipswich
Interruptible	Kettering General Hospital NHS Trust	Kettering General Hospital	Rothwell Road			Kettering
Interruptible	Kings College Hospital NHS Trust	Dulwich Hospital (South Wing)	South Wing	East Dulwich Grove		London
Interruptible	Kings College Hospital NHS Trust	Kings College Hospital	Bessemer Road	Denmark Hill		London
Interruptible	Kingston Hospital NHS Trust	Kingston Hospital	Galsworthy Road			Kingston-on-Thames
Interruptible	Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust	Chapel Allerton Hospital	Harehills Lane			Leeds
Interruptible	Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust	Cookridge and Ida Hospitals	Otley Old Road	Cookridge		Leeds
Interruptible	Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust	Seacroft Hospital	York Road			Leeds
Interruptible	Leeds Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust	St. James Hospital	Beckett Street			Leeds
Interruptible	Lewisham Hospital NHS Trust	Lewisham Hospital	Lewisham High Street	Lewisham		London
Interruptible	Maidstone and Tunbridge Wells NHS Trust	Maidstone Hospital	Hermitage Lane	Barming		Maidstone
Interruptible	Mayday Healthcare NHS Trust	Mayday University Hospital	London Road			Croydon
Interruptible	Medway NHS Trust	Medway Maritime Hospital	Windmill Road			Gillingham
Interruptible	Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Trust	Leighton Hospital	Middlewich Road			Crewe
Interruptible	Mid Staffordshire General Hospitals NHS Trust	Staffordshire General Hospital	Weston Road			Stafford
Interruptible	Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	Dewsbury District Hospital	Halifax Road			Dewsbury
Interruptible	Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	Pinderfields General Hospital	Aberford Road			Wakefield
Interruptible	Newcastle North Tyneside and Northumberland Mental Health Trust	St. Nicholas Hospital	Jubilee Road	Gosforth		Newcastle Upon Tyne
Interruptible	North Bristol NHS Trust	Southmead Hospital	Southmead Road	W.O.T.		Bristol
Interruptible	North Cheshire Hospitals NHS Trust	Warrington D G H	Lovely Lane			Warrington
Interruptible	North Cumbria Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	Cumberland Infirmary	Newtown Road			Carlisle
Interruptible	North Cumbria Acute Hospitals NHS Trust	West Cumberland Hospital	Hensingham			Whitehaven
Interruptible	North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust	University Hospital of Hartlepool	Holdforth Road			Hartlepool
Interruptible	North Tees and Hartlepool NHS Trust	University Hospital of North Tees	Boiler House	Hardwick Estate		Stockton on Tees
Interruptible	Northampton General Hospital NHS Trust	Northampton General Hospital	Cliftonville			Northampton
Interruptible	Northern Devon Healthcare NHS Trust	North Devon District Hospital	Raleigh Park			Barnstaple
Interruptible	Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Trust	Diana Princess of Wales Hospital	Scartho Road			Grimsby
Interruptible	Northern Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Trust	Scunthorpe General Hospital	Cliff Gardens			Scunthorpe
Interruptible	Northumbria Healthcare NHS Trust	North Tyneside General Hospital	Rake Lane			North Shields
Interruptible	Norwich PCT	Norwich Community Hospital	Bowthorpe Road			Norwich
Interruptible	Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust	John Radcliffe Hospital	Headley Way			Oxford
Interruptible	Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust	Radcliffe Infirmary	Woodstock Road			Oxford
Interruptible	Peterborough Hospitals NHS Trust	Peterborough District Hospital	Thorpe Road			Peterborough
Interruptible	Poole Hospital NHS Trust	Poole General Hospital	Longfleet Road			Poole
Interruptible	Portsmouth City PCT	St. James Hospital	Locksway Road	Milton		Portsmouth
Interruptible	Portsmouth Hospitals NHS Trust	Queen Alexandra Hospital	Southwick Hill Road	Cosham		Portsmouth
Interruptible	Queen Elizabeth Hospital NHS Trust	Queen Elizabeth Hospital	Stadium Road			London
Interruptible	Rotherham General Hospitals NHS Trust	Rotherham District General Hospital	Moorgate Road			Rotherham
Interruptible	Royal Berkshire and Battle Hospitals NHS Trust	Battle Hospital	Portman Road			Reading

Gas supply	Trust name	Branch name	Address 1	Address 2	Address 3	Town
Interruptible	Royal Berkshire and Battle Hospitals NHS Trust	Royal Berkshire Hospital	London Road			Reading
Interruptible	Royal Bournemouth and Christchurch Hospitals NHS Trust	Royal Bournemouth Hospital	Castle Lane East			Bournemouth
Interruptible	Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Trust	Harefield Hospital	Hill End Road	Harefield		Uxbridge
Interruptible	Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Trust	Royal Brompton Hospital	Fulham Road	Chelsea		London
Interruptible	Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust	Royal Free Hospital	Pond Street	Hampstead		London
Interruptible	Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Trust	Royal Surrey County Hospital	Egerton Road			Guildford
Interruptible	Royal United Hospital Bath NHS Trust	Royal United Hospital	Combe Park	Main Boiler House		Bath
Interruptible	Royal West Sussex NHS Trust	St. Richards Hospital	Spitalfield Lane			Chichester
Interruptible	Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust	Royal Shrewsbury Hospital (North)	Mytton Oak Road			Shrewsbury
Interruptible	South of Tyne and Wearside NHS Trust	Cherry Knowle Hospital	Stockton Road		Ryhope	Sunderland
Interruptible	South Tees Hospitals NHS Trust	James Cook University Hospital	Marton Road			Middlesbrough
Interruptible	South Tyneside Healthcare NHS Trust	South Tyneside District Hospital	Harton Lane			South Shields
Interruptible	South West Yorkshire Mental Health NHS Trust	Fieldhead Hospital	Ouchthorpe Lane	Stanley		Wakefield
Interruptible	Southend Hospital NHS Trust	Southend Hospital	Prittlewell Chase			Southend-on-Sea
Interruptible	St. George's Healthcare NHS Trust	St. George's Hospital	Main Supply (Boiler House)	Blackshaw Road	Tooting	London
Interruptible	St. Helens and Knowsley Hospitals NHS Trust	St. Helens Hospital	Marshalls Cross Road			St. Helens
Interruptible	St. Helens and Knowsley Hospitals NHS Trust	Whiston Hospital	Warrington Road	Whiston		Prescot
Interruptible	St. Mary's NHS Trust	St. Mary's Hospital	Praed Street	Paddington		London
Interruptible	United Bristol Healthcare NHS Trust	Boiler House	Bristol Royal Infirmary	Southwell Street		Bristol
Interruptible	United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust	Grantham and Dist. Hospital	101 Manthorpe Road			Grantham
Interruptible	United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust	Lincoln County Hospital	Greetwell Road			Lincoln
Interruptible	University College London Hospitals NHS Trust	The Middlesex Hospital	Mortimer Street			London
Interruptible	University College London Hospitals NHS Trust	University College Hospital	Huntley Street			London
Interruptible	University Hospital of North Staffordshire NHS Trust	City General Hospital	Newcastle Road			Stoke on Trent
Interruptible	University Hospital of North Staffordshire NHS Trust	North Staffs Royal Infirmary	Princes Road	Hartshill		Stoke on Trent
Interruptible	University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust	Glenfield General Hospital	Groby Road			Leicester
Interruptible	University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust	Leicester General Hospital	Gwendolen Road			Leicester
Interruptible	University Hospitals of Leicester NHS Trust	Leicester Royal Infirmary	Infirmary Square			Leicester
Interruptible	Walsall Hospitals NHS Trust	Walsall Manor Hospital	Moat Road			Walsall
Interruptible	West London Mental Health NHS Trust	Ealing General And St. Bernards Wing	Uxbridge Road			Southall
Interruptible	Whittington Hospital NHS Trust	Whittington Hospital	St. Marys Wing	Highgate Hill		London
Interruptible	Worthing and Southlands Hospital NHS Trust	Worthing Hospital	Lyndhurst Road			Worthing

General Dental Services Contract

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how her Department plans to inform *(a)* dentists and *(b)* patients about the new general dental services contract; and how much has been allocated to publicise the contract. [24560]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* The acting chief dental officer has written to all dentists, explaining the key messages of the new contracts. He is also holding regular meetings with groups of dentists across the country. The Department and the British Dental Association have met twice recently to discuss the new contracts. We have arranged articles in the dental press, recently issued extensive guidance to the national health service that included key messages to dentists and are holding six roadshows across England during November and December to build on the recent guidance.

The Department will produce an information leaflet for patients and a poster to explain the proposed banded system of patient charges for dentists to display in their surgeries.

General Medical Services Contract

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of the total number of points available for assessing practice remuneration under the General Medical Services contract is assigned to *(a)* severe mental illness, *(b)* coronary heart disease, *(c)* diabetes and *(d)* cancer. [28228]

Mr. Byrne: The total number of points available in the quality and outcomes framework, part of the general medical services contract for 2005–06 is 1,050. The points available for the named diseases shown in the table.

Disease	*Points*	*Percentage (per cent. of the total)*
Severe mental illness	[1]30	2.9
Coronary heart disease, including left ventricular disease	121	11.5
Diabetes	99	9.4
Cancer	12	1.14

[1] Plus an additional 11 points for lithium therapy.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the priority given to severe mental illness in the practice remuneration system of the general medical services contract. [28229]

Mr. Byrne: The quality and outcomes framework is part of the general medical services contract. For the current financial year severe mental illness has 30 points allocated, plus a further 11 for patients on lithium therapy.

The contract is currently being re-negotiated and the disease areas being covered in the updated framework will be announced at the conclusion of the negotiations.

General Practitioners

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the percentage change in payments to general practitioners following the introduction of the Quality and Outcomes Framework included in the new General Medical Services contract for General Practice has been in *(a)* England and *(b)* for Dacorum Primary Care Trust; and if she will make a statement. [27211]

Mr. Byrne: In 2004–05, in the year they were introduced, quality and outcomes framework payments for England accounted for about 9.5 per cent. of the total payments made by primary care trusts under the new general medical services contract.

For Dacorum PCT, figures held centrally indicate that about 11.3 per cent. of the total payments made by PCTs under the new general medical services contract relate to the quality and outcomes framework.

Information relating for Wales is a matter for the Welsh Assembly.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the oral answer from the Prime Minister of 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 302, to the right hon. Member for West Derbyshire (Mr. McLoughlin), what the evidential basis is for the statement about the pay of general practitioners compared with their European counterparts. [28365]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* The table shows the latest available comparisons published in 2005 between general practitioners (GPs) earnings in the UK compared against their European equivalents.

Evidence is taken from the research firm Stethos' recent GP survey and used by the British Medical Association in their memorandum of evidence to the Review Body on Doctors' and Dentists' Remuneration. The evidence indicates UK GP earnings are currently ranked the highest in Europe.

Net GP earnings across five European countries

Countries	£ *Net GP earnings*
France	42, 037
United Kingdom	49, 947
Germany	49, 299
Spain	25, 926
Italy	22, 607

GP/Dentist Registration

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many residents in West Lancashire constituency were registered with *(a)* a general practitioner and *(b)* an NHS dentist in each year since 1997. [28094]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the tables.

Table 1: Registered patients[1] for Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic Health Authority and West Lancashire Primary Care Trust, for 1997–2004—England

					Number (headcount)
		1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*
Q13	Cumbria and Lancashire	1,953,272	1,959,654	1,896,094	1,956,484
of which:					
5F3	West Lancashire PCT	—	—	—	—

		2001	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Q13	Cumbria and Lancashire	1,953,563	1,943,598	1,981,218	1,970,937
of which:					
5F3	West Lancashire PCT	109,448	111,587	112,187	110,550

'—' denotes data not applicable.

[1] Patients registered with general practitioners in the given PCT may be resident outside of the specific PCT geographical area.

Note:

Data as at 1 October 1997–99 and 30 September 2000–04.

Source:

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre General and Personal Medical Services Statistics.

Table 2: Number of residents in West Lancashire constituency registered with an NHS dentist as at 30 September

	Number of patients
1997	50,266
1998	43,526
1999	44,477
2000	46,552
2001	44,921
2002	46,830
2003	45,867
2004	48,293
2005	53,208

Notes:

1. Patients are included within the constituency area according to the postcode of the dental practice and not the patient's own home address.
2. Most Personal Dental Service schemes that have registrations have a re-registration period in excess of 15 months, so the figures for PDS schemes are generally higher than they would have been for the same attendance pattern under General Dental Service.
3. This information was provided by the Dental Practice Board and relates to patients registered with dentists whose practice address postcodes are within the constituency boundary.

Source:

Dental Practice Board

Health Funding (Hemel Hempstead)

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding was allocated by her Department to the Hemel Hempstead constituency for *(a)* capital projects and *(b)* revenue funding in each of the last eight years. [25733]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Capital and revenue allocations are made to NHS organisations, strategic health authorities, primary care trusts (PCTs) and NHS trusts and are not allocated on a constituency basis. The tables show the NHS bodies within the Hemel Hempstead constituency that have received capital and revenue funding.

The operational capital allocated to all organisations within the Dacorum PCT area are shown in table 1. The funding is provided to maintain and enhance their existing capital stock.

Table 1: Capital and revenue funding received—Dacorum PCT

Organisation	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*£000 2005–06*
Dacorum PCT	123	132	141
E & N Herts NHS Trust	4,262	4,560	4,880
West Hertfordshire Hospital NHS Trust	4,413	4,745	5,077
Beds & Herts Ambulance & Paramedic Services NHS Trust	1,179	1,346	1,523

Strategic capital is allocated to strategic health authorities to support larger scale investments. The allocations for the Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire SHA is shown in table 2.

Table 2: Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire SHA

	£000
2003–04	13,548
2004–05	15,310
2005–06	17,224

Note:

Comparisons between allocations rounds cannot be made, for the following reasons:

Revenue allocations were made to health authorities for the period 2000–01 to 2002–03;

Changes are made to the weighted capitation formula for each allocations round, therefore, comparisons would not be on a like-with-like basis;

2003–06 revenue allocations were made direct to PCTs, for the first time, and were on a three-yearly basis; and

2006–08 is the first year that Primary Medical Services (PMedS) were incorporated on to revenue allocations.

Prior to 2003–04, the Department allocated all NHS capital to the eight regional offices who had responsibility for distributing this funding to their health authorities. NHS capital allocations have not yet been made for 2006–07 onwards.

The most recent round of revenue allocations, covering 2006–07 and 2007–08 was announced in February 2005. Revenue allocations made to Dacorum PCT for this period is shown in table 3.

Table 3

	Dacorum PCT
2006–07 (£000)	165,791
2007–08 (£000)	180,733
Increase over 2 years (percentage)	18.5

The 2003–04 to 2005–06 revenue allocations to PCTs were announced in December 2002. Revenue allocations made to Dacorum PCT for this period is shown in table 4.

Table 4

	Dacorum PCT
2003–04 (£000)	115,040
2004–05 (£000)	126,173
2005–06 (£000)	138,186
Increase over 3 years (percentage)	31.8

Prior to 2003–04, revenue allocations were made direct to health authorities (HAs) on an annual basis. Revenue allocations made to HAs in the Hertfordshire area from 2000–01 to 2001–02 is shown in tables 5 and 6.

Table 5

Health authority	*2000–01 (£000)*	*Percentage increase*
2000–01 East & North Hertfordshire HA allocation	318,662	9.0
2000–01 West Hertfordshire HA allocation	346,924	8.6

Table 6

Health authority	*2001–02 (£000)*	*Percentage increase*
2001–02 East & North Hertfordshire HA allocation	348,992	8.8
2001–02 West Hertfordshire HA allocation	374,913	8.6

In 2002–03 there were several HA mergers. East and North Hertfordshire HA & West Hertfordshire HA became Hertfordshire HA. Revenue allocation made to Hertfordshire HA for 2002–03 is shown in table 7.

Table 7

	Hertfordshire HA
2002–03 (£000)	802,649
Percentage increase	9.6

Health Services (Uxbridge)

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time for an appointment to see a general practitioner was in *(a)* the parliamentary constituency of Uxbridge and *(b)* Greater London in each year since 1997 for which figures are available. [29766]

Jane Kennedy: The requested data are not collected or held centrally. Since 2001, data has been collected each month from primary care trusts and general practitioners on the availability of access to a general practitioner. This data show whether access is or is not available in line with the NHS Plan target that patients should be able to be seen within 48 hours but do not provide information on actual waiting times.

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average response time to an emergency call to the Ambulance Service was in *(a)* Uxbridge constituency and *(b)* each London borough in the last year for which figures are available. [29767]

Jane Kennedy: The information is not centrally collected in the requested format. The data that the Department collects on ambulance response times are published in tables 5a, 5b, 6 and 7 of the statistical bulletin, "Ambulance services, England: 2004–05", which is available in the Library and on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk.

Health Trust Funding

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what financial resources were made available to *(a)* Wellhouse Trust for financial year 1997–98, *(b)* Chase Farm Trust for financial year 1997–98, *(c)* Barnet Chase Farm Trust for 2005–06, *(d)* Barnet Health Authority for the financial year 1997–98 and *(e)* Barnet Primary Care Trust for 2005–06; and if she will make a statement. [26805]

Jane Kennedy: In 1997–98, the revenue allocation to Barnet Health Authority was £149.1 million.

From 2003–04 revenue allocations have been made to primary care trusts (PCTs). Barnet Primary Care Trust was allocated £361.1 million in 2005–06.

There are several reasons why comparisons between allocations rounds cannot be made, for example: changes are made to the weighted capitation formula for each allocations round, therefore, comparisons would not be on a like with like basis; and, 2006–08 is the first year that primary medical services (PMedS) were incorporated onto revenue allocations.

It is for PCTs, and was previously for health authorities, to determine how to use the funding allocated to them to commission services to meet the healthcare needs of their local total income, including all income from activities and all other operating income in 1997–98 for Chase Farm Hospitals National Health Service Trust and Wellhouse NHS Trust is shown in the table.

Organisation	*Total income 1997–98 (£000)*
Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust	56,876
Wellhouse NHS Trust	71,876

Source:
Audited summarisation schedules of the Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust and the Wellhouse NHS Trust 1997–98.

Allocations are now made to PCTs. PCTs were informed of their allocation for 2005–06 as part of the announcement of the 2003–04 to 2005–06 revenue allocations in December 2002. Information is therefore not currently available on the financial resources of Barnet Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust for 2005–06.

The latest year for which the audited financial information of all NHS organisations, strategic health authorities, PCTs and NHS trusts, is available is for 2004–05. The financial position of Barnet Chase Farm Hospitals NHS Trust in 2004–05 showed a breakeven position.

Health Workers (Coventry)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* dental nurses, *(b)* dental hygienists and *(c)* dental therapists there are in Coventry South. [29329]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 21 November 2005.]:* As of 30 September 2004 there were two qualified dental therapists in the Coventry South constituency area.

Information about the number of dental nurses and dental hygienists is not held centrally.

Source:
Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census.

Healthcare Professionals Recruitment

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent representations she has received from *(a)* healthcare recruitment agencies, *(b)* developing countries and *(c)* representatives of health workers regarding the Code of Practice for the International Recruitment of Healthcare Professionals. [24208]

Mr. Byrne: The Secretary of State has received no recent representations from individual healthcare recruitment agencies or developing countries. Representations regarding this issue have been received within the last three months from representatives of health workers.

Hemel Hempstead Hospital

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, if she will list the posts that will be lost at Hemel Hempstead Hospital under the proposed plans to close all acute services at the hospital; and if she will make a statement. [30260]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The reconfiguration of health services in Hertfordshire is a matter for Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire strategic health authority to agree upon, in partnership with the primary care trusts within the two counties. This major reconfiguration of services, known locally as "Investing in Your Health", was consulted on in 2003, and the strategic health authority is currently compiling an outline business case which is expected to be submitted to the Department in January 2006.

Hospital-acquired Infections

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of *(a)* MRSA and *(b)* other antibiotic resistant bacteria infections there have been at the Norfolk and Norwich hospital in *(a)* private and *(b)* NHS patients in each of the last five years; and what the average number per acute hospital in England in each category was over the same period. [28498]

Jane Kennedy: The best data available are from the mandatory surveillance system which started in April 2001. Reports of meticillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) blood stream infections in the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital National Health Service Trust are shown in the table. The table also shows the trust and national rate per 1,000 bed days as this is a more reliable benchmark than an average number of reports.

Reports of MRSA at Norfolk and Norwich hospital

	April 2001 to March 2002	*April 2002 to March 2003*	*April 2003 to March 2004*	*April 2004 to March 2005*
Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital NHS Trust Number of reports	62	57	64	58
Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital NHS Trust Rate per 1,000 bed days	0.22	0.19	0.20	0.18
National rate per 1,000 bed days	0.17	0.17	0.18	0.17

The mandatory surveillance system also includes reports of blood stream infections caused by glycopeptide resistant enterococci. Results of the first year of surveillance, October 2003 to September 2004, are available and Norfolk and Norwich University Hospital NHS Trust did not have any cases during this year. As this is a relatively rare national infection rates are not available.

Jim Sheridan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent research the Department has commissioned into combating MRSA. [28960]

Jane Kennedy: During the first half of 2003, the Department commissioned a £2.5 million strategic programme of research aimed at improving scientific understanding of antimicrobial resistance. Part of that total sum, together with funds committed by the former NHS Estates Agency, is being spent on projects that will provide information relating to best practice in preventing methicillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus*.

The publication of the Department's report "Winning Ways—working together to reduce healthcare associated infection in England" in December 2003 was accompanied by the announcement that £3 million would be allocated to fund a new research programme on healthcare associated infections.

Several projects are being supported from this fund. These include:

a national observational study of the effectiveness of the Clean Your Hands campaign and a cluster randomised controlled trial of the effectiveness and cost-effectiveness of feedback in intensive care units and acute general medical wards;

a study of the efficacy and cost-effectiveness of MRSA screening and monitoring on surgical wards using a new, rapid molecular test;

a randomised crossover trial of a new, rapid method of MRSA detection compared with conventional screening: efficacy and the effect upon hospital MRSA infection rates, transmission rates and the use of hospital resources.

Funding has recently been agreed to support the development of a healthcare infection research network. In addition, a call for proposals for research into the cost-effectiveness of interventions aimed at controlling the spread of infection was published earlier this year. Twelve short listed projects are being peer reviewed and we expect to commission several of these early next year.

Influenza

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much Government funding have been directed towards the creation of a vaccine for the H5N1 influenza virus. [21021]

Caroline Flint: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for South Cambridgeshire (Mr. Lansley) on 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1715W.

Liquid-based Cytology

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the health trusts which will introduce liquid-based cytology over the next three years; and what the planned implementation date is for each. [29184]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Although primary care trusts (PCTs) are responsible for the commissioning of cervical screening services, not all PCTs have a cervical screening laboratory. Therefore, we have advised strategic health authorities (SHAs) to lead on the implementation of liquid based cytology (LBC), in close collaboration with PCTs, regional quality assurance directors, regional directors of public health and, where

appropriate, cancer networks. We have not asked for these local strategies to be submitted centrally as the SHAs are best placed to judge the needs of their local populations. We expect all SHAs to have introduced LBC by 2008.

Macular Degeneration

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the implementation of National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidance relating to photodynamic therapy for wet age-related macular degeneration. [30948]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) issued its guidance on photodynamic therapy on 24 September 2003. Implementation of the NICE guidance was co-ordinated by local specialist commissioning groups and all primary care trusts are funding photodynamic therapy treatment for patients with both the wholly classic and predominantly classic forms of age-related macular degeneration.

Management Consultants

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent by the *(a)* Cheshire and *(b)* Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire health authority on management consultants in each of the last five years. [30109]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what projects in the Hertfordshire and Bedfordshire strategic health authority *(a)* have required and *(b)* will require the assistance of external management consultants in 2005–06. [30120]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally. This is a matter for local decision making which should take full account of local circumstances.

Mental Health

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many inpatients detained under sections *(a)* 2, *(b)* 3 and *(c)* 4 of the Mental Health Act 1983 have absconded from psychiatric hospitals in each year since 1997; and from which hospital in each case. [25105]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This information is not collected centrally. Absconsions occur when patients detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 go missing outside of the secure perimeter of a unit, e.g. when on a scheduled visit. Missing patient incidents that originate from inside the perimeter of a secure site are termed escapes or breakout.

Absconsions can be either non-serious or serious untoward incidents (SUIs). In relation to mental health patients, an SUI means the absconsion of a patient detained under the Mental Health Act 1983 where a significant risk is posed to the patient or to others. A non-serious absconsion would be where the absconsion is unintentional, due for example to a patient missing a transport connection when returning from leave.

SUI absconsion reporting is far more stringent than for non-serious absconsions. There must be clear local procedures at each national health service organisation to identify, report and investigate SUIs. Information is collected by each strategic health authority (SHA) about all SUIs reported during each calendar year by month, type and NHS organisation, and is available on request from the SHAs. These requirements do not apply to collecting non- serious absconsion data.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what specialist services are available for families affected by mental health problems in Hemel Hempstead constituency. [25565]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information is not held in the format requested. However, shown is a list of services that can be found in the Directory of Services in Hertfordshire Local Implementation Team (this is not an exhaustive list) and further information is available on the Adult Mental Health Service Mapping and Children and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS) Mapping websites at: www.dur.ac.uk/service.mapping/amh/index.php (adults) and www.camhsmapping.org.uk/2005/index.php (CAMHS).

Types of services available:

Access and Crisis Services
Accommodation Services
Carers' Services
Clinical Services
Continuing Care Services
Day Services
Home Care Services
Key Services
Mental Health Promotion
Other Services
Primary Care Services
Secure Services
Service Development
Services for Mentally Ill Offenders
Support Services
Therapy Services

Source:
Adult Mental Health Service Mapping

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children with mental illness have been treated in adult wards in each of the last five years. [28448]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not available. I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him on 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 842W.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether responsibility for mental health tribunals proposed in the draft Mental Health Bill will be passed from her Department to the Department for Constitutional Affairs. [28045]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department and the Department of Constitutional Affairs' (DCA) ministers have agreed in principle to transfer the responsibility for mental health review tribunals to the DCA on 31 March 2006.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if her Department will carry out an investigation into how The Guardian newspaper received a copy of the unpublished report by the code of practice working group set up to implement a workable model of mental health tribunals proposed in the draft Mental Health Bill. [28046]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department is not carrying out an investigation.

Mid-Essex Hospital Trust

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many intermediate care beds there have been in the Mid-Essex Hospital Trust area in each of the last six years for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement. [28224]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 16 November 2005]:* The number of intermediate care beds within the Mid Essex Hospital Trust area are shown in the table.

Number of intermediate care beds

	Primary care trust	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
5GR	Basildon PCT	0	0	0
5GL	Maldon & South Chelmsford PCT	51	51	51
5JN	Chelmsford PCT	42	41	22
5GP	Brentwood, Billericay and Wickford PCT	26	91	92

Note:
Data prior to 2002–03 were collected on a health authority basis.
Source: LDPR

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many delayed discharges there have been in the Mid-Essex Hospital Trust area in each of the last six years for which figures are available; and if she will make a statement. [28225]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 16 November 2005]:* The latest data available relating to delayed discharges in the Mid-Essex Hospital Trust area are shown in the table.

Mid Essex Hospital Services NHS Trust

	Delayed transfers of care
1999–2000	58
2000–01	2
2001–02	2
2002–03	6
2003–04	2
2004–05	9

Note:
Data in the table are taken from local monitoring of delayed discharges included in the SITREPs collection. These figures are based on a snapshot taken on the last typical Thursday in the year. This differs to the day used in the separate, quarterly LDPR commissioner collections on which the figures published in the statistical supplement to the chief executive's report to the NHS, May 2005 are based.
Source:
Situation Reports (SITREPS)

Midwifery

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the midwifery vacancy rate for Southampton University Hospitals Trust has been in each of the last five years. [29190]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is shown in the table.

Health and social care information centre vacancies survey, national health service three-month vacancies for Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust for qualified midwives, three-month vacancy rates, numbers and staff in post

			Midwives		
			Three month vacancy rate (Percentage)	*Three month vacancy number*	*(Staff in post) full-time equivalent*
Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust	RHM	2005	0.3	0	162
		2004	2.6	4	172
		2003	4.1	6	143
		2002	0.0	—	136
		2001	0.0	—	128

Notes:
Three month vacancy notes:
1. Three month vacancy information is as at 31 March each specified year.
2. Three month vacancies are vacancies which Trusts are actively trying to fill, which had lasted for three months or more (full-time equivalents).
3. Three month Vacancy Rates are three month vacancies expressed as a percentage of three month vacancies plus staff in post.
4. Three month Vacancy Rates are calculated using staff in post from the Non-Medical Workforce Census.
5. Percentages are rounded to one decimal place.

Staff in post notes:
1. Staff in post data are from the Non-Medical Workforce Census.
2. zero.

General notes:
1. Vacancy and staff in post numbers are rounded to the nearest whole number.
2. Calculating the vacancy rates using the above data may not equal the actual vacancy rates.

Sources:
Health and Social Care Information Centre Vacancies Survey.
Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many midwives have been employed by Southampton University Hospitals Trust in each of the last five years *(a)* in numerical terms and *(b)* as full-time equivalents. [29191]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is shown in the table.

National health service hospital and community health services: qualified midwifery staff employed by Southampton University Hospitals Trust as at 30 September each specified year

	Qualified midwifery staff	
	Full-time equivalent	*Headcount*
2000	128	169
2001	136	183
2002	143	188
2003	172	222
2004	167	228

Note:

Full-time equivalent figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Source:

Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what proportion of maternity units in England have vacancies in midwifery posts; and what proportion of these vacancies have been unfilled for at least three months; [29019]

(2) what steps she is taking to increase the number of *(a)* student midwives and *(b)* midwives in practice in the national health service. [29020]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 16 November 2005]:* Information is not collected centrally on the numbers of vacancies in each maternity unit. The table shows vacancies for midwives that have lasted three months or more in national health service organisations as at March 2005.

Over 70 per cent. of NHS organisations that employ midwives did not report any vacancies lasting three months or more. As at March 2005, 348 midwifery posts had been vacant for three months or more, which represents a vacancy rate of 1.8 per cent., which is a fall from 3.3 per cent. the previous year.

As at September 2004, there were 24,844 midwives employed in the NHS, which is an increase of 2,272 or 10 per cent. since 2000. A range of work force supply initiatives are in place to ensure the NHS work force continues to meet service needs. These include: improving pay and conditions; encouraging the NHS to become a better, more flexible and diverse employer; increasing training; investing in child care and continuing professional development; attracting back returners and running national and international recruitment campaigns.

NHS Employers is working closely with the NHS to help embed these strategies locally within their organisations.

Health and Social Care Information Centre Vacancies Survey March 2005—proportion of trusts that returned a three month vacancy rate for qualified midwives

	Number and percentage
Total NHS organisations[1]	616
Trusts employing qualified midwifery staff[1]	180
of which:	
Returned a three month vacancy rate	51
Rate of vacancies lasting three months or more (percentage)	1.8

[1] The 2005 Vacancy Survey did not receive a valid return from the Lincolnshire and Goole Hospitals NHS Trust. This trust has been excluded from all applicable calculations.

Sources:

Health and Social Care Information Centre Vacancies Survey March 2005

Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census September 2004

MRI/CT Scans

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many scans have been delivered to date under the Alliance Medical contract for mobile MRI scans; how many *(a)* rejected and *(b)* repeat scans there were; and what assessment she has made of the (i) timeliness of, (ii) quality of and (iii) customer satisfaction with scans provided under the contract. [24200]

Mr. Byrne: Over 83,000 scans had been delivered via the Alliance Medical Limited (AML) mobile scanning units by the end of October 2005. Of these, less than 1.5 per cent. were repeat scans, which is in line with national health service practice and incorporates the figure for rejected scans as patients are automatically re-imaged by AML.

AML is now exceeding its contracted reporting time of four working days, with 97 per cent. of scan reports returned within three days.

Scan quality is independently audited every six months by the clinical guardian of the contract, Professor Adrian Dixon; NHS sponsors; and AML's head of clinical governance.

The last audit, which compared a sample of scans provided by the NHS and the independent sector, carried out by the Royal College of Radiologists in conjunction with the Department of Health, was published in May 2005. The findings stated that there was "little difference in the technical quality of magnetic resonance examinations between the two services".

In addition, scan quality is monitored consistently throughout the contract as an integral part of the clinical governance framework. Any discrepancies or concerns are audited on a case by case basis by the clinical guardian of the contract.

In October, 90 per cent. of patients rated the service as excellent or good.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether patients who have waited longer than 20 weeks for *(a)* an MRI and *(b)* a CT scan at a hospital run by an NHS foundation trust will be offered the choice to be treated elsewhere. [25109]

Mr. Byrne: The Department are currently discussing how choice of scan relates to national health service foundation trusts with monitor and the position will be clarified before choice of scan commences on the 30 November. There is no reason, however, that NHS foundation trusts should not accept patients from other providers where they wish to do so and have the available capacity.

Multiple Sclerosis

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in each county of England suffer from secondary progressive multiple sclerosis. [29964]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The information requested is not available centrally in the requested format. However, the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence has previously estimated that in England and Wales multiple sclerosis (MS) affects around 63,000 people and that secondary progressive MS accounts for about 45 per cent. of the total population with MS.

Myelopathy

Alison Seabeck: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of HTLV-1 associated myelopathy have been recorded in each year since 1988. [30625]

Mr. Byrne: Specific data on the number of cases of HTLV-I associated myelopathy are not collected.

Research, published in 1994, has identified 231 cases of HTLV types one and two associated myelopathy in England and Wales for the period 1986 to 1992.

Details are available on the Health Protection Agency's website at: hpa.org.uk/cdr/archives/CDRreview/1994/cdrr0694.pdf.

Nappies

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what measures she has put in place to ensure the safety of commercial cloth laundering services supplying NHS maternity wards with communally laundered cloth nappies for newborn babies; and what temperature these nappies are washed at; [27091]

(2) when the proposed BSI PAS 100 safety standard for commercial cloth nappy laundries will be finalised; [27092]

(3) what research she has evaluated on the effects on levels of infections of the use of communally-laundered cloth nappies in NHS maternity wards. [27519]

Mr. Byrne: Commercial cloth laundering services supplying national health services maternity wards with communally laundered cloth nappies for newborn babies must comply with NHS laundry guideline with HSG(95)18, a copy of which has been placed in the Library. The guidelines set a thermal disinfection wash cycle in which the water temperature has been raised to 65 degrees centigrade for not less than ten minutes or to 71 degrees centigrade for not less than three minutes.

The British Standards Institute publicly available specification 106 safety standard for commercial cloth nappy laundries is expected to be published early in the new year.

The Department has not evaluated any research into the effects on levels of infections of the use of communally-laundered cloth nappies in NHS maternity wards.

National Minimum Wage

Ms Katy Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many employees in her Department were affected by the rise in the national minimum wage on 1 October. [28978]

Jane Kennedy: The Department pays above the minimum wage; therefore, no employees were affected by the rise on 1 October.

NHS Bodies

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures the Government are taking to protect jobs in the proposed reforms of *(a)* the Dental Practice Board, *(b)* the NHS Logistics Authority, *(c)* the NHS Pensions Agency and *(d)* the Prescription Pricing Authority. [27756]

Mr. Byrne: The NHS Business Services Authority (NHSBSA) will be formed through a merger of the Dental Practice Board, NHS Logistics Authority, NHS Pensions Agency and Prescription Pricing Authority which is scheduled to take place on 1 April 2006.

No decision has been taken to privatise any of the functions of the NHSBSA. However, contracting out and market testing will be considered if they offer value for money. If engagement with the private sector offers better value and results in a decision to transfer service delivery from BSA constituent organisations to a new employer, the BSA will follow best practice within national health service organisations; those staff who move across will have the protection of the transfer of undertakings (protection of employment) regulations and benefit from the recent joint statement of good practice issued on 6 October 2005 by the Department, NHS employers, the Confederation of British Industry and the Business Services Association, together with a number of trade unions.

Any savings made as a result of any outsourcing or market testing will be re-invested in front line NHS services.

NHS Direct

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has for NHS Direct services to be accessible via internet-enabled mobile handsets. [18565]

Mr. Byrne: NHS Direct Special Health Authority (SpHA) is responsible for setting overall strategy and direction for the service. There are no immediate plans to make services accessible in this way. Any future plans would need to be considered by the SpHA in the context of its three-year multi-channel strategy and agreed by Department through the established governance arrangements.

NHS Staff (Bullying)

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent estimate she has made of the cost to the NHS of the bullying of members of its staff by other members of its staff; and if she will make a statement. [27046]

Jane Kennedy: The improving working lives initiative ensures employers have in place an organisational commitment and culture to tackle discrimination/ harassment and bullying.

No official estimate of the financial cost of bullying in the national health service has been made. However, the NHS national staff survey for 2004, carried out by the Healthcare Commission, revealed that 16 per cent. of NHS staff had been bullied, harassed or abused by other staff in the previous year. Given that the NHS employs over 1,300,000 people, the total personal and financial costs of bullying is unacceptably high. With the support of NHS employers, the Department is working to ensure an approach of zero tolerance to bullying and harassment in the NHS.

NHS Work Force Data

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent representations have been made to the Department by *(a)* the Royal Statistical Society and *(b)* the Statistics Commission on the presentation of NHS workforce data; and how the Department has responded. [16938]

Jane Kennedy: Two representations have been made this year to the Department by the Royal Statistical Society and the Statistics Commission on the publication in March 2004 of an incorrect chart showing trends in the national health service's workforce. The Department responded to both representations, acknowledging that the chart was incorrect, and indicating that a correction had been published on the Department's website. The central message that the chart had intended to convey, increases in the work force each year since 1997, was still correct.

Norfolk PCTs

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will make a decision on the reorganisation of Norfolk primary care trusts; and if she will undertake a public consultation process. [24392]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Strategic health authorities have recently submitted their proposals for the reconfiguration of primary care trusts, which set out how they intend to strengthen their commissioning function. These proposals have been assessed by an independent external panel drawn from and representing a wide range of stakeholder interests, to determine whether the SHA proposals meet the criteria stipulated in 'Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS' (July 2005). Where the criteria are judged to have been met the proposals will go forward to a three-month public consultation. No decisions on the reorganisation of PCTs will be taken until this process has been completed.

Nursing Agencies

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nursing agencies *(a)* meet and *(b)* do not meet her minimum Department of Health guidelines (i) in England and (ii) in Surrey. [25827]

Jane Kennedy: The National Audit Team for the NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency monitor the commercial agencies providing personnel to the national health service via national framework agreements.

Of the 55 nursing agencies that have been audited nationally 29 have passed the audit requirements and 12 agencies have been terminated from the frameworks. The remainder have or will be undergoing a second audit with recommendations to be made following the reports.

For the framework agreement for the south of England, including Surrey, 18 nursing agencies have been audited of which eight have passed and eight have been terminated from the framework.

Obesity

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research she has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the effect of obesity on the budget for drug prescribing by general practitioners for (i) obesity and (ii) (A) diabetes, (B) coronary heart disease, (C) stroke, (D) hypertension, (E) hyperthyroidism, (F) cancer, (G) arthritis, (H) asthma and (I) other associated co-morbidities. [30241]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 22 November 2005]:* No research has been commissioned on the effect of obesity on the budget for drug prescribing by general practitioners (GPs) for treating obesity and its consequences. However, 222,000 items of all anti-obesity drugs were prescribed in GP practices in England and dispensed in the community in the second quarter of 2005, April to June 2005, with a net ingredient cost of £9.6 million.

Ophthalmic Operations

Frank Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of whether the employment of South African clinicians to provide cataract operations by Netcare complies with the Government's ethical recruitment policy. [17374]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 17 October 2005]:* Yes. Netcare are contractually obliged to follow the Government's Code of Practice for International Recruitment. This is in line with the Memorandum of Understanding with South Africa, which specifically enables qualified healthcare professionals to undertake time-limited placements in the United Kingdom providing opportunities for collaboration and the exchange of knowledge and skills.

Patient and Public Involvement Resource Centre

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the allocated budget for the Patient and Public Involvement Resource Centre is for 2005–06; and if she will make a statement. [16350]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department is in the process of procuring a supplier to design, develop and deliver a new centre to support the delivery of patient and public involvement in heath care. We anticipate launching the centre in January 2006.

As we are in the middle of a procurement process, the details of the budget are commercially confidential.

Patient Choice

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information will be available to patients under patient choice about *(a)* NHS providers and *(b)* private providers; whether it is her intention that information will be directly comparable; and if she will make a statement. [18897]

Mr. Byrne: Patients will need comparative information for national health service and independent sector providers. For choice at referral, a basic set of information on access and location, waiting times and hospital performance will be available through nhs.uk and patient leaflets drawing on information currently available. The Department has already begun a programme of work to develop the more detailed comparative information, particularly on clinical quality, which patients will need as we increase choice in elective care.

Patient Safety

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS trusts have not submitted patient safety data to the National Reporting and Learning System; and what action she will take to reduce this number. [28711]

Jane Kennedy: As of mid-November 2005, about 75 per cent. of all national health service trusts in England have submitted data to the national patient safety agency's national reporting and learning system (NRLS). 146 NHS trusts have not yet submitted data.

The National Patient Safety Agency has appointed a network of patient safety managers to work with trusts in enabling them to report patient safety incidents to their local risk management system and then to the NRLS.

In addition the Healthcare Commission is reviewing NHS organisations against a set of core standards, the first one of which relates to safety. Reporting patient safety incidents to the NRLS is one of a set of criteria against which trusts are assessed.

We are considering what further action can be taken in the light of the National Audit Office report, "A safer place for patients: Learning to improve patient safety," which draws attention to the level of reporting in acute, mental health and ambulance trusts in England. The report will be discussed in detail at a committee of public accounts hearing early in 2006. The Government will respond to the committee's subsequent report in the form of a Treasury minute.

Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust

Graham Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what administrative savings have been made by the Pennine Acute Hospitals NHS Trust since its inception; and what the forecast figures were for such savings. [30468]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The information requested is not held centrally.

Plagiocephaly

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will make a statement on the treatment of plagiocephaly; [14792]

(2) if she will extend treatment for plagiocephaly to families with affected children in those primary care trusts that do not offer treatment. [14793]

Mr. Byrne: There is a difference between positional plagiocephaly, where flattening of the skull is caused by pressure from the surface on which a baby is customarily laid and craniosynostosis, where the cranial sutures have closed prematurely. In the latter case, surgery may well be necessary to prevent future health problems. The national service framework for children, young people and maternity services sets out standards to ensure that primary care trusts (PCTs) base decisions about treatments on the best evidence available to them. Treatment for plagiocephaly is available should doctors and PCTs consider it necessary.

Primary Care Trusts

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding per capita was given to *(a)* Chelmsford primary care trust, *(b)* Essex primary care trusts, *(c)* Eastern Region primary care trusts, *(d)* Greater London primary care trusts and *(e)* primary care trusts in England in the last two financial years for which figures are available. [28819]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 17 November 2005]:* Revenue resource allocations per head of population to primary care trusts (PCTs) in these areas in 2004–05 and 2005–06 are shown in the table.

Allocations to PCTs are based on the population weighted for a number of factors. These factors include:

age related need—to recognise that people tend to have greater need as they grow older;

additional needs—to reflect difference in health need over and above that accounted for by age; and

unavoidable difference in the cost of providing services.

Revenue allocations for PCTs increased from £49.3 billion for 2004–05 to £53.9 billion for 2005–06; and are due a further increase to £64 billion in 2006–07 and £70 billion in 2007–08. Over the two years covered by this further allocation, PCTs will receive an average increase of 19.5 per cent.

£

	2004–05 allocation per head	*2005–06 allocation per head*
Chelmsford PCT	852	975
PCTs in Essex strategic health authority	905	1,082
PCTs in the Government Office for the East of England	889	1,061
PCTs in the Government Office for London	1,114	1,317
PCTs in England	986	1,172

Note:
The population data used in the table above is the updated populations used in the 2006–08 revenue allocations to PCTs.

Mr. Jeremy Browne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans the Government have to merge the four primary care trusts in Somerset. [22692]

Caroline Flint: Strategic health authorities have recently submitted their proposals for the reconfiguration of primary care trusts, which set out how they intend to strengthen their commissioning function. The proposal

for Somerset is available from the Dorset and Somerset SHA. These proposals have been assessed by an independent external panel drawn from and representing a wide range of stakeholder interests, to determine whether the SHA proposals meet the criteria stipulated in "Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS" (July 2005). Where the criteria are judged to have been met the proposals will go forward to a three-month public consultation. No decisions on the reorganisation of PCTs will be taken until this process has been completed.

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the potential financial effects of the reconfiguration of primary care trusts. [24484]

Mr. Byrne: We anticipate that boundary changes and a new focus on commissioning for primary care trusts (PCTs) will enable local organisations to make significant reductions in management costs.

Following reconfiguration of PCTs and strategic health authorities, we expect upwards of £250 million in savings to be invested back into local frontline services. This means that all over the country, PCTs will be able to decide with their clinicians how this extra money could be used to improve local services.

Reportable Medical Incidents

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* medical errors and *(b)* reportable incidents involving (i) drugs and (ii) equipment in NHS hospitals there have been in Kent since 1997. [29821]

Caroline Flint: It is only possible to provide data on the number of reportable incidents involving drugs and equipment. The Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) operates national systems for the collection and monitoring of adverse events related to drugs and devices. Both systems rely upon voluntary reporting of suspected adverse events by health professionals. Manufacturers with respect to devices and marketing authorisation holders with respect to drugs have statutory obligations to report suspected adverse events.

Table 1 shows the total number of suspected adverse drug reaction (ADR) reports received via the yellow card scheme from 1997 to 2005 by year from hospitals in Kent.

Table 1: Reports received via the yellow card scheme from hospitals in Kent

	Number
1997	81
1998	100
1999	93
2000	127
2001	93
2002	92
2003	91
2004	91
2005	[1]90
Total	858

[1] Data up to 16 November 2005

The MHRA pharmacovigilance system does not differentiate between national health service and private hospitals. The number of reports received from Kent hospitals, therefore, includes day hospitals, private hospitals and hospitals that may now be closed.

The yellow card scheme is the United Kingdom system for collecting and monitoring information on suspected ADRs. The scheme is run by the MHRA on behalf of the committee on safety of medicines. The scheme relies upon voluntary reporting of suspected ADRs by health professionals and under statutory obligation by marketing authorisation holders.

Table 2 shows the number of medical device related adverse incident reports submitted to the MHRA from the NHS in Kent on a voluntary basis between mid-1999 and 2005. Information obtainable from electronic records created prior to mid-1999 does not distinguish reports from the NHS in Kent.

Table 2: Medical device related adverse incident reports submitted to the MHRA from the NHS in Kent

	Number of reports received from Kent hospitals
1999	189
2000	143
2001	175
2002	168
2003	140
2004	117
2005	[1]78

[1] Data up to 21 November 2005.

Royal Shrewsbury Hospital

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much it costs to treat patients resident in Wales at the Royal Shrewsbury hospital; and how many were treated in each year since 2002. [29164]

Mr. Byrne: Information relating to the costs of treating patients resident in Wales at the Royal Shrewsbury hospital is not held by the Department. However, information relating to the number of finished consultant episodes at the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals National Health Service Trust and the predecessor organisation is shown in the table.

Count of finished consultant episodes for the Royal Shrewsbury Hospitals Trust and Shropshire and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust where patient region of residence is Wales.

	Episodes
2001–02	8,000
2002–03	9,156
2003–04	9,482

Notes:
1. Finished Consultant Episode (FCE).
2. An FCE is defined as the period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one health care provider. However, it should be noted that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.

Data Quality:
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) are compiled from data sent by over 300 NHS Trusts and PCTs in England. The Health and Social Care Information Centre liaises closely with these organisations to encourage submission of complete and valid data and seeks to

minimise inaccuracies and the effect of missing and invalid data via HES processes. While this brings about improvement over time, some shortcomings remain.

Ungrossed Data:

Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in the data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Secondments

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS staff are seconded to her Department; whether their *(a)* salaries and *(b)* pension contributions are paid by (i) her Department and (ii) NHS trusts; and whether they are counted in the civil service staff headcount. [25981]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Sutton Coldfield (Mr. Mitchell) on 23 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 2108W.

Smoking

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research she has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on whether the proposed ban on smoking in public places will displace smoking from pubs to domestic environments. [28639]

Caroline Flint: The evidence available from those countries with legislation for smokefree public places and bars is that there is no significant displacement to domestic environments.

Smokefree legislation has been shown to result in reduced prevalence of smoking, which in turn means reduced prevalence of smoking in domestic environments as well as public places.

Recent research on the ban in Ireland reported in the publication "Going Smokefree" by the Royal College of Physicians pointed to a

"statistically significant increase in the percentage of smokers who banned smoking in their own homes after the smokefree law was introduced."

(Page 74).

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research her Department has evaluated on the displacement effect of workplace smoking bans on smoking at home; and if she will make a statement. [29752]

Caroline Flint: The Royal College of Physicians July 2005 report, "Going Smokefree" reviewed the evidence and concluded:

"There is no evidence that smokefree workplaces and enclosed public places increase the exposure of children to environmental tobacco smoke at home."

A study of changes in Ireland published in the journal Tobacco Control in October 2005 reported from a survey of smokers before and after the March 2004 ban came in:

"... there was a significant decrease in the percentage of Irish homes where smoking was allowed."

Source:

Fong G. T., Hyland A et al. Reductions in tobacco smoke pollution and increases in support for smoke-free public places following the implementation of comprehensive smoke-free workplace legislation in the Republic of Ireland: findings from the ITC Ireland/UK survey. Tobacco Control 2005;000:1–8.doi:10.1136/tc.2005.013649.

Speech and Language Therapists

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 276W, if she will break down the number of speech and language therapists employed by the NHS in *(a)* 1997 and *(b)* 2004 by (i) full-time and (ii) part-time workers; and what the full-time equivalent figures were in each year. [27257]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

NHS hospital and community health services: Qualified speech and language therapists by nature of contract as at 30 September in each specified year

	Full-time equivalent		*Headcount*	
	1997	*2004*	*1997*	*2004*
Qualified speech and language therapists	3,742	4,973	4,871	6,556
Full-time	n/a	n/a	2,492	3,015
Part-time	n/a	n/a	2,373	3,541
Unknown	n/a	n/a	6	0

Note:

Full-time equivalent figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.

Source:

Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census.

Staff Sickness Absence

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the staff sickness absence rate has been in the NHS in each financial year since 1997–98; [26297]

(2) what steps she is taking to reduce the staff absence due to illness rate in the NHS, with particular reference to steps to reduce levels of stress among staff. [26012]

Mr. Byrne: Information on rates of sickness absence in the national health service is only available from 1999 by calendar year. The rates for sickness absence between 1999 and 2004 for NHS Hospital and Community Health Services staff in England are shown in the table.

Sickness absence rates in the NHS (England)

	Percentage
1999	4.9
2000	4.7
2001	4.8
2002	4.6
2003	4.7
2004	4.6

Notes:

1. Sickness absence rate is defined as the amount of time lost through absences as a percentage of staff time available.
2. This does not cover maternity leave, carers leave or any periods of absence agreed under family friendly/flexible working policies.
3. General practitioners and their staff are not included in the figures.
4. The figures are estimates as some organisations in the NHS did not provide figures for sickness absence.

Source:

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre Sickness and Absence Surveys, 1999–2004

NHS employers launched a stress campaign to coincide with national stress awareness day on 2 November. As part of the campaign, all trusts will be supplied with a series of posters and booklets to raise awareness. They will also direct both staff and employers to online toolkits and support networks to help tackle stress.

Unum Provident

Harry Cohen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether her Department has entered into a contract with Unum Provident. [25931]

Jane Kennedy: Unum Provident is not found on the Department's supplier database and has not been paid any money.

Your Health, Your Care, Your Say

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reasons a regional meeting was chosen as the forum for those selected to apply for involvement in the "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" consultation programme; what other consultative forms were considered; what the cost of the consultation exercise has been *(a)* per stakeholder engaged and *(b)* in total; and if she will make a statement. [26384]

Mr. Byrne: Four regional deliberative consultation events were held as part of the overall consultation which also included a citizens' summit and events co-ordinated by local health and social care organisations, including the voluntary sector. We produced an online questionnaire, copies of which were available in hard copy, an assortment of languages, braille and easy read. An abbreviated questionnaire was published in the magazine "Take-a-Break" and in the national health service publications, "Prime" and "Fit". Five policy taskforces of key stakeholders have been established to make recommendations on the policy options associated with the public's view and five academic seminars were organised.

The overall cost is estimated at £1.2 million. Cost per stakeholder will not be known until the feedback from all sources has been analysed fully.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 29 November 2005

PRIME MINISTER

Intelligence and Security Committee

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Prime Minister what *(a)* emoluments, *(b)* expenses and *(c)* facilities are available to the Chairman of the Intelligence and Security Committee; and if he will make a statement. [31407]

The Prime Minister *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* The Intelligence and Security Committee (ISC) is supported by a clerk and secretariat in the Cabinet Office. The ISC Chairman and members are unpaid but expenses incurred by them in the course of their ISC duties are met from within the ISC's budget, which is funded by the Cabinet Office.

Iraq

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his statement of 16 November 2005, *Official Report,* column 96S, and the Secretary of State for Defence's statement of 17 November 2005, *Official Report,* columns 113–14, what account he took of the Attorney General's letter to Lord Astor of 9 July in making his statement. [31709]

The Prime Minister: There is no contradiction between my comments and the Attorney-General's letter of 9 July. The Army Prosecuting Authority (APA) was established under the Armed Forces Act 1996 and acts independently of the military chain of command. As an additional measure of protection from interference, the APA is subject to the general superintendence of the Attorney-General but he is not responsible for taking decisions on individual prosecutions. There is nothing unusual about this practice which takes place with the other prosecutors superintended by the Attorney-General, for example, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), Serious Fraud Office, Revenue and Customs Prosecution Office, and the Public Prosecution Office Northern Ireland.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Prime Minister how many times he has visited soldiers who are receiving hospital treatment in the UK after being wounded in Iraq. [33139]

The Prime Minister: I have visited members of the armed forces both in the United Kingdom and abroad, and have met injured personnel on these occasions.

Nuclear Power

Mr. Evans: To ask the Prime Minister what *(a)* representations he has received from and *(b)* advice he has been given by his special scientific advisers in the last 12 months on nuclear power. [33045]

The Prime Minister: Information relating to internal discussion and advice is generally not disclosed as to do so could harm the frankness and candour of internal discussion.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Carbon Dioxide

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what year-on-year projections he has made for the reductions of atmospheric carbon dioxide concentration estimated to result from present and proposed measures. [32162]

Mr. Morley: I have been asked to reply.

As the 2003 Energy White Paper makes clear, UK emissions of CO_2 account for only about 2 per cent. of the global total, and therefore our own actions will only have a detectable impact on atmospheric CO_2 concentrations as part of a concerted international effort. Our policies on emissions are intended to contribute to an emission reduction of 60 per cent. by developed countries by 2050 leading to eventual stabilisation of atmospheric concentrations at below 550 parts per million, provided others take commensurate action.

Correspondence

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he will reply to the letter of 18 May from the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, on behalf of constituent Mike Josypenko regarding planned changes to UK trade and investment support for exporters. [32282]

Ian Pearson: I regret the delay, which was due to an administration error, but a full reply has now been sent.

Digital Broadcasting

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate his Department has made of the number of television sets that will be dumped following digital switchover; what legislation governs locations for recycling; and if he will make a statement. [32198]

Alun Michael: DTI and Defra have commissioned research to model any changes in patterns of waste disposal generated by digital switchover now that the time scale has been determined. Results from this research are expected early in 2006.

A range of facilities recycle waste materials deriving from production processes or from disposal of finished products. These are subject to the various planning and regulatory controls which govern the location and operation of industrial production plants generally. Disposal of television set-top boxes and video recorders will all be subject to intended regulations implementing the Waste Electrical and electronic Equipment Directive which are planned to come into force in June 2006.

International Trade (Women's Participation)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps the UK has taken to facilitate the active participation of women's organisations in international trade decision-making structures; and if he will make a statement. [33091]

Meg Munn: The Government is committed to ensuring gender considerations are mainstreamed in UK and EU trade policy development.

To help achieve this, the Government set up the Gender Expert Group on Trade (GEGT) in early 2004. It is made-up of representatives from women's and development non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and academics to advise the Government on the gender implications of trade policy formulation.

Plumbers

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many registered plumbers there have been in each of the last 10 years. [31298]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 23 November 2005]:* There is no official register of plumbers in the UK as there is no "licence to operate" requirement and I cannot be sure that the following information covers all areas of plumbing. Individual plumbers are employed by firms operating in both the domestic and commercial markets. Depending on the nature of their work and skills level, some would be more appropriately referred to as heating engineers. Especially in the domestic market, many plumbers are self-employed and may operate at a very local, or neighbourhood level.

I understand that the Institute of Plumbing and Heating Engineers has 12,200 active members, covering all categories and including trainees.

There are two main trade associations, The Association of Plumbing and Heating Contractors (England and Wales) has 1,100 registered companies. The Scottish and Northern Ireland Plumbing Employers Federation has 6,500 active plumbers registered with them. The split is roughly NI 2,000; Scotland 4,500.

Telephone Preference Service

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many complaints regarding marketing calls have been received by the Information Commissioner from consumers following their registration for the telephone preference service for each year since 1999. [28560]

(2) how many companies have been subject to investigations by the Information Commissioner for breaches of telephone preference service arrangements for each year since 1999. [28561]

Alun Michael: I understand from the Information Commissioner that due to the nature of the casework management system previously used by his office, he is unable to provide specific numbers for telesales complaints prior to 2004, but the annual reports to Parliament each year have provided general figures for complaints and inquiries.

3,040 complaints about the regulations were recorded as dealt with in 2004 (January to December) 597 of which were recorded as relating to phone calls. In 2005 the office has received 4,200 regulations complaints this year, 925 of which relate to phone calls.

Traffic Offences

Susan Kramer: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people have been convicted for driving while using hand-held mobile telephones since January 2004; and if he will make a statement. [31441]

Fiona Mactaggart: I have been asked to reply.

Motoring offences statistics are part of National Statistics. The pre-announced date for availability of 2004 data is March 2006.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Human Rights (Africa)

13. **Mrs. Dorries:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on human rights in Africa. [32400]

Ian Pearson: Improving human rights is key to making Africa successful. That means tackling firmly any abuses, strengthening democratic governance, and addressing the causes of human rights problems, such as conflict and poverty. Africans are taking increasing responsibility for this. We are committed to helping them.

European Union

14. **Andrew Selous:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the Government's priorities for the UK's presidency of the EU. [32401]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary told this House on 1 November, he set out the work programme for the UK presidency in detail in White Paper Cmnd 6611 presented to this House on 30 June.

We have made progress in a number of areas, including the historic decision to open accession negotiations with Turkey and Croatia on 3 October.

Only last week we achieved significant reform of the EU sugar regime. And we continue to work on a range of issues from the fight against terrorism to the future financing of the EU.

16. **Mr. Bone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the progress of negotiations on the EU budget. [32403]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: EU Foreign Ministers had substantive discussions on the EU budget for 2007–13 at the General Affairs and External Relations Councils on 7 and 21 November. On the basis of these, and other bilateral consultations, we will table comprehensive proposals in early December, and work towards

agreement at the European Council on 15–16 December. Significant changes will be needed to the proposals tabled in June if we are to reach agreement.

Cameroon

15. **Mr. Chaytor:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with his counterparts in Cameroon. [32402]

Ian Pearson: Lord Triesman discussed human rights and migration with Dion Ngute, Minister Delegate at the Ministry of External Relations at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting on 24 November. Lord Triesman met the Cameroon high commissioner on 9 November on the issue of migration.

Israel

17. **Mr. Hollobone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Israeli security fence in combating terrorism. [32404]

Ian Pearson: The number of terrorist and other attacks has fallen in 2005 relative to previous years. A number of factors were responsible, including the barrier. But where, for example, the barrier separates Palestinians from Palestinians we do not believe the route is designed exclusively for security purposes. We continue to urge the Israeli Government to route the barrier on or behind the Green Line.

World Trade

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on progress in the Doha round of world trade talks. [32405]

Ian Pearson: The World Trade Organisation ministerial conference in Hong Kong, in less than two weeks time, is vital to successfully concluding the current trade round. Many countries are arguing that too little progress has been made and ambitions for the ministerial conference should be lowered. But the Doha round is an opportunity to tackle some of the most fundamental injustices at the heart of world trade. We must not lower our ambitions.

Cuba

19. **Colin Burgon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what subjects Mr. Caleb McCarry recently discussed with officials of his Department. [32406]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The recent meeting between United States Cuba Transition Coordinator, Caleb McCarry, and officials at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office was an introductory meeting to discuss the breadth of US and UK/EU policy towards Cuba.

Ministers and officials continue to have a wide range of contacts on Cuba. This is in line with the EU's longstanding policy of constructive engagement in pursuit of a peaceful transition to a pluralist democracy.

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which *(a)* Officials and *(b)* Ministers the United States Cuba Transition Co-ordinator met when in London recently; and on what dates. [31443]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: On 7 November 2005, the United States Cuba Transition Co-ordinator Caleb McCarry attended a meeting with Officials at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, chaired by the Deputy Head of the Latin America and Caribbean Department. He did not meet any Ministers during his visit.

Zimbabwe

20. **Dr. Julian Lewis:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the Government's policy on human rights in Zimbabwe. [32408]

Ian Pearson: Zimbabwe's record is appalling. This year it has denied 700,000 vulnerable Zimbabweans, adequate housing in mass destructions, manipulated elections and continued its assault on unions, civil society and media.

We continue to press for a return to democratic governance. We raise our concerns directly with the Government, maintain EU sanctions on those responsible for human rights abuses, and have put Zimbabwe on the Security Council agenda.

Uganda

22. **Mr. Mullin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to President Museveni of Uganda following the arrest of the opposition leader Dr. Besigye; and if he will make a statement. [32410]

Ian Pearson: My noble Friend the Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development met President Museveni on 23 November to press for a transparent and fair civilian trial for Dr. Besigye. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister also expressed his concerns directly to President Museveni at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Malta.

Iran

23. **Mrs. Ellman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the likely effects of Iran's nuclear programme on regional stability. [32411]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction in the Middle East would pose a serious threat to regional peace and stability. We remain deeply concerned about the intentions of Iran's nuclear programme. We have called on Iran to resume negotiations on long-term arrangements that would provide objective guarantees that its nuclear programme is for exclusively peaceful purposes.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent communications his Department has had with India regarding Iran's nuclear development. [32324]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: During the last month, senior officials have been in frequent contact with their Indian opposite numbers over Iran's nuclear programme. We welcome India's support in encouraging Iran to meet the requests made by the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors and to resume talks about a long-term solution on an acceptable basis.

United Nations

24. **Jim Sheridan:** To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on reform of the UN. [32412]

Ian Pearson: The UK strongly supports reform of the UN to make it better equipped to deal with the threats facing the international community.

The reforms and commitments agreed at September's World Summit would, if fully implemented, represent an important step forward for the UN.

The UK will continue to play an active role, as EU president and nationally, in urging progress on implementation.

Cyprus

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will meet the President of the National Federation of Cypriots in the UK; and if he will make a statement. [31447]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The President of the National Federation of Cypriots in the UK, Mr. Sophoclides, has not recently requested a meeting with my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary. The Foreign Secretary regularly meets a range of interlocutors on Cyprus issues, including Mr. Sophoclides, whom he last met in his official capacity in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in February this year.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the recent discussions between his Department and Turkish Cypriot leaders Mr. Talat and Mr. Soyer. [31450]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister met Mr. Soyer when he visited Cyprus in October and I met Mr. Soyer this month in London. Officials also maintain an open dialogue with representatives of the Turkish Cypriots. UK policy remains to help facilitate a just, viable and lasting settlement for the benefit of all Cypriots. We believe that only by engaging with both communities in Cyprus can we help make progress towards this objective.

The Government maintains its long-standing position of non-recognition of the self-declared "Turkish Republic of Northern Cyprus".

Mr. Burrowes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the Minister of State for Europe last met representatives of the Cypriot community in the UK. [32016]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Ministers and officials maintain a close and extensive dialogue with the Government of the Republic of Cyprus. In addition, Ministers meet regularly with members of the Cypriot community in the UK, in both official and parliamentary capacities. My right hon. Friend the former Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister of State for Europe (Mr. MacShane), last met representatives of the Cypriot community in March 2005 and I am willing to consider future requests for meetings.

Departmental Estate

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which buildings and sites used by his Department and related agencies *(a)* have ceased to be used in the last year and *(b)* will be closed under current plans for relocation. [31777]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: No buildings and sites have ceased to be used by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office within the UK in the last year. We intend to rationalise our central London estate and move out of our Albert Embankment, London, SE1, and Croydon premises in the next two years.

Departmental Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to relocate staff in his Department and related agencies into London and the South East. [31745]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is implementing the Lyons Review recommendation to relocate 450 FCO jobs out of London, to Hanslope Park, Buckinghamshire, by 2010. We have no plans to relocate jobs from Hanslope Park to London or to other parts of the South East.

Diego Garcia

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many *(a)* US military personnel and *(b)* civilian contractors reside in Diego Garcia (i) in total and (ii) broken down by nationality. [32179]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: There are currently 991 US Military personnel and 2347 civilian personnel posted to Diego Garcia. The civilian personnel are broken down as follows:

2,224 Filipinos,

40 Mauritians,

one Singaporean,

seven British,

75 American.

In addition there are 41 British military personnel posted to Diego Garcia.

There is no settled or permanent population on Diego Garcia.

Ethiopia

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what factors he took into account when on behalf of the EU under the UK presidency he congratulated Prime Minister Meles of Ethiopia on his re-election. [31644]

Ian Pearson: The EU letter congratulated Prime Minister Meles on his re-election and welcomed the progress towards democracy represented by the May elections. It also urged him to demonstrate that the Opposition parties could play a constructive role in the new Parliament; to free detained activists not charged with any offence; and to conduct a prompt independent inquiry into the killings on 8 June. We are continuing to urge the Government of Ethiopia to take these measures and resume a political dialogue with the Opposition.

EU Council

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what options for the improvement of its transparency he will present to the Council of the European Union as part of the UK presidency of the EU; and if he will make a statement. [31619]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The UK presidency has recently tabled a paper setting out options for improving transparency in the Council. A copy of this paper has been sent to the Chair of the European Scrutiny Committee and the Chair of the EU Select Committee. One of these proposals advocates implementing more fully the existing provisions on transparency in the Council Rules of Procedure and the alternative proposes revising those provisions. We have also suggested that supporting measures to facilitate access to the Council's proceedings be considered. These proposals will be taken forward in COREPER (Committee of Permanent Representatives).

Freedom of Information

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many Freedom of Information applications his Department has received; how many have taken more than 20 days to process; and how many of these gave rise to complaints about the time taken. [31211]

Dr. Howells: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) received 830 Freedom of Information (FOI) requests from 1 January 2005, when the Freedom of Information Act 2000 came fully into force, to 30 June 2005, the date to which full monitoring statistics were provided to the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA). Of these, 436 were answered within the 20 days specified in the Act; a further 249 received responses within permitted extended deadlines; and the remaining 145 received replies after the permitted deadlines. The FCO has received two complaints on timeliness grounds from the Information Commissioner.

The DCA is committed to publishing quarterly updates in relation to departmental performance under FOI, including information on both the volume and outcomes of requests. The bulletin for the second quarter was published on 30 September 2005 and can be found on the DCA website at http://www.foi.gov.uk/statsapr-jun05.htm and in the Library of the House. The next bulletin will be published before Christmas and an annual report will be published in early 2006.

International Arrest Warrants

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether his Department is considering proposals to amend legislation on international arrest warrants. [31399]

Dr. Howells: This is a matter for the Home Office.

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what meetings *(a)* he and *(b)* his Department has (i) had since 11 September and (ii) is planning to have with representatives of the Israeli (A) Ministry of Law, (B) State Attorney Office and (C) Foreign Ministry regarding the arrest warrant for General Almog. [31400]

Dr. Howells: Officials at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have met twice with officials from the Israeli Government. This includes the Israeli Foreign Ministry, Ministry of Justice and Israeli embassy since 11 September regarding the arrest warrant for General Almog.

Iraq

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what assistance the Government is providing to *(a)* the Iraqi Interim Government and *(b)* the International Advisory and Monitoring Board to ensure that public funds in Iraq are administered in a transparent manner; [31246]

(2) what the role of the UK is in the Coalition Provisional Authority in Iraq in administering *(a)* the Development Fund for Iraq and *(b)* funds from other sources; and if he will make a statement. [31247]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* The Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) ceased operating in Iraq at the end of June 2004, at which point control of the Development Fund for Iraq (DPI) was transferred to the sovereign Government of Iraq. We continue to encourage the transparent management of public funds by the Iraqi Government.

The UK is providing economic technical assistance to the Iraqi Government to improve the transparency and management of public expenditure through reforms to the budget cycle. A team of UK-funded advisers also works closely with the Iraqi Ministry of Finance on essential reforms to the subsidy system which will help to improve transparency in public funds. The UK is also helping to build up the capacity of the Prime Minister's Office, the Iraqi Cabinet Office, the Ministry of Interior, and the southern Provincial Councils. This work is supporting the development of an effective Iraqi civil service which is able to administer public funds in a more accountable way. Earlier this year the National Audit Office hosted a study tour for the Iraqi Supreme Board of Audit to compare current practices. In addition, the UK is encouraging Iraq to sign up to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and to the UN Convention for Anti-Corruption.

The role of the International Advisory and Monitoring Board (IAMB) is to act as an audit oversight body for DPI. Its purpose is to help ensure that the DPI is used in a transparent manner for the benefit of the people of Iraq and that export sales of petroleum, petroleum products, and natural gas from Iraq are consistent with prevailing

international market best practices. IAMB membership includes representatives from the International Monetary Fund, World Bank, UN Secretary General's Office, Arab Fund for Economic and Social Development and Iraq's Ministry of Finance. External audits of the IAMB have been carried out by KPMG, The UK is not directly involved with the IAMB.

Libya

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made in the context of the UK Presidency of the European Union to the Libyan Authorities regarding the situation of the Bulgarian nurses and the Palestinian doctor; and if he will make a statement. [32371]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* On behalf of the EU, the UK Presidency issued a statement on 15 November 2005, noting the decision by the Libyan Supreme Court to delay its ruling on the death sentences on the Bulgarian and Palestinian medical staff, expressing our concern about their plight, and that we continue to support efforts to find a resolution, which is acceptable to both parties, to this difficult and longstanding issue. We are engaging with the Libyan and Bulgarian authorities to secure that outcome. At the same time, the UK is working with EU partners to provide humanitarian assistance to alleviate the HIV crisis in Benghazi, including through the EU HIV Action Plan.

Middle East

Mr. Joyce: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the threat posed by Hezbollah to peace and stability in the middle east. [32409]

Ian Pearson: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave today to my hon. Friend the member for Hartlepool (UIN 32395).

Jim Sheridan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many UK observers will be involved in the EU monitoring of the crossing between Egypt and Gaza at Rafah. [28961]

Dr. Howells: On 15 November, EU Special Representative Javier Solana, US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice and Quartet Special Envoy James Wolfensohn announced an Agreement between the Israelis and Palestinians on Movement and Access relating to the Gaza Strip. This Agreement will give the Palestinian people more freedom to move and to trade. The EU will act as an on-site Third Party at the Rafah (Gaza-Egypt) crossing and provide training and equipment to the Palestinians.

The UK is sending five personnel to the mission this week commencing (28 November). Members of our embassy in Tel Aviv and our Consulate General in Jerusalem are working directly with General Pistolese's team on the ground. In addition to this, we are providing funding and equipment to the Palestinians, including the provision of five armoured cars.

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the likely impact on the *(a)* economic situation and tourist industry of Bethlehem and *(b)* viability of a future Palestinian state of the creation by Israel of a new checkpoint at Rachel's Tomb. [31508]

Dr. Howells: Bethlehem is of unique religious and cultural significance to Christians. Restrictions on access and freedom of worship there are one of the many negative consequences of the Israeli restrictions on movement in the West Bank and Jerusalem. Israel has a right to protect its citizens from terrorist attacks but it also has a duty to ensure the effect of its security measures on the Palestinian population are minimised. We will continue to raise this concern at all levels with the Israeli Government. In addition to this, we have seconded a senior British Army officer to the region to work with the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs and Quartet Special Envoy James Wolfensohn's team to examine ways of improving freedom of movement in the West Bank.

Checkpoints and the barrier have a serious detrimental effect on the Palestinian economy, including revenues from tourism, and in a few cases on the vision of a future Palestinian state.

Pakistan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Government of Pakistan for *(a)* a fair trial for Younas Maish in the court of Lahore and *(b)* protection to be given to the advocate of the defendant and court officials. [32291]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We were concerned to learn about the apparent misuse of the Blasphemy Law in Pakistan in this case. We are following it closely and are discussing the case with the Government of Pakistan. We will continue to make representations as appropriate.

Public Service Agreement

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he will publish a public service agreement delivery plan for 2004 public service agreement target number 3. [29943]

Dr. Howells: We do not intend to publish the spending review 04 public service agreement (PSA) delivery plan for 2005–08, as it is an internal business-planning tool. However, the Government regularly reports progress against PSA 3 in departmental annual and autumn performance reports. These reports are publicly available on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and other relevant Departments' websites. Details of the measurement systems underpinning the target are published in the PSA 3 technical note, which is also publicly available on the FCO website at www.fco.gov.uk

Royal Family

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list official visits abroad by members of the Royal Family in the last 12 months; and what the itinerary was in each case. [32733]

Mr. Douglas Alexander *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* Details of visits overseas made by Members of the Royal Family appear daily in the Court Circular. Information is also available on the Royal websites at

www.royal.gov.uk and www.princeofwales.gov.uk under the diary links. Detailed information is also given in the annual report for The Grant-in-Aid for Royal Travel by Air and Rail which is part of the Royal Public Finances Annual Reports publication. The list my hon. Friend requests is given as follows:

The Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh

State visit by the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh to Malta 23–24 November 2005. Attendance by the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Valletta 25–26 November 2005. London-Luqa-London.

The Duke of Edinburgh

The Netherlands, 11 December 2004, Blackpool-Valkenburg-London.

Vatican City, 23–24 April 2005, London-Rome-London.

The Prince of Wales

Sri Lanka, 28 February 2005 and Fiji, 10–11 March 2005. London-Colombo-Perth. Fiji-RAF Lyneham.

Vatican, 7–8 April 2005, London-Rome-London.

Turkey Gallipoli, 24–25 April 2005. Aberdeen-Cannakkale-RAF Lyneham.

Germany, 27 June 2005 Aberdeen-Paderborn-RAF Lyneham.

Saudi Arabia, 2–3 August 2005. Wick-Riyadh-Wick

United States, 1–9 November, 2005. London-New York-Washington-New Orleans-San Francisco-London. Accompanied by the Duchess of Cornwall.

The Duke of York

Switzerland and Italy, 22–23 November, 2004. London-Geneva-Milan-London[1]

Singapore, Brunei, Malaysia and the Philippines, 24 November-5 December 2005.London-Singapore-Brunei-Kuching-Kuala Lumpur-Manila-London.[1]

Luxembourg, 15 January 2005. London-Luxembourg-London.

UAE, Saudi Arabia, Kuwait, Oman, Qatar and Cyprus, 12–27 February 2005. London-Abu Dhabi-Dubai-Abu Dhabi-Jeddah-Riyadh-Bahrain-Kuwait-Muscat-Doha-RAF Akrotiri-London. [1]

Germany, 4–5 April 2005. London-Hamburg-Munich-London. [1]

Monaco, 14–15 April 2005. London-Nice-London.

Japan and Thailand, 19–27 April 2005. London-Tokyo-Osaka-Kobe-Nagoya-Bangkok-Hua Hin-Phuket-Bangkok-Dubai-London.

Russia, 8–11 May 2005. London-Murmansk-London.

France, 17–18 May 2005. London-Paris-Toulouse-London.[1]

Azerbaijan, 24–26 May 2005. RAF Wattisham-Baku-London.

Iraq, 20 August 2005. Abu Dhabi-Basra-Abu Dhabi.

Slovakia and Hungary, 11–14 October 2005. London-Bratislava-Budapest-London.[1]

Bermuda, 3 6 November 2005. London-Bermuda-London.

Republic of Korea, 13–17 November 2005. London-Tokyo-Incheon-Hong Kong-Los Angeles-London. [1]

Egypt, 28–30 November 2005. London-Cairo-Alexandria-London.[1]

The Earl of Wessex

Poland 27 January. London-Katowice-London.

Uruguay and Chile 28 February-3 March 2005. London-San Paulo-Montevideo-Santiago-Madrid-London.

Monaco 18–20 November 2005, accompanied by he Countess of Wessex. London-Amsterdam-Nice-London.

The Princess Royal

British Virgin Islands and Montserrat 21–25 February 2005. London-Montserrat-Tortola-Kingston-London.

Luxembourg 3 March 2005. Lyneham-Luxembourg-Brussels-Lyneham.

China, Indonesia, East Timor and Papua New Guinea 20 September to 30 September accompanied by Admiral Timothy Laurence. London-Beijing-Shanghai-Hefei-Lanzhou-Wujiaba-Medan-Banda Aceh-Jakarta-Dili-Port Moresby-Singapore-London.

The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester

France, 6–7 December 2004. London-Paris-London.

Germany, 8–9 March 2005, Duke only. London-Munster-London.

Ireland, 16–17 March 2005. London-Cork-London.

Germany, 16–17 April 2005. London-Hanover-London.

Denmark, 4–5 May 2005. London-Copenhagen-London.

Germany 24–25 June 2005, Duke only. London-Hanover-Hamlyn-Hanover-London.

The Duke of Kent

Austria 20–22 September 2005. London-Vienna-Graz-Vienna-London.

Germany 29–30 October 2005. London-Berlin-Dresden-London.

[1] UK Special Representative for International Trade and Investment duties.

State Visits

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what state visits *(a)* by Her Majesty the Queen to foreign countries and *(b)* by foreign heads of state to the UK have been agreed; and what the planned dates of such visits are in each case. [31244]

Dr. Howells: Announcements have already been made concerning Her Majesty the Queen's outward state visits to Malta 23–24 November 2005 and to Singapore 16–18 March 2006.

Proposals and dates for further inward and outward state visits are kept under constant review. It is not our practice to announce such visits until they are firm and the formal invitation has been delivered to the Head of State of the country concerned.

Sudan

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact of recent events in the Darfur area of Sudan on the prospects for peace in the region. [31048]

Ian Pearson: We remain seriously concerned about the situation in Darfur. Although the African Union (AU) monitoring force has expanded and is increasingly effective, there are reports of tribal clashes as well as skirmishes within the Sudan Liberation army, and ongoing banditry. In his latest report on Darfur, the UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, notes that September and October recorded a rise in the number of people being killed. We continue to press the parties to rein in their fighters and to reach a political agreement within the UN Security Council's deadline of the end of the year. We have also made clear that those who are responsible for attacks must be held to account.

It is only through political negotiation that a sustainable solution to the conflict will be found. The AU led talks in Abuja provide a political process and are making steady progress, although there is still a long

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way to go, particularly given rebel divisions. We are firmly committed to the Abuja process and are pushing for the negotiations to be better structured so as to have maximum impact on the immediate security situation on the ground. We have a UK observer at the talks, to support both the mediation and the parties and to provide technical assistance if needed.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agicultural Levy Boards

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will publish the terms of reference for the investigation into agricultural levy boards. [30486]

Jim Knight: The terms of reference were published on the DEFRA website and laid in the Library of the House when the review of the agricultural and horticultural levy boards was announced on 15 March 2005. They are also reprinted in annex A of the report of the review, published on 11 November 2005.

Bees

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what improvements are planned to the work of the Plant and Invertebrate Ecology Division at Rothamsted Research Station into bee viruses; [26898]

(2) what arrangements are being made for the future preservation of bee viruses held at the Rothamsted Research Station. [27089]

Jim Knight: Rothamsted Research is sponsored by the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council. It is one of several contractors with whom the Department funds research that supports our bee health policy to control pests and diseases of bees in England. Rothamsted completed a three-year Defra funded project on exotic bee viruses and their interactions under UK conditions in November 2004. While Defra has no current plans to commission further work on bee viruses at the institute, we have made provision for continuing expenditure on research on bee health.

I understand that Rothamsted is considering future arrangements for the preservation of its collection of bee viruses and antisera and for access to this collection.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she plans to increase the number of bee inspectors; and if she will make a statement. [29283]

Jim Knight: The Bee Health Inspection and Advisory Service of the National Bee Unit undertakes a range of statutory disease control measures and delivers an extensive training programme to beekeepers to help maintain the health of the honey bee population.

The Department has no current plans to increase the size of the Inspectorate in England. Funding on bee health and any changes to the provision of the inspection services will be considered as the Department's expenditure plans are developed for future years.

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has for beekeepers to be required to make their own diagnosis of European foulbrood in their colonies. [29285]

Mr. Bradshaw: The responsibility to ensure the maintenance of a healthy bee population is a shared one between the Department and beekeepers. The National Bee Unit already provides a training programme that aims to help beekeepers become more self-reliant in controlling pests and diseases through improved disease recognition and bee husbandry techniques.

The Department believes that beekeepers can take a greater measure of responsibility for the control of European foulbrood as improved disease control methods are developed. However, as was indicated to the House on 20 October, we will not make changes to the inspection arrangements for European foulbrood unless we are sure that bee health will not suffer as a result.

Biomass and Biofuels

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the division of departmental responsibilities for biomass and biofuels is between the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, the Department of Trade and Industry and the Department of Transport; and what reallocations of responsibility have occurred in 2005. [30927]

Jim Knight: In common with other policies and issues which are wide-ranging in their impact on the UK, there are a number of Government Departments with an interest in biomass and biofuels. There is strong liaison across the Departments both at ministerial and official level to ensure co-ordinated policy. Defra has responsibility for the role biomass and biofuels can play in sustainable development, climate change, air quality and rural issues. The Department of Trade and Industry is responsible for the overall renewable energy policy, new technology and industry development and sponsorship. The Department for Transport is responsible for transport policy and the promotion of low carbon fuels, including the Biofuels Directive and the Renewable Transport Fuels Obligation. No reallocations of responsibility have occurred in 2005.

Carbon Dioxide Emissions

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) whether the Government are continuing to aim to meet the target to cut carbon dioxide emissions by 20 per cent. by 2010; [30268]

(2) whether the Government plan to cut carbon dioxide emissions by 60 per cent. by 2050. [30269]

Mr. Morley: The manifesto reiterated the Government's commitment to reducing carbon dioxide emissions by 20 per cent. below 1990 levels by 2010 and stated that a 60 per cent. reduction by 2050 remains necessary and achievable.

Combined Heat and Power

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress is being made towards achieving the year 2000 target of 5 gigawatts of installed combined heat and power (CHP)

capacity in the UK: and what impact she expects the dismantling of the 18 megawatt CHP plant in Bury to have on this target. [31609]

Mr. Morley: The Government target for CHP, announced in 2000, is to achieve at least 10 gigawatts of Good Quality CHP capacity by 2010. Installed capacity at the end of 2004 was 5.6 gigawatts. We have no record of a CHP plant in Bury.

Commons Registration Act

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what guidance she has issued on whether a common registered under the Commons Registration Act 1965 which has consequently been mapped as access land under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 but which has an Order of Limitation placed on it by way of provisions under section 193 of the Law of Property Act 1925 has full access rights by ways of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. [31844]

Jim Knight: Section 15 of the Countryside and Right of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act) lists enactments, under which the public has rights of access, including access on foot and higher rights such as horse riding. Where land which falls under these enactments has been mapped as open country or registered common land, the right of access under the CROW Act does not apply because an existing right is in place. Section 193 of the Law of Property Act 1925 is one of the enactments listed in section 15. The right of access under the CROW Act does not therefore apply to land which falls under section 193 of the Law of Property Act 1925 even if that land has an Order of Limitation placed on it.

We have provided public guidance on section 15 in the context of appeals relating to the mapping of open country and registered common land and applications for restrictions and exclusions of the right of access. We have not so far seen a need to provide guidance specifically on those cases where land subject to section 193 of the Law of Property Act 1925 has an Order of Limitation placed on it.

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what mechanisms are in place to assess the effectiveness of consultant-led projects in her Department; what sanctions are available to penalise consultants who ran unsuccessful projects; how many projects conducted by consultants were assessed as unsuccessful in each year since 2000; and what sanctions were imposed in each case. [29077]

Jim Knight: The planning, monitoring, control and delivery of projects and programmes in Defra is the responsibility of departmental management, not consultants. External resources are engaged to assist in the successful delivery of these projects and programmes and are subject to a raft of commercial, financial, procurement, technical and project quality assurance and standards. Additionally, OGC's Gateway Review process provides assurance at critical stages of a programme's or project's lifecycle.

Service providers who do not deliver the required services to time, quality and cost are subject to remedies appropriate to the shortcomings identified up to and including, as a last resort, contract termination and pursuit of damages. From information held centrally, the Department is unaware of any projects or programmes that could merit classification as unsuccessful, because the Department's project and contract management procedures act to remedy any emerging difficulties in the planning, monitoring, control and delivery of departmental projects and programmes.

No records are held centrally of sanctions applied within programmes, projects and contracts, and the information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department takes to ensure that consultancies do not claim excessive expenses while working for the Department and its agencies. [29078]

Jim Knight: Departmental governance arrangements require that expenses incurred by contractors, including consultancies, while working for the Department and its agencies are subject to validation and substantiation before authorisation for payment. The Department reserves the right to recover any monies overpaid to contractors to which they are not entitled.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list departmental projects conducted by consultants in each year since 2000; what the cost was in each case; and what the total cost of employing consultants was in each year. [29079]

Jim Knight: Defra came into being in June 2001. Departmental projects are the responsibility of departmental management. A list of departmental projects and their costs each year since 2000 could be provided only at disproportionate cost. On the total cost of employing consultants, a broad and imprecise term, I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave on 13 June 2005, *Official Report*, columns 35–36W, and on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1962–63W to my hon. Friend the Member for Great Grimsby (Mr. Mitchell).

Cormorants

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many licences for the culling of cormorants were issued in England in each of the last five years; how many cormorants were killed under licence in England in each year; and if she will make a statement. [31387]

Jim Knight: The information requested is as follows.

Season	*Number of licenses granted*	*Number of birds licensed to be shot*	*Number of birds shot*
2001–02	99	570	189
2002–03	120	603	273
2003–04	146	828	499
2004–05	331	1,996	1,258
2005–06	355	2,302	[1]

[1] Returns due January 2006.

The above table shows statistics from the start of each cormorant season, rather than for specific years.

The numbers given for the 2005 season run to 17 November only.

Correspondence

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Coventry, South on the Draper Study on overhead power lines. [31426]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 28 November 2005]*: There is no record of this letter in the Department. If the hon. Member would like to resubmit this letter I will expedite a prompt reply

Countryside Stewardship Scheme

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to continue the Access Management Grant Scheme beyond 2007. [31840]

Jim Knight: The Access Management Grant Scheme was introduced to support access authorities (outside National Parks) in meeting the start-up costs in managing the new right of public access under the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.

The right of access has now been commenced across England, and the Grant Scheme is due to come to an end for access authorities in mapping areas one to five in March 2006, and for remaining authorities in March 2007.

On-going access management, and infrastructure maintenance costs, should be much lower than the initial start-up costs. However, I have asked the Countryside Agency to advise me as to whether there would be any benefit in extending the scheme for a further year. This would allow access authorities to benefit from three years worth of funding. The Agency is currently consulting access authorities and other stakeholders and I hope to make a decision in spring next year.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she plans to publish the regulations covering the review of maps of open country and registered commons land produced under section 1 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. [31841]

Jim Knight: Section 10 of the Countryside and Right of Way Act 2000 requires the Countryside Agency to review the conclusive maps of open country and registered common land not more than 10 years after the time that each map was first issued and not less frequently than every 10 years thereafter. Before making any regulations covering the review of conclusive maps we need to consider how the review process ought to work. Both Defra and the Countryside Agency are currently undertaking lessons learned exercises and the outcome of these will help inform our decisions on the review process. We aim to undertake consultation on our proposals for the review of conclusive maps during the course of next year.

Deforestation

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research the Department has commissioned on the environmental consequences of deforestation. [31606]

Mr. Morley: Forests cover 30 to 40 per cent. of the earth's land area and provide several essential ecosystem services. For example, forests act as sinks for the world's terrestrial carbon stores, absorbing the carbon dioxide that is contributing to climate change. Forests are the repository of the great bulk of terrestrial biodiversity; regulate water cycles; maintain soil quality and reduce the risks of natural disasters such as floods.

There is a vast amount of existing research on the environmental impacts of deforestation which guides UK policy. The UK Government remains in regular discussions with a number of international organisations that undertake significant forestry research such as the UN's Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO), as well as spending about £20 million a year on forestry through country programmes and centrally funded research.

Defra is engaged in several areas. For example under Defra's contract with the Hadley Centre for Climate Prediction and Research, Defra has commissioned work on the consequences of deforestation for the climate at local, regional and global scales. Defra also funds a range of forestry projects under the Darwin Initiative which helps developing countries to monitor biodiversity impacts and build capacity for conservation.

Departmental Finance

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the real terms percentage increase in allocated resources for her Department *(a)* was for the period 1997–98 to 2004–05 and *(b)* is estimated to be between 2005–06 and 2007–08 (i) for each period and (ii) for each year. [31037]

Jim Knight: Defra was only created in July 2001, therefore in the following table is the information requested based upon the Defra 2005 Departmental Report for the period 2001–02 onwards.

	Allocated resources (£ million)	*GDP deflator*	*(a) Real term resources in 2004–05 prices (£ million)*	*(b)(i) Percentage increase per period*	*(b)(ii) Percentage increase per year*
2001–02	2,763	92.454	2,989		—
2002–03	2,876	95.391	3,015	14.30	0.88
2003–04	2,965	97.92	3,028		0.43
2004–05	3,416	100	3,416		12.81
2005–06[1]	3,358	102.501	3,276		-4.10
2006–07	3,560	105.268	3,382	3.48	3.23
2007–08	3,665	108.11	3,390		0.24

[1] Forecast for years 2005–06 to 2007–08, derived from HM Treasury forecasts for GDP deflator increases as per the Budget Report 2005.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many of her Department's staff have moved to Worcester from London since 1997. [30609]

Jim Knight: Defra was created in June 2001 and since that date 10 members of staff have transferred from London to Worcester with funding assistance from the Department.

Departmental Transport

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations her Department, and its local departmental offices, have received on parking on local roads by her Department's staff and IBM contractors at her Department's offices in Epsom Road, Merrow, Guildford. [30369]

Jim Knight: Defra has received representations from local residents residing in Down Road, Daryngton Drive, Carroll Avenue, Gateways, Broadwater Rise, Pitt Farm Road.

Representations have also been received from the local constabulary, and from the local authority community safety officer.

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps officials located in departmental offices in Epsom Road, Merrow, Guildford are taking to minimise the environmental and adverse impact of car parking by staff and contractors in Down Road and other nearby roads. [30370]

Jim Knight: The Department is giving priority to developing a joint travel plan that will apply to staff and external contractors.

Endangered Flora and Fauna

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her most recent assessment is of the most endangered species of *(a)* flora and *(b)* fauna in Staffordshire; and what steps are being taken to reverse their decline. [32034]

Jim Knight: The Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan provides an assessment of the flora and fauna of high nature conservation value in Staffordshire and is subject to regular review. In addition the Staffordshire Ecological Record Centre is able to provide the latest information on many species of conservation concern.

Over the latter half of the last century, there has been a general decline in the area and quality of wildlife habitats in Staffordshire and their associated species of flora and fauna. A number of measures are in place to address these issues. The Staffordshire Biodiversity Action Plan contains plans for 15 habitats, 23 species of fauna and six species of flora. It has identified priority actions and targets, such as restoring 800 ha of heathland by 2010. Staffordshire also contains 64 statutorily protected sites of special scientific interest (SSSI), covering 9,228 hectares, which have been notified by English Nature to protect the best of Staffordshire's wildlife resource.

At the national level, action is being taken to protect and enhance our biodiversity such as the roll-out of the new higher level and entry level agri-environment schemes; the recent publication of Planning Policy Statement 9 on Biodiversity and Geological Conservation and the proposed biodiversity duty within the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill which places a duty on all public bodies to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

English Wine

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what support she provides for English wine producers. [30954]

Jim Knight: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 11 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 646W. Since that reply the UK has been serving British food and drink, including English wines at the regular Council meetings during the UK Presidency of the EU. We will continue to do so for the remaining period of our Presidency.

Environment Agency (Fuel Switching Coordinator)

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the position of fuel switching coordinator was created at the Environment Agency; and what actions her Department took to inform energy intensive users of this appointment. [32318]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* The Environment Agency tasked a member of staff with this role on 12 October 2005. His appointment, name and contact details were communicated by ofgem to their Demand Side Management Group (DMSMG) at a meeting on 13 October 2005. The DSMG includes British Energy, MEUC, Shell, British Gas Business, Centrica Energy, Total, National Grid, APX, Chemicals Industries Association and GdF.

The Environment Agency subsequently contacted electricity producers and briefed Trade Associations at routine bilateral meetings.

EU Emissions Trading Scheme

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proposals her Department has considered for derogation from emissions limits under the EU Emissions Trading Scheme for energy intensive users in the event of *(a)* gas shortages and *(b)* sustained high gas prices this winter. [32319]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* The EU Emissions Trading Scheme is a cost-effective and efficient way of reducing carbon dioxide emissions, which allows industry to achieve emissions reduction targets at the point of least cost. In the event of temporary tightness in the gas supply market there is no limit on fuel switching and the carbon market provides industry with the flexibility to source further allowances if energy intensive users exceed their emissions cap.

Farming

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what tests have been applied to applications for the 2005 single farm payment scheme in England to ensure that the applicants are in legal occupation of the holdings used for their claim. [29788]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 29 November 2005]:* There is no requirement in the European Regulations governing the Single Payment Scheme that the farmer claiming aid has to be in legal occupation of the land supporting the claim. However, to receive payment the farmer must carry out an agricultural activity or maintain the land in good agricultural or environmental condition and the land has to be at the farmer's disposal for 10 months of the year between prescribed dates. Compliance monitoring inspections, including checks on the 10 month provision, are undertaken on a proportion of claims. Where two or more claims are made on the same land parcel claims will be investigated and resolved.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in what circumstances action taken by a farmer prior to the Mid-Term Review is deemed to be a breach of cross-compliance. [32877]

Jim Knight: Cross compliance came into force on 1 January 2005 following an extensive period of discussion and consultation with stakeholders. The requirements are based on existing law and good farming practices. Farmers choosing to claim the single payment confirm that they are aware of, and are meeting the standards as part of their application. A breach of the relevant requirements on or after that date will be regarded as a non-compliance and will be assessed for a penalty as required by the EC Regulations. Breaches which commenced prior to the introduction of cross compliance and are continuing, through an act or omission of the farmer, into 2005, will also be assessed for a penalty. If farmers have concerns about penalties for breaches committed prior to cross compliance coming into force, we would urge them to contact the Rural Payments Agency.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on proposals to increase the budget of the Hill Farming Allowance Scheme to preserve the public benefit from upland farming. [29731]

Jim Knight: The current Hill Farm Allowance is part of the England Rural Development Programme for 2000–06, which implements the rural development elements of the common agricultural policy, using a combination of EU and national funding. The EU budget for rural development for the next programming period (2007–13), and the EU funds available in England, will depend on the outcome of the current EU future financing negotiations.

Decisions on whether to implement the specific EU measure which applies to the less favoured areas, and if so how much of the available funding will be allocated specifically to hill farming, and in what form, will be taken as part of the preparation of the next rural development programme for England, and in the light of responses to a forthcoming consultation. The usual discussions between Departments with an interest will take place as part of that process. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State made clear in her announcement on the Single Payment Scheme on 22 April that we would consider how the next round of rural development programming can better reflect the needs of upland communities, and the public interest in good management of some of our best-loved landscapes.

Greenhouse Gases

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 321–22W, on greenhouse gases, if she will publish a further table using the published provisional 2004 figures as the most recent available. [31157]

Mr. Morley: The table shows projected UK greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions and percentage reductions during the commitment period obtained by assuming that the linear trend in emissions of the last *(a)* five years, *(b)* four years, *(c)* three years, *(d)* two years and *(e)* one year continue, based on the most recent published UK Greenhouse Gas Inventory data, which cover the period 1990 to 2003 and using the provisional 2004 estimate.

In the Government's view the provisional estimate for 2004 is very unsuitable for the analysis requested. This is because, under the calculation method proposed, the additional uncertainty (+/-1%) associated with the final provisional data point enters in to all the estimates and is magnified by the projection process to form an uncertainty of between +7–2 and of +/-6 percentage points over the Kyoto commitment period.

In addition, in comparison with the results already presented, the difference in projected percentage reduction due to shifting the base year of projection from 2003 inventory data to 2004 provisional estimates ranges between 1 and 12 percentage points.

	Projections based on trend back (years)	*Average UK GHG emission 2008–12 (MtC)*	*Reduction from Kyoto Protocol base year emissions (percentage)*
(a)	Five	180.1 (+7–3.9)	-12.1 (+7–1.9)
(b)	Four	180.9 (+7–4.5)	-11.8 (+7–2.2)
(c)	Three	175.2 (+7–5.4)	-14.6 (+7–2.6)
(d)	Two	189.7 (+7–7.2)	-7.5 (+7–3. 5)
(e)	One	188.9 (+7–12.5)	-7.9 (+7–6.1)

Projections based purely on extrapolation from past data are inherently unsound, particularly where the record is very short in duration. Neither this set of projections, nor the set published in the reply given on 8 November, takes specific account of expectations about the future of energy supply, economic activity, fuel prices, sectoral trends and effects of policy measures and for this reason they are not a sound basis for judging whether the UK will meet its commitments under the Kyoto Protocol.

Home Energy Conservation

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she has taken to review guidelines on the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995. [30144]

Mr. Morley: We are currently in the process of drawing-up, with the key stakeholders, the terms of reference to a review of the guidance issued to energy conservation authorities in England on compliance with the Home Energy Conservation Act 1995.

Household Waste

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of household waste to be recycled or composted she would accept as further improvement by 2008 for the purposes of measuring achievement against 2004 public service agreement target 6. [30433]

Jim Knight: The Department recently launched a consultation on options for local authority statutory performance standards on recycling and composting in 2007–08. The Government's preferred option would deliver a national recycling and composting rate of approximately 28.5 per cent. in 2007–08. This would put England on course to meet the national recycling and composting target of 30 per cent. by 2010 as set out in Waste Strategy 2000.

Hunting

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her policy is on the use of scents for *(a)* drag and *(b)* trail hunting on Forestry Commission land; and if she will make a statement. [31791]

Jim Knight: The Forestry Commission has entered a Drag Hunting Agreement for one season with the Master of Foxhounds Association (MFHA). This sets out the terms on which their member hunts can apply to the Forestry Commission for a specific licence to drag hunt. The terms are identical to those agreed with the Master of Bloodhounds and Draghounds Association (MBDA) who have operated on the public forest estate for a number of years. The MBDA code of conduct on scents is included in the MFHA Agreement as follows:

> "The scent used must be artificial and may be chemical or animal based. The scent used should not be easily confused by the hounds with a wild mammal. Under no circumstances should a carcass or part of one, the hunting of which is illegal, be used as the scent."

Land Maps

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the number of farmers and landowners who have failed to provide maps for parcels of land. [30792]

Jim Knight: Following initial validation of the Single Payment Scheme claims the Rural Payments Agency has requested maps from some 13,000 claimants of which 6,000 have been received.

National Minimum Wage

Ms Katy Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many employees in her Department were affected by the rise in the national minimum wage on 1 October 2005. [28882]

Jim Knight: Seven staff in the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS), an Executive agency of DEFRA, received an increase to their salaries on 1 October 2005, pending the application of the CEFAS 2005 pay award (applicable from 1 April 2005), which will take the lowest pay band minima in the agency above the national minimum wage.

Pesticides

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, columns 2313–14W, on pesticides, if she will express the quantities used in each year in terms of volume. [30952]

Mr. Morley: Details of the volume of pesticide applied are only kept for those products which have a liquid formulation. Details of the volumes of such products applied since 1990, when our records began, are as follows:

million

	Litres	
	Volume of active substance	*Volume of product*
1990	24.5	40.4
1991	24.8	40.8
1992	28.6	46.3
1993	30.7	50.0
1994	32.5	51.2
1995	33.9	52.4
1996	35.7	55.4
1997	35.6	56.0
1998	35.5	57.3
1999	35.2	57.3
2000	32.9	54.8
2001	32.8	54.7
2002	30.9	51.8
2003	30.6	51.5
2004	31.1	54.0

Pesticides which are not formulated as liquid formulations such as powders or granules are not recorded in these figures.

Predictive Diallers

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many calls were made from call centres in her Department in 2004–05 using predictive diallers; how many such calls resulted in contact being made with the recipient without a Government agent available to talk to them; and what assessment she has made of the likely impact of Ofcom's policy on silent calls on the use of predictive diallers in departmental call centres. [28170]

Jim Knight: Defra does not use predictive diallers.

Public Service Agreement

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the data required to measure the sharing of risk management with industry for the purposes of measuring performance against 2004 public service agreement target 1 are available to her. [30292]

Jim Knight: Progress towards achieving the public service agreement target 1 is evaluated annually using the set of 68 UK sustainable development strategy indicators. Specific indicators relating to the impacts of industry are:

Carbon dioxide emissions by end user (including industry)

Manufacturing sector carbon dioxide, nitrogen oxides, sulphur dioxides and particulates

Water abstractions in total

Waste arisings from industry and commerce

Resource use as measured by domestic material consumption.

The indicators were published in June 2005 in "Sustainable development indicators in your pocket 2005", copies of which were sent to all Members of Parliament. Copies were also placed in the Library of the House. The indicators are also available via the UK Government's sustainable development website:

www.sustainable-development.gov.uk

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what time scale she has set for achievement of 2004 public service agreement target 6. [30294]

Jim Knight: As set out in DEFRA's PSA target 6, Government are committed to enable at least 25 per cent. of household waste to be recycled or composted by 2005–06, with further improvements by 2008.

Red Squirrels

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the red squirrel population is estimated to be in Northamptonshire. [30854]

Jim Knight: There are no red squirrel populations in Northamptonshire. This native species is in serious decline as a result of habitat fragmentation and the spread of the grey squirrel. Conservation effort is focused on protecting large areas of coniferous woodland (mainly in northern England) that have no grey squirrels and can be defended against their incursion.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the red squirrel population in Staffordshire. [32028]

Jim Knight: Red squirrels are known to have survived in some parts of Staffordshire until the 1980s and the last population recorded was in the Forestry Commission's Cannock Forest. The last red squirrel sighting in Staffordshire was a road casualty in Cannock Forest in 1990. A study in the early 1990s, which concluded in 1996, failed to record any red squirrels.

Rural Payments Agency

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) if she will publish all the guidance and instruction given to Rural Payments Agency inspectors for the enforcement of the rules on cross-compliance; [31860]

(2) what targets have been set for Rural Payments Agency inspectors checking cross-compliance. [32876]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 29 November 2005]:* The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) has a legislative requirement to carry out checks on at least one percent of all farmers submitting aid applications under support schemes as established in Titles III and IV of Regulation (EC) 1782/2003.

There is no target set for inspectors finding problems on cross compliance inspections. They carry out inspections and are asked to report what they observe in accordance with the Guidance for Cross Compliance Inspectors and Penalty Reduction Matrices.

RPA is currently in the process of publishing all its current Guidance for Cross Compliance Inspectors and Penalty Reduction Matrices on its website www.rpa.gov.uk and on request from RPA.

The Penalty Reduction Matrices will also be published in the Cross Compliance Handbook for England 2006 edition which will be circulated to single payment scheme applicants in December 2005.

RPA and devolved Administrations have worked closely to bring about shared ownership of these documents and a common approach across the UK where there are similar cross compliance standards.

Single Farm Payment

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the target date is for the commencement of the single farm payment; and if she will consider paying interest on late payments where the delay is caused by her Department. [30877]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 22 November 2005]:* The Rural Payments Agency is still working towards a target date of starting payments in February. The regulatory payment deadline is 30 June and consideration would not be given to paying interest before that time.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many farmers have yet to submit maps in relation to applications for single payments. [29911]

Jim Knight: Following the initial validation of the Single Payment Scheme claims the Rural Payment Agency has requested maps from some 13,000 claimants of which 6,000 have been received.

Snares

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will take steps to ensure that the contract to survey the use of snares will be subject to an open tender process. [30492]

Jim Knight: Defra published a Snares Action Plan on 19 October 2005 in response to the report by the Independent Snares Working Group. The action plan sets out the next steps during the next three years, which includes a review of the priorities for wildlife management research. Further information may be found on www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/vertebrates/snares/index.htm.

A review of the whole of Defra's wildlife management research programme will be undertaken in February 2006. It will consider all future research priorities across the programme, including a survey of the use of snares and whether it will be subject to an open tender process.

Suckler Cow Production

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of *(a)* the future of suckler cow production in upland farms and *(b)* consequential environmental change as a result of the impact of the Single Farm Payment on this sector. [29733]

Jim Knight: Prior to the implementation of the latest round of CAP reform and the introduction of the Single Payment Scheme, my Department commissioned assessments on possible impacts of decoupling on a range of sectors, including suckler cows in the uplands. These suggest that suckler cow production is expected to decrease as a result of CAP reform.

Assessments have also been made on possible environmental impacts which reveal that grazing by cattle plays an important role in the maintenance of heather moor land, an important habitat for biodiversity. It is for this reason my officials have submitted to the European Commission for approval, the inclusion of payments within the Environmental Stewardship schemes to provide incentives for appropriate cattle grazing in the uplands.

All of these assessments are, understandably, speculative and the agricultural and environmental impacts of the Single Payment Scheme will depend on a range of factors—not least the response of suckler beef farmers in their individual businesses. It is therefore too soon to predict categorically what the impacts will be.

Urban Gulls

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the problems caused by urban gulls; and if she will commission research into the breeding patterns of such gulls. [32021]

Jim Knight: DEFRA recognises the problems which can be caused by an increasing urban gull population. It is for this reason that my Department issues a general licence under section 16 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to allow the control of certain species of gulls by local authorities and other authorised persons where they are a threat to public health and safety. These birds include the following species of gulls—lesser black-backed gull, greater black-backed gull and the herring gull. However, licences cannot be issued to control gulls where they are merely causing a nuisance and to do so would be in breach of the EU Birds Directive.

DEFRA is in regular contact with the Central Science Laboratory (CSL) and has recently been provided with a preliminary evaluation of the issues involved and current state of knowledge on the problems caused by gulls. The CSL are also conducting research, although not commissioned by DEFRA, into the impact of waste management facilities as a food source for gull populations and also the problem of bird-strikes on aircraft.

Warm Front Scheme

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many households in the Nottinghamshire constituency have received assistance under the Warm Front Scheme in each year since its introduction. [29328]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 29 November 2005]:* Between the launch of the Warm Front Scheme in June 2000 and the 31 March 2005, the numbers of households assisted in Sherwood for each year are:

Period	*Number of households assisted*
2000–01	185
2001–02	822
2002–03	547
2003–04	483
2004–05	531
Total	2,568

The numbers of households assisted in the Nottinghamshire area for each year are:

Period	*Number of households assisted*
2000–01	2,657
2001–02	11,413
2002–03	5,761
2003–04	4,589
2004–05	5,273
Total	29,693

Water Consumption

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures are being taken to reduce water consumption. [31605]

Mr. Morley: The promotion of greater water efficiency particularly in households is a key priority for Defra. In order to give this work appropriate priority I have established a Water Saving Group (WSG) to identify practical ways in which Defra can work with ODPM, OfWat, the Environment Agency, water companies and other bodies in order to encourage the efficient use of water in households.

The Government also supports a number of programmes to further sustainable water use within the business sector, such as Envirowise and the Enhanced Capital Allowance scheme for designated water efficient technologies.

Regulations set standards for the amount of water use in certain water fittings and Defra is currently exploring the feasibility of introducing a voluntary labelling scheme for water efficient products.

Water companies carry out a range of activities under their statutory duty to promote the efficient use of water by their customers. They also recognise the need to give greater priority to this work area and have established waterwise as an independent organisation to enhance water efficiency activities.

Wildlife and Countryside Act

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many prosecutions have taken place under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; and if she will make a statement. [32801]

Jim Knight: There are no specific data available for prosecutions brought for offences under Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. The only figures available relate to the number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates' courts for offences under the categories of Cruelty to Animals and Wild Bird Protection Acts, which may include offences under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. These data can be found through the following link;

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/commandpubs1.html

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Army Prosecution Authority

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Solicitor-General if the Attorney-General will make a statement on his *(a)* responsibility for and *(b)* role in general superintendence of the Army Prosecution Authority.[32427]

The Solicitor-General: A paper on the Attorney-General's ministerial superintendence of the Army Prosecuting Authority was placed in the Libraries of both Houses on 14 June 2004.

Crown Prosecution Service

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Solicitor-General what proportion of cases handled by the Crown Prosecution Service in Northamptonshire were abandoned *(a)* for evidential reasons, *(b)* for public interest reasons, *(c)* because the prosecution was unable to proceed and *(d)* for other reasons in the last year for which figures are available. [32048]

The Solicitor-General: During the year ending September 2005 the number and proportion of prosecutions stopped by the CPS in Northamptonshire was as follows:

	Number	*Percentage*
Evidential reasons	702	5.6
Public interest reasons	624	5
Prosecution unable to proceed	306	2.5
Other reasons	152	1.2
Total	1,784	14.3

Lynne Jones: To ask the Solicitor-General whether, in coming to the decision not to prosecute Babar Ahmad, the Crown Prosecution Service asked the United States authorities to provide the evidence upon which they were basing the request for extradition. [32118]

The Solicitor-General: At the time of making the decision not to prosecute Babar Ahmed, the Crown Prosecution Service was aware of the nature of the evidence in the possession of the United States authorities.

Mr. Maples: To ask the Solicitor-General how many cases Warwickshire Crown Prosecution Service has *(a)* considered for prosecution and *(b)* prosecuted in each of the last five years; and how many convictions were obtained in each of those years. [32511]

The Solicitor-General: Crown Prosecution Service case outcomes are measured in relation to the number of cases completed, rather than the number considered. The following table shows the number completed in Warwickshire in each of the last five financial years and, of this total, the number in which a prosecution proceeded to trial or guilty plea, and the number resulting in a conviction. The table also shows the number of cases which resulted in an early termination, and the number which resulted in acquittal after trial.

Case outcomes CPS Warwickshire

	2000–01		*2001–02*		*2002–03*	
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
Total completed cases	8,030	—	8,863	—	8,144	—
Early terminations:						
Discontinuances	765	9.5	860	9.7	760	9.3
Administrative finalisations	395	4.9	505	5.7	357	4.4
Total early terminations	1,160	14.4	1,365	15.4	1,117	13.7
Cases proceeding to a hearing	6,870	85.6	7,498	84.6	7,027	86.3
Of which:						
Acquittals	66	0.8	42	0.5	49	0.6
Guilty pleas	5,684	70.8	5,989	67.6	5,647	69.3
Proofs in absence	887	11.0	1,301	14.7	1,161	14.3
Convictions after contest	233	2.9	166	1.9	170	2.1
Total convictions	6,804	84.7	7,456	84.1	6,978	85.7

	2003–04		2004–05	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Total completed cases	8,945		9,312	
Early terminations:				
Discontinuances	860	9.6	713	7.7
Administrative finalisations	222	2.5	127	1.4
Total early terminations	1,082	12.1	840	9.0
Cases proceeding to a hearing	7,863	87.9	8,472	91.0
Of which:				
Acquittals	54	0.6	50	0.5
Guilty pleas	5,901	66.0	5,735	61.6
Proofs in absence	1,768	19.8	2,460	26.4
Convictions after contest	140	1.6	226	2.4
Total convictions	7,809	87.3	8,421	90.4

Departmental Staff

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Solicitor-General what assessment he has made of the *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills of new recruits to the Law Officers' departments. [20998]

The Solicitor-General: New recruits are required to meet a level of skills, knowledge and experience appropriate to the post. Specific assessments are made of literacy and numeracy skills only if the job requires a particular level of expertise which cannot be otherwise demonstrated by the candidate.

Iraq

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Solicitor-General on how many occasions the Attorney-General has taken a decision on whether to prosecute cases relating to personnel serving in Iraq. [32426]

The Solicitor-General *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* None.

TRANSPORT

A21

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to hold public consultations on the proposed A21 upgrade other than in Hurst Green, East Sussex. [32693]

Dr. Ladyman: Public consultation on the proposed upgrade of the A21 from Pembury to Hastings was carried out in 2002–03. The consultation included specific proposals for the Tonbridge to Pembury and Kippings Cross to Lamberhurst sections. East Sussex county council held consultation during February/March 2004 for their Bexhill to Hastings Link Road, which included the Highways Agency's proposals for the A21 Baldslow Link. The proposals for upgrading the remainder of the A21, Lamberhurst to Flimwell and Robertsbridge to Hastings, will be reviewed in the light of progress on the Flimwell to Robertsbridge Improvement.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to hold public consultations on the proposed Bexhill to Hastings link road in East Sussex. [32692]

Dr. Ladyman: Public consultations on the Bexhill to Hastings link road are a matter for East Sussex county council, as the local highway authority promoting the scheme.

Airport Policing

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his written statement of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 98WS, on policing airports, whether Newcastle airport will be included in the wide-ranging review he has announced; and what the criteria are for airport designation under section 25 of the Aviation Security Act 1982. [32434]

Ms Buck: The review will look at policing at airports generally. It will consider the appropriateness of the current system of designation, including the criteria that might be applied, as well as possible alternative options.

Crown Land

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his policy is on authorising the compulsory purchase of third party interest in Crown land for which he is responsible. [27937]

Dr. Ladyman: The Secretary of State's consideration of authorising compulsory purchase of third party interests in Crown land is a statutory, not policy, one. When considering whether to authorise such compulsory purchase, in an order submitted by a local highway authority for which he is confirming authority, the Secretary of State will consider the merits of the proposals including the acquisition of third party interests in Crown land and take into account any objections from those affected by the proposals. In reaching a decision he will take into account the guidance given by the Deputy Prime Minister in circular 6/2004. Similar considerations will be applied when a compulsory purchase order is promoted by the Secretary of State and a decision is taken whether the order should be made.

Cycling

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many times he has met representatives of the cycling community over the past

12 months; where these meetings took place; and if he will place copies of the minutes of these meetings in the Library. [26523]

Derek Twigg: Department for Transport Ministers have had a number of meetings with representatives of the cycling community over the last year, including several at Great Minster House with Phillip Darnton, the Chairman of Cycling England. Ministers have also made a number of visits around the country to cycling facilities and meetings with local cycling interests. Minutes of these meetings are for internal records only.

General Development Order 1995

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many Article 14 directions under the 1995 General Development Order have been served in each region of England in each year since 1999; and if he will list all such directions and their location in respect of the north-east region since 1 April 1999. [31573]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* An Article 14 direction is any type of response given by the Secretary of State for Transport to a planning application, be it refusal, conditions, advice, holding direction or consent.

The current database for monitoring Article 14 directions does not allow this type of information to be collated by region. Over England as a whole, the information requested is as follows for the last financial year:

	2004–05
Planning application consultations received	3,733
Directions of refusal	79
Directions of conditions	137
Directions of restrictions on grant of permission	72

Note:
Data for earlier years are not available centrally.

A specific analysis of planning applications has been carried out for the Highways Agency's Maintenance Area 14 (which generally corresponds to the north-east region). This shows that over the period 18 August 2003 to 23 November 2005, there were 394 planning applications. Directions of refusal were given in five cases as follows. In each case the direction of refusal was given on road safety grounds:

23 February 2004—Northallerton Construction of cattery

5 May 2004—Stockton Road, Seaham, free-standing trailer signs

26 November 2004—The Old Mill, Elwick, New dwelling and garage

23 June 2005—The Old Mill, Elwick, New dwelling and garage

4 August 2005—Blenkinsopp Castle, Greenhead, new self-catering visitors block

The Department is currently improving existing monitoring systems so that a full regional analysis can be provided in future.

Greater Western Franchise

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the successful bidder for the new Greater Western Franchise will be announced. [32087]

Derek Twigg: The Department plans to announce the successful bidder for the Greater Western Franchise in December 2005.

Merseytram

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what assessment he has made of the level of contingency funding needed to underpin the construction of the Merseytram Line 1; and if he will place copies of the papers relating to that assessment in the Library; [25644]

(2) what assessment his Department has made of the contingency requirements for the construction costs of Merseytram Line 1; when these assessments were carried out; what the results of these assessments were; and if he will place copies in the Library. [26513]

Derek Twigg: Before giving the scheme provisional approval in 2002, the Department commissioned an audit of the project costs. No further audit has been undertaken since then.

The Department made it clear in December 2002 that our contribution was capped at £170 million. Any contingency for funding above this level was for the promoters to assess and to fund.

Merseytravel submitted a final bid for Merseytram Line 1 in November 2004, and further advised on the costs in May 2005. In considering Merseytravel's bid, the Department considered whether the scheme offered value for money, taking into account the total costs of the scheme, including an allowance for risk. For this purpose, the Department took Merseytravel's estimate of the cost of the scheme, including Merseytravel's proposed contingency provision and 6 per cent. optimism bias uplift. The Department considered that the 6 per cent. optimism bias uplift would probably be reasonable at the point of contract signing, but also considered the impact of a 15 per cent. uplift on the benefit cost ratio.

Following that consideration, the Secretary of State announced on 13 June that the Government would not increase its funding for the scheme, but that £170 million remained available if the scheme could be delivered for that cost. It has been for the promoters to consider what contingency funding they need in the light of that statement.

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what advice he has given to *(a)* Merseyside local authorities and *(b)* Merseytravel on the commitments they are required to make to enable the Merseytram project to proceed; and when this advice was given. [26249]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* Since the project was first approved, the Department has provided clear advice to the Merseyside authorities that

the Department's contribution to Merseytram was capped at £170 million. All costs above this level would have to be met from local sources and that appropriate assurances would be needed from authorities contributing to the costs of the scheme.

Motor Vehicle Accidents

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many deaths from motor vehicle accidents on private land there were in each year for which records are available. [32322]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not available.

Railways

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will publish the consultation on draft guidance relating to the proposed new Railways Closures Procedures introduced by the Railways Act 2005; and when he expects those procedures to be in force. [27935]

Derek Twigg: We expect to consult on the closure guidance shortly. The guidance will come into force after the consultation and consideration of comments received is completed.

Rolling Stock

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many train sets were ordered from United Kingdom companies that assemble train sets in the United Kingdom in each year between 1994 and 2004; and what the projected number of orders for train sets from those companies is for each year between 2005 and 2010. [29030]

Derek Twigg: Bombardier is now the only manufacturer who builds/assembles train sets in the United Kingdom. Alstom previously built trains in the United Kingdom at Washwood Heath, Birmingham until it made a decision to close its facilities in the UK.

Following is the number of vehicles ordered since rail privatisation which were built or assembled in the UK.

Year of order	*Number of vehicles*
Bombardier	
1996	12
1997	338
1998	595
1999	33
2000	121
2001	257
2002	876
2003	42
2004	—
Alstom	
1997	120
1998	294
1999	507

There are currently no orders placed with these companies for the period 2005 to 2010. However there will be a competitive procurement process for the replacement of high speed trains in due course.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* new and *(b)* old train sets were procured for the United Kingdom in each year between 1994 and 2004, broken down by nationality of provider; and what the estimated numbers are in each year between 2005 and 2010. [29031]

Derek Twigg: The following table sets out the number of new vehicles ordered since rail privatisation, up until 2005. We do not have information for 1994 or 1995.

Manufacturer nationality and order by vehicles each year

	Bombardier (Canadian)—UK site	*Siemens (German)*	*Alstom (French)*	*CAF/Siemens (Spanish/German)*	*Hitachi (Japanese)*
1996	12	—	—	—	—
1997	338	—	120	—	—
1998	595	—	294	48	—
1999	33	—	507	—	—
2000	121	—	—	8	—
2001	257	869	—	—	—
2002	1,003	—	—	8	—
2003	42	153	—	—	—
2004	—	—	—	—	—
2005	—	—	—	—	168

There will be a replacement of high speed train's in due course, for which there will be a competitive procurement process.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the rolling stock manufacturers in the United Kingdom in each year between 1994 and 2004; and what the *(a)* location of production facilities, *(b)* number of orders and *(c)* number of employees was for each manufacturer for each year. [29032]

Derek Twigg: We do not have information for 1994 or 1995. The following table provides the information requested from 1996.

Number of orders by manufacturer and location of build

	Bombardier (Canadian)[1]	*Siemens (German)*[2]	*Alstom (French)*[3]	*CAF/Siemens (Spanish/German)*[4]
1996	1	—	—	—
1997	3	—	1	—
1998	10	—	4	1
1999	3	—	2	—
2000	2	—	—	1
2001	3	2	—	—

Number of orders by manufacturer and location of build

	Bombardier (Canadian)[1]	*Siemens (German)*[2]	*Alstom (French)*[3]	*CAF/Siemens (Spanish/German)*[4]
2002	5	—	—	1
2003	1	1	—	—
2004	—	—	—	—

[1] Bombardier vehicles built or assembled in the UK (Derby) with the exception of 127 Meridians built in Brugge.
[2] Siemens vehicles are all being built in Germany/Austria site.
[3] Alstom build all their vehicles at Washwood Heath, Birmingham.
[4] These vehicles were built in Spain.

The number of staff employed by each manufacturer is a matter for those companies and is not recorded by the Department.

South-West Regional Planning Assessment

Alison Seabeck: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects the South West Regional Planning Assessment to start; and which organisations will be consulted. [30626]

Derek Twigg: No decision has yet been made about when the consultation for the South West Regional Planning Assessment (RPA) will begin. As with all RPAs, it will be developed through extensive discussion and consultation with regional and local bodies. These include the county councils, unitary authorities and regional planning bodies.

Speed Cameras

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the regression to the mean effect on the statistics relating to the number of accidents on roads with speed cameras. [31464]

Dr. Ladyman: Independent academics are looking at regression to the mean as part of the fourth year evaluation report on the National Safety Camera Programme. Their report is in preparation and is expected to be completed shortly.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much and what percentage of spending by safety camera partnerships was on camera operations and related road traffic injury prevention in each year between 1994 and 2004. [31470]

Dr. Ladyman: All expenditure reclaimed by safety camera partnerships has to be directly related to speed and red light camera enforcement. The following table shows the fine receipts and partnership expenditure in England and Wales since the inception of the safety camera programme in 2000.

	Number of partnerships	*Total fines*	*Expenditure*	*Expenditure as percentage of fines received*
2000–01	7	9,871,920	8,611,793	87.2
2001–02	14	18,799,820	15,386,939	81.8
2002–03	28	73,876,260	57,620,133	78.0
2003–04	35	113,567,780	91,877,359	80.9

Figures for 2004–05 will be published on the Department's website in due course.

Speeding (Carbon Emissions)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much extra carbon dioxide in tonnes per annum he estimates arose from the driving of road vehicles in excess of 70 mph in each of the last five years. [30926]

Dr. Ladyman: If no vehicles exceeded the speed limits on motorways and dual carriageways we have estimated that savings in the region of 0.5 million tonnes of carbon per annum could theoretically occur. In practice, however, it would be virtually impossible to enforce blanket compliance with the 70 mph speed limit, and the Government have no intention of introducing such a policy.

Stratford Stations

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what arrangements will be made for passengers with disabilities to be able to move between Stratford Regional Station and Stratford International Station. [31794]

Derek Twigg: Stratford International Station is being built with step free access from platform to street level

As part of the Olympic development, to be delivered by 2012, Stratford Regional Station will also provide step free access from platform to street level.

Subject to the approval of applications which are currently before the Secretary of State, it is proposed that from 2010 the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) will provide direct access between Stratford International and Regional Stations. Access from DLR trains to platforms will be step free.

Rail Services

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of punctuality of services on First Great Western services from Paddington to Swansea since January. [30731]

Derek Twigg: In the year to 30 June 2005, the public performance measure for First Great Western passenger train services as a whole was 77.8 per cent. The Department for Transport does not keep separate records on the punctuality of trains running from Paddington to Swansea. Joint action plans are in place between Network Rail and First Great Western to address performance trends and these are monitored monthly.

Traffic Growth (West Sussex)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his projections are for traffic growth in West Sussex over each of the next 10 years. [33058]

Dr. Ladyman: Estimates of future traffic growth in West Sussex are as follows:

	Percentage
2005–10	8 to 11.5
2005–15	15.5 to 23

These figures are based on the National Road Traffic Forecasts (GB) 1997, with an adjustment to allow for West Sussex having higher-than-average projected rates of population and employment growth.

Train Operating Companies

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the total amount of penalties awarded against each train operating company for poor performances by the *(a)* Office of Passenger Rail Franchising and *(b)* Strategic Rail Authority was in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [26958]

Derek Twigg: The franchising authority pays performance bonuses to train operators for exceeding performance targets. If performance is poor, operators pay a performance penalty. Payments of both types are made at four weekly intervals and, in the course of a year, a particular operator may both pay performance penalties and receive performance bonuses. The following table lists cases where payments by an operator during the financial year concerned exceeded the payments it received from the franchising authority. All operators have similar agreements except those indicated in the table as not having one.

£000

Operator	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Anglia	[1]	[1]	[1]	221	329	3,160	[2]	[2]
Cardif Railways	[1]	1,423	59	73	[1]	[2]	[2]	[2]
Central Trains	[1]	1,651	384	8,804	9,633	10,910	6,838	11,348
Chiltern	117	276	115	467	484	846	397	18
South Central	[1]	[1]	1,020	9,248	5,978	6,342	12,828	12,118
South Eastern	974	1,629	2,040	11,229	5,746	6,897	2,895	[3]
SET	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	2,998	2,501
Cross Country	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	2	[3]
Gatwick Exp	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]
Great Eastern	122	[1]	[1]	7,744	5,579	1,525	[2]	[2]
GNER	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	[3]	2,902	2,447
Great Western	[3]	2,452	2,175	1,978	5,408	2,610	2,020	1,058
Island Line	24	14	20	41	9	12	17	25
LTS/c2c	[1]	[1]	[1]	477	2,540	430	[1]	[1]
Merseyrail	[1]	114	346	796	641	[1]	[2]	[2]
MML	[3]	[3]	18	15	[1]	[3]	[3]	[3]
North Western	[1]	[1]	[1]	2,256	3,455	2,536	1,448	540
Northern Spirit	[1]	[1]	[1]	8,337	7,611	3,729	1,111	741
Northern	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[3]
Scotrail	[1]	[1]	[1]	5,284	9,999	8,654	2,820	2,268
First Scotrail	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	178
Silverlink	[1]	199	254	2,879	2,854	447	90	[1]
SWT	1,281	3,933	3,657	10,648	12,776	11,471	10,186	[1]
Thames/FGWL	572	2,224	2,046	4,291	4,069	4,173	3,990	4,700
Thameslink	49	270	668	4,337	3,325	2,904	2,844	6,473
Trans Pennine	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	50	2,817
Wales and West	[1]	378	[1]	4,497	1,577	[2]	[2]	[2]
WAGN	346	452	849	8,833	8,359	6,380	2,782	1,767
West Coast	[3]	[3]	67	15	12	88	476	80
W&B/ATW	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	1,329	2,425	[1]	[1]
Wessex	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	1,115	3,354	2,094	1,398

[1] Indicates that the operator received a net performance bonus.
[2] Indicates that the franchise did not exist in the year concerned.
[3] Indicates operators who were not subject during the year in question to a performance penalty regime
Note:
All figures are in £000 and are total net payments for poor performance.

Northern Rail Services Review

Mrs. Riordan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the consultation with stakeholders on the Review of Northern Rail Services will commence. [32572]

Derek Twigg: No date has yet been fixed for consultation with stakeholders on this review.

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how the performance data for 2004 public service agreement no. 2 will be published after the Strategic Rail Authority is wound up. [29954]

Derek Twigg: From April 2005, the Office of Rail Regulation took over the publication of "National Rail Trends". This document contains the data used to measure the achievement of public service agreement target no. 2.

Victims of Violence

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many victims of violence were recorded by the British Transport police in each year since 1998–99, *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by region. [31518]

Derek Twigg: The number of victims of violence recorded by the British Transport police (BTP) in each year since 1998–99 is given in the following table.

BTP Area	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
London North	659	742	809	920	1,126	1,334	1,632
London South	1,849	2,160	2,107	1,837	2,265	2,350	2,509
London Underground	1,456	1,575	1,471	1,424	1,880	2,295	2,622
North Eastern	243	204	285	306	495	605	625
Scottish	345	396	348	406	545	631	617
North Western	466	551	526	604	654	787	786
Western	388	461	497	594	691	725	957
Force Total	5,406	6,089	6,043	6,091	7,656	8,727	9,748

The Home Office introduced a National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) that all police forces across England and Wales were required to adopt. BTP adopted this standard on 1 April 2002. The impact of the new recording standard saw an increase in recorded crime nationally.

BTP have also been proactive in encouraging victims of assaults, whether a passenger or a member of rail staff, to report these offences. This includes the creation of dedicated staff assault teams within the BTP areas.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Andrew Cunningham

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what responsibilities Mr. Andrew Cunningham has held in her Department and its predecessors since 1997. [32918]

Mr. Lammy: Mr. Andrew Cunningham was not employed by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport or its predecessors before June 2001 when he and his policy responsibilities were transferred to the Department from the Home Office as part of the Machinery of Government Changes. At that time, Mr. Cunningham was made Head of the Licensing Policy Team with responsibility for advising Ministers on all policy matters relating to the reform of the alcohol, entertainment and late night refreshment licensing laws, including preparation of the Licensing Bill. His current responsibility is to lead the teams charged with implementing the Licensing Act 2003.

Correspondence

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she will reply to the letter of 12 September from the hon. Member for Aylesbury which her Department acknowledged on 16 September (reference CMS 22830/DC) about the Department's guidance on the Licensing Act 2003. [32917]

James Purnell: I wrote to the hon. Member for Aylesbury on 21 November 2005.

Criminal Offences

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by her Department since May 1997, broken down by Act. [26704]

Mr. Lammy *[holding answer 9 November 2005]:* The following is a list of criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport since May 1997, broken down by Act:

Communications Act 2003

Offences were created by the following provisions of the Communications Act 2003:

s.43(1); s.103(1) and (2); s.125(1); s.126(1) and (2); s.127(1) and (2); s.133(1); s.143(1) and (2); s.144(1) and (3); s.171(5); s.363(2) and (3); s.393(10); schedule 11 paragraphs 13(8), (9) and (10).

Licensing Act 2003

Offences were created by the following provisions of the Licensing Act 2003:

s.33(6); s.40(2); s.41(5); s.46(4); s.49(5); s.56(3); s.57(4) and (7); s.59(5); s.82(6); s.83(6); s.93(3); s.94(5), (6) and (9); s.96(5); s.108(3); s.109(4) and (8); s.123(2); s.127(4); s.128(6); s.132(4); s.134(5); s.135(4); 5.136(1): 5.137(1); s138(1); 5.140(1); s.141(1); 5.142(1); s.143(1); s.144(1); s. 145(1): 5.146(1), (2) and (3); s.147(1) and (3); s. 148(1) and (2); s. 149(1), (3) and (4); s. 150(1) and (2); s.151(1), (2) and (4); s.152(1); s.153(1); s.156(1); s.157(5); s.158(1); s.160(4); s.161(6); s.165(7); s.168(8); s.179(4); schedule 8 paragraph 10(1); schedule 8 paragraph 22(1).

Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003

An offence was created by s.1(1) of the Dealing in Cultural Objects (Offences) Act 2003.

Horserace Betting and Olympic Lottery Act 2004

Offences were created by the following provisions of the Horserace Betting and Olympic Lottery Act 2004:

s. 9(5); s.10(1); schedule 1 paragraphs 19, 20, 21, and 23.

Gambling Act 2005

Offences are created by the following provisions of the Gambling Act 2005:

s.33(1); s.37(1); s.41(1); s.42(1); s.43 (1); s.44(1); s.46(1); s.47(1), (4), (5), (6) and (7); s.48(1); s.49; s.50(1); s.51(1); s.52; s.53; s.54*(1)* and (2); s.55(1) and (4); s.56(1); s.57(1); s.58; 5.59(1); s.101(6); 5.105(3); 5.108(2); s.109(4); 5.122(5); 5.134(2); s.138(3); 5.139(2); 5.185(2); s.186(6); s.229(2); s.242(1) and (2); s.243(1) and (2); s.244(1); s.245(1); s.258(1); s.259(1); s.260(2); 5.261(2); s.262; 5.275(7); 5.281(7); s.301(2); s.316(5); 5.326(1); s.328(5); 5.330(1); s.331(1); s.337(5); s.342(1); s.345(5); schedule 10 paragraph 20; schedule 12 paragraphs 13(1) and 15(6); schedule 13 paragraph 10(1); schedule 14 paragraph 20.

Members should consult the texts of the Acts for full details of the offences.

Fixed Odds Betting Terminals

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what research the Government have undertaken into the impact on public welfare of increasing the number of fixed odds betting terminals. [32543]

Mr. Caborn: The Government have not directly commissioned research into fixed odds betting terminals (FOBTs). An independent report, funded by the Association of British Bookmakers, by European Economics and MORI was published in April 2005 and subjected to DCMS commissioned peer review. It found

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no evidence to suggest FOBTs led to an increase in problem gambling. A second study is due to be published by the end of the year and will again be subjected to the same level of scrutiny. The Gambling Commission will undertake prevalence studies into gambling every three years which will enable the Government to scrutinise trends in British gambling habits. The first of these will be published in 2007.

Football World Cup

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether the consideration by her Department of the possibility of England bidding to host the 2018 World Cup will include an assessment of suitable venues in Sunderland city council area. [32873]

Mr. Caborn: My right hon. Friends, the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport announced a feasibility study to assess whether England should bid to host the FIFA World Cup in 2018 in England on 19 November 2005.

Officials from HM Treasury and DCMS will be discussing the precise scope of the study with the Football Association. They will undertake the study and report back next year.

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what baseline percentages she is using for the purposes of measuring performance against 2004 public service agreement target 3. [30291]

Mr. Lammy: The public service agreement target 3 will be measured using the Taking Part Survey. The baseline percentages for measuring performance against the target will be data collected from interviews conducted between July 2005 and July 2006.

Indicative baselines will be published quarterly, with the first of these released in December 2005. However, due to the use of interim weighting and the effects of seasonality the final baseline percentages will not be set until the full year of data are available. The final baselines will be released in late 2006.

Swimming

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate she has made of the *(a)* number of children taught to swim in each of the last 10 years and *(b)* proportion of teenagers who can swim. [32057]

Mr. Caborn: Figures on the number of children taught, or able, to swim are not collected centrally.

Swimming and water safety are a compulsory part of the national curriculum for physical education. By the end of key stage 2, pupils should be taught to swim unaided for a sustained period of time over a distance of at least 25 metres.

In 2000, an Ofsted report on swimming in schools at key stage 2 found that 83 per cent. of pupils could swim the 25 metre standard.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment the security forces have made of who carried out the recent bombings in Kabul; and if he will make a statement. [32212]

Mr. Ingram: Investigations into who carried out the recent attacks involving ISAF troops in Kabul are ongoing.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many provisional reconstruction teams the UK is leading in Afghanistan; where they are based; and what other help the UK is extending through its military commitments to provisional reconstruction teams. [32214]

Mr. Ingram: The United Kingdom leads the provincial reconstruction team in Mazar-e Sharif in North West Afghanistan. In addition, the United Kingdom leads the Forward Support Base and the Quick Reaction Force, both also based in Mazar-e Sharif, that support all the international security assistance force's provincial reconstruction teams across Northern Afghanistan.

Apache AH-64

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the naval application of the Apache AH-64; and whether funds have been set aside for maritimisation. [32196]

Mr. Ingram: In line with the future maritime operating concept, the Apache AH Mkl is required to operate in support of amphibious forces during ship to shore operations. Extensive ship-borne trials have taken place on HMS Ocean and RFA Argus during which flying and deck operating limits were determined, and maritime modifications, including enhanced corrosion protection, were assessed. These trials have shown that Apache can be operated safely and effectively from these platforms. A declaration of maritime initial operating capability is expected at the end of December 2005. Funding for further trials has been set aside in the equipment plan. However, the benefit of full conversion of the entire Apache fleet is currently being assessed.

AWE Aldermaston

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1259W, on AWE Aldermaston, when he was first informed that the original estimate was inadequate. [27853]

John Reid: I became aware of the need for additional investment at AWE Aldermaston shortly after my appointment as Secretary of State for Defence. As far as the Ministry of Defence is concerned, when the initial AWE management and operation contract (which became effective on 1 April 2000) was awarded to AWE Management Ltd., it was recognised that a detailed analysis would be required to establish the levels of investment necessary to sustain the minimum capability required to support the policies described in the 1998 Strategic Defence Review. This process, which included conducting studies, investment appraisals, capability

assessments, contract negotiations and a process of departmental and ministerial approvals, was completed in July 2005.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1259W, on AWE Aldermaston, how much of the £1 billion will be spent on *(a)* increased costs for the continuous running project, *(b)* new facilities at Aldermaston, with particular reference to the proposed new laser and *(c)* other areas of expenditure; and if he will make a statement. [27855]

John Reid: As I made clear in my written statement to the House on 19 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 59WS, the purpose of this additional expenditure at the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) is to maintain the effectiveness and safety of the nuclear deterrent through an additional investment in key skills and facilities. Of the total forecast expenditure at AWE between now and the end of 2007–08, around 45 per cent. is capital costs, principally on new facilities including the new Orion laser, and around 55 per cent. is operating costs.

Iraq (US Casualties)

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many casualties United States forces have suffered since 1 January 2005 in the proposed Tactical Area of Responsibility that British forces will take over next year. [31386]

Mr. Ingram: As I made clear in my written statement on 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 41–42WS, no final decisions have yet been made on the area of responsibility that British forces could take over next year.

Overseas Recruitment

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what expenditure has been incurred in relation to overseas recruitment for the armed services in each of the last five years. [29622]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 17 November 2005]:* Employment in the Regular armed forces is open to citizens of Commonwealth countries and Republic of Ireland nationals as well as British citizens; all applicants are given equal consideration and all have to meet the same basic entry standards. The armed forces do not actively recruit overseas with the exception of Gurkhas from Nepal. However, in recent years the Royal Navy and the Army have sent selection teams to some Commonwealth countries at the specific request of the Government concerned, and only then when evidence suggests that there is sufficient interest among the local population to merit a visit. The selection teams screen out those who are not thought capable of meeting the full entry standards, to save them the cost of an abortive trip to the UK to undergo the recruitment process. The costs incurred as a result of the selection team visits were as follows:

Financial year	£
2001–02	47,500
2002–03	147,600
2003–04	127,700
2004–05	125,100
2005–06	52,900

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to nearest £100.
2. FY2005–06 details show the position at the mid-year point.

Gurkha recruitment policy is completely different to that for the Regular armed forces. The travel costs incurred as a result of a selection team from the UK visiting Nepal during the final selection process to assist the in-country recruiting team in its final selection of approximately 230 Nepalese to join the Brigade of Gurkhas each year and approximately 150 to join the Singapore Police (for which we get compensation) were as follows:

Financial year	£
2001–02	27,800
2002–03	32,900
2003–04	33,000
2004–05	33,000
2005–06	40,000

Note:
Figures are rounded to nearest £100.

RAF Bases

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what savings were achieved by transferring maintenance work for *(a)* Harriers and *(b)* Tornados to RAF main operating bases; and where this money will be reinvested. [29226]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* Changes have been made in the way RAF Harrier aircraft are supported. Primarily these changes relate to the concentration of aircraft maintenance, including Harrier GR7 to GR9 upgrade, at RAF Cottesmore, and the introduction of more effective and efficient processes. Together these will deliver savings of £44 million over financial years 2005–06 to 2008–09. Similar changes in the way RAF Tornado GR4 aircraft are maintained and upgraded are in the process of being implemented at RAF Marham. This will significantly streamline the overall logistics footprint for the Tornado GR4 fleet which in turn will contribute to the £2 billion of efficiency savings to be delivered as part of the MOD's logistic transformation programme.

All cash savings are re-allocated within the Defence Programme in accordance with Defence priorities.

Royal Green Jackets

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future of the Royal Green Jackets Regiment. [30336]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence's written ministerial statement on 24 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 129–33WS, which states that the Royal Green Jackets will form the 2nd and 4th battalions of the Rifles. The Rifles will form in 2007.

The Rifles will be established from the two battalions of the Royal Green Jackets, the two battalions of the Light Infantry, the Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Light Infantry and the Devonshire and Dorset Light Infantry. All six battalions have elected to merge within the Rifles, following extensive consultation within the regiments and the division, to produce a regiment which embodies the best traditions of the Light Division. The five battalions within the Rifles will be capable of covering every future operational role envisaged and will be able to provide a variety of roles and locations for its serving soldiers.

Shropshire Light Infantry

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will reverse his decision to change the name of the Shropshire Light Infantry to the Rifles. [33359]

John Reid: The new title of the Rifles is the result of extensive consultation within the Light Division and the regiments concerned to find a fitting title to embody their heritage and traditions. The title was adopted with the full agreement of the representatives of the Light Infantry, the Royal Green Jackets, the Devonshire and Dorset Light Infantry and the Royal Gloucestershire, Berkshire and Wiltshire Light Infantry and I have no plans to change it.

Vanguard Submarines

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on his plans to modify Vanguard class submarines. [32353]

John Reid: Since commissioning, a number of modifications to the Vanguard class submarine platforms have been planned, some of which have already been implemented. These include an upgrade to the nuclear reactor core as well as obsolescence management programmes, such as a technology demonstrator programme to update Sonar 2054, and replacement of elements of the radio system. As with any other platform, we routinely assess obsolescence issues that may occur throughout platform life.

ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Public Relations

Mr. Kemp: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission how much the Electoral Commission has spent on public relations companies and consultants in each of the last five years. [31495]

Peter Viggers: The Commission informs me that its expenditure on public relations companies and consultants, to support its public awareness work under section 13 of the Political Parties, Elections and Referendums Act 2000, in each of the years concerned is as set out in the following table:

	Expenditure (£)
2001–02	76,775
2002–03	272,131
2003–04	267,598
2004–05	332,891
2005–06	[1]307,120

[1] Estimated.

SCOTLAND

Bank Notes

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with *(a)* the Chancellor of the Exchequer and *(b)* the Scottish Executive on issuing of bank notes in Scotland; and if he will make a statement. [32608]

David Cairns: My right hon. Friend has regular discussions on a range of issues with both the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Scottish Executive. During the Treasury's consultation on their document "Banknote issue arrangements in Scotland and Northern Ireland" the Scotland Office facilitated a forum between Treasury officials, the Bank of England, Scottish issuing banks and representative organisations. The consultation period has now concluded and it is for the Treasury to consider the responses.

Consultants/Special Advisers

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list departmental projects conducted by consultants in each year since 2000; what the cost was in each case; and what the total cost of employing consultants was in each year. [29053]

David Cairns: The cost of projects conducted by consultants in each year since 2000–01 are listed as follows:

	Description	*Cost (£)*
2000–01	A comparison study on motor taxation across Europe	5,465
	Total	5,465
2001–02	Professional services in relation to a proposed Scotland to Northern Ireland Ferry Service	17,864
	Total	17,864
2002–03	Professional services in relation to a proposed Scotland to Northern Ireland Ferry Service	4,620
	Report on Devolution in Europe	6,100
	Total	10,720
2003–04	Senior Civil Service Assessment Centre	10,044
	Total	10,044
2004–05	Management Review and Assessment Centre for Head of Scotland Office	2,817
	Total	2,817

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many *(a)* consultants and *(b)* special advisers were employed by his Department in each year since 1997; what the cost of each was in each year; and if he will make a statement. [27415]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999. The number and spend on consultants since then has been:

	Number	£
1999–2000	0	0
2000–01	1	5,465
2001–02	1	17,864
2002–03	2	10,720
2003–04	1	10,044
2004–05	1	2,817

Since 2003, the Government have published, on an annual basis, the names and overall cost of special advisers and the number in each pay band. For the most recent information, I refer the hon. Member to the statement made by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, columns 158–162WS. Information on the numbers of special advisers prior to 2003 was provided at regular intervals and this information is available in the Library of the House.

TREASURY

Bank Notes

John Thurso: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether the launch of the consultation on the banknote issue arrangements in Scotland and Northern Ireland conformed with Cabinet Office regulations on consultation procedure; [32605]

(2) how many responses he has received to the consultation on banknote issue arrangements in Scotland and Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement; [32606]

(3) if he will list the representations received on the issuing arrangements of banknotes in Scotland and Northern Ireland prior to the launch of the banknote issue arrangements in Scotland and Northern Ireland consultation document from *(a)* note issuing banks, *(b)* non-note issuing banks, and *(c)* other third parties. [32607]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The launch of the consultation was consistent with the Cabinet Office's Code of Practice on Consultation. The consultation exercise was initially set for eight weeks because the proposals were technical in nature and of interest to a limited number of stakeholders. In response to requests from stakeholders I agreed to extend the consultation period by four weeks. In addition to the written consultation, several face-to-face meetings took place between my officials and stakeholders.

The Treasury received 34 responses to the consultation and we will publish a summary of all responses and our response to the consultation in due course. At present, I have no plans to make a statement but will consider doing so when it comes to publishing our response to the consultation.

The Treasury has had frequent informal discussions with various Government Departments and the Bank of England on the subject of the banknote issue arrangements in Scotland and Northern Ireland but received no representations on this subject from any commercial note issuing bank or private sector third parties, prior to the launch of the consultation in July of this year.

Breast Cancer

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many women *(a)* were diagnosed with and *(b)* died from breast cancer in each of the last five years. [31380]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Lynne Featherstone, dated 29 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning how many women *(a)* were diagnosed with and *(b)* died from breast cancer in each of the last five years. (31380)

The latest available figures for the incidence of breast cancer are for the year 2003. The numbers of newly diagnosed cases for the years 1999 to 2003. and the numbers of deaths occurring in these years, are given in the attached table.

Number of newly diagnosed cases of, and deaths from, breast cancer[1] in females in England, 1999–2003[2]

Year of diagnosis/death	*Number of cases*	*Number of deaths*
1999	34,176	10,856
2000	33,829	10,609
2001[3]	34,347	10,846
2002[3]	34,319	10,789
2003[3]	36,509	10,489

[1] Breast cancer is defined as code 174 in the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) and as code C50 in the International Classification of Diseases. Tenth Revision (ICD-10). Newly diagnosed cases were defined using ICD-10; deaths were defined using ICD9 from 1999 to 2000, and ICD-10 from 2001 onwards.

[2] Figures for the number of deaths are based on deaths occurring in each calendar year.

[3] The introduction of ICD-10 for coding cause of death in 2001 means that data for breast cancer are not completely comparable with data for years before this date. The data should therefore be interpreted with caution. The effect of the change in classification in 2001 on deaths from cancer by site is described in an article published in August 2004.*

* Brock A, Griffiths C, Rooney C (2004) 'The effect of the introduction of ICD-10 on cancer mortality trends in England and Wales'. "Health Statistics Quarterly" 23, 7–17.

Source:
Office for National Statistics.

Capital Gains Tax

Chris Huhne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the capital gains tax treatment is for shared ownership schemes in non-charitable housing associations; and if he will make a statement. [32479]

Dawn Primarolo: A non-charitable housing association will be within the charge to corporation tax and is liable to pay tax on chargeable gains, including those arising under shared ownership arrangements. The amount of such gains may be reduced by various forms of relief that are available to companies, including the ability to deduct capital losses.

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what steps his Department takes to ensure that consultancies do not claim excessive expenses while working for the Department and its agencies; [29090]

(2) what mechanisms are in place to assess the effectiveness of consultant-led projects in his Department; what sanctions are available to penalise consultants who ran unsuccessful projects; how many projects conducted by consultants were assessed as unsuccessful in each year since 2000; and what sanctions were imposed in each case. [29120]

John Healey: The Treasury assesses the effectiveness of high and medium risk projects via Gateway reviews, managed by the OGC. Low risk projects are assessed via a project appraisal completed by the relevant business manager.

The Treasury ensures there are strongly worded clauses in all consultancy contracts and assignment orders, which are agreed and signed by the supplier before undertaking the engagement. This enables the Department to take action against any defaults in performance, quality issues or other failures of the supplier to perform the agreed service in a timely and appropriate manner.

The remedies can cover anything from re-execution of the services at the expense of the supplier, reduction in the payment in respect of any service that the supplier has failed to provide or has provided inadequately, up to and including termination of the contract. The Treasury also ensures that there is a clause referring to an Alternative Dispute Resolution procedure as recommended by the Centre for Dispute Resolution.

Since 2000 no consultant-led project has been deemed unsuccessful.

All contracts let for consultancy support by the Treasury clearly specify to the supplier that any travel expenses to and from the assignment location will be met from the day rate. Expenses may be payable where travel to other sites is required as part of the assignment, but only with prior approval and within the current maximum limits agreed for civil servants. Any other expenses are only payable solely at the discretion, and with the prior approval, of the relevant Treasury project manager.

Credit Overpayments

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will write off all the credit overpayments caused by official error following the recent decision of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs to write off all overpayments to claimants who are subject to immigration control; and if he will make a statement. [30544]

Dawn Primarolo: These payments were made because of an error on the part of HMRC. They were not overpayments. Errors, where the claimant could have reasonably expected not to know, are written off.

Departmental Relocation

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff in his Department have been relocated into London and the South East in each of the last five years for which records are available. [31749]

Mr. Des Browne: No staff in the Department or related agencies have been relocated into London or the South East in the last five years.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to relocate staff in his Department and related agencies into London and the South East. [31750]

Mr. Des Browne: There are no plans to relocate staff in the Department or related agencies in to London or the South East.

Departmental Websites

Charles Hendry: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will take steps to ensure the Department's websites attain the W3C AAA standard of accessibility for people with visual and other disabilities; and if he will set a target date for this standard to be achieved by. [30968]

John Healey: Guidelines for Government websites produced by the Cabinet Office state that Government websites should comply with Single-A level of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0; The Treasury's Public website has been designed to comply with Double-A level of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines 1.0.

Nevertheless, a number of Triple-A requirements are met by the Treasury website, including; the use of access-keys, contrast between foreground and background colours, consistent style of presentation across all website pages and our search facility enables different types of searches.

Disability Discrimination Act

Chris Huhne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost would be of applying the definition of disability in the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 to the tax regime for trusts with a vulnerable beneficiary as defined by section 38(1) of par' 2, Chapter 4 of the Finance Act 2005. [31350]

Dawn Primarolo: We are unable to quantify this cost. The Government recognised that the increase in the rate applicable to trusts and the dividend trust rate from 6 April 2004 could have an impact on trusts with vulnerable beneficiaries, especially those set up for disabled and minor children who have suffered the death of a parent. We therefore introduced the special tax regime for such trusts in Finance Act 2005.

We consulted widely before introducing the regime and, in consultation, including with groups representing the disabled, the consensus was to use the existing, generous definition from within the Taxes Acts that already works well within the tax system and relies on qualification for Department for Work and Pensions benefits.

Financial Instruments Directive

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the *(a)* costs and *(b)* benefits of the implementation of the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive. [32857]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer provided by the Financial Secretary, on 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1905-06W to the hon. Member for Surrey Heath (Michael Gove) and the hon. Member for Chipping Barnet (Mrs. Villiers).

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received from the Financial Services Authority on the implications of the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive. [32862]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Treasury and Financial Services Authority, have worked closely together on the negotiation of the Markets in Financial Instruments Directive (MiFID), and are doing so on its implementation. On 21 November the FSA published 'Planning for MiFID' (available at www.fsa.aov.uk/pubs/international/planninq_mifid.pdf) which highlights some of the key areas of UK regulation that will be affected by the directive.

HM Revenue and Customs

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the national performance targets were for HM Revenue and Customs centres in 2004–05; and what the performance of the branches in *(a)* Torquay, *(b)* Paignton and *(c)* Brixham were against those targets in 2004–05. [32064]

Dawn Primarolo: The HMRC target is that 95 per cent. of customers calling at their Inquiry Centres without an appointment will be seen within 30 minutes. The results for the period 1 April to 18 November, this year, are: Paignton 97.02 per cent. and Torquay 95.05 per cent. There is no HMRC Inquiry Centre at Brixham.

IR35

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people have been investigated by HM Customs and Revenue to determine whether IR35 applies to them in each of the last five years; how many of these were found to fall within IR35; what the *(a)* total cost and *(b)* average duration of such investigations was in each year; and what estimate he has made of the additional tax revenue raised as a result of those investigations in each year. [32454]

Dawn Primarolo: HMRC does not routinely collect data in respect of specific types of employer obligations from the PAYE system. It is therefore not possible to isolate how many investigations have solely related to the intermediaries legislation.

Manual Payments

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many manual payments were issued in each month since April 2003; and what their value was in each month. [30009]

Dawn Primarolo: For the estimated number of manual payments between April 2004 and February 2005, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the right hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) on 22 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 711W. The estimated number of manual payments in each month from April 2003 to March 2004, and for March 2005 to October 2005, and the estimated value of manual payments between April 2003 and October 2005 are:

	£000	£000
	Number of payments	*Estimated value of manual payments made*
2003		
April	Less than 5	1,200
May	135	111,400
June	130	83,900
July	10	6,400
August	25	15,300
September	15	10,000
October	10	6,500
November	10	7,000
December	20	10,600
2004		
January	25	13,100
February	30	18,100
March	20	12,000

	£000
	Estimated value of manual payments made
2004	
April	18,100
May	11,200
June	8,900
July	11,200
August	10,100
September	19,600
October	16,400
November	13,900
December	14,600
2005	
January	16,000
February	17,700

	£000	£000
	Number of payments	*Estimated value of manual payments made*
2005		
March	40	20,000
April	50	23,400
May	45	19,900
June	40	17,500
July	40	18,700
August	45	22,800
September	45	25,000
October	30	15,000

The allocation of payments to precise payment dates requires a degree of estimation and are therefore rounded to the nearest 5,000. The value of manual payments made also requires a degree of estimation and are therefore rounded to the nearest 100,000.

Money Laundering Directives

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which EU countries have not transposed the Money Laundering Directive into their national law. [32897]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: According to the EU Commission two EU Countries, France and Greece, have not transposed the Second Money Laundering Directive (2001/97/EC) into their national law. The EU Commission has started infringement proceedings against these countries. The Third EU Money Laundering Directive has recently been adopted and will need to be implemented into national law by the end of 2007.

National Minimum Wage

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many companies in Tamworth have been *(a)* fined and *(b)* forced to cease trading for non-compliance with the national minimum wage since it was introduced. [32033]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is not available.

John Cummings: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many businesses were found to be employing workers for less than the minimum wage in Easington constituency in each year since the minimum wage was introduced; how many were fined; and how many employees were involved in each case. [33276]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is not available.

Official Travel Costs

Peter Luff: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer of 17 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1519W, whether the sum quoted includes the cost of the travel of the two Treasury officials. [31568]

John Healey: The sum quoted is for the Chancellor's travel.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to answer Questions 26261 and 26263 tabled on 3 November 2005 by the hon. Member for Birkenhead. [31527]

Dawn Primarolo: I have done so.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects to answer Question 22005 tabled on 24 October 2005 by the hon. Member for Birkenhead. [31528]

Dawn Primarolo: I have done so.

Planning Gain Supplement

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Government expects to publish further details of its plans for a *(a)* planning gain supplement and *(b)* land development tax. [31828]

John Healey: As set out in the March 2005 Economic and Fiscal Strategy Report, the Government will respond to the recommendations in the Barker Review of Housing Supply later this year.

Pneumococcal Meningitis

Susan Kramer: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* children and *(b)* adults died of pneumococcal meningitis in the UK in each of the last 10 years. [31461]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Susan Kramer, dated 29 November 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question concerning how many *(a)* children and *(b)* adults died of pneumococcal meningitis in the United Kingdom in each of the last 10 years. I am replying in her absence. (31461)

The most recently available information is for deaths in 2004. Figures for deaths where pneumococcal meningitis was mentioned as either the underlying cause of death or as a contributory factor to the death, in children aged 0 to 15 and adults aged 16 and over are shown in the table below for each year from 1995 to 2004.

Number of deaths where pneumococcal meningitis[1] was mentioned in (a) children aged under 16 and (b) adults aged 16 and over. United Kingdom. 1995 to 2004[2]

	(a) children	*(b) adults*
1995	8	75
1996	17	103
1997	13	87
1998	20	61
1999	12	63
2000	15	59
2001	18	60
2002	13	54
2003	22	68
2004	15	47

[1] Cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (JCD-9) code 320.1 for the years 1995 to 2000 for England and Wales and Northern Ireland, and for the years 1995 to 1999 for Scotland, and Tenth Revision (1CD-10) code G00.1 from 2001 onwards for England and Wales and Northern Ireland and from 2000 onwards for Scotland.

[2] Figures are for deaths occurring in each calendar year for residents of England and Wales and for deaths registered in each calendar year for Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Population

Jim Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the mid-year population estimates were in each metropolitan authority in Tyne and Wear in each year between 1999 and 2004; and what estimate he has made of the population of each authority in *(a)* 2006–07, *(b)* 2007–08 and *(c)* 2008–09 based on the estimates for (i) 1999 to 2003 and (ii) 2000 to 2004. [31630]

John Healey *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. Jim Cousins, dated 29 November 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning the population of Tyne and Wear. (31630)

The Office for National Statistics produces official mid-year population estimates and subnational population projections.

Table 1, attached below shows the mid year population estimates for the metropolitan authorities in Tyne and Wear for the years 1999 to 2004.

The most recent set of official subnational population projections are 2003-based and use local trends in births, deaths and migration over the reference period 1999 to 2003 to formulate assumptions on levels of these components of change for future years. Updated 2004-based projections (using a 2000 to 2004 reference period) will be published in summer 2006.

Table 2, attached below shows the 2003-based projected mid-year population for the Tyne and Wear metropolitan authorities for years 2006 to 2009.

Table 1: Mid-year population 1999 to 2004

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Gateshead	193,300	191,900	191,200	190,900	191,000	191,300
Newcastle Upon Tyne	271,000	267,600	266,200	266,000	266,600	269,500
North Tyneside	190,100	190,700	192,000	191,400	190,800	190,700
South Tyneside	153,600	153,100	152,800	152,300	151,700	151,500
Sunderland	287,500	285,700	284,600	283,600	283,100	282,700

Note:
Population estimates are rounded to the nearest 100 people.
Source:
Office for National Statistics.

Table 2: Projected population for local authorities in Tyne and Wear

	2006	2007	2008	2009
Gateshead	189,400	188,900	188,400	188,000
Newcastle Upon Tyne	263,900	263,400	262,900	262,500
North Tyneside	193,300	194,000	194,800	195,600
South Tyneside	149,600	148,900	148,300	147,600
Sunderland	281,100	280,500	280,000	279,600

Notes:
1. These are 2003-based mid-year population projections.
2. Subnational population projections are rounded to the nearest 100 people.
Source:
Office for National Statistics

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place in the Library a copy of *(a)* the Gateway Review and *(b)* the business case for the tax credit computer system. [13880]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is provided on a confidential basis and is not generally made public.

To disclose Gateway Review reports would be likely to prejudice both the ability of reviewers to examine the effectiveness, efficiency and economy with which other Government Departments exercise their functions and also the formulation and development of Government policy.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many letters from members of the public were received by the tax credits department from April 2003 to April 2005; what the average response time was in each quarter; and if he will make a statement; [9840]

(2) what the average time taken to respond to correspondence about tax credit claims was in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05; and what that time has been in 2005–06. [19723]

Dawn Primarolo: Between June 2003 and April 2005, the Tax Credit Office (TCO) received around 1.4 million letters from members of the public or their representatives. Figures are not available before June 2003. TCO aims to deal with 80 per cent. of correspondence within 15 working days and 95 per cent. of correspondence within 40 working days. Indicative figures for 2004–05 suggest that TCO responded to around half of correspondence within 15 working days and almost three-quarters within 40 working days. Figures are not available for 2003–04 and indicative figures are not yet available for 2005–06.

Mr. George Osborne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish the Gateway Review of tax credit IT systems. [13706]

Dawn Primarolo: A Gateway Review is conducted on a confidential basis and is not generally made public. To disclose Gateway Review reports would be likely to prejudice both the ability of reviewers to examine the effectiveness, efficiency and economy with which other Government Departments exercise their functions and also the formulation and development of Government policy.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many tax credit award notices have been issued in each *(a)* year, *(b)* quarter and *(c)* month since 2001–02; and if he will make a statement. [19289]

Dawn Primarolo: There are more than 6 million families benefiting from tax credits at present. Each adult included in a tax credit award receives an award notice when the initial claim has been decided, each time a change of circumstance is reported, and another after the end of the year when their claim is renewed.

Child tax credit and working tax credit (CTC and WTC) were introduced in April 2003 replacing children's tax credit, working families' tax credit and disabled person's tax credit; however, (the former) Inland Revenue started issuing CTC and WTC award notices from February 2003. The number of award notices issued in each month since February 2003 is provided in the table.

Thousand

(b) and (c) Month	Numbers of notices issued each month[1]
2003	
February	258
March	2,602
April	2,415
May	3,066
June	2,062
July	2,289
August	1,072
September	1,553
October	1,595
November	1,116
December	1,053
2004	
January	1,310
February	1,140
March	2,124
April	1,502
May	4,105
June	4,914
July	4,014
August	3,430
September	3,354
October	3,932
November	1,809
December	1,072
2005	
January	1,398
February	1,516
March	2,725
April	3,260
May	3,571
June	4,475
July	3,388
August	3,698
September	4,340

[1] Figures to month end.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many calls were received by the tax credits helpline from Northern Ireland residents in August and September. [21615]

Dawn Primarolo: The number of calls received by tax credits helpline from Northern Ireland residents are as follows:

	Number of calls
August 2005	44,902
September 2005	48,880

These figures are where the caller selected an option from the call steering menu and was put in a queue to speak to an adviser.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many TC 647 forms have been *(a)* requested, *(b)* printed and *(c)* sent to tax credit claimants giving details on how their tax credit claim has been worked out since the inception of tax credits. [22005]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* Between 3 March 2004 and 27 September 2005 around 370,000 TC647 forms were printed and issued to tax credit claimants. These forms are issued on request.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what measures have been put in place to compensate claimants where automatic recovery of a tax credit overpayment has been stopped, and the overpayment found to have been caused by official error. [24162]

Dawn Primarolo: For details of the circumstances in which HM Revenue and Customs will make compensation payments, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Osborne) on 19 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1698W.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1057–58W, on tax credits, what proportion of the families contacted returned their renewal forms before 30 September. [26261]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) made around 341,000 outbound call attempts. Of those, around 81,000 resulted in taxpayer contact, this generated around 3,900 renewals at the time of calling. HMRC also estimate that a further 15,400 claimants subsequently rang back to renew as a direct result of the initial contact.

Overall, for 2004–05, HMRC issued around 4.2 million 2004–05 renewals declarations requiring a response and only around 200,000 of those had not been returned by 30 September 2005.

Vera Baird: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how the tax credit IT system differentiates between a credit allocated to a recipient and a payment made to the same recipient. [30403]

Dawn Primarolo: Tax credits are allocated at household, not individual, level. The whole circumstances of the household are considered against a set of rules and elements of entitlement are allocated accordingly. Each element of entitlement is designated as either child tax credit (CTC) or working tax credit (WTC) and a composite entitlement to CTC and WTC calculated.

Where a household contains two adults the claimants nominate which individual will receive payments for each tax credit. This can mean that one member of the household receives both credits or that they receive one credit each.

While individual payments are physically made to one person payments are treated as being made to the household. Members of the household are equally entitled to the payments and equally liable to repay any amount which is overpaid (joint and several liability).

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether a claimant whose circumstances make him eligible for working tax credit and child tax credit is able to claim working tax credit only. [31521]

Dawn Primarolo: The child and working tax credits are a single, seamless system of support for families with children and for low-paid people in work. In practice a claim for working tax credit is also a claim for child tax credit if a claimant is eligible for both. The reverse is also true.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what methods the Department has developed with the voluntary sector to target support to vulnerable families claiming tax credits. [31526]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the right hon. Gentleman to my statement to the Treasury Sub-Committee of 26 October 2005.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many tax credit claimants had their awards processed using an emergency national insurance number in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05; what the figures are for 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [31545]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 24 November 2004]:* The information is not available.

HM Revenue and Customs could provide details of the number of current claims with a temporary tax credits reference number only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total amount outstanding in backdated tax credits that have not yet been paid where a claim has been processed but a system error has delayed the generation of an award of tax credits was in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05; and how much is outstanding in 2005–06 to date. [31546]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* The information is not available. Where payments cannot be made via the system they can be paid manually. I refer the hon. gentleman to the reply I gave him on 15 November 2004, *Official Report*, column 1212w.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the written statement of 26 May 2005, *Official Report*, columns 22–23WS, on tax credit overpayments, with how many voluntary sector bodies discussions have been held on providing more active support and advice for families claiming tax credits; and on what dates. [31547]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer to the minutes of evidence taken before the Treasury Sub-Committee on Wednesday 26 October 2005. I informed Members that HMRC is discussing with the Citizens Advice Bureau how they can best work together with a view to developing pilots to support claimants better, including offering face-to-face contact with the most vulnerable groups.

The Department is also working with the HMRC Tax Credits Consultation Group, which includes representatives from the voluntary sector and other interested parties, to speed up improvement in key areas. In addition to the group's regular meetings, a number of working parties have been set up. Working parties, made up of representatives and officials, are considering a range of issues such as a review of Code of Practice 26, the Helpline, HMRC tax credit website and complaints and redress.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will establish a system of tax credits similar to that used in the United States to encourage employers to help their staff to improve their level of skills; and if he will make a statement. [31846]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government recognise that improving the skills of the work force plays an important part in increasing productivity and reducing social exclusion. The financial assistance available to encourage employers and learners to improve their skills is set out the Government's Skills Strategy and recent White Paper, Skills: Getting on in business and getting on in work.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in how many cases in Scotland where a tax credit has been processed there was a delay in the computer system generating an award of child or working tax credit in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05; and how many such cases there have been in 2005–06. [33021]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is not available.

Unemployment

Ms Diana R. Johnson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of the working age population was unemployed in each ward in Kingston upon Hull, North in each year since 1997. [31396]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl to Ms Diana R. Johnson, dated 29 November 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about unemployment. I am replying in her absence. (31396)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) compiles statistics of unemployment from the Labour Force Survey following International Labour Organisation definitions. Estimates of unemployment are not available for wards as the survey sample size for such areas is too small.

However, ONS also compiles statistics for local areas of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance. Table 1 shows statistics for the number of claimants expressed as a percentage of the resident working age population for the Kingston upon Hull North constituency for the years 1997 to 2005. Comparable percentages for constituency wards of Kingston upon Hull North are only available from February 2004. Table 2 shows these statistics for the months available to date.

Table 1: Jobseeker's allowance claimants as a percentage of the resident working age population for Kingston upon Hull, North parliamentary constituency

Date	*Annual average percentage*
1997	7.8
1998	7.5
1999	7.0
2000	6.0
2001	5.4
2002	5.2
2003	5.1
2004	4.5
2005[1]	4.8

[1] Average for period January 2005 to October 2005

Source:

Jobcentre Plus administrative systems.

Table 2: Jobseeker's allowance claimants as a percentage of the resident working age population in wards of the Kingston upon Hull, North parliamentary constituency

	2004										
Wards[1]	*February*	*March*	*April*	*May*	*June*	*July*	*August*	*September*	*October*	*November*	*December*
Avenue	5.3	5.2	5.0	4.9	4.7	4.6	4.7	4.5	4.0	3.9	3.9
Beverley	2.4	2.2	2.3	2.0	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.5	1.4	1.6	1.6
Bransholme East	8.0	7.9	7.8	7.5	6.9	6.7	6.5	6.6	6.5	5.9	6.1
Bransholme West	6.3	5.9	5.8	5.1	5.1	4.8	4.6	4.8	5.0	5.0	5.3
Bricknell	1.8	1.7	1.5	1.5	1.4	1.5	1.8	1.9	1.6	1.8	1.8
Kings Park	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.3	2.1	2.1	2.3	2.2	2.1	2.1	2.0
Newland	5.0	4.9	4.7	4.3	4.6	4.4	4.0	4.1	3.7	3.5	3.6
Orchard Park and Greenwood	9.4	9.2	8.9	8.8	8.5	8.5	8.7	8.9	8.4	8.4	8.1
University	4.3	4.0	3.9	4.0	39	4.1	3.9	3.8	3.8	3.8	3.9

	2005								
Wards1	*January*	*February*	*March*	*April*	*May*	*June*	*July*	*August*	*September*	*October*
Avenue	4.5	4.7	4.5	4.5	4.4	4.5	4.5	4.6	4.9	4.5
Beverley	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.7	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.8	1.7	1.9
Bransholme East	6.6	7.2	7.0	7.4	7.2	6.9	7.2	7.5	7.5	7.3
Bransholme West	6.1	6.3	6.4	6.2	6.4	6.1	6.5	6.4	6.4	6.5
Bricknell	1.9	2.1	2.2	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.3	2.3	2.2	1.9
Kings Park	2.4	2.3	2.3	2.1	2.2	2.6	2.5	2.8	2.7	2.5
Newland	4.1	4.2	4.3	4.5	4.4	4.3	4.5	4.3	4.5	4.5
Orchard Park and Greenwood	8.8	94	9.1	9.8	9.6	9.7	9.7	9.5	9.3	9.9
University	4.0	3.9	3.8	3.8	4.0	4.0	4.1	4.0	4.2	4.4

[1] The figures relate to Census Area Statistics wards

Source:

Jobcentre Plus administrative systems

Valuation Office Agency

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much of the costs incurred in respect of the deferred 2007 council tax revaluation the Valuation Office Agency *(a)* will write off and *(b)* recover from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. [28621]

Mr. Woolas: I have been asked to reply.

The Valuation Office Agency currently has no plans to write-off any costs incurred in respect of the postponed Council Tax Revaluation. The issue of recovery does not therefore arise.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what projection he has made of the written down value of the expenditure by the Valuation Office Agency in respect of the deferred 2007 council tax revaluation at *(a)* 1 June 2009 and *(b)* 1 June 2010. [28622]

Mr. Woolas: I have been asked to reply.

No projection of written down value has been made for 1 June 2009, nor for 1 June 2010, in respect of the Valuation Office Agency (VGA) expenditure on the postponed Council Tax Revaluation by the VOA.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what responsibility the Valuation Office Agency has for the levying of *(a)* inheritance tax, *(b)* stamp duty and *(c)* capital gains tax; and if he will make a statement. [31802]

Dawn Primarolo: The Valuation Office Agency has no responsibility for levying inheritance tax, stamp duty or capital gains tax. It does however have responsibility for undertaking and agreeing property valuations, for taxation purposes, on behalf of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Valuation Office Agency used *(a)* computer assisted mass appraisal and *(b)* the Automated Valuation model for the recent business rates revaluation in England. [31803]

Dawn Primarolo: The Valuation Office Agency did not use *(a)* computer assisted mass appraisal or *(b)* the Automated Valuation model for the recent business rates revaluation in England. However, the Agency has used significant computerised support in the business rates revaluations, which have taken place on a 5-yearly cycle since 1990.

VAT

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what representations he has received about the threshold below which goods supplied from Jersey are VAT-free; and if he will make a statement. [32110]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government have received a number of representations on this issue.

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent estimate he has made of the value of goods which are supplied in a year by retailers based on Jersey to UK residents free of VAT. [32111]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the former Economic Secretary to the Treasury's oral evidence to the Treasury Sub-committee on 2 February 2005, Fourth Report of Session 2004–05 (HC 126).

Chris Huhne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the revenue cost in *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07 of exempting demolition costs from value added tax. [32480]

Dawn Primarolo: No estimate has been made.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much value-added tax was paid by voluntary and charity sector organisations in each of the past five years for which figures are available. [32687]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: HM Revenue and Customs do not collect data on VAT from individual goods and services. The amount of VAT received from voluntary and charity sector organisations is therefore unavailable.

Working Tax Credits

Alistair Burt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* complaints and *(b)* appeals have been made about working tax credits in North East Bedfordshire in 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [28345]

Dawn Primarolo: This information is not available at constituency level.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Budgetary Forecast

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the projected direct budgetary support from his Department for each country is for the next three years. [32271]

Hilary Benn: DFID plans for Poverty Reduction Budgetary Support (PRBS) for the period 2005–06 to 2007–08, broken down by country and region, are as set out in the table. The figures include amounts earmarked for General PRBS and Sector PRBS.

All forecast figures are provisional and subject to review against progress towards meeting agreed development objectives.

£

Country/region	PRBS total 2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
Africa			
DRC	0	0	0
Ethiopia	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Ghana	25,000	35,900	35,000
Kenya	0	0	0
Malawi	25,000	20,000	20,000
Mozambique	35,000	40,000	40,000
Nigeria	0	0	0
Rwanda	31,000	31,000	31,000
Sierra Leone	15,000	15,000	[1]—
South Africa	0	0	0
Sudan	0	0	0
Tanzania	85,000	90,000	105,000
Uganda	50,000	55,000	55,000
Zambia	16,000	21,300	12,500
Zimbabwe	0	0	0
Total	282,000	307,300	298,500
Asia			
Afghanistan	0	0	0
Bangladesh	8,000	6,000	5,000
Burma	0	0	0
Cambodia	0	0	0
China	0	0	0
East Timor	0	0	0
India	119,000	137,000	158,500
Indonesia	0	0	0
Nepal	10,000	10,000	10,000
Pakistan	37,000	47,000	38,000
Sri Lanka	0	0	0
Vietnam	42,000	38,000	40,000

£

Country/region	PRBS total 2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
Total	216,000	238,000	251,500
Rest of the world			
Nicaragua	850	1,000	[1]—
Palestine Authority	5,000	[1]—	[1]—
Total	5,850	1,000	[1]—
Total PRBS	503,850	546,300	550,000

[1] To be decided.

Chagossian Community

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans his Department has to provide development aid to the Chagossian community in *(a)* Mauritius and *(b)* the Seycheiles; and what representations he has made to the EU to provide assistance. [32182]

Hilary Benn: We have no such plans and have made no representations.

Departmental Salaries

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the 10 highest-paid employees in his Department, broken down by *(a)* job title and *(b)* salary including bonuses; and whether the individual concerned is (i) a civil servant and (ii) a contractor in each case. [27573]

Hilary Benn: The following table lists the 10 highest-paid employees within DFID. The salary figures do not include any bonuses which will be determined at the end of March 2006. DFID has no contractors within its 10 highest-paid employees.

Job title	Salary (£)
Director General	164,436
Permanent Secretary	155,850
Director General	129,352
Director General	124,786
Director General	104,504
Director	101,905
Director	96,517
Director	94,828
Director	93,011
Director	92,088

Departmental Staff

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development who the Director of Finance and Corporate Development is in his Department; what relevant specialist finance qualifications he or she holds; and what the details are of his or her career to date. [26329]

Mr. Thomas: The Director of Finance and Corporate Performance in DFID is Richard Calvert. He expects to complete qualification as a chartered management accountant in the course of 2006. His career to date includes:

Head of Service Quality in Children, Schools and Families Directorate, Hertfordshire county council (2002–03)

Head of Information and Civil Society Department, DFID (1998–2002)

Head of Ministerial Offices, DFID/ODA (1995–98)

First Secretary, UK Permanent Representation to the European Union, Brussels (1991–95)

Range of finance and other programme management roles, ODA (1983–91).

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development who the Director of Human Resources is in his Department; what relevant specialist qualifications he or she holds; and what the details are of his or her career to date. [26330]

Mr. Thomas: The Director of Human Resources in DFID is Liz Davis. Her relevant specialist qualifications are post graduate diplomas in Leadership, Innovation and Change (1996) and Teaching and Training Adults (1990). Her career to date includes appointments as:

Deputy Director, Cabinet Office (2000–05)

Director of Human Resources, Hull and Holderness Community Health NHS Trust (1994–2000)

Training Manager, Humberside Social Services (1993–94)

Local Organiser, Humberside county council (1988–92)

Community Development Worker, Hull Council for Voluntary Service (1987).

Departmental Telephone Lines

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how the money that is raised from his Department's 0845 prefix contact telephone number is spent. [27130]

Mr. Thomas: DFID has an 0845 number which enables members of the public to call the Public Enquiry Point in East Kilbride from anywhere in the United Kingdom. Calls are charged at standard local rates, and there is no revenue generated for the Government.

Development Spending Targets

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether the UK is on track to meet the UN target of spending 0.7 per cent. of gross domestic product on international development by 2013. [32874]

Hilary Benn: The UK is on track to meet the target of spending 0.7 per cent. of gross national income (GNI) on official development assistance (oda) by 2013. Total net oda from the UK to developing countries was £4.3 billion in 2004 which represented 0.36 per cent. of GNI. In the Spending Review 2004, the Chancellor announced that total UK oda will reach nearly £6.5 billion a year by 2007–08. This represents 0.47 per cent. of GNI, and is a real terms increase in UK oda of 140 per cent. since 1997. He also stated that the Government wishes to maintain these rates of growth in the overseas aid budget in order to meet the UN target by 2013.

Earthquake (Kashmir)

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate his Department has made of the number of deaths from exposure that will occur this winter following the earthquake in Kashmir. [32019]

Mr. Thomas: It is not possible to give a meaningful estimate of possible deaths from exposure in affected areas during the winter months. The Government of Pakistan and international relief effort is focussed on providing shelter and other assistance to those who choose to remain above the snow line and also providing camps for those relocating to lower altitudes. The immediate priorities are to deliver shelter materials with "warm rooms" to remove the risks of exposure and provide water and sanitation interventions for the camps to prevent the spread of disease. The emergency shelter programme involves mobile outreach teams providing material and technical support for the construction of "warm rooms" for families above the snow line. To support this effort an 86-strong Royal Engineers unit has deployed to the region.

The Government are providing £58 million towards the international relief effort and has allocated £70 million for reconstruction.

Roll Back Malaria Programme

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to encourage greater accountability and transparency in the World Health Organisation's roll back malaria programme. [29697]

Mr. Thomas: There is a distinction between the World Health Organisation's Roll Back Malaria Department and Roll Back Malaria Partnership: The Roll Back Malaria Department of the World Health Organisation (WHO) is responsible for the co-ordination of the WHO'S global efforts on malaria. As part of the HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria cluster, the Roll Back Malaria Department reports progress using standard WHO results-based management systems, primarily against the organisation's programme budget. During 2004, DFID conducted an assessment of the WHO's effectiveness; the results concluded that the WHO was working towards better strategic planning, organisational efficiency and improved accountability for results.

At the World Health Assembly this year, member states commended the WHO for the progress it is making in implementing results-based management across the organisation, which now provides greater transparency and accountability.

The Roll Back Malaria Partnership (RBM) is a global initiative against malaria which provides a co-ordinated international approach for joint action to tackle the global burden of malaria. The WHO, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank launched the RBM Partnership in 1998. The WHO is an important partner of RBM, which is housed within the WHO's Malaria Department.

The UK, as a board member of the partnership is working with partners to address a number of issues concerning the effectiveness of RBM Partnership which includes accountability and transparency. DFID has supported RBM Partnership to develop a five-year global strategic plan and a two-year work plan to assist with greater accountability and transparency by setting out clearly the goals and responsibilities of the partnership. We have also supported the Partnership

Forum where the partnership is accountable to many additional stakeholders; the most recent forum was held in Cameroon in November. In addition, the UK has pushed for greater transparency on the way the partnership operates and, as a result, most RBM materials are now available on the website. We will continue to push for more transparency in development of technical guidance by the WHO.

The third and final High Level Forum for Health met in November in Paris. Participants encouraged RBM and other global health partnerships to adopt and implement a set of best practice principles. Four of the 21 principles deal with accountability and transparency. We will be looking to ensure that these principles are endorsed by the RBM Board.

St. Helena

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate he has made of the *(a)* costs and *(b)* total investment that will be forthcoming from (i) the Department for International Development, (ii) other UK Government Departments, (iii) the EU, (iv) private companies and (v) other sources for the proposed redevelopment of the island of St. Helena. [32181]

Mr. Thomas: There are no plans to redevelop St. Helena. Last March, however, I announced proposals to build an airport and establish air services for the island by or around 2010. The commitment was subject to satisfactory contract bids and a rigorous environmental impact assessment. The project budget has not been made public, as to do so might prejudice competition for the airport "design, build and operate" contract. The cost of the airport will be additional to DFID's regular support for St. Helena, currently running at some £14 million per annum.

St. Helena is also eligible for support from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) "Good Governance" and "Economic Diversification" programmes, plus a "Governor's Delegated Fund" and a joint DFID/FCO Overseas Territories Environmental Programme. Disbursements from those sources are expected to total around £250,000 this year. Funds currently available to St. Helena from the European Union total over £9 million, all of which St. Helena hopes to utilise over the next few years for improvements to its wharf facilities.

No private sector funding is envisaged for the airport. All private sector interest in St. Helena, however, will be welcome and considered on an equal footing. We are currently helping St. Helena to review its tourism and inward investment policies, following the decision to build an airport. The aim is for agreed policy to guide investment, and not vice versa.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much has been allocated for the construction of an airstrip on St. Helena. [33131]

Mr. Thomas: Our estimates have not been published, as to do so could commercially prejudice current procurement processes.

Water and Sanitation (Funding)

Emily Thornberry: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the answer of 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 475W, on water and sanitation (funding), how many additional child diarrhoeal deaths he expects to occur if progress towards the Millennium Development Goal target for sanitation in sub-Saharan Africa continues at the rate of progress between 1990 and 2002. [32616]

Hilary Benn: Calculating the number of diarrhoeal deaths attributable to inadequate sanitation is not an easy task. Most of them occur in the homes of the poor in remote villages and ramshackle shanty-towns, without the knowledge of health care workers. Most can be attributed to multiple contributory causes including malnutrition, malaria, the aftermath of measles and contaminated water, as well as poor sanitation.

Roughly the same number of people in sub-Saharan Africa lack access to water supply (266 million) as lack sanitation (242 million); indeed, many people lack both.

The best available calculation is by the World Health Organisation (WHO), which estimates that 747,500 deaths a year in sub-Saharan Africa could be attributed to deficient water, sanitation and hygiene. The vast majority (99 per cent.) of these are deaths from diarrhoea, and nearly 90 per cent. of those who die are children less than five-years-old. This gives a figure of some 650,000 child diarrhoeal deaths a year due to poor water, sanitation and hygiene.

Looking to the future, if progress towards the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) is not accelerated we can expect the number of deaths to decrease very slightly each year, but at this rate we estimate that in 2092 34 per cent. of the population would still lack access to basic sanitation.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Freedom of Information

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Leader of the House how many Freedom of Information applications his Office has received; how many have taken more than 20 days to process; and how many of these gave rise to complaints about the time taken. [31216]

Mr. Hoon: The Office of the Leader of the House has received nine Freedom of Information applications from 1 January to 30 June 2005. None has taken more than 20 days to process. The applications are included under the Privy Council Office's statistics published in the Department for Constitutional Affairs quarterly bulletin.

The Department for Constitutional Affairs is committed to publishing quarterly updates in relation to departmental performance under FOI, including information on both the volume and outcomes of requests. The bulletin for the second quarter was published on 30 September 2005 and can be found on the DCA website at http://www.foi.gov.uk/statsapr-jun05.htm and in the Libraries of both Houses. The next bulletin will be published before Christmas, while an annual report will be published in early 2006.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Brixham Council

Mr. Steen: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) following the affirmative referendum on the creation of a Brixham town council, if he will establish such a council in 2006; [32165]

(2) pursuant to the answer to parliamentary question 30167, if he will set out the consultation that has to take place to create a new town council in Brixham following an affirmative referendum; what other processes are required; and for what reasons these steps will take six to nine months. [32166]

Mr. Woolas: No proposals to establish a town council in Brixham have been received by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and if such proposals were received in view of the time scale given in the answers to the hon. Member on 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 495–96W and 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1701W, it is unlikely that one could be established in time for elections for new parish and town councils in May 2006.

Depending on the issues that proposals for new parish arrangements may raise the consultation that needs to take place is with local authorities, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's lawyers, Ministers and other stakeholders such as the Ordnance Survey and the Electoral Commission.

Before recommendations are made to Ministers, the processes required need to ensure that each recommendation contained in the review compiies with the legislation and that they meet the underlying criteria that a parish needs to reflect the identities and interests of local communities, and that it secures effective and convenient local government.

The reasons these steps take six to nine months are that these cases are dealt with in rotation; that reviews raise complex and technical issues—some reviews make only one or two boundary changes, others are district wide recommending many boundary changes, some of these with consequential changes to electoral arrangements. In addition, maps need to be commissioned showing the proposed boundary changes; and we need to consult for up to six weeks on the content of the draft order that will implement new parish arrangements.

Council Tax

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 15 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 386W, on council tax, what sanctions are available to Valuation Office Agency representatives against householders who refuse to admit valuation inspectors who have given written advance notice of their request to make a council tax valuation inspection. [33207]

Mr. Woolas: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member on 24 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2240W.

Mr. McLoughlin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of spending by *(a)* Derbyshire county council, *(b)* Derbyshire Dales district council and *(c)* Amber Valley borough council has been financed from council tax in each of the years since 1 January 1996. [32720]

Mr. Woolas: The percentage of revenue expenditure by Derbyshire county council, Derbyshire Dales district council and Amber Valley borough council that has been financed from council tax in each financial year since 1996–97 is tabled as follows:

Percentage

	Derbyshire county council	*Derbyshire Dales district council*	*Amber Valley borough council*
1996–97	26.1	38.4	31.2
1997–98	28.7	40.0	38.6
1998–99	30.2	39.7	38.5
1999–2000	30.3	45.6	39.2
2000–01	30.1	47.0	42.4
2001–02	30.2	46.6	38.7
2002–03	31.2	43.0	34.5
2003–04	30.0	47.5	37.4
2004–05	29.0	52.2	35.4
2005–06	28.0	52.7	38.2

The data are as reported by local authorities and are taken from revenue summary (RS) returns for 1996–97 to 2003–04, and revenue account budget (RA) returns for 2004–05 and 2005–06.

The definition of council expenditure used here is that expenditure funded from aggregate external finance (AEF), council tax and authorities' reserves.

Comparisons across years may not be valid due to changes in the method of reporting the information. In particular, the outturn data for 1996–97 to 2002–03 have been calculated on a non-FRS (financial reporting standard) 17 basis while the outturn data for 2003–04 has been calculated on an FRS 17 basis. The budget data for 2004–05 and 2005–06 are a mix of FRS 17 and non-FRS 17. This is because for their 2004–05 and 2005–06 budget forms local authorities, after consultation, were given the option to complete their forms either on a non-FRS 17 basis or on an FRS 17 basis. Hence, figures for different years may not be directly comparable.

Council Tax Valuation

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether a regulatory impact assessment was produced for the Council Tax (New Valuation Lists for England) Bill. [33166]

Mr. Woolas: Paragraph 10 of the explanatory notes accompanying the Bill makes clear, that the regulatory impact unit of the Cabinet Office (now known as the Better Regulation Executive) confirmed that no regulatory impact assessment was required.

Emergency Services

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps the Government are taking to co-ordinate the response of fire and rescue services with other emergency services; and if he will make a statement. [20457]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Fire and Rescue National Framework 2005–06 requires all Fire and Rescue Authorities in England to have in place robust plans for integrated command and control of major incidents, and to co-ordinate these both with other emergency services and with non-emergency responders such as local authorities and the Environment Agency.

The specification for the new Firelink wide area radio communications system requires interoperability between the fire and rescue service and the other emergency services.

Guidance on a consistent operational approach is provided by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and the Chief Fire Officers' Association and by the Cabinet Office, and is kept under continuing review.

I have no plans to change these arrangements.

Similar arrangements operate in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland under the overall guidance of the devolved Administrations.

Fire Services

Mr. Evans: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* part-time and *(b)* full-time firefighters serviced (i) Lancashire and (ii) Ribble Valley constituency in each year since 1997. [33040]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The number of firefighters employed by the Lancashire fire and rescue service between 1997 and 2004 is set out as follows:

Date[1]	*Retained duty system firefighters*	*Whole-time firefighters*
1997	390	971
1998	395	979
1999	402	1,007
2000	398	1,008
2001	371	1,010
2002	357	1,002
2003	369	1,008
2004	384	990
2005[2]	402	957

[1] Information provided refers to the work force at 31 March.
[2] Figures are provisional.
Source:
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's annual returns.

Information on the number of firefighters employed at constituency level is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Offices of the Regions

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many full-time equivalent staff were employed by each Government office of the regions in each year since 1996–97; and what the estimated figures are for 2005–06. [30434]

Yvette Cooper: The total number of staff employed in each Government office on 31 March for each year from 1997 to 2005 and the latest figures for end September 2005 is as follows. Full-time equivalents are not available:

GO	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*March 2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*September 2005*
East of England	173	169	163	176	178	189	235	271	277	276
East Midlands	226	208	213	233	214	239	277	296	285	282
London	274	325	338	382	279	258	282	316	316	311
North East	276	270	250	255	249	275	296	326	327	297
North West[1]	388	396	368	371	353	338	351	360	338	347
South East	211	184	192	223	240	275	277	319	295	297
South West	135	185	200	217	265	288	309	354	340	324
West Midlands	324	340	268	260	290	277	301	307	339	293
Yorkshire and the Humber	260	249	233	270	255	264	283	312	307	285
Total	2,267	2,326	2,225	2,387	2,323	2,403	2,611	2,861	2,824	2,712

[1] For 1997 and 1998, figures include staff in Government office for Merseyside, which was merged with GO North West on 1 April 1998.

Planning

Anne Milton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what research he has commissioned into the *(a)* background, *(b)* sex, *(c)* socio-economic status and *(d)* ethnic origin of people who respond to planning applications. [30360]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not conducted research into the ethnic, gender, or social background of third parties who comment on planning applications, nor on the results of planning applications.

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he treats the provisions relating to the correction of errors in decisions set out in part five of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as applying to decisions made as a result of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000; and whether he treats the 2000 Act as a planning act for the purposes of part five of the 2004 Act. [31845]

Yvette Cooper: The power to correct errors in decisions contained in part 5 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 relates only to the errors in decision documents set out in section 59(4). Decision made under the Countryside and Right of Way Act 2000are not listed in section 59(4). The "planning Acts" in section 59(4)*(h)* is defined by section 117(4) and does not include the Countryside and Right of Way Act 2000.

Street Crime Wardens

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of the street crime wardens funding stream from the Government office for London was made available to the London borough of Croydon in 2004–05. [32279]

Mr. Woolas: £4.4 million was allocated to the Government office for London to fund street crime wardens in 2004–05, of this £240,000 was made available to the London borough of Croydon.

Super Output Areas

Ben Chapman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans his Department has to use super output areas as a means to direct funding towards pockets of deprivation. [32725]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has used both district level and super output area (SOA) level data to allocate the new Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) resources. As well as, the district level summaries of the Indices of Deprivation 2004 (ID04) to determine which areas should be eligible for NRF because this data take into account the extent of deprivation across a local authority as a whole.

However, the new SOA level data have been used to determine the amount of NRF allocated to each eligible authority.

SOA data have also been used to allocate Neighbourhood Element of the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund (SSCF (NE)) worth £160 million over four years 2006–10 and the Cleaner Safer Greener (CSG) element of SSCF, worth an additional £105 million for the two years 2006–08. This brings together a total package of nearly £1.3 billion to help local authorities and their partners in narrowing the gap between deprived areas and the rest of the country.

SOA data provide a better picture of the number of people living in very deprived neighbourhoods within each local authority than the old ward level data did.

Telephone Masts

Anne Milton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what planning guidance his Department issues to borough councils about mobile phone networks sharing mobile phone mast sites. [30189]

Yvette Cooper: Planning policy guidance note 8: 'Telecommunications' (PPG8), makes clear the expectation that developers should provide evidence to local planning authorities that they have carefully considered the use of existing masts, buildings and other structures before seeking to erect any new mast, regardless of size. The authority may be justified in refusing prior approval or planning permissions if it considers the evidence regarding the consideration of such alternative sites is not satisfactory.

Anne Milton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he last met officials from the Department of Health to discuss the potential impact of phone masts on public health. [30190]

Yvette Cooper: I met with Melanie Johnson, the then Minister for Public Health on 27 January 2005 this year.

Thames Gateway

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what consultation there has been between the Government and *(a)* Essex county council, *(b)* Thurrock council, *(c)* Basildon council, *(d)* Havering council and *(e)* Barking and Dagenham council in connection with the plans to build the Thames Gateway. [25084]

Yvette Cooper: They have been closely involved in the development of the Thames Gateway. Essex county council, Thurrock council and Basildon council are members of the sub-regional Thames Gateway South Essex Partnership. In different parts of the Gateway, different arrangements apply. Thurrock council is represented on the Board of the Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporation, which is leading regeneration of the Thurrock area. Essex county council and Basildon district council are members of the Basildon Renaissance Partnership, which is promoting development in the Basildon area. Havering council and Barking and Dagenham council are represented on the board of the London Thames Gateway Development Corporation, which is taking forward regeneration at the London end of the Gateway.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Asylum Law Provision

Mr. McGovern: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many asylum cases have been undertaken by lawyers paid for under legal aid or community legal service funding in each of the past three years. [32729]

Bridget Prentice: The following figures have been provided by the Legal Services Commission (LSC) for the immigration category of work:

Controlled work matters started:

2004–05: 94,236

2003–04: 120,440

2002–03: 155,865

Controlled work covers the provision of legal advice and legal representation before the Immigration Appellate Authorities.

The total certificates issued:

2004–05: 1,856

2003–04: 2,253

2002–03: 2,920

Licensed work relates to other legal representation.

The figures cover solicitors and not-for-profit suppliers. The figures do not split matters started or certificates issued under the LSC immigration contract by asylum and non-asylum cases. The LSC records matters started rather than cases started and for controlled work there is likely to be more than one matter start per case in some instances.

Court Performance Targets

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) what the national performance targets are for Crown courts; and what the performance of each Crown court in Devon and Cornwall has been against those targets; [32060]

(2) what the national performance targets are for magistrates courts; and what the performance of Torquay Magistrates Court has been against those targets; [32061]

(3) what the national performance targets are for county courts; and what the performance of the *(a)* Torquay and *(b)* Newton county courts has been against those targets. [32062]

Ms Harman: The following tables set out the key performance indicators for the Crown, county and magistrates courts and the national target levels for 2005–06. The tables show performance figures for the Crown court centres in Devon and Cornwall, magistrates courts data, which is only available at the Devon and Cornwall area level, and county court data for Torquay. Newton Abbot county court was closed on 30 March 1996 and merged with Torquay county court.

Devon and Cornwall area statistics—Financial year to date, April to October 2005

		Devon and Cornwall crown court		
Courts	*Ineffective trial rate*	*Ineffective trial rate national target*	*Number of sitting days (FYD)*	*Allocation of days for sittings (FYD)*
Exeter	7.1	17.0	412.0	—
Plymouth	16.8	17.0	306.5	—
Truro	67	17.0	252.0	—
Barnstaple[1]	0.0	17.0	19.0	—
Devon and Cornwall	10.9	17.0	989.5	889

[1] Barnstaple's ineffective trial rate is 0.0% due to the fact that the cases in that court were either cracked or effective.

Note:
Sitting days allocated at area level.

National targets

Percentage

	Committals for trial—78% 16 weeks or less			*Section 51 (Narey/Sent for trial)—78% 26 weeks or less*				*78% Appeals 14 weeks or less*	
	In custody	*On bail*	*Custody and bail*	*In custody*	*On bail*	*Custody and bail*	*Sentence 10 weeks or less*		*All types % in target*
Exeter	97.1	78.0	80.6	81.8	70.7	74.8	85.4	94.0	81.8
Plymouth	80.0	48.4	57.1	71.4	51.3	62.5	80.2	84.2	66.6
Truro	87.0	66.7	70.7	76.0	82.1	79.7	87.7	89.1	79.5
Barnstaple	83.3	80.0	80.8	—	0.0	0.0	100.0	62.5	79.6
Devon and Cornwall	86.3	63.0	68.5	76.4	68.3	71.8	84.5	87.7	75.6

Devon and Cornwall magistrates courts

	April to August (FYD)	*National target (days)*
Persistent Young Offenders		
Devon and Cornwall	59	71
Magistrates courts only	53	—
Crown court only	195	—

Note:
Data for persistent young offenders financial year to date is only available for the period April to August. The target for persistent young offenders is not split into separate targets for the magistrates courts and Crown court.

Devon and Cornwall magistrates courts

Percentage

Ineffective trials	
Ineffective trial rate (April to September 2005)	22.8
National targets for 2005–06	23.0
Enforcement of penalties	
April to September 2005 (FYTD)	99.7
National payment rate target in 2005–06	81

Torquay county court

Percentage

Claims	
Small Claim	
% < = 15 weeks (Target 78%)	91.3

Torquay county court

Percentage

Fast Track	
% < = 30 weeks (Target 78%)	81.5
Multi Track	
% < = 60 weeks (Target 78%)	81.0
All	
% Dealt on time (not targeted)	89.1
Attachment of earnings	
All Disposals	
% < = 10 weeks (Target 70%)	78.6

Percentage

	Application—nisi Percentage dealt in time	*Nisi—order*	*All*
	(< = 2 weeks)	*(< = 10 weeks)*	*Dealt in respective times (target = 70%)*
Charging Orders	96.1	94.8	95.5
3rd Party Orders	100.0	100.0	100.0

Children Act Private Law Orders

Parental Resp. orders (PRO)	*Percentage*
% < =40 weeks	91.3
s.8 Contact	
% < = 40 weeks	71.5
s.8 Residence	
% < =40 weeks	78.3
s.8 Specific issue	
% < =40 weeks	100.0
s.8 Prohibited steps	
%< =40 weeks	100.0
Private (PRO and s.8)	
% < =40 weeks (Target 70%)	76.2

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many staff in her Department were *(a)* civil servants, *(b)* contractors and *(c)* other staff for each year since 1997. [27449]

Ms Harman: The answer cannot be provided without incurring disproportionate cost.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Abandoned Vehicle Recovery

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent on *(a)* recovering and *(b)* disposing of abandoned vehicles in Northern Ireland in each year since 1997. [7098]

Angela E. Smith: Removal and disposal of abandoned vehicles is primarily a district council function. However, where an obstruction is caused on the highway, there is a responsibility for roads service. An analysis of recovery and disposal costs is not available and figures for councils can be provided only for the last three years, as this was not held centrally until 2002–03.

The expenditure for clearing abandoned vehicles in Northern Ireland since 1997 is set out in the following table.

£

	Roads service expenditure	*District council expenditure*	*Total*
1996–97	33,044	—	33,044
1997–98	23	—	23
1998–99	338	—	338
1999–2000	514	—	514
2000–01	358	—	358
2001–02	663	—	663
2002–03	351	124,490	124,841
2003–04	441	185,143	185,584
2004–05	674	91,821	92,495

Abortion

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the distribution of the review of abortion service guidelines has been among health care professionals in Northern Ireland. [33235]

Mr. Woodward: The development of abortion guidelines is a complex task that needs to be taken forward with sensitivity given the divergence of opinion and strength of feeling about this particular issue.

Work on developing guidance is already under way and it is the intention to have draft guidance developed by May of next year. At this stage, no decisions about the distribution of guidelines have been taken.

Air Routes

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to attract more air routes into Northern Ireland airports. [32235]

Mr. Hanson: The Air Route Development Fund established by the Government to encourage the development of more air routes to Northern Ireland is fully committed and any decision on the future financing of the fund must await the outcome of the public consultation on the draft 2005 Budget.

In the meantime, ARD Ltd., the company with responsibility for the administration of the fund is maintaining close contact with the airport authorities and the airlines to ensure that we keep abreast of their plans.

Alcohol-related Deaths/Illness

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many deaths there were in Northern Ireland in which alcohol was the primary cause in each of the last five years. [31268]

Angela E. Smith: The following table gives the number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland in each year between 2000 and 2004 where the underlying cause of death indicated a condition directly related to alcohol.

Number of alcohol-related deaths registered in Northern Ireland, 2000–04

	Alcohol-related deaths[1]
2000	193
2001	210
2002	246
2003	211
2004[2]	260

[1] For the years 2001–04 the cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10). The codes used to define alcohol-related deaths are:
F10—Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol;
142.6—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy;
K70—Alcoholic liver disease;
K73—Chronic hepatitis, not elsewhere classified;
K74—Fibrosis and cirrhosis of liver; and
X45—Accidental poisoning by and exposure to alcohol.
For the year 2000 the cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10). The codes used to define alcohol-related deaths are:
291—Alcoholic psychoses;
303—Alcohol dependence syndrome;

305.0—Non-dependent abuse of alcohol;
425.5—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy;
571—Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis; and
E860—Accidental poisoning by alcohol.
[2] Data for 2004 is provisional.

Ambulance Officers

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many ambulance officers in Northern Ireland have reported sick with a stress related illness in each of the last five years. [32223]

Mr. Woodward: The information, provided by the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service, is set out in the following table:

	Number
2005	54
2004	51
2003	48
2002	47
2001	36

Attacks on Fire Crews

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many attacks on fire crews have taken place in each district of Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [31969]

Mr. Woodward: The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service has advised that recording of attacks on firelighters commenced in September 2001. Figures for attacks by fire and rescue service district for each calendar year available are as follows:

District	*2001*[1]	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Belfast Knock	35	126	86	103
Belfast Whitla	58	142	124	87
Ballymena	3	10	4	9
Coleraine	—	2	2	4
Glengormley	4	28	21	24
Lisburn	—	7	2	1
Portadown	2	16	25	32
Bangor	—	17	11	6
Newry	9	23	14	26
Downpatrick	1	5	5	6
Londonderry	7	20	22	22
Omagh	2	1	1	—
Cookstown	3	9	8	7
Enniskillen	—	4	2	—

[1] Part year.

Blood Donors

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have given blood in each region of Northern Ireland in each year since 2000; and how many units of blood were given in each region in each year. [33067]

Mr. Woodward: The Northern Ireland Blood Transfusion Service (NIBTS) is a regional service that collects blood donations from a range of communities. These include: the public in general (74 per cent. of all donations); sessions in the workplace (8 per cent.); schools—from 17 and 18-year-olds (1 per cent.); colleges and universities (2 per cent.); hospital settings (4 per cent.); and from NIBTS HQ (6.5 per cent.) and the agency's shared facilities at College Street, Belfast (4 per cent.). Data are not collected on any other 'regional' basis within Northern Ireland.

The figures for blood donations made in each year since 2000 are as follows:

	Whole blood donations	*Approximate number of donors per year*
2004–05	67,384	42,000
2003–04	68,799	43,000
2002–03	67,797	42,000
2001–02	66,982	42,000
2000–01	69,702	44,000
Total	340,664	—

Business Rate

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the impact on *(a)* jobs in Northern Ireland and *(b)* the economy in Northern Ireland of the Government's business rates proposals. [31275]

Angela E. Smith: No assessment has been made.

A commitment however has been given to undertake an initial assessment on the impact and effectiveness of this change as soon as practical after 1 April 2007.

Business Start-ups

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many new business start-ups there were in each of the last five years in *(a)* East Belfast, *(b)* North Belfast, *(c)* South Belfast and *(d)* West Belfast. [31957]

Mr. Hanson: The following table presents the number of new business start-ups offered assistance by Invest NI during each of the last 3½ years, analysed by Belfast parliamentary constituency. The information is not available for the financial years prior to April 2002, since the data used to record most of this activity did not capture the detail required to report at constituency level.

Parliamentary constituency	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*[1]	*Total*
Belfast East	54	98	116	45	313
Belfast North	58	73	92	59	282
Belfast South	88	135	177	64	464
Belfast West	70	94	137	50	351
Belfast Total	270	400	522	218	1,410

[1] 2005–06 information to September 2005 only.

Child Obesity

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children were suffering from obesity in Northern Ireland in *(a)* 1994 and *(b)* 2004. [32524]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not available.

Civic Studies

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps his Department is taking to promote *(a)* knowledge of and *(b)* interest in parliamentary government in schools in Northern Ireland. [31977]

Angela E. Smith: Citizenship is one of the key themes of the revised Northern Ireland curriculum and will introduce pupils to parliamentary democracy. Legislation will be in place by September 2006 but Citizenship is already being piloted in over two-thirds of post-primary schools. Feedback has indicated that young people have enjoyed these lessons.

The Department of Education also provides a copy of the Northern Ireland edition of the Young Citizens Passport to all year 11 pupils. The booklet is a valuable source of information to young people and covers topics such as Parliament and The NI Assembly.

Conservation Areas

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many dedicated qualified conservation area officers are employed by the Northern Ireland Planning Service; and how many of those are *(a)* members of the Institute of Historic Building Conservation and *(b)* not members but eligible for membership; [32688]

(2) which planning districts in Northern Ireland have a dedicated qualified conservation area officer responsible for the management of conservation areas and other designated areas; [32690]

(3) how much money was spent by his Department on external consultants' fees relating to conservation areas in each year since 2002. [32689]

Angela E. Smith: There are seven dedicated planning officers who provide advice on conservation area matters. Two officers are members of the Institute of Historic Buildings Conservation. One officer is eligible but not a member. One officer is currently training and will become eligible.

There is at least one dedicated officer in each divisional planning office. Qualifications are as above with the remainder having taken, or undertaking, appropriate training.

Details of the money spent on external consultant fees relating to conservation areas each year since 2002 are contained in the following table.

	Expenditure (£)
2002–03	103,929
2003–04	105,174
2004–05	21,983
April-October 2005	36,594

GCSE

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the quality of the GCSE exam in Northern Ireland. [31997]

Angela E. Smith: The level of attainment at GCSE continues to improve and young people are increasingly better motivated and prepared for examinations. The regulatory bodies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland work closely with all the awarding bodies on the accreditation and marking of public examinations to ensure that standards are maintained. In Northern Ireland, the marking of exam scripts is subject to extensive moderation by CCEA, whose standards are independently assessed by the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA).

Consultants/Special Advisers

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list recipients of consultancy fees paid by each Government Department in the Province over each of the last three years. [24855]

Angela E. Smith: A list of the recipients of consultancy fees paid by each of the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration and the Northern Ireland Office (excluding Agencies and non-departmental public bodies) has been placed in the Library.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* consultants and *(b)* special advisers were employed by his Department in each year since 1997; what the cost of each was in each year; and if he will make a statement. [27417]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is as follows.

(a) Consultants

The number of consultants employed by the Northern Ireland Office in each year since 1997 could be answered only at disproportionate cost.

The cost to the Department of employing external consultants in each year since 1997 is as follows:

	Cost (£)
1997–98	403,000
1998–99	309,000
1999–2000	352,035
2000–01	479,897

2001–02	*Cost (£)*
Management Consultancy	868,590
External Training	90,509
Internal Audit	26,103
Competition and Purchasing	34,654

2001–02	Cost (£)
Finance and Accountancy	47,918
Organisation and Planning	26,273
Personnel	33,051
Research	88,852
Specific Issues	5,246
Capital Works	9,664
IT Projects	1,017,713
Total	2,248,572

2002–03	Cost (£)
Management Consultancy	468,130
External Training	14,818
Internal Audit	71,368
Competition and Purchasing	40,913
Finance and Accountancy	134,162
Information and Control Systems	12,175
Efficiency	14,351
Organisation and Planning	3,534
Personnel	158,079
Research	68,563
Specific Issues	124,475
Capital Works	39,420
IT Projects	1,271,409
Total	2,421,395

2003–04	Cost (£)
Management Consultancy	45,468
External Training	20,706
Internal Audit	4,686
Competition and Purchasing	3,653
Finance and Accountancy	71,724
Information and Control Systems	1,764
Efficiency	2,140
Personnel	2,910
Research	54,924
Specific Issues	103,372
Capital Works	2,122
IT Projects	1,856,846
Total	2,170,315

2004–05	Cost (£)
Management	86,520
External Training	3,482
Internal Audit	31,428
Competition and Purchasing	1,159
Finance and Accountancy	23,915
Efficiency	1,700
Personnel	1,750
Research	118,517
Specific Issues	47,063
IT Projects	2,963,103
NIO Website	50,203
Total	3,328,839

2005–06[1]	Cost (£)
Management	72,134
External Training	7,171
Internal Audit	77,552
Organisation and Planning	13,314
Marketing	4,539
Research	161,885
Specific Issues	10,568
IT Projects	1,930,478
NIO Website	4,712
Total	2,282,353

[1] Up to October 2005.

(b) Special Advisers

Since 2003, the Government have published on an annual basis the names and overall cost of special advisers and the number in each pay band. For the most recent information I refer the hon. Member to the statement made by my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, 158–162WS. Information on the numbers of special advisers prior to 2003 was provided at regular intervals and this information will be available in the Library of the House.

Departmental Finance

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the real terms percentage increase in allocated resources for his Department *(a)* was for the period 1997–98 to 2004–05 and *(b)* is estimated to be between 2005–06 and 2007–08 (i) for each period and (ii) for each year. [31040]

Mr. Woodward: The following information refers to the Northern Ireland Office (including its Agencies and NDPBs). It does not include information for the 11 Departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Period/year	Real time allocated resources in 2004–05 prices (£)	Real terms percentage increase/decrease (i) for each period	Real terms percentage increase/decrease (ii) for each year
(a) 1997–98 to 2004–05			
1997–98	1,107,599,962		—
1998–99	1,060,545,448		-4.2
1999–00	1,110,725,474		4.7
2000–01	1,118,380,715		0.7
2001–02	1,220,806,022		9.2
2002–03	1,235,581,973		1.2
2003–04	1,140,734,273		-7.7
2004–05	1,104,478,000	-0.3	-3.2
(b) 2005–06 to 2007–08			
2005–06	1,111,308,182		0.6
2006–07	1,069,894,935		-3.7
2007–08	1,035,442,605	-6.8	-3.2

Notes.

1. For the financial years 1997–98 to 2005–06, Allocated Resources are based on the Department's Main Parliamentary Estimates.
2. For the financial years 2006–07 and 2007–08, Allocated Resources are based on forecast Parliamentary Estimates calculated from the Department's Spending Review 2004 settlement.

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Drug Awareness

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many teachers who specialise in drug awareness and prevention are employed in schools in each education board in Northern Ireland. [31976]

Angela E. Smith: Drugs education is delivered in schools as part of a wider programme of Personal, Social and Health Education. As recommended by departmental guidance, all schools have a designated teacher for drugs education. Drugs awareness training is available to all teachers and every post-primary school, and many primary schools, have at least one teacher who has received it.

Fire Officers

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many fire officers in Northern Ireland have reported sick with a stress related illness in each of the last five years. [32224]

Mr. Woodward: Information provided by the Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service is given as follows. This relates solely to full-time firefighters. Information is not available for retained firefighters.

April to March	*Number*
2000-01	42
2001-02	48
2002-03	35
2003-04	33
2004-05	35

Freedom of Information

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Freedom of Information applications his Department has received; how many have taken more than 20 days to process; and how many of these gave rise to complaints about the time taken. [31215]

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many applications for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 have been received by each of the Northern Ireland Government Departments in 2005. [32523]

Angela E. Smith: Since the Freedom of Information Act 2000 came fully into operation on 1 January 2005, the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister has published statistics on the performance of the 11 Northern Ireland Departments on a quarterly basis. Similarly, figures for the Northern Ireland Office are included in the Department for Constitutional Affairs quarterly update for Whitehall Departments. The total number of requests received by each Department between 1 January 2005 and 30 June 2005 are set out in the following table. The table also notes the number of requests that took more than 20 days to process. Figures for the third quarter, 1 July 2005 to 30 September 2005, should be available towards the end of the year. Only two Departments have received complaints referring to the time taken to process a request. The Department for Regional Development has received one complaint, while the Department of the Environment has received three.

Department	*Number of requests received*[1]	*Number of requests where 20 working day deadline was extended*[2]	*Number of other requests where the 20 working day deadline was exceeded*
Agriculture and Rural Development	131	3	7
Culture, Arts and Leisure	[3]48	3	22
Education	75	7	3
Employment and Learning	51	2	1
Enterprise, Trade and Investment	35	4	2
Finance and Personnel	212	8	2
Health, Social Services and Public Safety	65	2	0
Environment	414	6	71
Regional Development	208	2	8
Social Development	86	2	9
Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister	48	3	2
Northern Ireland Office	110	18	20

[1] Figures include requests made under the Environmental Information Regulations 2004 (EIRs).
[2] This figure includes the number of requests made under the FOI Act, where the 20-day period was extended to allow consideration of the balance of the public interest, and the number of requests made under the EIRs, where the 20-day period was extended because of the complexity or volume of the request.
[3] The DCAL figure includes requests made to the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland.

GPs

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have registered with general practitioners in East Belfast in each year since 1998. [31998]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is provided in the following table.

Number of new registrations for general practitioners at general practices located within East Belfast

October to September each year	*Number of new registrations*
2004-05)	4,138
2003-04	3,995
2002-03	3,675
2001-02	4,127

Notes:

1. The Central Services Agency only holds archived data on new registrations from 2001, data for earlier years are not available.

2. The practices within East Belfast have been identified as being within Belfast, East parliamentary constituency.

Source:
Central Services Agency

Maritime Safety

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what assessment he has made of the merits of employing fully trained lifeguards along beaches and publicly used coastline in Northern Ireland; [18145]

(2) if he will list the beaches which are manned by qualified lifeguards in Northern Ireland; [18226]

(3) what assessment he has made of the merits of funding for coastal local government districts who have no lifeguards manning the coastline in their borough; [18228]

(4) what requirement there is on local government councils who have responsibility for coastlines and beaches to have them properly manned for public use. [18229]

Angela E. Smith: No assessment has been made by the Government of the need for fully trained lifeguards on public beaches in Northern Ireland, nor of the funding for this activity.

While most of the beaches in Northern Ireland are the responsibility of district councils, there is no statutory requirement on them to provide lifeguards along publicly used beaches.

However, I am aware that both Down district council and Newry and Mourne district council now have trained beach lifeguards stationed at Tyrella and Cranfield beaches respectively. In addition, I welcome the work being undertaken by Limavady, Coleraine, and Moyle councils and the National Trust to improve safety on their public beaches along the North Coast, by working in conjunction with a range of agencies including the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents; the Royal National Lifeboat Association; the Coastguard; the Ambulance Service for Northern Ireland; and the Royal Life Saving Society.

Graffiti

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many prosecutions there have been against people found putting graffiti on property in each of the last five years in *(a)* East Belfast and *(b)* Castlereagh. [31995]

Mr. Hanson: Prosecution data for the specific act of putting graffiti on property cannot be separately identified. The figures shown in table 1 include prosecutions for the offences of criminal damage, possessing an article with intent to damage property, and malicious damage. The geographical breakdown is based on offenders addresses that fall within the PSNI District Command Units of East Belfast and Castlereagh. Such a breakdown is not available for 1999.

Data relating to 2004 will be available in early 2006.

Table 1: Persons prosecuted for criminal damage offences[1] 2000–03

	Belfast East	*Castlereagh*
2000	63	29
2001	48	21
2002	38	28
2003	59	33

[1] Includes criminal damage, possessing an article with intent to damage property, and malicious damage.

Note:
Data are based on the police District Command Unit in which an offender's address falls. The District Command Unit structure became operational in April 2001. However, for the purposes of comparability, calendar year 2000 and first quarter 2001 data are also provided based on 2001 DCU structure.

Housing

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many houses have been built in *(a)* Belfast East, *(b)* Belfast North, *(c)* Belfast South and *(d)* Belfast West in each year since 1980. [31942]

Angela E. Smith: Accurate data to answer the question are not readily available. However, the Annual Housing Land Availability Monitor prepared by DOE, Planning Service provides information from 1998 on the annual amount of residential units built in Belfast city council area set out as follows. Castlereagh and Newtownabbey council areas are also included for information.

Housing Completions from 1998 to 2004

District council area	*1999 1998 to 1999*	*2000 1999 to 2000*	*2001 2000 to 2001*	*2002 2001 to 2002*	*2003 2002 to 2003*	*2004 2003 to 2004*	*Total*
Belfast	675	1,217	1,342	1,490	1,656	1,660	8,040
Castlereagh	140	331	188	103	98	185	1,045
Newtownabbey	583	525	572	500	635	608	3,423
Total	1,398	2,073	2,102	2,093	2,389	2,453	12,508

Note:
Figures produced as of 2004 Housing Monitor Survey
Source:
Planning Service—Housing Land Availability Monitor

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many social housing schemes are planned in each council area in the Province, over the next three years; and if he will make a statement. [32101]

Mr. Hanson: The target across Northern Ireland is to start 1,500 new social houses per annum over the next three years from the identified programme.

The Northern Ireland Housing Executive is responsible for assessing housing need and for prioritising the units in the development programme.

The programme is reviewed each December to take account of new priorities. The planned programme for 2005–06 is reasonably firm but some adjustments will be made to the latter two years to take account of slippage and reassessed priorities. This may result in increases in some council areas and reductions in others.

Planned social housing schemes

Council area	2005–06 Schemes	2005–06 Units	2006–07 Schemes	2006–07 Units	2007–08 Schemes	2007–08 Units
Antrim	6	58	1	10	1	8
Ards	5	26	5	58	0	0
Armagh	1	4	1	8	0	0
Ballymena	1	11	1	16	1	12
Ballymoney	0	0	1	3	0	0
Banbridge	4	44	0	0	1	5
Belfast	77	1,17[illegible]	39	905	40	1,143
Carrick	2	30	0	0	0	0
Castlereagh	3	68	1	20	1	20
Coleraine	3	31	0	0	1	20
Cookstown	1	5	0	0	0	0
Craigavon	1	12	2	18	0	0
Derry	8	113	9	93	8	192
Down	3	28	4	39	0	0
Dungannon	0	0	1	19	1	12
Fermanagh	5	31	1	11	0	0
Larne	0	0	1	5	0	0
Limavady	1	6	1	6	1	10
Lisburn	15	156	9	346	5	200
Magherafelt	0	0	0	0	2	14
Moyle	0	0	0	0	1	10
Newry and Mourne	3	27	6	55	2	24
Newtownabbey	1	2	1	57	1	31
North Down	3	40	12	133	1	11
Omagh	1	7	1	8	0	0
Strabane	0	0	1	4	2	21
Total	144	1,836	98	1,814	69	1,733

Retirement Age

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans the Government have for the retirement age in Northern Ireland. [31028]

Angela E. Smith: Plans for retirement age in Northern Ireland are outlined in the draft Employment Equality (Age) Regulations (Northern Ireland) which are currently subject to public consultation. A copy of the consultation document has been placed in the Library.

Railways

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which railway stations in Northern Ireland fall below the standards required by the Disability Discrimination Act 2005; and if he will make a statement. [32105]

Mr. Woodward: The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 does not apply to Northern Ireland. However, an Order in Council, the Disability Discrimination (NI) Order, will shortly be laid. At present none of Northern Ireland Railways stations currently fully comply with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995). However, Translink have embarked on a project, funded by Government, to upgrade railway stations and halts in accordance with the DDA 1995 and they are working closely with Disability Action to ensure that those standards are met. The project is expected to be complete by September 2008.

Illegal Taxis

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland have been prosecuted for operating an illegal taxi service in each of the last 10 years. [32228]

Angela E. Smith: Unfortunately the requested information is not available prior to April 2003.

The following information is however available:

	Number of taxi operators prosecuted
April 2003 to March 2004	336
April 2004 to March 2005	212
April 2005 to November 2005	95

Judges (Northern Ireland)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many judges have been appointed in Northern Ireland in each year since 1990. [31981]

Bridget Prentice: I have been asked to reply.

Since 1990, 77 judicial appointments have been made in Northern Ireland.

	LCJ	*LJ of Appeal*	*High Court*	*County court*	*Resident magistrate*	*District judge*
1990	—	—	—	2	—	—
1991	—	—	—	—	1	—
1992	—	—	—	1	1	—
1993	—	2	3	—	3	—
1994	—	—	—	2	1	—
1995	—	1	1	1	1	—

	LCJ	LJ of Appeal	High Court	County court	Resident magistrate	District judge
1996	—	—	—	—	—	1
1997	1	1	1	2	2	1
1998	—	1	—	3	2	—
1999	—	—	2	—	2	—
2000	—	—	—	1	2	1
2001	—	—	1	1	—	—
2002	—	—	—	—	1	—
2003	—	—	1	1	2	—
2004	1	1	2	4	—	—
2005	—	—	1	1	[1]4	—

	Master of the High Court	Chief Social Security and Child Support Commissioner	Child Support Commissioner	Coroner	Total
1990	1	—	—	—	3
1991	—	—	—	—	1
1992	—	—	—	1	3
1993	2	1	1	—	12
1994	—	—	—	—	3
1995	—	—	—	—	4
1996	—	—	—	—	1
1997	—	—	—	—	8
1998	1	1	1	—	9
1999	1	—	—	—	5
2000	—	—	—	—	4
2001	1	—	—	—	3
2002	—	—	—	—	1
2003	—	—	—	—	4
2004	—	—	—	—	8
2005	2	—	—	—	8
Total					77

[1] Of these appointments two were part-time.

In addition 272 lay magistrates were appointed in April 2005.

Respect

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken to educate *(a)* primary and *(b)* post-primary school children about the need to treat people from different ethnic backgrounds with respect; what budget has been allocated for such work; and if he will make a statement. [32100]

Angela E. Smith: Schools are currently required to teach the cross-curricular themes of Education for Mutual Understanding and Cultural Heritage, which aim to foster respect for others and improved community relations. This will continue with the introduction of Citizenship Education as a key theme of the revised curriculum.

The Department of Education does not allocate resources for specific areas of the curriculum.

The Department has funded a number of relevant publications for use in schools. These are: a Guide for School Management to the Human Rights Act 1998 (Human Rights Commission) and Human Rights Awareness for School Managers (Children's Law Centre).

Medical Instruments

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money was spent by each health board on medical instruments for use in each year since 1998; and what the projected spend in Northern Ireland is in *(a)* 2006 and *(b)* 2007. [31956]

Mr. Woodward: The expenditure on the purchase and maintenance of medical and surgical equipment incurred by each health board (including the spend for the board itself and the trusts within the host board area) for the period 1998–99 to 2003–04 is given as follows:

£000

	EHSSB	NHSSB	SHSSB	WHSSB	Total
1998–99	23,839	4,252	3,318	4,149	35,558
1999–2000	25,378	4,559	3,191	3,965	37,093
2000–01	27,311	4,877	4,960	4,813	41,961
2001–02	29,641	5,976	5,285	5,919	46,821
2002–03	33,669	2,782	6,398	6,843	49,692
2003–04	38,947	3,250	6,481	6,809	55,487
Total	178,785	25,696	29,633	32,498	266,612

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The estimated expenditure for 2004–05, 2005–06 and 2006–07 could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Northern Ireland Civil Service (Transfers)

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to permit civilians employed by the Home civil service and working in the Royal Irish Regiment to transfer to the Northern Ireland civil service; and if he will make a statement. [31281]

Angela E. Smith: The Northern Ireland civil service is facing its own efficiency pressures as a result of 'Fit for Purpose' and other current initiatives. However, the Northern Ireland civil service has agreed, in principle, an arrangement whereby staff from UK Departments based in Northern Ireland who have been earmarked for compulsory redundancy could seek appointment to the Northern Ireland civil service at administrative entry grades. It is planned to agree a protocol between the NICS, the relevant UK Departments and the Civil Service Commissioners for Northern Ireland.

Music (Support Staff)

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many permanent curriculum support staff for music are employed by each education and library board; how many were employed by each board in 2004; and what numbers are projected for 2006–07. [31329]

Angela E. Smith: It is a matter for each education and library board to determine the number of curriculum support staff to be employed. The number of permanent curriculum support staff for music employed by each of the five education and library boards is set out in the following table. The information relates to the Boards' Curriculum Advisory and Support Services (CASS) and the figures provided are the full-time equivalent (FTE) number of permanent staff in 2004–05 and current estimates for 2005–06 and 2006–07.

Board	*2004–05*	*2005–06*	*2006–07*
BELB	5	1	1
NEELB	3	3	3
SEELB	0.7	0.7	[1,2]
SELB	3.5	3	3
WELB	6	[3]0	[1,2]

[1] Undetermined at present.
[2] SEELB and WELB are unable to determine the level of provision for 2006–07 at this time.
[3] staff were redeployed within the Curriculum Advisory and Support Service and three took early retirement.

Neighbourhood Partnerships

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the members on each Neighbourhood Partnership in the four Belfast constituencies; what the position of each on the Neighbourhood Partnership is and who they represent. [31946]

Mr. Hanson: Details of membership of each established partnership including the organisation they represent has been placed in the Library.

It should be noted that the boundary of the Colin Neighbourhood Renewal Area also falls into the Lagan Valley constituency.

List of Neighbourhood Partnerships established and details of their membership

Members	*Position*	*Who they represent*
Inner North Belfast Partnership		
Paul Roberts	Joint Lead Partner	Ashton Centre
Michael Donnelly	Member	Dept For Social Development, Belfast Regeneration Office
Harry Murphy	Member	Artillery Youth Centre
Carol Ni Chuilin	Member	New Lodge
Trish O'Kane	Member	Star Neighbourhood Centre
Ian Crozier	Joint Lead Partner	Lower North Belfast Community Council
John Dempsey	Member	Lower North Community Empowerment Partnership
Catherine McCartan	Member	Lower North Community Empowerment Partnership
Anne Thompson	Member	Lower North Belfast Community Council
John McGewon	Member	North and West Health Trust
Sharon Beattie	Member	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Tullycarnet Neighbourhood Partnership		
Maggie Andrews	Member	East Belfast Partnership
Joe Torney	Member	Department for Social Development
Ann Martin	Member	Tullycarnet Community Forum
Davy Crothers	Member	Tullycarnet Community Forum
Paul Lincolns	Member	Tullycarnet Presbyterian Church
Frankie Gallagher	Member	Tullycarnet Action Group Initiative Trust
Harry Flynn	Member	Tullycarnet Action Group Initiative Trust
Paul Millar	Member	Hanwood Project
Paul Carland	Member	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Lawrence Ferguson	Member	South and East Health Trust
Inner East Belfast Neighbourhood Partnership		
Maggie Andrews	Member	East Belfast Partnership
Joe Torney	Member	Department for Social Development Belfast Regeneration Office
Michael Briggs	Acting c/person	East Belfast Community Development Agency
John Cochrane	Member	Mersey Street Area Residents Association
Mervyn Gibson	Member	Ballymac Friendship Trust
Glenn Jordan	Member	East Belfast Mission Enterprises Ltd.

List of Neighbourhood Partnerships established and details of their membership

Members	*Position*	*Who they represent*
Inner North Belfast Partnership		
Colin Robinson	Member	Bridge Community Association
Cliff Kennedy	Member	Oasis Caring in Action Ltd.
Bernie McConnell	Member	Short Strand Community Association
Yvonne Cowan	Member	South and East Health Trust
Richard Williamson	Member	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Inner South Neighbourhood Partnership		
Gerry Doherty	Member	South Belfast Partnership Board
Joe Torney	Member	Department for Social Development, Belfast Regeneration Office
Seamus Flynn	Member	Markets Development Association
Deidre Hargie	Member	Markets Development Association
Peter Montgomery	Member	Markets Development Association
Marie Kavannagh	Member	Lower Ormeau Community Forum
Gerard Rice	Member	Lower Ormeau Road Action Group
Ken Orr	Member	Donegall Pass Community Forum
Vacant	Member	Donegall Pass Community Forum
Stephanie Green	Member	Donegall Pass Community Forum
Ken Humphrey	Member	Mornington Community Project Ltd.
Liam Kinney	Member	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Rowan Davidson	Member	South and East Health Trust
South West Belfast Partnership		
Gerry Doherty	Member	South Belfast Partnership
Joe Torney	Member	Department for Social Development, Belfast Regeneration Office
Ian Robinson	Member	Sandy Row Community Forum
Cora McCann	Member	Sandy Row Community Forum
Glenda Davies	Member	Sandy Row Community Forum
Garnet Busby	Member	Belfast South Community Resources
Tommy Wilson	Member	Greater Village Regeneration Trust
Robin Lyttle	Member	South Belfast Malecare
Paula Bradshaw	Member	Greater Village Regeneration Trust
Eleanor Jordan	Member	Windsor Women's Centre
Liam Kinney	Member	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Gabi Mornhinweg	Member	South and East Health Trust
Lenadoon Neighbourhood Partnership		
Michael Doherty	Chairperson	Lenadoon Community Forum
Danny Barr	Community Rep	
Aidan Campbell	Community Rep	Glen Community Parent/Youth Group
Renee Crawford	Community Rep	Lenadoon Community Forum
Maria Fox	Community Rep	Local Residents Association
FR. Martin Magill	Community Rep	Parish Priest
Tim Attwood	Political Rep	Belfast City Council
Michael Ferguson	Political Rep	Sinn Fein
Gerard O'Neill	Political Rep	Belfast City Council
Marie-Claire Ferris	Business Rep	Work West
Robin Livingstone	Business Rep	Andersonstown News
Vincent McAuley	Business Rep	First Trust Bank
Martin McDermott	Statutory Rep	Belfast Regeneration Office
Gary Ballentyne	Statutory Rep	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
John McGeown	Statutory Rep	North and West Belfast Health and Social Services Rep
Colin Neighbourhood Partnership		
Ciaran Sheehan	Chairperson	Private Sector
Martin McDermott	Statutory Rep	Department for Social Development, Belfast Regeneration Office
Danny Cochrane	Statutory Rep	Northern Ireland Housing Executive
Kate Thompson	Statutory Rep	Down Lisburn Trust
Jim Clarke	Statutory Rep	Catholic Controlled Maintained Schools
Cybil Skelton	Statutory Rep	South Eastern Education and Library Board
Gerard Daye	Community Rep	Lagmore
Annie Armstrong	Community Rep	Twinbrook
Cecilia Whitehorn	Community Rep	Kilwee
Cllr Patricia Lewsley	Political Rep	SDLP
Cllr Michael Ferguson	Political Rep	Sinn Fein
Cllr William Ward	Political Rep	UUP
Cllr Angela Nelson	Political Rep	Sinn Fein
Eamon Foster	Sectoral Rep	Business
Gillian Gibson	Sectoral Rep	Women and Family
Tim Duffy	Sectoral Rep	Environment
Joseph McGinnity	Sectoral Rep	Parish Issues
Bill McComb	Sectoral Rep	Youth

Parking Tickets

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many unpaid parking tickets there were in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years, broken down by local authority area. [31952]

Mr. Woodward: The statistics requested have been placed in the Library.

The Police Service of Northern Ireland currently records statistics by District Command Unit. These were previously recorded by Sub-Divisional Command. The earliest available figures relating to unpaid parking tickets are from 1997.

Police

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many police officers in Northern Ireland have reported sick with a stress related illness in each of the last five years. [32141]

Mr. Woodward: The number of officers who have reported sick with a stress related illness is not recorded.

The following table provides figures for the number of instances that officers reported sick citing stress related illness as a reason, or in which stress has been listed during the medical certification process. An individual officer might report sick with stress on more than one occasion: every occasion is included in the total

Stress related sickness absence 2001 to present

Calendar year	*Number*
2001	316
2002	615
2003	573
2004	410
2005–06 to date (24 November 2005)	394

Pre-schools

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many registered pre-schools there were in each of the education boards in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [31954]

Angela E. Smith: The requested information is as follows:

	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Belfast	35	40	40	34	36
Western	81	82	87	82	82
North Eastern	99	95	94	90	91
South Eastern	69	71	78	75	74
Southern	76	75	84	84	83
NI total	360	363	383	365	366

Note:
1. Figures relate to voluntary and private pre-school centres that are funded by the Department of Education.

Quangos

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people are members of quangos in Northern Ireland; and what the total cost of quangos in Northern Ireland was in each of the last 10 years. [31289]

Angela E. Smith: Information on the number of members of each non-departmental public body in Northern Ireland, and their cost (shown as total gross expenditure) since 1998, can be found in the Cabinet Office annual publication "Public Bodies", copies of which are held in the Library. Information for 2004 and 2005 is also detailed on the on-line searchable database, accessible through the Cabinet Office website:

www.civilservice.gov.uk/the_future_of_the_civil_service/agencies_public_bodies/index.asp.

Recycling

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to increase the amount of household waste that is recycled annually in Northern Ireland. [32135]

Angela E. Smith: The Environment and Heritage Service (EHS) promotes the recycling of household waste in two main ways: grant support to district councils and through education and awareness programmes. Its work has yielded encouraging results, with the overall household recycling rate in Northern Ireland growing from 10 per cent. in 2002 to 18.9 per cent. in 2004–05. All district councils in Northern Ireland have increased their household recycling rates. Two district councils have achieved a household recycling rate of almost 40 per cent.

Since 2001, EHS has provided councils with £36 million via the Waste Management Grant Scheme to help procure infrastructure and assist with operating costs associated with meeting their Waste Management Plans. In 2004–05, £10 million was distributed under the scheme which will finish in 2006–07. Future support for councils will be reviewed in light of the new Waste Management Strategy which is currently out for consultation and is scheduled for publication in March 2006.

The "Wake up to Waste" campaign succeeded in raising the profile of waste management among the general public. EHS continues to reinforce the "Reduce, Reuse, Recycle" messages and develop new initiatives aimed at achieving behavioural change through education and awareness.

Roads Service

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding was received from the European Parliament for the Streetwise Project of the Roads Service in Northern Ireland. [31937]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Malcolm McKibbin to Mr. Peter Robinson, dated 29 November 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding how much funding was received from the European Parliament for the Streetwise Project of the Roads Service of Northern Ireland. I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

Streetwise is one of seven Euro-Regional projects concerned with the provision of traffic control facilities and travel information across the Trans European Road Network (TERN). The projects have been in existence since 2001 and the current programme of funding by the European Union is due to finish at the end of 2006. Representatives from the seven projects meet frequently and there is an annual conference at which developments within the projects are highlighted. I understand the project chairpersons are working closely to ensure that European Funding for this work will continue post 2006.

Funding from the European Union for the current project is provided to offset the costs of studies (50% funding) and implementation of facilities (8% funding). The balance of the costs is met from the national budgets of the project partners.

To date, Roads Service has received £345,077.37 funding from the European Union for the Streetwise Project.

I hope this information is helpful.

School Buildings

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects to announce the new build programme for the remaining primary schools in the Coleraine area which require new school buildings. [32563]

Angela E. Smith: The North Eastern education and library board and the Catholic Council for Maintained Schools are responsible for identifying the need for school major capital works schemes for their respective sectors, and presenting their proposals to the Department of Education. The Department does not currently have any schemes in planning for primary schools in the area. The Board has identified in its current five-year strategic investment plan, several schemes for replacement primary schools in the Coleraine area though none of them have as yet been presented to the Department for consideration.

Sewerage Treatment

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the estimated completion date is for the sewerage treatment works that will service the village of Drumahoe, Londonderry. [32221]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Water Service (Mrs. Katharine Bryan) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Mrs. Katharine Bryan to Mr. Gregory Campbell, dated 29 November 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about the estimated completion date for the sewage treatment works that will service the village of Drumahoe, Londonderry (32221). I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Water Service.

As part of the Drumahoe Sewerage Scheme, Water Service plans to decommission the existing wastewater treatment works at Drumahoe. It will be replaced with on-site storm water storage facilities and a new sewage pumping station that will transfer flows to the upgraded Culmore Wastewater Treatment Works. The contract has been awarded and the scheme is programmed to commence on site in January 2006. It will take 9 months to complete.

Special Schools

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many special schools in Northern Ireland have closed since 1998. [31974]

Angela E. Smith: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply that I gave to the hon. Member for East Antrim (Sammy Wilson) on 10 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 762W.

Stormont Estate (Northern Ireland) Order

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for what reasons the Stormont Estate (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 makes provision for the sale of all of the land on the Stormont Estate; and what assessment he has made of the merits of selling land as well as buildings under these proposals. [31248]

Angela E. Smith: The proposed Stormont Estate (Northern Ireland) Order 2006 removes, in part, the restrictions that currently prevent the Department of Finance and Personnel selling or disposing of the lands within the Estate.

For the purposes of the legislation a proposed boundary has been drawn around a designated part of the Estate occupied by some civil service office buildings. The designated area includes Castle Buildings, Craigantlet Buildings, Dundonald House, Hillview Buildings, Massey House and all the sectional buildings. The extent of the land to be transferred with the buildings is limited to what constitutes reasonable access to, and around, the buildings and the land currently used for car parking.

The draft legislation and proposed boundary is currently subject to public consultation.

Tax Credits (Helpline)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will introduce a helpdesk information technologist specialist in the Regional Inland Revenue Office in Belfast to deal with computer errors in tax credit claims from Northern Ireland. [17127]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

The existing Business Help Desk serves both Great Britain and Northern Ireland. It liaises regularly with Northern Ireland Help Desk Liaison Officers.

There are no current plans to set up new arrangements solely for Northern Ireland.

Teachers

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many teaching vacancies there are in each education and library board in Northern Ireland. [31282]

Angela E. Smith: Since vacancies are identified by Boards of Governors in accordance with the staffing complement they determine under LMS, the information is not held by the Department of Education nor by the relevant employing authorities, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. I have, however, asked the Department to consider the routine collection of such information in order to inform future decisions about teacher demand.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school teachers in Northern Ireland will have reached retirement age in each of the next five years. [32127]

Angela E. Smith: The number of teachers in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools who will reach retirement age in the next five years is detailed as follows:

Teachers who will have attained age 65 years at 31 August each year:	*Primary schools*	*Secondary schools*	*Total*
2006	9	6	15
2007	6	3	9
2008	11	6	17
2009	22	15	37
2010	34	22	56
Total	82	52	134

Tourism

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to establish an interpretation centre for foreign visitors at the site of the River Bann massacre in Portadown. [31279]

Angela E. Smith: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board has received no correspondence and has no plans in relation to this venture.

The board has focused its resources on delivery of the five Signature Projects in the Strategic Framework for Action 2004–07.

Valuation and Lands Agency

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will place in the Library the internal guidance *(a)* manual and *(b)* methodology to be used for the forthcoming domestic rates revaluation in Northern Ireland. [29714]

Angela E. Smith: The majority of capital valuations are produced using the computer-assisted mass appraisal approach. Copies of the current internal working documents and guidance being used for the valuation of the remaining properties have been placed in the Library.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will place in the Library the instructions and advice documents prepared by the Valuation and Lands Agency for the Northern Ireland domestic rates revaluation and introduction of discrete capital values. [30707]

Angela E. Smith: I will arrange for copies of the guidance and instructions to be placed in the Library when they are available in April 2006.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Valuation and Lands Agency plans to use contractors for the domestic rates revaluation in Northern Ireland. [30708]

Angela E. Smith: At present the Agency are considering the limited use of private sector contract staff to assist with the review of computer generated values in a small number of areas around Belfast.

Women Executives

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the number of women in senior board positions in businesses in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [32234]

Mr. Hanson: It is not possible to provide information on the number of women in senior board positions in businesses in NI. However, estimates of the number of females in employment classified as 'Managers and Senior Officials' are available from the NI Labour Force Survey. The following table shows the estimated number of female 'Managers and Senior Officials' in each summer (June-August) quarter since 1996.

Females in employment classified as 'Managers and Senior Officials' (1996–2005)

Period	*Female Managers and Senior Officials*[1]
Summer	
1996	24,000
1997	28,000
1998	28,000
1999	25,000
2000	25,000
2001	27,000
2002	25,000
2003	26,000
2004	25,000
2005	30,000

[1] The estimates up to and including summer 2000 were based on a previous occupational coding and refer to female 'Managers and Administrators'.

Source:
NI Labour Force Survey

Work Force

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total estimated work force was in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [32233]

Mr. Hanson: Estimates of the number of work force jobs at June each year in Northern Ireland for the period 1996 to 2005 can be found in the following table.

Work force jobs[1,2] in Northern Ireland

June of each year	*Number*
1996	692,300
1997	712,500
1998	720,300
1999	731,100
2000	749,400
2001	763,100
2002	771,100
2003	790,100
2004	794,900
2005	808,600

[1] This includes employee jobs, self-employment jobs and Government-supported trainees.
[2] Figures are rounded to the nearest 100.
Source:
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HEALTH

Alzheimer's Disease

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent discussions she has had with the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence about drug treatment for Alzheimer's disease; and if she will make a statement. [29783]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* I received an update on the progress of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE's) appraisal of drugs for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease during a meeting with the NICE'S chair and chief executive on 9 June 2005.

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what opportunity cost analysis she has evaluated comparing the daily cost of proven drugs for Alzheimer sufferers with the cost of full-time caring if the drugs are unavailable. [30611]

Jane Kennedy: No such analysis has been undertaken by the Department. The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is currently reviewing its guidance on the clinical and cost effectiveness of drugs for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has had with the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence regarding the *(a)* clinical effectiveness and *(b)* cost effectiveness of treatments for Alzheimer's; when meetings were held; what conclusions were drawn (i) from and (ii) following the discussions; and if she will make a statement. [27222]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* Ministers received an update on the progress of the National Institute for Health Clinical Excellence's (NICE'S) work to review its appraisal of drugs for Alzheimer's disease during the course of routine discussions on 2 March 2005, with the NICE chief executive, and 9 June 2005, with the NICE chairman and chief executive.

The Department responded on 22 March 2005 to NICE'S appraisal consultation document, 'Donepezil, Rivastigmine, Glanatamine and Memantine for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease'. A copy of that response was published on and is still available from the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk. A copy is available in the Library.

Breast Cancer

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects Herceptin will be available to patients in England for the treatment of each stage of breast cancer. [19861]

Jane Kennedy: Herceptin is already licensed throughout the European Community for the treatment of certain categories of advanced or late-stage breast cancer. In accordance with the press release made by the European Medicines Agency (EMEA) on the 22 September 2005, we anticipate that the company will be applying for an extended licence for the treatment of early-stage breast cancer and that this new use may then be approved throughout the European Community by July 2006, assuming that data in support of the quality, safety and efficacy for the intended use are satisfactory.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects the use of Herceptin will be approved for the treatment of early stage breast cancer. [19867]

Jane Kennedy: In accordance with the press release made on the 22 September 2005 by the European Medicines Agency (EMEA) and if the Roche company are able to make their formal application to the EMEA together with their new clinical trial data by early next year then, assuming the scientific experts issue a positive opinion, it could be licensed for treatment of early-stage breast cancer throughout the Community by July 2006.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how long she expects the European Medicines Evaluation Agency will take to approve Herceptin for the early stage treatment of breast cancer. [19909]

Jane Kennedy: In accordance with the press release made on 22 September 2005, the European Medicines Agency (EMEA) anticipated that Roche planned to submit an application for Herceptin in the beginning of 2006. The statement further indicated that similar types of submissions in important oncology indications in the past have been dealt with by the EMEA in an expedited review within two to three months.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on what date Herceptin was submitted to the European Medicines Evaluation Agency for formal market authorisation to treat early stage breast cancer. [19910]

Jane Kennedy: A formal application and new clinical data for Herceptin in the treatment of early stage breast cancer has not yet been submitted to the European Medicines Evaluation Agency for authorisation. We anticipate that the formal application will be early next year when the company have completed their analysis of all of the new clinical trial data.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to ensure the rapid approval of Herceptin for early stage breast cancer. [19929]

Jane Kennedy: I have asked the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency to do everything possible to ensure that formal applications from the company are evaluated and determined as rapidly and efficiently as possible while ensuring appropriate standards of safety, quality and efficacy are maintained by the European Medicines Evaluation Agency, the scientific experts and the European Commission.

Paul Farrelly: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make additional funding immediately available to primary care trusts to fund the prescription of Herceptin for advanced stage breast cancer sufferers who have already been diagnosed as likely to benefit from the drug. [18609]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 17 October 2005]:* Herceptin for the treatment of advanced breast cancer was approved by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) in March 2002 and should already be available to all women who might benefit from it.

Funding to meet recommendations of NICE has been included in the allocations made to primary care trusts (PCTs) for the period 2003–04 to 2005–06. This funding is not separately identified. The total of PCT allocations is £45 billion for 2003–04, £49.3 billion for 2004–05 and £53.9 billion for 2005–06. This represents an increase of £12.7 billion or an average of 30.8 percent., over the three years 2003–04 to 2005–06.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the availability of Herceptin on prescription throughout the NHS. [30642]

Jane Kennedy: Data on the availability of Herceptin on prescription throughout the national health service is not collected centrally. However, in 2004 Professor Mike Richards, the National Cancer Director, published a report which examined the usage of certain cancer drugs across the country, including Herceptin. An update of Professor Richard's report will be published next year and will provide a picture of Herceptin prescribing in the first half of 2005.

Herceptin is already licensed and available on the NHS for woman diagnosed with advanced breast cancer. It is not yet licensed for women with early breast cancer but, as with other unlicensed drugs, can be used in some cases.

Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people worked in the Cheshire and Merseyside strategic health authority, including Southport and Ormskirk hospital trust; and what the staff costs were *(a)* in October and *(b)* at its inception. [26377]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested on staff costs is not held centrally. Information on all national health service staff by selected group, for Cheshire and Merseyside strategic health authority by organisation, as at 30 September 2002 and 30 September 2004 has been placed in the Library.

Commercial Confidentiality

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on what basis she exercises her discretion to release information covered by commercial confidentiality for reasons of public accountability; and if she will list the occasions on which she has exercised this discretion in each of the last five years. [29747]

Jane Kennedy: In considering any decision to disclose confidential information the commercial sensitivity of that information is assessed on a case by case basis at the time the request for disclosure is made, against the criteria set out in the Freedom of Information Act (2000). The Freedom of Information Act 2000 became effective on 1 January 2005.

The information requested on the release of such information is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the 10 highest-paid employees in her Department; what the *(a)* job title and *(b)* salary including bonuses is of each; and whether the individual concerned is (i) a civil servant and (ii) a contractor in each case. [27431]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is shown in the following table.

The 10 highest paid staff within the Department by salary, including bonuses.

Job title	*Status*	*£000 Total salary including bonus*
Director General of NHS IT[1]	Civil Servant	280–285
Permanent Secretary	Civil Servant	225–230
Commercial Director[1]	Fixed Term Appointment	220–225
Group Director of Health and Social Care Services Delivery and Department of Health Board Member	Civil Servant	190–195
Chief Medical Officer	Civil Servant	180–185
Director of Programmes and Performance	Civil Servant	170–175
Director of Strategy	Civil Servant	150–155
Director of Access	Civil Servant	145–150
Director of Health Partnerships	Civil Servant	145–150
Project Lead—White Paper	Civil Servant	140–145

[1] These staff are rewarded above the standard level for the pay band due to the fact they have scarce skills that attract premium rates of pay.

Notes:

1. Information on civil service reward, including colleagues at senior levels, is available on its website at:www.civilservice.gov.uk/index.asp
2. Information on the Department's resource accounts for 2004–05 is available on its website at: www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/Publications/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidance/PublicationsPolicyAndGuidanceArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4123393&chk=sqhBec

Diabetes

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what long-term safety and efficacy data the Department makes available on insulin analogues; [28665]

(2) what research she has evaluated on the clinical effects of the use of insulin analogues by insulin-requiring diabetes patients; [28671]

(3) what assessment has been made of the safety of NovoRapid for use in children; and what assessment she has made of the post-marketing data available in this respect. [28676]

Jane Kennedy: All new drugs applications, including insulins such as Novorapid are evaluated by the commission on human medicines (CHM), formerly the committee on safety of medicines (CSM) which advises the Licensing Authority as to whether a marketing

authorisation should be granted. The applicant includes, in their submission, results of clinical trials conducted in the proposed indication for which the licence is sought. The first marketing authorisation for the recombinant human insulin was granted to NovoNordisk on 9 June 1982. This application was considered by the expert biologicals sub-committee of the CSM, in March 1982 and subsequently by the main committee. The application for a new drug substance such as recombinant human insulin would have been scientifically and medically reviewed to ensure it satisfied the criteria for safety, quality and efficacy. Medicinal products, including human or animal insulin, will not be granted a marketing authorisation unless supporting data have been provided to demonstrate that the quality, safety and efficacy are satisfactory for the intended use. The type of clinical development programme, clinical trial data, that should support the registration of new medicinal products for the indication treatment of diabetes mellitus is detailed in European guidance documents, for example, notes for guidance on clinical investigation of medicinal products in the treatment of diabetes mellitus. CPMP/EWP/1080/00. These are read in conjunction with other pertinent European and International (ICH) clinical guidelines. The marketing authorisation applications are evaluated by the CSM before they are granted.

Data from clinical trials submitted at the time of licensing examined the safety and efficacy of the human insulin analogues (insulin glargine, insulin aspart, insulin detemir, insulin lispro and insulin gluisine) in diabetic patients treated for up to 12 months. A summary of the available data submitted in support of the licence applications for many of the insulin analogues is made publicly available in the form of a European Public Assessment Report.

The longer term safety of the use of human insulin analogues in routine clinical practice is monitored by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA). Any possible new safety issue to emerge is evaluated and, if necessary, product information for prescribers and patients is updated to reflect the new data.

As with all medicines, reports of suspected adverse drug reactions (ADRs) to insulin analogues are collected by MHRA and CHM through the spontaneous reporting scheme, the Yellow Card scheme. A summary of the ADRs that have been received in association with a medicine, including insulin analogues, is available on the MHRA's website.

East Lancashire NHS Trust

Kitty Ussher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the expenditure of East Lancashire NHS Trust on NHS services was in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [28005]

Mr. Byrne: The information is not available in the format requested. However, information relating to the total operating expenses is shown in the table.

Total operating expenses of the East Lancashire national health service trust and its predecessor trusts

	NHS trust	*Expenditure (£000)*
2000–01	Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley NHS Trust	101,488
	Burnley Healthcare NHS Trust	113,521
2001–02	Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley NHS Trust	114,282
	Burnley Healthcare NHS Trust	125,506
2002–03	Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley NHS Trust	116,154
	Burnley Healthcare NHS Trust	103,577
2003–04	East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust	231,430
2004–05	East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust	255,313

Sources:

1. Audited summarisation schedules of the Burnley Healthcare NHS Trust and Blackburn, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley NHS Trust 2000–01 to 2002–03.

2. Audited summarisation schedules of the East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust 2003–04 and 2004–05.

Free Prescriptions

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have been prosecuted under the Health Act 1999 for wrongful claims of free prescriptions in London in each year since 2000. [16904]

Jane Kennedy: Since August 2001, a penalty charge system has been in place in respect of those falsely claiming exemption to national health service pharmaceutical charges. Since its introduction in August 2001, 160,000 penalty notices have been issued. The total amount recovered to date is £2,950,000. These figures are national and are not broken down into regions as requested. This is done through the civil courts as criminal prosecution of offenders would not be a cost-effective way of dealing with such high volume but low-value frauds.

Health Finance (Manchester)

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which *(a)* primary care trusts, *(b)* health trusts and *(c)* acute trusts have overspent their budget in Greater Manchester in each of the last five years; and what the overspend was in each case. [28468]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* The position reported in the 2004–05 final accounts showed that the Greater Manchester strategic health authority (SHA) reported a surplus of £30 million. The latest financial year for which the audited financial information of all national health service organisations, SHAs, primary care trusts (PCTs) and NHS trusts, is available is 2004–05. For 2006–07, PCT allocations within the Greater Manchester SHA area total £3,602,273. For 2007–08, the total is £3,940,609. This represents a cash increase of £338,336 since 2006–07. The total cash increase over the two years—2006–07 and 2007–08—is £661,727.

Those NHS trusts that overspent in the Greater Manchester area for 2000–01 to 2004–05 are shown in the table. No PCTs in Greater Manchester have recorded an overspend against their revenue resource limit in this period.

Deficits by NHS trusts in Greater Manchester SHA from 2000–01 to 2004–05

Trust type	*Trust name*	*(Deficit) £000*	*Financial year*
Ambulance	Greater Manchester Ambulance NHS Trust	(109)	2000–01
Health	Wigan and Leigh Health Services NHS Trust	(84)	2000–01
Acute	South Manchester University Hospital NHS Trust	(6,980)	2002–03
Acute	Trafford Healthcare NHS Trust	(744)	2003–04
Acute	Cental Manchester/Manchester Children's NHS Trust	(7,727)	2004–05
Acute	Trafford Healthcare NHS Trust	(3,490)	2004–05
Acute	Bolton Hospitals NHS Trust	(2,706)	2004–05
Acute	Wrightington, Wigan and Leigh NHS Trust	(743)	2004–05

The 2004–05 data is available in the Library. It is also available on the Department's website at:

www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/FreedomOfInformation/ClassesOfInformation/fs/en.

Herbal Medicines Directive

David Tredinnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to address the concerns of small and medium-sized manufacturers about the cost of registering products under the Traditional Herbal Medicinal Products Directive. [32273]

Jane Kennedy: We are using the full transitional period, until 2011, permitted under European Directive 2004/24/EC to allow companies with unlicensed herbal medicines on the market at April 2004 the opportunity to spread over a number of years their applications to register products. Measures taken by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) to contain the regulatory impact of the directive include meetings with individual companies to give regulatory advice free of charge on companies' provisional plans to register products; also the provision of guidance notes on a range of implementation issues. Discussions continue between the MHRA and the industry's herbal forum about the practical application of the European guidelines on the quality of herbal medicinal products.

Human Embryo Research

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the cures for diseases which have been developed as a result of human embryo research in each of the last 12 years; and if she will make a statement. [30413]

Jane Kennedy: Embryo research has been vital in the development of treatment techniques for infertility, resulting in improved outcomes for patients. For treatments such as in vitro fertilisation (IVF), the United Kingdom's live birth rate per treatment cycle started has increased year on year.

Research with embryonic stem cells has been licensed to allow scientists to understand and develop treatments for conditions such as motor neuron disease, diabetes and cystic fibrosis. It is still too early to speak of cures, but scientific and medical opinion is that stem cell research will revolutionise medicine in the 21st century.

Independent Treatment Centres

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 5 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 2827W, on independent sector treatment centres, whether doctors working in independent sector treatment centres carrying out work equal to a consultant in the NHS are required to be on the GMC specialist register. [21605]

Mr. Byrne: Yes. All surgeons working in independent sector treatment centres are required to be registered with the General Medical Council and on the specialist register. This is the same registration standard as required in the national health service.

Internet Medicine Purchases

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to increase *(a)* men's and *(b)* women's awareness of possible risks of buying prescription-only medicines on the internet. [30722]

Jane Kennedy: The Medicines and Healthcare product Regulatory Agency (MHRA) issued a general press release on 9 June to national print and broadcast media, ethnic press and trade publications, alerting people that some websites offering medicinal drugs belong to unscrupulous vendors. It mentioned that many of these vendors sell unlicensed and prescription-only medicines, and some sell counterfeit drugs that are harmful. This information was then targeted to specific segments of the population to assist consumers to make informed decisions about their health.

On 16 June, MHRA issued a press release to men's lifestyle magazines, warning them about buying lifestyle drugs such as erectile dysfunction medication, weight and hair loss products from the internet. This was followed on 27 June with the further release of two press releases. One was again targeted at men's lifestyle magazines, warning men to be careful when buying human growth hormone products from websites. The second was targeted at women's lifestyle magazines, warning women about purchasing slimming pills from the internet.

Since 9 June, the MHRA press office had 38 calls from the media about these issues and organised nine briefings with specific journalists.

In addition, details of successful prosecutions brought by the enforcement group of the MHRA are made available by press releases which serve to reinforce the message that buying medicines via the internet can be dangerous.

Mental Health

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the forecast year-end deficit of Oxfordshire Mental Health NHS Trust is in 2005–06; and what the year-end position of the trust has been in each year since 1997–98. [25104]

Caroline Flint: The Department does not currently publish unaudited information relating to the in-year financial position of national health service organisations. The following table shows the audited year-end financial position of Oxfordshire Mental Health Trust from 1997–98 to 2004–05.

Organisation: Oxfordshire Mental Healthcare NHS Trust

£000

	Over/(under) spend
1997–98	(3,311)
1998–99	(1,855)
1999–2000	(2,153)
2000–01	7,343
2001–02	8
2002–03	1
2003–04	2
2004–05	2

Patient Safety

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will develop a single entry point for the reporting of patient safety incidents through the National Programme for Information Technology. [27929]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2118W.

PCT Commissioning (Oxfordshire)

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions there were between her Department and the Thames Valley strategic health authority on the subject of putting primary care trust commissioning in Oxfordshire out to tender prior to its announcement. [32147]

Caroline Flint: *[holding answer Monday 28 November 2005]:* Discussions were held at official level with Thames Valley strategic health authority (SHA) regarding their proposals prior to their submissions.

We wanted SHAs, in partnership with local stakeholders, to identify various options for the reconfiguration of locally, which would then be assessed by the external panel against the criteria in "Commissioning a Patient-led NHS". If the proposals are adjudged to meet these, they will be subject to full public consultation.

I regret that my previous response on this matter, to question 26170, on 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 971W, was incorrect.

Plagiocephaly

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will require all primary care trusts to offer treatment for plagiocephaly; and if she will make a statement; [19503]

(2) if she will make a statement on the treatment of plagiocephaly. [19504]

Mr. Byrne: There is a difference between positional plagiocephaly, where flattening of the skull is caused by pressure from the surface on which a baby is customarily laid and craniosynostosis, where the cranial sutures have closed prematurely. In the latter case, surgery may well be necessary to prevent future health problems. The national service framework for children, young people and maternity services sets out standards to ensure that primary care trusts (PCTs) base decisions about treatments on the best evidence available to them. Treatment for plagiocephaly is available should doctors and PCTs consider it necessary.

Prescriptions

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many pre-payment certificates for prescriptions have been issued in Gravesham in each of the last 12 months. [29823]

Jane Kennedy: Information on the number of pre-payment certificates (PPCs) issued for Gravesham is not separately identifiable. However, the number of PPCs issued for England, by month for each of the last 12 months is as follows:

	Number
November 2004	93,823
December 2004	77,050
January 2005	95,299
February 2005	91,868
March 2005	127,400
April 2005	84,821
May 2005	90,624
June 2005	97,744
July 2005	88,624
August 2005	92,221
September 2005	93,500
October 2005	92,922

Primary Care Trusts

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the projected spending from central Government funding was per head of the population for each primary care trust in England in 2004–05. [25071]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent representations she has had from the local primary care trust in Gravesham; and on what subjects. [28601]

Caroline Flint: There have been no representations to the Department from the local primary care trust in Gravesham.

Private Sector NHS Treatment

Clive Efford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether guarantees have been given to private sector providers of health services regarding the proportion of NHS patient services that will be transferred to them; [17422]

(2) what discussions she has had with private sector health providers regarding the transfer of NHS services; [17423]

(3) what guarantees private sector health providers have sought regarding the transfer of NHS services to enable them to secure financial backing for their businesses. [17424]

Mr. Byrne: Patients will decide if they want to use an independent or national health service service.

No guarantees have been given to private sector providers of health services regarding the proportion of NHS patient services that will be transferred to them.

No discussions have taken place with private sector health providers regarding the transfer of NHS services, and no guarantees have been sought. Providers will have to bid against the terms laid down by the Department.

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the time scales are for achievement of all aspects of 2004 public service agreement target number three. [29205]

Caroline Flint: The Department's public service agreement (PSA) targets and associated technical notes were agreed with HM Treasury as part of 2004 spending review and are published on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk. PSA technical notes contain the measurement details of the targets including what the specific time scales are for achievement of all aspects 2004 public service agreement target number three.

Recovery and Support Unit

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the role is of her Department's Recovery and Support Unit; and what information it collects. [29825]

Jane Kennedy: The recovery and support unit (RSU) is the team within the Department that works with strategic health authorities (SHA) on the performance of the national health service. SHAs are the local headquarters of the NHS and are responsible for the performance management of NHS trusts and primary care trusts. The RSU uses routine data collections from the NHS and in exceptional circumstances will make a specific request for data from SHAs on a specific issue.

Roaccutane

Nick Harvey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps she *(a)* has taken and *(b)* is taking in response to the conclusion of the European-wide review of isotretinoin (Roaccutane) that (i) the psychiatric adverse events be kept under review and (ii) more frequent periodic safety update reports be produced than is usual for a product of Roaccutane's age; [31190]

(2) what research her Department has commissioned into the side effects of isotretinoin (Roaccutane); and what assessment she has made of the significance of *(a)* the Medical and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency review of paediatric data on isotretinoin and *(b)* the suicide of David Roberts while taking the drug. [31191]

Jane Kennedy: The European-wide review of isotretinoin was completed in October 2003. This review was led by the United Kingdom and resulted in the harmonisation of the product information for prescribers, summary of product characteristics, throughout Europe. The review also developed a set of important principles for nationally agreed pregnancy prevention programmes.

Warnings about depression and suicide have been present in the product information for isotretinoin since 1997. Since the completion of the European review, the issue of psychiatric reactions associated with isotretinoin has been considered by an expert working group of the Committee on Safety of Medicines on two occasions in 2003 and 2005. The reviews by the expert group led to the product information being expanded to include warnings about the possibility of further psychiatric adverse reactions. During their review the expert group conducted a thorough assessment of all reports of suicidal behaviour received in association with isotretinoin. The patient information leaflet for isotretinoin currently includes extensive warnings about the potential psychiatric side effects associated with isotretinoin treatment.

Following the European review, the marketing authorisation holders for isotretinoin are required to submit annual periodic safety update reports (PSURs), more frequently than the three-yearly PSURs required by legislation for a product of this age. These PSURs contain a summary of all information on safety from any data source in the period of the report.

The Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) Department's strategy on medicines for children was implemented in July 2004. As part of the strategy, the MHRA has been assessing clinical data in children for those medicines where such data are known to exist with a view to modifying the product information for these medicines where appropriate.

For isotretinoin, clinical data concerning its use in children was known to exist, as isotretinoin was included in the United States of America Food and Drug Administration's (FDA) list of active ingredients for which paediatric exclusivity had been granted. This data was obtained, and the MHRA assessment report of them was considered by the paediatric medicines working group of the Committee on Safety of Medicines. The assessment report has been published on the MHRA website.

The working group recommended that no changes to the product information for isotretinoin were necessary as a consequence of the review of this data. The group also recommended that the marketing authorisation holder should provide information regarding the adverse event reports received in children aged 13 to 17 years in future PSUR. These recommendations have been adopted by the MHRA.

The MHRA continually monitors the safety of isotretinoin and any new data, including that generated by research will be carefully considered and independent expert advice sought from the Commission on Human Medicines, which has replaced the Committee on Safety of Medicines and the Medicines Commission as the Government's independent expert advisory committee. Similarly all reports of suicidal behaviour associated with isotretinoin are carefully reviewed as part of the ongoing review of psychiatric reactions associated with isotretinoin.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Absent Parents

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many payments by absent parents have been written off as irrecoverable in each year since 1997; what the *(a)* average and *(b)* upper decile value of such payments is; and how many payments are in the upper decile. [32903]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty, dated 28 November 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many payments by absent parents have been written off as irrecoverable in each year since 1997; what the *(a)* average and *(b)* upper decile value of such payments is; and how many payments are in the upper decile.

The Agency has no legislative power to write off debt, and current debt is now the cumulative total of 12 years. However for accounting purposes the Agency recognises that in some cases some debt is "probably un-collectable" (for example, where the non-resident parent is long-term unemployed, has gone abroad, or has died). The accounts are therefore adjusted accordingly.

The cumulative total of "probably un-collectable" debt from 1997, as reported in the Agency's Annual Reports and Accounts, is summarised in the following table:

	Amounts classed as probably un-collectable (£ million)
2004–05	1,984.400
2003–04	2,004.847
2002–03	1,965.340
2001–02	1,915.312
2000–01	1,692.380
1999–2000	1,410.853
1998–99	1,069.680
1997–98	829.237
1996–97	748.040

The amounts stated as probably un-collectable in the accounts are based on a statistically valid sample and do not relate to specific cases. Unfortunately the Agency does not hold information on the average and upper decile value of unpaid maintenance payments.

I hope you find this information useful.

Asbestos

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people *(a)* were diagnosed with and *(b)* died from asbestos-related illnesses in each county in England in each of the last five years. [33183]

Mr. Plaskitt: The number of mesothelioma deaths and deaths with underlying cause of death specified as asbestosis in each county or unitary authority in England in each of the last five years for which data are available is given in the two tables.

Lung cancer deaths caused by asbestos are clinically indistinguishable from those caused by other agents such as tobacco smoke and so cannot be tabulated directly. It is estimated that about the same number of lung cancer deaths due to asbestos occur each year as mesothelioma deaths.

Statistics on the number of diagnoses of asbestos-related diseases are not readily available. However, in the case of mesothelioma, annual numbers of deaths give a good indication of the number of diagnosed cases since the disease is almost always rapidly fatal following diagnosis.

Table 1: Mesothelioma deaths in England by county and unitary authority, 1999–2003

	1999	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*[1]	*2003*[1]
North East					
Darlington UA	3	3	4	4	4
Hartlepool UA	7	6	9	3	5
Middlesbrough UA	3	5	4	4	5
Redcar and Cleveland UA	3	4	6	6	8
Stockton-On-Tees UA	8	6	15	12	6
Durham	13	15	12	14	10
Northumberland	11	8	11	14	8
Tyne and Wear (Met County)	71	76	93	70	66
North West					
Blackburn with Darwen UA	3	2	4	4	—
Blackpool UA	5	6	6	8	3
Halton UA	—	5	10	8	6
Warrington UA	5	3	1	6	5
Cheshire	21	29	29	37	30
Cumbria	23	21	26	27	29

Table 1: Mesothelioma deaths in England by county and unitary authority, 1999–2003

	1999	2000	2001	2002[1]	2003[1]
Greater Manchester (Met County)	71	47	66	55	73
Lancashire	26	30	49	31	39
Merseyside (Met County)	46	55	57	58	44
Yorkshire and the Humber					
East Riding Of Yorkshire UA	11	5	8	7	14
Kingston Upon Hull, City Of UA	8	7	9	7	8
North East Lincolnshire UA	6	7	4	2	4
North Lincolnshire UA	4	1	4	6	13
York UA	11	6	9	5	5
North Yorkshire	10	14	12	25	19
South Yorkshire (Met County)	34	31	35	37	40
West Yorkshire (Met County)	69	65	86	79	80
East Midlands					
Derby UA	6	9	17	12	4
Leicester UA	5	—	3	3	4
Nottingham UA	6	6	8	13	8
Rutland UA		1		2	
Derbyshire	24	15	18	21	19
Leicestershire	12	16	12	10	10
Lincolnshire	12	11	15	17	18
Northamptonshire	16	15	20	19	17
Nottinghamshire	16	22	22	20	28
West Midlands					
Herefordshire, County Of UA		3	5	4	6
Stoke-On-Trent UA	8	7	2	4	4
Telford And Wrekin UA	2	5	4	2	—
Shropshire	3	5	3	8	5
Staffordshire	14	22	28	24	25
Warwickshire	11	16	9	11	13
West Midlands (Met County)	53	61	53	60	69
Worcestershire	8	13	6	17	11
East					
Luton UA	3	3	6	4	8
Peterborough UA	3	4	7	7	6
Southend-On-Sea UA	2	10	7	8	6
Thurrock UA	3	5	10	7	9
Bedfordshire	8	3	14	12	13
Cambridgeshire	9	16	16	23	17
Essex	51	48	44	55	66
Hertfordshire	27	24	36	27	25
Norfolk	24	26	17	42	35
Suffolk	25	26	26	24	32
London					
Inner London	46	45	62	64	43
Outer London	113	117	113	125	111
South East					
Bracknell Forest UA	3	4	3	3	8
Brighton And Hove UA	6	4	8	4	7
Isle Of Wight UA	7	7	14	9	11
Medway UA	14	13	20	15	13
Milton Keynes UA	5	5	5	6	1
Portsmouth UA	16	5	12	9	12
Reading UA	3	3	4	1	4
Slough UA	—	1	3	—	3
Southampton UA	16	13	11	11	12
West Berkshire UA	3	5	4	7	4
Windsor and Maidenhead UA	7	4	2	3	2
Wokingham UA	2	6	6	5	3
Buckinghamshire	11	11	12	10	8
East Sussex	16	14	15	15	18
Hampshire	50	45	66	60	65
Kent	38	56	52	54	68
Oxfordshire	16	17	9	9	15
Surrey	31	36	35	31	35
West Sussex	15	29	22	24	36

Table 1: Mesothelioma deaths in England by county and unitary authority, 1999–2003

	1999	2000	2001	2002[1]	2003[1]
South West					
Bath and North East Somerset UA	2	4	3	4	4
Bournemouth UA	5	3	10	3	3
Bristol, City Of UA	8	7	9	14	18
North Somerset UA	6	5	9	10	5
Plymouth UA	18	19	13	18	18
Poole UA	7	4	6	4	5
South Gloucestershire UA	9	7	5	11	7
Swindon UA	8	5	10	3	8
Torbay UA	—	7	7	6	4
Cornwall and Isles Of Scilly	16	14	27	13	18
Devon	35	23	22	33	33
Dorset	19	10	14	11	19
Gloucestershire	10	10	14	15	14
Somerset	7	9	17	13	9
Wiltshire	15	9	9	13	7

[1] Provisional.

Source:

HSE mesothelioma register

Table 2: Deaths with asbestosis as underlying cause in England by county and unitary authority, 1999–2003

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
North East					
Darlington UA	—	—	1	—	—
Hartlepool UA	3	1	2	2	1
Middlesbrough UA	—	—	—	1	1
Redcar and Cleveland UA	—	—	1	1	—
Stockton-On-Tees UA	—	2	1	1	1
Durham	—	—	1	—	—
Northumberland	—	1	—	—	—
Tyne and Wear (Met County)	7	9	8	15	16
North West					
Blackburn with Darwen UA	—	—	—	1	1
Blackpool UA	—	—	—	—	1
Halton UA	—	1	—	—	1
Warrington UA	—	—	1	—	—
Cheshire	1	1	5	1	4
Cumbria	—	1	1	3	1
Greater Manchester (Met County)	—	2	3	1	6
Lancashire	1	2	—	—	2
Merseyside (Met County)	3	5	6	6	10
Yorkshire and the Humber					
East Riding of Yorkshire UA	—	1	—	—	—
Kingston Upon Hull, City Of UA	—	—	—	—	—
North East Lincolnshire UA	—	—	—	2	—
North Lincolnshire UA	—	—	—	—	—
York UA	—	—	—	—	—
North Yorkshire	—	—	—	—	—
South Yorkshire (Met County)	—	3	4	—	3
West Yorkshire (Met County)	5	—	5	7	7
East Midlands					
Derby UA	—	—	1	1	1
Leicester UA	—	—	—	—	—
Nottingham UA	1	2	—	2	—
Rutland UA	—	—	—	—	—
Derbyshire	—	—	—	1	—
Leicestershire	—	—	—	—	1
Lincolnshire	—	—	—	—	—
Northamptonshire	—	1	—	1	—
Nottinghamshire	1	—	—	2	3

Table 2: Deaths with asbestosis as underlying cause in England by county and unitary authority, 1999–2003

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
West Midlands					
Herefordshire, County Of UA	—	—	—	—	—
Stoke-On-Trent UA	—	1	—	—	—
Telford And Wrekin UA	—	—	—	—	—
Shropshire	—	—	—	—	—
Staffordshire	2	1	2	2	—
Warwickshire	—	—	—	—	—
West Midlands (Met County)	2	4	2	1	3
Worcestershire	—	—	—	1	—
East					
Luton UA	—	—	—	—	—
Peterborough UA	—	—	—	—	—
Southend-On-Sea UA					
Thurrock UA		2	—	—	—
Bedfordshire	—	—	—	1	1
Cambridgeshire	1	—	—	—	—
Essex	1	1	—	2	2
Hertfordshire	1	—	—	—	—
Norfolk	—	2	—	2	1
Suffolk	1	—	—	1	—
London					
Inner London	6	1	4	5	4
Outer London	5	4	7	8	3
South East					
Bracknell Forest UA	3	4	3	3	8
Brighton and Hove UA	6	4	8	4	7
Isle Of Wight UA	7	7	14	9	11
Medway UA	—	—	3	—	2
Milton Keynes UA	1	—	1	1	—
Portsmouth UA	—	—	—	3	1
Reading UA	—	—	—	—	—
Slough UA	—	—	—	—	—
Southampton UA	—	—	1	1	—
West Berkshire UA	—	—	—	—	—
Windsor and Maidenhead UA	—	—	1	—	—
Wokingham UA	1	—	—	—	—
Buckinghamshire	—	—	—	1	1
East Sussex	—	1	—	2	—
Hampshire	—	—	2	1	—
Kent	—	1	1	2	1
Oxfordshire	—	—	—	—	1
Surrey	1	1	—	—	1
West Sussex	—	1	—	—	1
South West					
Bath And North East Somerset UA	1	—	—	1	—
Bournemouth UA	—	—	—	—	—
Bristol, City of UA	1	1	1	3	1
North Somerset UA	1	—	—	—	—
Plymouth UA	—	2	2	6	7
Poole UA	—	—	—	—	—
South Gloucestershire UA	—	—	—	—	1
Swindon UA	3	—	—	—	—
Torbay UA	1	—	—	—	—
Cornwall And Isles Of Scilly	1	4	2	1	2
Devon	—	—	1	2	1
Dorset	—	—	—	1	—
Gloucestershire	2	—	—	—	2
Somerset	—	—	—	—	—
Wiltshire	—	—	—	—	—

Source:

HSE asbestosis register

Child Support Agency

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his latest estimate is of the average time taken to resolve complaints to the Child Support Agency for *(a)* old scheme cases and *(b)* new scheme cases. [30033]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty, dated 29 November 2005:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his latest estimate is of the average time taken to resolve complaints to the Child Support Agency for *(a)* old scheme cases and *(b)* new scheme cases.

The Agency has an internal target to resolve 68% of client complaints or agree a resolution plan within 15 working days of receipt of a complaint from a Child Support Agency client. I cannot provide the average time taken to resolve complaints but year-to-date information on performance against this standard is set out in the table below.

Percentage of CSA client complaints for which a resolution plan has been agreed within 15 days of the receipt of the complaint, by scheme, September 2005

	Percentage
Old scheme	91
New scheme	87
Overall	88

I hope you find this response helpful.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his latest estimate is of the total cost to date of the set-up and running costs of the Enforcement Directorate. [30035]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty, dated 29 November 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his latest estimate is of the total cost to date of the set-up and running costs of the Enforcement Directorate.

The Enforcement Director was appointed on 1 November 2004 and the Directorate went live from 1 April 2005.

The set up costs were approximately £100k and the running costs for the period 1 April 2005 to 31 October 2005 amount to approximately £6.6m which includes legal costs and bailiff charges. This does not include the staffing costs for the Belfast Enforcement Team.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average administration cost per case on *(a)* the new scheme and *(b)* the old scheme was in each of the last four years. [30036]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty, dated 29 November 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average administration cost per case on *(a)* the new scheme and *(b)* the old scheme was in each of the last four years.

Information is not currently available in the format requested. We expect information on administration costs for the Child Support Agency to be available after the Departments new Resource Management System is introduced in the Child Support Agency in 2006. In the meantime, the Agency does publish interim unit cost information in accordance with Public Service Agreement (PSA 9) which is contained in the Annual Report and Accounts.

As the new child support scheme was only introduced from March 2003 only data from then to October 2005 would be available.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his latest estimate is of the backlog of new claims held by the Child Support Agency. [30038]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty, dated 29 November 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his latest estimate is of the backlog of new claims held by the Child Support Agency.

The information requested can be found in Table 2 of the CSA Quarterly Statistical Supplement which was published on the Departments website on 27th October. A copy of this table is attached as an annex to this letter.

I hope you find this useful.

CSA Table 2: New application intake, clearances and work on hand

Number and percentage

					2005				
CSA intake and clearances—scheme to date	*January*	*February*	*March*	*April*	*May*	*June*	*July*	*August*	*September*
New Scheme									
Intake	557,000	582,000	608,000	632,000	657,000	682,000	708,000	731,000	755,000
Cases Cleared	298,000	318,000	342,000	366,000	393,000	419,000	444,000	466,000	494,000
Not progressed to calculation and schedule set up	155,000	166,000	180,000	195,000	213,000	229,000	245,000	258,000	276,000
of which:									
Closed	129,000	138,000	150,000	163,000	180,000	195,000	208,000	220,000	236,000
Good Cause	8,000	8,000	9,000	9,000	10,000	11,000	11,000	12,000	12,000
Reduced Benefit Decision	5,000	6,000	6,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	8,000	8,000	9,000

CSA Table 2: New application intake, clearances and work on hand

Number and percentage

CSA intake and clearances—scheme to date	*January*	*February*	*March*	*April*	*May*	*June*	*July*	*August*	*September*
					2005				
Other	13,000	14,000	15,000	15,000	16,000	17,000	18,000	19,000	19,000
Calculated and schedule set up	143,000	152,000	162,000	171,000	180,000	190,000	199,000	209,000	219,000
of which:									
Subsequently closed	6,000	7,000	7,000	7,000	8,000	8,000	8,000	9,000	9,000
Initially Nil Calculated	21,000	23,000	24,000	26,000	28,000	29,000	31,000	33,000	34,000
Initially Maintenance Direct	10,000	12,000	13,000	15,000	16,000	18,000	19,000	21,000	23,000
Initially Collection Service	105,000	111,000	117,000	123,000	129,000	135,000	141,000	146,000	153,000
of which:									
One or more payments received	82,000	86,000	93,000	98,000	104,000	109,000	115,000	121,000	126,000
Awaiting payment	24,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	25,000	26,000	26,000	26,000
Uncleared applications	259,000	264,000	266,000	266,000	265,000	263,000	263,000	264,000	261,000
of which:									
Prior to calculation	236,000	241,000	242,000	242,000	240,000	238,000	238,000	238,000	234,000
Calculated, awaiting schedule set up	23,000	24,000	24,000	24,000	25,000	25,000	26,000	26,000	27,000
Old Scheme									
Outstanding applications	103,000	92,000	87,000	86,000	82,000	78,000	76,000	75,000	73,000
Percentage cases for whom maintenance is due who have made one or more payments via collection service, or had an initial maintenance direct arrangement in place.	66	67	68	70	71	71	72	73	74
Percentage cases who have been charged via the collection service and for whom one or more payments received	77	78	79	80	81	81	82	82	83
Percentage of clearances which result in a initial calculation and schedule set up	48	48	47	47	46	45	45	45	44

Notes:

1. A case is defined as cleared if a maintenance calculation has been carried out and a payment arrangement between the parent with care and the non resident parent is in place; a case has been identified as claiming Good Cause or is subject to a Reduced Benefit Decision; or the application is identified as being a change of circumstances on an existing case; or the case has been closed.
2. Figures exclude new scheme cases which have been progressed and cleared clerically. This is because it is not possible to determine how many clerically progressed cases are still included in the Agency's work in progress, or were originally included in the intake figures.
3. New scheme uncleared figures include cases transferred from Jobcentre Plus which are awaiting processing and input to the main CS2 computer system (some 81,000 cases). These figures may be subject to revision in future issues of these tables.
4. Percentage cases for whom maintenance is due who have made one or more payments via collection service, or had an initial maintenance direct arrangement in place is arrived at by summing number of cases receiving payment via collection service or on maintenance direct and expressing as a percentage of sum of collection service cases, those on maintenance direct and those with a calculation and no charging schedule.
5. Volumes are rounded to the nearest thousand, and percentages to nearest whole per cent.
6. Robust data from the new IT system (CS2) covering the period March 2003-December 2004 is not currently available, and is under development.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the average number of Child Support Agency staff who deal with each case brought to the agency by parents with care. [30042]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty, dated 29 November 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the average number of Child Support Agency staff who deal with each case brought to the Agency by parents with care.

I am unable to answer this question as we do not record information on the numbers of staff who deal with each case.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the compliance rate for the self-employed in cases with the Child Support Agency. [30065]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty, dated 29 November 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made for the compliance rate for the self-employed in cases with the Child Support Agency.

In September 2005, the case compliance rate for collection service cases in which non-resident parent was classified as self-employed was 63%. This compares to an overall Agency case compliance rate of 70%.

A case is defined as case compliant if it was open at the end of the reporting period, and had paid all or part of any maintenance that was due (either regular or arrears) via the collection service over the preceding quarter.

Additionally, the Agency measures cash compliance, which is the total amount of maintenance received via the collection service over any three month period as a percentage of the total amount charged (both regular maintenance and arrears). In September 2005, the cash compliance rate for cases in which non resident parent was classified as self-employed was 60%. This compares to an overall Agency cash compliance rate of 68%.

These figures for self-employed reflect the status of the non-resident parent currently held on the system as at the last intervention by the Agency. This will not necessarily reflect the current status of the non-resident parent if the Agency has not been informed of, or not yet actioned, a change of circumstances.

I hope you find this helpful.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what definition he uses of *(a)* full compliance and *(b)* partial compliance in Child Support Agency statistics; and whether the definition has changed in the last five years. [30067]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty, dated 29 November 2005:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what definition he uses of *(a)* full compliance and *(b)* partial compliance with the Child Support Agency and whether the definition for statistical purposes has changed in the last five

A case is defined as compliant if maintenance was due via the collection service (either regular maintenance and/or arrears) in the preceding quarter, the case was open at the end of that quarter, and any payment was received during the period.

A case is considered to be fully compliant if the amount of maintenance received over the reporting period is greater than or equal to the amount charged, and partially compliant if a maintenance payment is received that is less than the amount due.

The above definitions, for statistical purposes, have not changed over the last five years.

I hope you find this useful.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) if he will break down the Child Support Agency's compliance figures by the income band of the non-resident parent for all Scottish claims; [31123]

(2) what proportion of Scottish claims under the Child Support Agency old scheme have been reassessed in the last three years; [31127]

(3) how many changes of circumstance have been reported by non-resident parents in Scotland on the *(a)* old and *(b)* new Child Support Agency scheme in each month of the last three years; [31133]

(4) what estimate he has made of the compliance rate for the self-employed in cases with the Child Support Agency in Scotland. [31134]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information requested is not available.

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when Tina Smith, a constituent of the hon. Member for Sittingbourne and Sheppey, will receive the sum agreed to be owed to her by the Child Support Agency. [31480]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Mike Isaac, dated 29 November 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive. I am replying on behalf of Stephen Geraghty as Director of Parliamentary Business.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when Tina Smith, a constituent of the honourable Member of Sittingbourne and Sheppey will receive the sum agreed as owed to her by the Child Support Agency.

As details about individual cases are confidential I have written to you separately about this case.

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on his plans for reform of the Child Support Agency. [33186]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Child Support Agency's chief executive, Stephen Geraghty, is currently undertaking a root and branch review of the agency. He will report to Ministers and we will make announcements shortly.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many workarounds are Child Support Agency staff currently having to use in order to process a child support application on the CS2 IT system. [18788]

Mr. Plaskitt: There are procedural interventions or workarounds within the online procedures for many parts of the business process. But they are not relevant for all types of cases.

In a typical case, a caseworker might encounter between one and four workarounds in progressing the case to first payment. This depends on its complexity and the extent to which it is linked to an existing case or cases.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the cost of introducing a disregard of all Child Support Agency payments in assessing benefit entitlement; and if he will make a statement. [20162]

Mr. Plaskitt: The estimated cost of disregarding all Child Support payments, including those not arranged through the Child Support Agency, in assessing benefit entitlement is £230 million. This includes a full disregard in income support, housing benefit and council tax benefit and is based upon the current number of benefit units who are in receipt of Child Support payments.

Council Tax

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when pensioners in Coventry, South will receive their financial support for council tax bills due for 2005. [32323]

Mr. Timms: The £200 payment to help with council tax bills is being issued with the winter fuel payment. Payments commenced in early November and will continue until Christmas. Eligible people who do not receive a winter fuel payment will need to claim and all claims must be received by 30 March 2006.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost of administering the appeals system for housing benefit was in each year since 1997. [5486]

Mrs. McGuire: This is a matter for Christina Townsend, chief executive of the Appeals Service. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Christina Townsend to Mr. Paul Goodman dated 29 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question regarding what the cost of administering the appeals system for Housing Benefit was in each year since 1997. As the Appeals Service only assumed responsibility for Housing Benefit appeals from July 2001, I am unable to supply figures prior to that date.

As the cost of processing appeals does not vary significantly between the different types of appeals, our accounting records do not analyse our costs by different appeal type. The best indication I can, therefore, give of the cost of administering the appeals system for Housing Benefit, is by providing on a pro-rata basis the costs of the Appeals Service to the proportion of Housing Benefit appeals.

On this basis, the calculated costs for administering Housing Benefit appeals since the above date are as follows;

	Cost (£)
2001–02	879,786
2002–03	2,102,310
2003–04	2,379,699

The rise in costs reflects the increase in the number of Housing Benefit appeals being handled by the Appeals Service, which has risen from 3,963 in 2001/2 to 9,793 in 2003/4.

Pension Service

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many calls made to the Pension Service *(a)* met an engaged tone, *(b)* were received and *(c)* were handled by an adviser during September, broken down by call centre; and what area is served by each call centre. [33062]

Mr. Timms: The administration of the Pension Service is a matter for the chief executive, Ms Alexis Cleveland. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Alexis Cleveland, dated 29 November 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning how many calls made to the Pension Service have *(a)* met an engaged tone *(b)* been received and *(c)* been handled by an adviser during September broken down by call centre; and if he will provide details of the area served by each call centre. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of The Pension Service.

During September 2005, 1,036,547 calls were received by The Pension Service and 986,811 were answered by agents, equating to 95.2% of total calls received.

Of these calls received only 3,138 (0.3%) were blocked (attempted calls receiving an engaged tone or message during this period).

The table below shows the number of calls received, calls answered and calls blocked in September 2005 for all Regional Pension Centres and the Pension Credit Application Line and shows the area served by each call centre. In addition I am now also able to supply details for the other telephone lines offered by the Pension Service.

You will see that almost all the blocked calls occurred in our International Pension Centre. The telephony system in this centre is being upgraded, and since September the number of lines available to customers has been increased.

Breakdown by pension centre	*Attempted calls receiving an engaged tone or message (a)*	*Received calls (b)*	*Calls answered (c)*	*Area served*
Bath	0	41,879	40,597	Avon, Gloucestershire, Wiltshire, Dorset, Somerset and S. Devon
Birmingham	0	30,420	29,267	Birmingham, Warwickshire, Coventry and Staffordshire.
Blackpool	0	18,813	17,854	Shropshire, parts of Surrey, Brighton and Eastbourne
Burnley	0	26,850	25,416	North Lancashire, Cumbria and parts of Essex (incl. Colchester and Southend)
Cwmbran	5	29,870	28,532	Worthing, Hampshire, Buckinghamshire, Oxfordshire, Berkshire and parts of Surrey
Dearne Valley	0	37,229	36,241	West Yorkshire, South Yorkshire and Nottingham
Dundee	0	46,367	45,241	East of Scotland and Scottish Highlands. Humberside and East Yorkshire.
Leicester	0	22,330	21,032	Lincolnshire, Leicestershire and Northamptonshire and parts of Derbyshire
London Pension Centre (Glasgow)	0	22,946	21,579	Inner city London (incl. Harrow, Ealing and Hackney)
London Pension Centre (Newcastle)	0	50,840	47,937	London (incl. Tottenham, Ilford, Fulham, Romford) and parts of Surrey
Motherwell	0	41,578	39,649	West of Scotland and Kent.
Norwich Baltic	0	13,215	12,601	Norwich.
Norwich Kingfisher	0	8,783	8,346	Parts of Essex including Basildon and Harlow.
Pension Credit Application Line	0	107,418	102,101	National
Seaham	0	31,113	29,846	Tyne and Wear, Bradford.
Stockport	0	44,456	40,901	Manchester, Fylde Coast, Cheshire, and parts of Derbyshire
Stockton	0	18,101	17,448	Teeside, Durham, Northumberland. Grimsby.
Swansea	0	48,029	45,141	Wales, Cornwall and N. Devon
Walsall	0	21,660	20,284	Walsall and Wolverhampton. Herefordshire and Worcestershire
Warrington	0	37,234	35,262	Merseyside, Wigan, Suffolk, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire.
International Pension Centre	3,131	45,606	41,950	International (Customers living outside GB)
Retirement Pension Tele Claims	0	39,367	37,656	National
Pensions Direct	1	72,961	72,186	National

Breakdown by pension centre	Attempted calls receiving an engaged tone or message (a)	Received calls (b)	Calls answered (c)	Area served
Pensioners Information Order line	0	7,958	7,182	National
Pensioners Guide Order line	0	8,243	7,180	National
Deficiency Notices Helpline	0	20,577	19,433	National
RP Forecasting Team	1	106,888	100,529	National
Winter Fuel Helpline	0	35,816	35,420	National
Total	3138	1,036,547	986,811	—

I hope this information is helpful.

Welfare Reform/Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to his oral statement on welfare reform and *incapacity benefit* of 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1417, where and when the hon. Member for Sutton and Cheam made the remarks to which he refers. [33208]

Mr. Hutton: My recollection was that the hon. Member made the remarks during the "Health Question Time" session in which he and I participated, at the Royal College of Nursing Congress on 25 April 2005.

On checking the record of that debate, I accept that the hon. Member referred to the retirement age of existing members of public sector pension schemes.

Winter Fuel Allowance

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the £200 one-off payment this winter with the winter fuel allowance will be *(a)* means-tested and *(b)* paid to pensioners receiving 100 per cent. council tax benefit. [33172]

Mr. Timms: The £200 payment is intended to assist older people who pay at least part of their council tax—that is, people who do not qualify for 100 per cent. council tax benefit. It is paid to eligible people who are not receiving the guarantee credit element of pension credit. It is a tax free lump sum payment that will not affect any state pension or benefit a person may get including council tax benefit, housing benefit and pension credit.

People in receipt of the guarantee credit element of pension credit, who are entitled to the maximum help available through council tax benefit, are not entitled to the £200 payment.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol Sales

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on progress in working with alcohol retailers and producers to agree and implement minimum standards for socially responsible promotion and retailing of alcohol products. [26661]

Paul Goggins: We are taking forward a comprehensive alcohol harm reduction programme that will tackle a range of alcohol harms, including crime, and is being implemented across government. As part of this, we have been working closely with the alcohol industry to develop a principles and standards document that will help retailers and producers to prevent sales to under-age children and drunks, put an end to irresponsible drinks promotions and put in place end of evening dispersal policies to help drinkers get home safely and quickly.

The document was published on 18 November, and we will continue to work with the industry to ensure rapid implementation.

Antisocial Behaviour

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to tackle antisocial behaviour in Bexhill-on-Sea. [31540]

Hazel Blears: Dealing with antisocial behaviour is a priority for the Safer Rother Partnership; the partnership was the first Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) in the area to recruit a dedicated worker to support young people who are at risk of an antisocial behavioural order (ASBO) or acceptable behaviour contract (ABC) and those who have an ASBO or ABC to reduce the incidence of breaches. This worker works with all the agencies through a specific Joint Information Sharing Group that meets on a monthly basis to identify young people at risk of or involved in antisocial behaviour and/or criminal activity. This group identifies and carries out multi-agency work and diversionary interventions. Six ABCs and six ASBOs have been issued in Bexhill to date.

In addition, there have been joint operations with Sussex police and Trading Standards to reduce the supply and availability of alcohol to young people within the Bexhill area. This operation successfully reduced violent crime by 24 per cent. over the summer and is now operating over the Christmas and new year period.

Three dispersal orders have operated across Bexhill over the last year which have been well received by local residents and businesses and reduced ASB in that area.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been issued to citizens living in Bexhill-on-Sea. [31541]

Hazel Blears: Data on antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) are not available below local authority area (LAA) level. A table is available on the crime reduction website at www.crimereduction.gov.uk giving the number of ASBOs issued in England and Wales where restrictions have been imposed in LAAs.

Appeals (Foreign Evidence)

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reasons evidence obtained in another EU country and used to convict a person in a British court cannot be re-examined on appeal. [30012]

Fiona Mactaggart: We are not aware of any rule to this effect. Restrictions on the use of evidence obtained abroad are found in section 9 of the Crime (International Co-operation) Act 2003. Section 9(2) says that evidence can be used only for the purposes for which it was obtained. A request should normally ask for evidence to be used for investigation, trial and any subsequent judicial proceedings (including of course an appeal). If that is done then the evidence can be used for the appeal. It is conceivable that a deficient letter of request might mention only the initial trial, in which case it might be insufficient to allow for the evidence to be used at an appeal. If this occurred, it could be rectified by sending a second letter or request for the purposes of the appeal.

Section 9(3) requires that the evidence be returned once it is no longer required. If evidence has been returned, or if it consisted of live witnesses, then a further letter of request may again be necessary for the purposes of the appeal.

Asylum Seekers

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people arrived in the UK and claimed asylum in each quarter since 1 January; and how many of the initial decisions on the applications were *(a)* refused asylum, *(b)* granted asylum, *(c)* granted humanitarian protection and *(d)* granted discretionary leave to remain. [32816]

Mr. McNulty: There were 7,015 asylum applications (excluding dependants) in Q1 2005, 6,220 in Q2 and 6,315 in Q3. Information on initial decisions on these applications is unavailable and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

However, initial decisions on asylum applications and their outcomes made in the first three quarters of 2005 are available in the Q3 2005 Asylum Bulletin published on 22 November 2005 on the Home Office research development and statistics directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1 .html.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his policy on deportations of failed asylum-seekers to Zimbabwe. [21820]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 353W to the hon. Member for Wantage (Mr. Vaizey).

Aviation Security

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females have been (i) charged with and (ii) convicted of offences under sections (A) 21A, (B) 21B, (C) 21C, (D) 21D and (E) 21E of the Aviation Security Act 1982 in each year since 1993. [29296]

Fiona Mactaggart: Statistics on the number of persons charged with a crime are not centrally collected.

Data collected on the Home Office Court Proceedings database for offences under these sections of the Aviation Act 1982 form part of a miscellaneous group, which cannot be separately identified.

Basic Command Units

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which local authority wards are within each basic command unit in England and Wales. [17500]

Hazel Blears: In 2004 the research, development and statistics department (RDS) at the Home Office compiled a table detailing which local authority wards comprised each basic command unit in England and Wales. The majority of this information is still accurate and is available in the Library. Basic command unit and Ward boundaries are subject to change and in the absence of any current requirement for such data this table has not been updated. Any such updating could be undertaken only at disproportionate cost.

Bruche Police Training Centre

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to ensure that local people are involved in any decision on the future of the former police training centre at Bruche. [16891]

Hazel Blears: It is not yet possible to begin consultations with the local community because we do not yet know what options for use of the site might emerge for discussion. This will depend largely on who takes an interest in purchasing the site after it closes in May 2006.

Once this becomes clearer, we are very keen to work closely with Centrex to ensure an effective and early dialogue with local people over the future use of the sites at Bruche, Cwmbran and Ashford. Of course, any change in the use of sites will require planning permission and local authorities will need to involve local people in consultation over their decisions on any application. We would certainly welcome the involvement in all such discussions and consultations of the hon. Members representing communities affected by closure of Centrex sites.

Child Deaths (Prisons)

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many child deaths there have been in penal custody in each year since 1997. [30453]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is given in the table:

Deaths of young people under 18 in penal custody

	Number of deaths
1997	0
1998	3
1999	2
2000	3
2001	3
2002	2
2003	0

Deaths of young people under 18 in penal custody

	Number of deaths
2004	2
2005	2
Total	17

Child Pornography

Judy Mallaber: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will list the *(a)* internet service providers and *(b)* mobile phone companies who are using their technology to block access to child pornography websites; [21387]

(2) what action his Department is taking to encourage *(a)* internet service providers and *(b)* mobile phone companies to block customers' access to child pornography websites following the Prime Minister's statement of 21 July 2004, *Official Report*, column 327. [21733]

Paul Goggins: We are working closely with the UK Internet Service Provider (ISP) industry, mobile operators and the Internet Watch Foundation as they pioneer solutions that will block their customers' requests to access websites that include child abuse images. On 6 September, the DTI Minister with responsibility for e-commerce, my right hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, South and Penarth (Alun Michael), and I had a meeting with CEOs, or their representatives, from all the large ISPs and mobile phone operators. Until recently blocking sites was not a feasible option, but with improvements in technology it is now, and we welcome the efforts and commitment of major players in the industry in developing blocking solutions. All the major fixed and mobile ISPs either have solutions in place, or are committed to having them in place the near future. Given the sensitivity around this issue, not all companies wish to be named. Government will continue to work with the industry to restrict access to child abuse images.

Coltsfoot Consultants Ltd

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department plans to meet representatives of Coltsfoot Consultants Ltd.; and if he will make a statement. [31291]

Paul Goggins: I am not aware of any existing plans from officials at the Home Office to meet representatives of Coltsfoot Consultants Ltd.

Commission for Integration

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the membership of the Commission for Integration is expected to be decided; and when the Commission is expected to hold its first meeting. [29926]

Paul Goggins: The Home Secretary wrote to faith leaders and other key stakeholders on 21 September inviting views on the terms of reference and membership of the Commission. These views are currently being considered as part of our wider discussions and we hope to make an announcement about the Commission's membership and terms of reference before the end of the calendar year. The date for the first meeting will follow thereafter.

Community Support Officers

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average salary paid to a community support officer is in 2005–06. [30793]

Hazel Blears: The salary and allowances of a community support officer are determined within each police force by the chief officer of that force and the police authority. We estimate that the average payment of salary and allowances this year is about £20,100.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police community support officers have enlisted in Gravesham since 1 January 2000; and how many of these remain in service. [29899]

Hazel Blears: Figures for the Gravesham district are not collected centrally.

Conviction Rates

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of *(a)* burglaries and *(b)* crimes against individuals resulted in a conviction in each year since 1997; and what percentage resulted in custodial sentences. [30570]

Hazel Blears: The table shows the number of convictions for burglary and the number resulting in a custodial sentence expressed as a percentage of the number of burglaries recorded, in each year since 1997. Neither the recorded crime data nor the court proceedings data enable offences against individuals to be separately identified from offences against businesses and organisations in all cases.

Number of burglary offences recorded by the police, offenders convicted of burglary at all courts and sentenced to immediate custody: England and Wales 1993 to 2004–05

Financial years from 1998–99 onwards	*Number of burglary offences recorded by the police*[2]	*Calendar years*	*Defendants convicted of burglary at all courts*[1]		*Defendants sentenced to immediate custody for burglary*[1]	
			Number	*Percentage of recorded offences*	*Number*	*Percentage of recorded offences*
1993	1,369,584	1993	40,272	2.9	11,899	0.9
1994	1,256,682	1994	37,952	3.0	13,036	1.0
1995	1,239,484	1995	35,346	2.9	13,497	1.1
1996	1,164,583	1996	32,194	2.8	13,503	1.2
1997	1,015,075	1997	31,703	3.1	14,338	1.4
1998–99[2]	953,184	1998	30,769	3.2	14,547	1.5
1999–2000	906,468	1999	29,261	3.2	14,345	1.6
2000–01	836,027	2000	26,222	3.1	13,677	1.6

Number of burglary offences recorded by the police, offenders convicted of burglary at all courts and sentenced to immediate custody: England and Wales 1993 to 2004–05

Financial years from 1998–99 onwards	Number of burglary offences recorded by the police[2]	Calendar years	Defendants convicted of burglary at all courts[3]		Defendants sentenced to immediate custody for burglary[1]	
			Number	Percentage of recorded offences	Number	Percentage of recorded offences
2001–02	878,509	2001	24,802	2.8	12,476	1.4
2002–03[3]	888,827	2002	26,691	3.0	13,350	1.5
2003–04	818,642	2003	25,726	3.1	11,820	1.4
2004–05	679,973	2004	24,252	3.6	10,814	1.6

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] The number of crimes recorded using the expanded coverage and rules which came into effect on 1 April 1998.
[3] The recorded crime figured from 2002–03 onwards take account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.
Source:
RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will answer the letter to him dated 22 September from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to *(a)* Mr. Mohammed Ashraf and *(b)* Ms Juliet Kufvor. [27085]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The information is as follows:

(a) I replied to my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton about Mr. Mohammed Ashraf on 24 November.

(b) I replied to my right hon. Friend the Member for Manchester, Gorton about Ms Juliet Kufour on 11 November.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister for the Criminal Justice System and Offender Management will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, of 24 August on behalf of Serge Paul and West Midlands Prison Visiting Transport Service.[29151]

Fiona Mactaggart: My noble Friend Baroness Patricia Scotland of Asthal replied to my right hon. Friend on 21 November enclosing a copy of her reply to Mr. Paul dated 9 September.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter of 6 July from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, (acknowledged on 25 July ref B15446/5) on Home Office case reference K1025532 regarding Mr. Karenzada. [32274]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) wrote to my right hon. Friend on 22 November 2005.

Crime Reduction

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what measures have been introduced since 2001 to reduce crime against small businesses in *(a)* North West Leicestershire and *(b)* England; [31362]

(2) what steps are being taken to reduce the number of crimes committed against small businesses. [31377]

Hazel Blears: In 2002 the Government provided North West Leicestershire with over 200,000 for crime reduction measures. This was used to set up the 'Retail Radio' system in Coalville and Ashby to provide immediate intelligence on business crime such as shoplifting, crime in a neighbouring shop and violence against a shopkeeper. The funding was also used to set up the PubWatch scheme in the same areas.

More widely, in 2001 £15 million was given to the Small Retailers in Deprived Areas initiative (SRDA). Over the next three years, the SRDA helped 12,500 small businesses in the most deprived areas to improve security and introduce other crime prevention measures.

In January 2004, the Home Office established a Small Business Forum with members from a wide range of organisations to hear at first hand the particular crime problems small and medium sized enterprises face, and to develop and implement practical and effective measures to reduce those crimes.

Earlier this year we also provided nearly £1 million to the Action Against Business Crime Group to help set up local business crime partnerships in town and shopping centres across England and Wales.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what methods his Department uses to record crimes against small businesses. [31394]

Hazel Blears: The Home Office publishes annual total crime statistics recorded by the police in England and Wales for the following offences specifically relating to business crime; robbery of business property, theft by an employee, theft from shops, and theft of an automatic machine or meter.

However we are aware that, given the complexity and range of crimes experienced by the business sector, no one method of collecting data will provide a sufficiently complete picture. We are therefore considering how both police and survey data collection can be refined and extended to give us a more accurate and comprehensive overview of the crimes experienced by businesses.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the crime reduction funding streams available in each of the last five years. [26624]

Hazel Blears: The table shows the crime reduction funding streams that were allocated for national and local activities, by year, during the period in question. A number of national activities for various crime types were funded through general crime reduction grants.

As outlined in the 2004 National Audit Report on the Crime Reduction programme, the Home Office has reduced the bureaucratic burden on Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships by rationalising the number of funding streams and the associated monitoring procedures, from fourteen in 2003/04 to three main funds in 2005/06, with just a handful of minor budgets channelled through the Government Offices.

That progress will continue over the coming months, particularly with the roll out nationally of the Safer Stronger Communities Fund, which will combine a number of Home Office and Office of the Deputy Prime Minister funding streams into a single fund.

That progress will continue over the coming months, particularly with the roll out nationally of the Safer Stronger Communities Fund, which will combine a number of Home Office and Office of the Deputy Prime Minister funding streams into a single fund.

	Crime reduction funding streams
2001/02	Crime Reduction Programme (CRP), including: CCTV; youth inclusion; drug arrest referrals; toolkits; Splash; Rape Crisis Federation; Suzy Lamplugh Trust; Treatment of Offenders; On Track; Schools; Violence Against Women (VAW); Neighbourhood Wardens; Reducing Burglary Initiative (RBI); Targeted Policing Initiative (TPI); Locks for Pensioners; Vehicle Crime; Prostitution; Sentencing; Design Against Crime; CCTV; Communities Against Drugs (CAD); Partnership Development Fund (PDF); Small Retailers in Deprived Areas (SRDA); DAT Development Fund; CAD for DATs; Street Crime.
2002/03	Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) (including CCTV and constituent elements named above); Communities Against Drugs (CAD); Partnership Development Fund (PDF); Small Retailers 'n Deprived Areas (SRDA); Safer Communities Initiative (SCI); Street Crime Initiative; DAT Development Fund; CAD for DATs.
2003/04	Building Safer Communities Fund (BSCF); Home Office Regional Directors' allocation (HORDs fund); Basic Command Unit (BCU) Fund; Vehicle crime; Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator grant; Business crime; Violence Against Women; Youth Crime; Voluntary Sector funding; Gun crime; DAT Development Fund; CAD for DATs; Small Retailers in Deprived Areas (SRDA); Capacity Building Fund.
2004/05	Building Safer Communities Fund (BSCF); Home Office Regional Directors' allocation (HORDs fund); Basic Command Unit (BCU) Fund; Capacity Building Fund; Youth Crime; Business Crime; Voluntary Sector; Burglary; Vehicle Crime; Violent crime (including Domestic Violence and DV Bill costs).
2005/06	Building Safer Communities Fund (BSCF); Home Office Regional Directors' Allocation; Basic Command Unit (BCU) Fund; Domestic Violence Tackling Violent Crime Programme; Business Crime Advisers Grant; Street Crime grant; Business crime; Prolific offenders; Youth crime

Crime Statistics

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average number of crimes committed per day was in each police force area in the last year for which figures are available. [29194]

Hazel Blears: The available data relate to the number of crimes recorded by the police in a year. The latest information was published in table 6.02 of Home Office Statistical Bulletin number 11/05, "Crime in England and Wales 2004–05". This can be found on the following website:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/index.htm.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the level of detection of burglaries was in each of the last eight years. [30572]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is given in the tables.

Detection rates for offences of burglary recorded by the police in England and Wales: 1997 to 2001–02

Period	*Percentage detected*
1997	23
1998–99[1]	19
1999–2000	13
2000–01	12
2001–02	12

[1] Expanded coverage and revised counting rules came into effect on 1 April 1998

Note:
The data in this table is prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Detection rates for offences of burglary recorded by the police in England and Wales: 2002–03 to 2004–05

Period	*Percentage detected*
2002–03	12
2003–04	13
2004–05	13

Note:
The data in this table takes account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Custody Detention Suites

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what plans he has to extend the installation of lifesigns monitoring equipment in custody detention suites; what each unit costs; and if he will make a statement; [30932]

(2) what guidance he has issued regarding the appropriate use of lifesigns monitoring equipment in custody suites; and if he will make a statement. [30933]

Fiona Mactaggart: Lifesigns monitoring equipment was trialled in HMP Ashwell in 2003 by the Police Scientific Development Branch of the Home Office, and the results were sent to all chief officers in December 2003. However, no guidance was issued as the decision to install such equipment in custody suites and the negotiations for its costs are matters for individual chief officers, and figures are not collated centrally.

Deepcut Barracks

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost was of the Devon and Cornwall police inquiry into Surrey police's investigation into the deaths at the Deepcut Barracks; and if he will make a statement. [32804]

Hazel Blears: The chief constable of the Devon and Cornwall police is responsible for the day to day operational management of the force and the deployment of resources. I will ensure that the chief constable receives a copy of the question and replies to you directly. Copies of the letter containing Devon and Cornwall police's response will be placed in the House Libraries.

Departmental Websites

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Hoine Department if he will take steps to ensure the Department's websites attain the W3C AAA standard of accessibility for people with visual and other disabilities; and if he will set a target date for this standard to be achieved by. [30967]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Current Cabinet Office guidelines recommend that Government websites adhere to a minimum of W3C WAI A standard (http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/e-government/resources/handbook/html/2-4.asp#2.4.3). However, the Home Office realises and understands that although this leads to websites that are acceptable to impaired users, their experience of the site is still sub-standard. As such we are committed to bringing all of our websites up to at least AA level.

The core Home Office family of websites (sites with homeoffice.gov.uk addresses) has recently been redeveloped to improve the experience of all users. Before launch the sites were independently audited for their accessibility compliance and met most requirements up to AAA standard. Following final adjustments being made at present the sites will be resubmitted to RNIB for their 'See it Right' accreditation. They will then meet A, AA and most AAA criteria. This level will be met by Christmas 2005 with RNIB accreditation following in early 2006.

All new websites built by the Department will either fit into the core set of sites and will therefore inherit their standards or will be objectively audited to ensure compliance.

All new websites built by the department will either fit into the core set of sites and will therefore inherit their standards or will be objectively audited to ensure compliance.

Directors' Allocation Fund

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of his Department's Directors' Allocation Fund funding stream from the Government office for London was made available to the London borough of Croydon in 2004–05. [32278]

Hazel Blears: In 2004–05, one project in Croydon was allocated funding under the Home Office Regional Directors' Allocation. A sum of £55,000 (out of the total allocation of around £1.2 million) was made available for the Croydon Family Justice Centre. The Centre enhances services to family violence, domestic violence and elder abuse victims in South London. It duplicates the San Diego Justice Centre, 'International Model of Excellence,' and will also help to ensure the success of the new Croydon Domestic Violence Integrated Court.

Domestic Burglar Alarms

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of domestic burglar alarms activated in each police force area in England in each of the last five years; and how many of these were found to be genuine alarms indicating a crime in progress. [31297]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Domestic Violence

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many victims of domestic abuse were of *(a)* British, *(b)* Indian, *(c)* Pakistani, *(d)* Bangladeshi, *(e)* North American, *(f)* South American, *(g)* Chinese and *(h)* African origin in each of the past 10 years for which figures are available; and how many were (i) married, (ii) co-habiting and (iii) single in each case. [31385]

Fiona Mactaggart: The British Crime Survey (BCS) routinely provides information on the number of incidents of domestic violence but not on the actual number of victims. The number of incidents is not broken down by nationality or marital status.

The 2004–05 BCS assessed the prevalence risk of domestic violence by marital status. The risk of victimisation (i.e. the percentage of people who had been victims of domestic violence once or more) was 0.2 per cent. among married people, 0.6 per cent. among cohabiting people and 0.8 per cent. among single people.

BCS incidents of domestic violence, 1995 to 2004–05, England and Wales

	Number (thousand)
1995	989
1997	814
1999	775
2001–02 ints	626
2002–03 ints	506
2003–04 ints	447
2004–05 ints	401

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many recorded incidents of domestic violence there were in West Mercia in each of the last five years. [30590]

Hazel Blears: From the information collected centrally on recorded crime, it is not possible to identify cases of domestic violence. Such offences are not specifically defined by statute and details of the individual circumstances of offences are not collected.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in how many incidents of domestic violence reported in (i) England, (ii) the Tees Valley and (iii) Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland in each year since 1997 the perpetrator was *(a)* male and *(b)* female. [31433]

Hazel Blears: From the information collected centrally on recorded crime, it is not possible to identify cases of domestic violence. Such offences are not specifically defined by statute and details of the individual circumstances of offences are not collected.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women have been prosecuted for domestic violence in each year since 1997 in (i) England, (ii) the Tees Valley and (iii) Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland. [31434]

Fiona Mactaggart: Of all cases identified and flagged as domestic violence by the police and passed to the CPS in Cleveland Local Justice Area, 378 were prosecuted in 2004–05. In the first quarter of 2005–06, there were 151 prosecutions and in the second quarter there were 149 prosecutions. These are collected at Local Justice Area level and cannot be disaggregated further.

In their guidelines on investigating domestic violence, issued in November 2004, the Association of Chief Police Officers advised all forces to identify and flag domestic violence incidents. In April this year, the CPS also began a campaign to encourage police and prosecutors to identify and flag cases. Therefore, there is a likely increase in the number of prosecutions identified as domestic violence from 2004–05 to the first two quarters of 2005–06 due to the embedding of this activity. There are no centrally collected figures prior to 2004–05.

The gender of the persons prosecuted for domestic violence cases is not collected by the CPS.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many recorded incidents of domestic violence there were in Staffordshire in each of the last five years. [32008]

Hazel Blears: From the information collected centrally on recorded crime, it is not possible to identify cases of domestic violence. Such offences are not specifically defined by statute and details of the individual circumstances of offences are not collected.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many domestic violence prosecutions were undertaken in Staffordshire in each of the last five years. [32038]

Fiona Mactaggart: Of all cases identified and flagged as domestic violence by the police and passed to the CPS in Staffordshire, 1,268 were prosecuted in 2004–05. In the first quarter of 2005–06, there were 407 prosecutions and in the second quarter there were 524 prosecutions.

In their guidelines on investigating domestic violence, issued in November 2004, the Association of Chief Police Officers advised all forces to identify and flag domestic violence incidents. In April this year, the CPS also begun a campaign to encourage police and prosecutors to identify and flag cases. Therefore, there is a likely increase in the number of prosecutions identified as domestic violence from 2004–05 to the first two quarters of 2005–06 has been due to the embedding of this activity. There are no centrally collected figures prior to 2004–05.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the nswer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1252W, on domestic violence, when the *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005 results on victimisation will be made available. [32186]

Hazel Blears: The British Crime Survey (BCS) measures victimisation against adults living in private households in England and Wales. Domestic violence is included as part of the survey's core measures of violent crime. The results from the 2004–05 BCS were published on 21 July 2005 in the Home Office Statistical Bulletin 11/05 'Crime in England and Wales 2004–05'. The 2005–06 figures will be published in July 2006.

The BCS also includes a self-completion module of questions on interpersonal violence; this covers domestic violence, sexual assault and stalking. This module was included in the 2004–05 survey, the results from which will be published in spring 2006. A module of questions on interpersonal violence has also been included in the 2005–06 BCS (currently in the field). The results from this module are intended for publication in 2007.

The results from the 2004 Offending, Crime and Justice Survey, which includes general data on victimisation of young people aged 10 to 25, were published on 24 November 2005, in the Home Office Statistical Bulletin 20/05 'Young people and crime: findings from the 2004 Offending, Crime and Justice Survey'. This report did not include domestic violence. The results from the 2005 survey will be published late 2006.

Drugs

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of drug users successfully completed drug treatment in 2004–05. [26660]

Caroline Flint: I have been asked to reply.

Overall, 75 per cent. (120,700) individuals either successfully completed treatment in 2004–05 or were retained in treatment on 31 March 2004.

53 per cent. of clients who were discharged remained in treatment for 12 weeks or more in 2004–05.

The Government is on track to achieve the public service agreement target to

> "increase the participation of problem drug users in drug treatment programmes by 100 per cent. by 2008 and increase year on year the proportion of users successfully sustaining or completing treatment programmes".

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the *(a)* quantity and *(b)* street value of drugs sold in England and Wales in 2005, broken down by type of drug; and if he will make a statement. [23178]

Paul Goggins: The latest estimates of the size of the market for illicit drugs were published by the Home Office in 2001 and refer to 1998. The following table sets out the study's estimate of the quantity and street value of the market for amphetamines, cannabis, cocaine, crack, heroin and ecstasy. Full details of this study (Occasional Paper 74) are available to download at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/drugs1.html

Drug	Quantity	Value (£ million)
Amphetamines (kg)	25,772	257.7
Cannabis (kg)	486,224	1,577.9
Cocaine (kg)	4,582	352.8
Crack (kg)	18,714	1,817.4
Heroin (kg)	31,257	2,313
Ecstasy (tablets)	26,786	294.6

Public Order

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* arrests and *(b)* prosecutions for (i) being drunk and disorderly, (ii) being found drunk on a highway, public place or on licensed premises and (iii) being drunk in or when entering a designated sports event there have been in each police force area in England and Wales, in each year since 1996. [18194]

Hazel Blears: The information requested on arrests is not collected centrally.

Tables 1–3 show the number of prosecutions for (i) being drunk and disorderly, (ii) being found drunk on a highway, public place or on licensed premises and (iii) being drunk in or when entering a designated sports event in each police force area in England and Wales, 1996–2003. Prosecution figures for 2004 will be available at the end of November.

Since April 2004 police in England and Wales have had the power to deal with the first two offences in question by issuing a penalty notice for disorder. Table 4 gives figures for the number of penalty notices issued for being drunk and disorderly and being found drunk on a highway in 2004 by each police force, alongside provisional figures for January to June 2005. issued for being drunk and disorderly and being found drunk on a highway in 2004 by each police force, alongside provisional figures for January to June 2005.

Table 1: Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts for selected offences related to drunkenness England and Wales, 1996–2003[1]

Police force area	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003
Offence: Being found drunk in a highway or other public place, whether a building or not, or on licensed premises								
Statute: Licensing Act 1872 s.12								
Avon and Somerset	41	61	63	92	83	72	84	84
Bedfordshire	22	53	153	94	52	31	20	47
Cambridgeshire	12	36	31	37	44	51	51	71
Cheshire	65	69	63	48	34	18	23	24
Cleveland	7	4	13	.	2	3	2	3
Cumbria	18	38	36	22	13	17	15	8
Derbyshire	18	38	42	46	64	60	52	40
Devon and Cornwall	223	284	300	331	249	215	228	185
Dorset	14	12	14	18	28	12	12	15
Durham	8	23	39	38	22	45	20	6
Essex	110	227	209	169	137	114	52	12
Gloucestershire	24	53	90	56	34	35	34	20
Greater Manchester	7	7	14	9	3	8	4	10
Hampshire	235	346	481	346	232	164	127	71
Hertfordshire	30	20	47	65	42	31	18	18
Humberside	5	11	12	14	6	3	4	5
Kent	98	155	145	145	148	142	154	153
Lancashire	150	213	213	188	248	182	177	69
Leicestershire	—	—	1	6	4	—	2	—
Lincolnshire	13	34	49	26	25	11	15	10
London[2]	170	258	287	245	166	305	185	141
Merseyside	47	44	46	38	34	39	29	18
Norfolk	55	65	65	68	67	58	57	72
North Yorkshire	40	81	94	85	133	136	143	120
Northamptonshire	6	6	6	6	7	1	9	3
Northumbria	9	21	28	41	23	10	12	9
Nottinghamshire	7	1	8	6	3	10	9	12
South Yorkshire	36	18	12	21	32	13	8	5
Staffordshire	84	81	70	41	12	17	15	34
Suffolk	80	108	81	97	72	51	61	57
Surrey	44	91	97	108	119	120	81	86
Sussex	232	226	226	130	81	129	102	88
Thames Valley	230	214	246	207	173	144	123	127
Warwickshire	7	8	98	17	9	7	7	6
West Mercia	30	97	64	73	19	22	9	4
West Midlands	27	61	51	29	19	11	7	22
West Yorkshire	29	46	103	67	70	26	34	90
Wiltshire	51	68	73	65	48	59	52	48
Dyfed-Powys	80	92	152	134	138	77	72	78
Gwent	28	21	25	21	25	38	50	25
North Wales	19	17	13	14	7	3	9	7
South Wales	64	113	241	250	251	228	206	218
England and Wales	2,475	3,421	4,101	3,513	2,978	2,718	2,374	2,121

Table 2: Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts for selected offences related to drunkenness—England and Wales, 1996–2003[1]

Police force area	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Offence: Drunk in, or when entering, a designated sports event								
Statute: Sporting Events (Control of Alcohol etc) Act 1985 s.2(2)								
Avon and Somerset	7	6	23	6	5	3	3	9
Bedfordshire	2	15	5	11	9	4	2	2
Cambridgeshire	4	9	6	5	5	8	4	2
Cheshire	10	4	3	2	3	1	2	5
Cleveland	10	9	7	26	4	15	26	14
Cumbria	3	4	1	—	—	—	2	1
Derbyshire	4	2	5	—	5	3	11	4
Devon and Cornwall	2	2	1	2	2	1	1	2
Dorset	3	6	13	3	11	12	8	3
Durham	2	—	—	1	1	3	—	—
Essex	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Gloucestershire	—	—	—	3	7	6	7	1
Greater Manchester	10	9	28	9	13	7	13	11
Hampshire	38	41	15	8	16	16	9	19
Hertfordshire	—	—	1	1	—	2	1	—
Humberside	4	—	—	5	3	5	1	2
Kent	3	2	1	10	3	3	—	—
Lancashire	54	61	33	24	26	26	23	16
Leicestershire	—	—	2	2	3	—	—	4
Lincolnshire	—	—	1	—	—	—	2	1
London[2]	136	198	191	115	73	37	61	72
Merseyside	5	3	9	13	10	9	8	7
Norfolk	39	12	14	7	1	11	10	7
North Yorkshire	15	6	2	3	15	13	4	3
Northamptonshire	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	1
Northumbria	53	102	43	26	20	44	42	44
Nottinghamshire	23	40	34	42	19	26	20	13
South Yorkshire	57	48	20	27	23	41	31	17
Staffordshire	4	3	1	—	—	—	5	2
Suffolk	5	5	5	3	2	7	5	6
Surrey	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sussex	—	1	—	1	3	—	—	—
Thames Valley	15	15	21	6	3	9	3	2
Warwickshire	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
West Mercia	4	2	—	1	2	1	—	1
West Midlands	126	59	52	25	15	55	85	72
West Yorkshire	20	32	33	30	53	68	47	25
Wiltshire	11	12	22	2	18	11	1	1
Dyfed-Powys	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Gwent	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
North Wales	3	2	3	7	5	—	2	4
South Wales	3	2	6	3	2	5	—	3
England and Wales	675	713	601	430	381	452	439	376

Table 3: Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts for selected offences related to drunkenness—England and Wales, 1996–2003[1]

Police force area	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Offence: Being guilty while drunk of disorderly behaviour								
Statute: Criminal Justice Act 1967 s.91								
Avon and Somerset	272	361	374	383	363	399	408	427
Bedfordshire	127	166	314	220	186	187	197	219
Cambridgeshire	55	122	144	159	148	151	154	189
Cheshire	652	586	714	652	590	563	648	652
Cleveland	521	774	707	708	684	621	630	715
Cumbria	680	808	812	802	521	558	514	525
Derbyshire	193	294	286	231	254	292	357	425
Devon and Cornwall	626	888	771	709	704	817	895	672
Dorset	247	272	390	343	406	469	551	520
Durham	396	406	504	491	538	563	541	603
Essex	281	515	490	553	584	513	409	194
Gloucestershire	113	147	200	153	158	164	180	201
Greater Manchester	1,481	1,415	1,307	1,206	1,215	1,067	1,005	965
Hampshire	1,093	1,270	1,393	1,306	1,133	1,072	1,117	977
Hertfordshire	228	296	337	388	381	406	508	449
Humberside	205	250	225	255	234	247	213	213
Kent	499	560	720	865	900	911	928	1,107
Lancashire	1,231	1,618	1,673	1,827	2,165	2,366	2,210	2,180
Leicestershire	17	27	27	37	24	26	26	19
Lincolnshire	181	478	624	584	458	506	528	556
London[2]	1,180	1,475	1,581	1,494	1,262	1,538	2,517	2,536
Merseyside	2,267	2,967	2,940	2,151	1,979	1,926	2,118	2,039
Norfolk	102	108	114	115	131	146	151	183
North Yorkshire	297	342	382	411	459	482	452	512
Northamptonshire	11	26	24	21	29	33	29	25
Northumbria	2,401	3,122	3,567	3,548	3,859	3,516	3,587	3,944
Nottinghamshire	581	563	570	526	482	529	507	501

Table 3: Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts for selected offences related to drunkenness—England and Wales, 1996–2003[1]

Police force area	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
South Yorkshire	1,367	1,186	968	1,148	1,264	1,248	1,271	1,497
Staffordshire	343	320	305	247	330	215	251	343
Suffolk	202	269	212	213	228	267	333	357
Surrey	165	208	208	280	412	473	477	439
Sussex	487	522	512	398	512	631	733	801
Thames Valley	1,123	1,086	1,305	1,161	979	997	979	1,090
Warwickshire	227	309	666	286	228	195	125	162
West Mercia	397	654	574	561	488	543	455	413
West Midlands	712	1,102	846	522	472	437	463	307
West Yorkshire	2,439	2,655	2,764	3,097	2,809	2,101	2,071	2,260
Wiltshire	396	370	426	267	275	262	284	426
Dyfed-Powys	181	200	198	153	145	162	173	223
Gwent	804	748	532	420	360	308	273	207
North Wales	1,090	824	1,006	949	799	839	669	545
South Wales	1,514	1,582	1,583	1,212	1,162	998	802	725
England and Wales	27,384	31,891	33,295	31,052	30,310	29,744	30,739	31,343

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] Includes Metropolitan police and City of London.
Source:
RDS—Office for criminal Justice reform.

Table 4: Number of penalty notices for disorder issued for 'drunk and disorderly' behaviour and being 'drunk on a highway' by police force area, England and Wales, 2004 and January to June 2005[1]

Police force area	*Drunk and disorderly*		*Drunk on a highway*	
	2004	*2005*[1]	*2004*	*2005*[1]
Offence: Being guilty while drunk of disorderly behaviour Statute: Criminal Justice Act 1967 s.91				
Offence: Being found drunk in a highway or other public place, whether a building or not, or on licensed premises Statute: Licensing Act 1872 s.12				
Avon and Somerset	176	145	22	64
Bedfordshire	144	131	13	34
Cambridgeshire	189	123	34	41
Cheshire	409	133	13	10
Cleveland	368	388	2	—
Cumbria	403	339	7	13
Derbyshire	372	243	9	6
Devon and Cornwall	988	658	158	110
Dorset	82	47	2	2
Durham	441	355	17	16
Essex	714	241	24	31
Gloucestershire	282	195	10	12
Greater Manchester	333	398	31	60
Hampshire	1,074	474	73	48
Hertfordshire	208	133	9	10
Humberside	604	330	1	3
Kent	498	670	45	62
Lancashire	2,869	2,128	79	76
Leicestershire	67	38	6	4
Lincolnshire	174	30	7	3
London, City of	32	13	3	6
Merseyside	2,728	1,794	20	33
Metropolitan	4,081	1,422	1,159	610
Norfolk	79	50	34	37
North Yorkshire	373	333	106	74
Northamptonshire	246	282	12	21
Northumbria	126	516	3	7
Nottinghamshire	477	305	8	8
South Yorkshire	1,590	1,049	10	4
Staffordshire	452	209	52	46
Suffolk	267	169	35	18
Surrey	80	130	25	70
Sussex	1,029	662	65	80
Thames Valley	396	122	7	44
Warwickshire	250	75	8	3
West Mercia	141	133	10	16
West Midlands	1,580	627	100	54
West Yorkshire	923	635	105	68
Wiltshire	346	153	63	46
Dyfed-Powys	183	148	37	73
Gwent	127	84	22	6
North Wales	639	452	14	21
South Wales	69	92	37	26
England and Wales	26,609	16,654	2,497	1,976

[1] January/June 2005 provisional data
Source:
RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform, Home office.

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E-Borders Project

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost of the e-Borders project has been to date; and what the total projected cost is. [30802]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The most recent estimates are that e-Borders programme will cost £1,098 million (at present day values) over the period to 2019.

To date the programme has incurred expenditure of £7.8 million resource and £14.9 million capital which is mainly made up of costs for pilot projects such as Project Semaphore and Project Iris.

Environmental Sustainability

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what change there was in water consumption by his Department between 2002 and 31 March 2005. [16189]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The following table shows the changes in annual water consumption from 2002. The departmental water consumption data for key Home Office (non-agency) buildings for 2004–05 is not yet available. The figures relate to key office buildings on the non-prison Home Office estate.

Water consumption in m^3

	Home Office[1]	*HM Prison Service*	*Total*
2002–03	202,520	8,147,572	8,350,092
2003–04	232,019	7,661,276	7,893,295
2004–05	n/a	8,195,722	8,195,722

Consumption in m^3 per person

	Home Office[1]	*HM Prison Service*
2002–03	12.7	—
2003–04	12.4	—
2004–05	n/a	—

n/a = not available.
[1] The figures relate to key buildings only.

Equality and Diversity

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1254W, on equality and diversity, how much was allocated to race equality grants in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [28294]

Paul Goggins: Figures for each of the 10 years 1996–97 to 2005–06 are provided in the table. The figures include all grants paid direct by the Home Office, and those paid by the Commission for Racial Equality which is funded by he Home Office. They are additional to those given in the answer of 3 November 2005.

Home Office expenditure on race equality grants

	£ million
1996–97	10.0
1997–98	10.7
1998–99	15.0
1999–2000	10.5
2000–01	12.6
2001–02	17.5
2002–03	17.5
2003–04	18.7
2004–05	10.0
2005–06[1]	9.4

[1] 2005–06 data are estimated expenditure.

European Foreign Ministers Meeting

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total cost was of policing the European Foreign Ministers conference at the Celtic Manor Hotel in Newport; and what financial contribution his Department made. [26335]

Hazel Blears: I understand from the chief constable of Gwent police that the total projected costs for policing the conference are £3.6 million. This includes total additional policing costs of £3.2 million as well as other consequential policing costs. Gwent police have submitted an application for special police grant as a contribution to the additional costs incurred of policing the conference. This is currently under consideration.

Firearms

Mr. Djanogly: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the summary of the responses to the May 2004 Controls on Firearms review will be published. [26635]

Hazel Blears: We received around 4,500 submissions in response to the consultation and they have all been read and analysed. A summary will be published in due course but we are concentrating at present on the steps needed to protect public safety as included in the Violent Crime Reduction Bill.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many incidents involving firearms occurred in the Essex police force area in each of the last five years. [31395]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is given in the tables.

Table 1 : Offences involving firearms (excluding air weapons) recorded by Essex police, 1999–2000 to 2001–02

	Number of offences
1999–2000	61
2000–01	77
2001–02[1]	98

[1] Figures for some crime categories may have been inflated by some police forces implementing the principles of the National Crime Recording Standard in advance of national implementation.

Table 2 : Offences involving firearms (excluding air weapons) recorded by Essex police, 2002–03 and 2003–04

	Number of offences
2002–03[1]	148
2003–04	145

[1] The National Crime Recording Standard was introduced on 1 April 2002. Figures before and after this date are not directly comparable.

Fox Hunting

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fox hunts have been prevented from taking place since the Hunting Act 2004 was enacted. [20824]

Hazel Blears: The Hunting Act 2004 makes the use of dogs to hunt wild mammals illegal, subject to some tightly drawn exemptions. It does not prevent hunts from meeting and carrying out legal equestrian or hunting activities, such as hound exercise, pest control or trail hunting. Current information suggests that hunts are seeking to adapt to the requirements of the Act.

Futurebuilders Funding

Margaret Moran: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what proportion of Futurebuilders funding was spent on consultants in the last year for which figures are available; [24034]

(2) how many community and voluntary groups have applied for *(a)* loans and *(b)* grants from Futurebuilders; and how many have been successful in each category. [24035]

Paul Goggins: Details of Futurebuilders England Ltd's expenditure on consultants are given in the following table:'

Table 1: Futurebuilders England's expenditure on consultants

	Proportion of total fund (percentage)
Consultants to Futurebuilders England Ltd.	0.1
Consultants engaged by Futurebuilders England Ltd. to assist applicant organisations.	0.12

Applications to Futurebuilders England Ltd. are for Futurebuilders investments. Decisions as to the form the investment should take, whether loan, grant or a combination, are made subsequently by Futurebuilders England Ltd., in consultation with the applicant organisation. Details of the number of applications made and the investments offered to date are given in the following table:

Table 2: Applications to Futurebuilders England Ltd. for Futurebuilders investments

	Application 'window one', July to September 2004	*Application 'window two', June to September 2005*
Number of applications	630	485
Number of full investments agreed	48	[1]
Number of development grants agreed	42	[1]
Total number of investments to date	90	[1]

[1] Figures not yet available.

Home Detention

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to expand the Home Detention Curfew Scheme. [30807]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Detention Curfew Scheme is kept under careful review but at present no decisions have been taken to expand the scheme.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offenders on home detention curfew have committed *(a)* a sexual offence and *(b)* an act of violence against the person while still on the scheme in each year since 1999. [29370]

Fiona Mactaggart: Since the start of the Home Detention Curfew scheme in January 1999 to 31 October 2005, 18 sexual offences and 833 offences against the person have been notified to the Home Office as committed by persons on HDC. These figures include those convicted, cautioned or awaiting prosecution. During the same period, 119,405 offenders have been released on the scheme.

The information is not recorded centrally in the format requested and to provide it would incur disproportionate costs.

Hostage Taking

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females have been (i) charged and (ii) convicted in England and Wales in each year since 1984 of offences under section 1 of the Taking of Hostages Act 1982. [27141]

Paul Goggins: Statistics on the number of persons charged with an offence are not centrally collected.

Paper records from the Home Office Court Proceedings database show that between 1992 to 2003, nobody was convicted under section one of the Taking of Hostages Act 1982 in England and Wales. Paper records prior to 1992 are now no longer available.

Court statistics for 2004 will be available in late November.

Human Trafficking

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Government will sign the Council of Europe Convention on trafficking in human beings. [31296]

Paul Goggins: The Government have not yet taken a decision on whether or not the United Kingdom (UK) will sign the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. While we support the aims of the Convention, there are provisions which present concerns for the UK and which remain under active consideration. We are assessing the level of risk associated with these provisions and considering actively how we might implement the Convention safely without placing more vulnerable people at risk.

The Government are committed to tackling trafficking in human beings, domestically and internationally, and has in place a multi-faceted strategy on trafficking in human beings. We are determined that the measures we take bring the criminals responsible for this serious organised crime to justice, protect the victims of trafficking, and do not undermine our ability to control our borders.

Identity Cards Bill

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many copies of the Identity Cards Scheme DVD have been produced; and at what cost. [6925]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Ongoing engagement with stakeholders and research conducted with the general public showed an awareness of the Identity Cards Scheme, but a degree of misunderstanding about the details of the scheme and how Identity Cards would be used. It was decided to fund a DVD to help the Identity Cards Programme Team communicate the basic features of the scheme in a clear and concise way.

To date, 250 copies of the Identity Cards Scheme DVD have been produced. The total cost of producing the DVD and making 50 copies was £70,482.38 and the subsequent cost of producing another 200 copies was £1,410.59, a unit cost of £7.05. Total cost for 250 copies was £71,892.96 including VAT.

An extract from the DVD was made available for download on the Identity Cards website (www.identitycards.gov.uk) on 28 June 2005. From that date to 22 August 2005 the page had recorded 4,273 hits.

Illegal Sales

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many businesses were prosecuted for selling alcohol to youths under the age of 18 years in *(a)* England, *(b)* the Tees Valley and *(c)* Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland constituency in 2004–05; [26493]

(2) how many businesses were prosecuted for selling *(a)* tobacco products and *(b)* lottery tickets and scratch cards to under 16s in (i) England, (ii) the Tees Valley and (iii) Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland in 2004–05. [26494]

Paul Goggins: Court statistics for 2004 will be available in late November.

The offence of selling alcohol to persons aged under 18 was added to the penalty notice for disorder scheme from 1 November 2004. Under the scheme the police may issue a fixed penalty notice to staff in licensed premises found to be selling alcohol to persons aged under 18 years. In 2004, 113 penalty notices were issued for this offence and provisional data for 2005 from January to September shows that 749 penalty notices were issued.

Ms Diana R. Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many businesses have been prosecuted for selling *(a)* tobacco products and *(b)* Lottery tickets and scratch cards to under-16s in Kingston upon Hull North in the past five years. [31397]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information taken from the court proceedings database held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform shows that between 2000 and 2004, there were no prosecutions of businesses at the magistrates courts in the Humberside police force area, for the sale of tobacco etc to persons under 16 nor under S13a National Lottery etc Act 1993.

The Lottery operator is required to ensure sufficient controls are in place to prevent sales to under 16s. Examples include test purchasing programmes and retailer training and education. It will also remove the lottery terminal if a retailer is found to have made repeat sales to people under 16.

Court statistics for 2005 will be available autumn 2006.

Independent Custody Visitors

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what statistics he collects to monitor the work of independent custody visitors in each police authority area; and if he will make a statement. [30930]

Hazel Blears: Statistics to monitor the work of custody visitors in police authority areas are not collated centrally by the Home Office.

Independent custody visiting, formerly known as lay visiting, is a statutory responsibility placed on police authorities to appoint volunteer members of the community to make random, unannounced visits to police stations to check on the welfare of persons held in police detention, to ensure that their rights and entitlements are observed and that the conditions and facilities in which they are held are appropriate.

The process became statutory under the Police Reform Act of 2002 paragraph 51 and the Independent Custody Visitors codes of practice place obligations on police authorities (paragraphs 60–64 of the codes of practice) to record, publish information relating to visits and review performance at a local level.

Investigatory Powers Tribunal

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average time spent by the Investigatory Powers Tribunal in adjudicating a complaint was in the last period for which figures are available. [30555]

Hazel Blears: The time taken by the Investigatory Powers Tribunal to investigate any individual complaint or claim depends on its complexity and the need to ensure that all the relevant information is available to the tribunal to consider and to make a reasoned determination.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what procedures are adopted by the Investigatory Powers Tribunal on receiving a complaint in order to ascertain whether it is a legitimate complaint. [30556]

Hazel Blears: All complaints and human rights claims made to the Investigatory Powers Tribunal are initially scrutinised by the tribunal office staff. They will decide, if necessary after making any further inquiries, whether or not the complaint or human rights claim falls within the jurisdiction of the tribunal. If it does, the tribunal undertakes a full investigation. Otherwise, the papers are referred to the members of the tribunal for directions.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to review the functions and procedures of the Investigatory Powers Tribunal. [30557]

Hazel Blears: There are no plans to review the functions and procedures of the Investigatory Powers Tribunal at present.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many public hearings the Investigatory Powers Tribunal has held since its inception. [30558]

Hazel Blears: The Investigatory Powers Tribunal was established on 2 October 2000 and has held oral hearings in three cases. Those hearings have taken place in both open and "in camera" sessions.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Investigatory Powers Tribunal has taken to publicise its functions. [30559]

Hazel Blears: The Investigatory Powers Tribunal has its own website giving information about the jurisdiction, the procedures and the members of the Tribunal, as well as information about how to make a complaint or a human rights claim to the Tribunal. The website can be found at:

www.ipt-uk.com

The site is shortly to be updated with further information.

The Tribunal has also produced an information leaflet which, together with complaints and claim forms, is circulated to Citizens Advice Bureaux, public libraries and police stations. Copies are also available on request by writing to the Investigatory Powers Tribunal, PO Box 33220, London SW1H 9ZQ.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many complaints have been received by the Investigatory Powers Tribunal in each calendar year since its inception; and how many were adjudicated on in each year, broken down by result. [30561]

Hazel Blears: This information is published each year in the Annual Reports of the Interception of Communications Commissioner and Intelligence Services Commissioner.

The published figures are as follows:

	Number of complaints received	*Number of determinations given*	*Number carried forward to next year*
2000–01	102	71	31
2002	130	94	67
2003	109	100	76
2004[1]	90	115	51

[1] Last year for which published figures are available.

On no occasion from its inception on 2 October 2000 until 31 December 2004 did the Tribunal determine that there had been a contravention of the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 or the Human Rights Act 1998.

Media Relations

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much the Home Department has spent on external media relations in each of the last 12 months. [14681]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office has used external PR companies to help deliver messages and advice to the public in press and magazines—as part of integrated communication campaigns often with a local focus.

Campaigns include Year of the Volunteer, Holocaust Memorial Day, Sexual Offences Act, Crime and Antisocial Behaviour.

In the last year, this spend was:

	£
2004	
September	73,420
October	88,660
November	106,341.70
December	106,324.36
2005	
January	162,806.40
February	160,023.11
March	195,283.87
April	91,574.60
May	86,525.90
June	85,455
July	91,135
August	101,828
September	104,630
October	103,005

We have not employed consultants or companies to manage relations with the media on behalf of the Department—the spend is all campaign PR.

These figures reflect an invoice schedule rather than when the work took place i.e. the amounts in March reflect work undertaken in January/February.

Metropolitan Police (Corruption)

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what resources the Metropolitan police has allocated to the detection and investigation of staff corruption in each of the last five years; how those resources have been deployed; what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of such deployment; and if he will make a statement. [31249]

Ha[illegible] Blears: The deployment of resources within the Me[illegible]itan police service is an operational matter for w[illegible]e commissioner has sole responsibility. I will [illegible]at the commissioner receives a copy of the [illegible] and that he replies to the hon. Member [illegible] Copies of his reply will be placed in the House [illegible]es.

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what safeguards are in place to ensure that National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty

to Children staff and social workers do not instigate discussions regarding compensation in interviews with witnesses in historical sex abuse cases. [20201]

Hazel Blears: It is a matter for the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) to decide what guidance they give to their staff with regard to the matters they discuss with their clients.

I am confident that social workers are aware of the risks of prejudicing future police investigations.

New Roads and Street Works Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females have been (i) charged with and (ii) convicted of offences under section 51 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement on the operation of the Act. [29300]

Paul Goggins: Statistics on the number of persons charged with a crime are not centrally collected. Data collected on the Home Office court proceedings database for offences under section 51 of the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 form part of a miscellaneous group, which cannot be separately identified.

Notting Hill Carnival

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many deaths there were at the Notting Hill carnival in each year since 1995. [27175]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is not available from the Home Office recorded crime statistics.

O'Connor Report

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what arrangements are in place to carry out a public consultation after police authorities have submitted their proposals in response to the O'Connor report. [30972]

Hazel Blears: Police authorities are already consulting with their local communities and will take their views into account when submitting their proposals for restructuring in December. Where there is local agreement to establish a strategic force my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary would want to move forward with implementation as soon as possible. Where there is no such agreement and the Home Secretary decides that force mergers would be in the interests of the efficiency and effectiveness of policing, the Police Act 1996 (sections 32 to 34) provides for a four month consultation period before any amalgamation order is made.

Operation Crackdown

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the timescale is for Operation Crackdown; and if he will make a statement. [32792]

Paul Goggins: Operation Crackdown was a concerted campaign by 33 police forces in England and Wales to close drug dens, disrupt local drug markets, seize illegal firearms and bring dealers to justice.

It was led by the Association of Chief Police Officers, working with the Home Office. It started on 12 January 2005 and ended on 31 March 2005.

During the campaign the police reported that 170 "crack houses" were closed, 123kg of cocaine, 3.4kg of crack cocaine, 119.8kg of heroin and 86,059 ecstasy tablets were taken off the streets, police arrested 3,419 people for the supply of class A drugs; during operations to tackle class A drugs, 483 firearms (real and replica) were seized, and £3,242,932 of cash assets were seized.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will answer the parliamentary questions tabled by the hon. Member for Orkney and Shetland on 19 October, ref *(a)* 21134 and *(b)* 21135. [24712]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1936W.

Police

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his policy is on the rights of *(a)* metropolitan police officers and *(b)* Serious Fraud Squad officers to give advance notice of operations to be carried out by their forces to (i) elected local representatives and (ii) members of police authorities, their advisors or employees. [26117]

Hazel Blears: This is an operational matter for the Metropolitan Police Service (MRS) and is not one on which central guidance has been issued. I understand from the MRS that each case is considered on its merits with the borough commander or officer in charge of an operation balancing the release of information against officer safety and the risk of compromising the operation.

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what restrictions there are on the use of relevant information obtained by *(a)* elected local representatives and *(b)* police authority members, their advisors or employees in advance of operations carried out by the police. [26118]

Hazel Blears: This is an operational matter for chief constables. I understand that in the case of the Metropolitan Police the officer in charge or borough commander will, alongside the chair of the group that carries out a Community Impact Assessment decide what information can be released about an operation and they can specify restrictions on the use of that information by third parties.

David Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the evidential basis was for the assumption that a minimum force size of 4,000 officers or 6,000 personnel in total is required for police constabulary efficiency. [27593]

Hazel Blears: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's report, "Closing the Gap", found that forces with over 4,000 officers or 6,000 staff tended to meet the standard for protective services in that they demonstrated good reactive capability with a clear measure of proactive capacity. Protective services were

assessed against national standards identified and agreed with the Association of Chief Police Officers on intelligence (what is known about an issue), prevention (what is being done to stop this) and enforcement/ resolution (what ability is there to intervene effectively).

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representation he has had from the West Yorkshire police force concerning the proposed merger of police forces in the area. [30951]

Hazel Blears: Separate submissions from West Yorkshire police and West Yorkshire police authority outlining a range of possible options for change were sent to the Home Office at the end of October 2005. The various options for change in the submission were carefully assessed by the Home Office, which are;

(1) Regional Force (all four forces merging)

(2) Merger between West Yorkshire and North Yorkshire

(3) West Yorkshire as strategic force (favoured by the police authority)

A detailed feedback letter on these options was sent to West Yorkshire police force and police authority on nine November. I wrote to all MPs on nine November providing an update on restructuring work. A written ministerial statement was also made to Parliament on 11 November, which fully outlined emerging options for all regions in England and Wales including Yorkshire and the Humber.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what disciplinary action has been taken against police officers for failure to comply with the associated Codes of Practice of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 and the Criminal Procedure and Investigations Act 1996 in historical sex abuse cases in the last three years. [31378]

Hazel Blears: The level of detail in the information my hon. Friend requires is not held centrally and could be obtained only at a disproportionate cost.

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what procedures will be used for the appointment of chief constables of newly amalgamated police forces. [31512]

Hazel Blears: Chief constables of newly amalgamated forces will be appointed in line with the provisions in section 11 (1) of the Police Act 1996, i.e. by the new strategic police authorities, subject to the approval of the Secretary of State and regulations under Section 50.

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what primary legislation would be necessary to implement the amalgamation of police forces. [31514]

Hazel Blears: Sections 32 to 34 of the Police Act 1996 make provision for the alteration of police force areas in England and Wales (other than the City of London police area) by secondary legislation. Under these provisions the Secretary of State may make an order either if he has received a request to make alterations from the police authorities for each of the areas affected by them (in which case the negative resolution procedure applies), or if it appears to him that it is expedient to make the alterations in the interests of efficiency and effectiveness (in which case the affirmative procedure applies).

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many full-time police officers there were in North Kent in each of the last eight years. [32650]

Hazel Blears: Information on police officer strength for North Kent basic command unit (BCU) is collected annually. The data reflect the position at the end of March and are only available from 2002. BCU strength between March 2002 and March 2005 is set out in the table. The deployment of police officers to North Kent is an operational matter for the chief constable.

North Kent basic command unit—police officer strength—March 2002 to March 2005

Year (as at 31 March)	*Number of officers*
2002[1]	342
2003[2]	363
2004	399
2005	387

[1] Data collected by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary.

[2] Data collected by Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what policing considerations underlay his Department's instruction to police authorities that under their restructuring proposals any new force areas should not cross Government office regional boundaries. [30860]

Hazel Blears: The Home Secretary has stated to police forces and authorities that proposals for police force restructuring should not cross government office regional boundaries unless there is a compelling case to do so.

The planning for effective and sustainable provision of protective services by the police requires the engagement of non-police partners including Government Offices, Regional Resilience Forums, local authorities, health authorities, and fire and ambulance services. A move away from coterminosity with these agencies could threaten the effectiveness of strategic partnership working, and hence has the potential to weaken the provision of protective services.

The consultation process is still ongoing and is being driven locally by police forces and authorities, who are currently working in partnership with their key stakeholders to refine the business cases of their leading options, with their preferred option to be submitted to the Home Secretary by 23 December 2005.

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many children have spent one or more nights in police cells in the last 12 months. [21783]

Hazel Blears: These statistics are not collated centrally.

The holding of prisoners in police custody is avoided wherever possible. In the last 12 months, three prisoners aged 15 to 17 who were committed to prison custody had to be held overnight in police accommodation.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people died as a result of a collision with a police car in the Essex police force area in each of the last five years. [31431]

Paul Goggins: Figures for the number of fatalities in Essex police force area including both police personnel and members of the public, in road traffic collisions on public roads during immediate/emergency response and police pursuits since 2001 are given in the table.

Number of fatalities (including members of the public and police personnel) in Essex police force area, as a result of Road Traffic Collisions on public roads resulting from immediate/emergency response and police pursuits (2001–05)

As at 31 March each year	Members of the public	Police personnel
2001	1	0
2002	0	0
2003	0	0
2004	2	0
2005	1	0

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the pension liability was as of 31 March or the nearest convenient date for each police force in England and Wales. [23932]

Hazel Blears: The information is not readily available in the form requested but it is estimated that the total liability in the police pension scheme in England and Wales as at 31 March 2004, reported under the accounting standard FRS17 (as it applies to the public sector), was £44 billion.

We are making arrangements to collate the figures requested and will provide the hon. Member with a copy of these and place a further copy in the Library in due course.

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will establish a royal commission to review proposed police force mergers. [30422]

Hazel Blears: No. My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has asked police authorities and chief officers to submit to him proposals for restructuring by 23 December. As part of this process police authorities and forces are consulting extensively with their local communities, and local government and criminal justice partners. Thereafter, there is wide recognition that restructuring should be implemented as quickly as possible to minimise disruption to the police service; a royal commission would preclude this.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 11 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 852W, on police helicopters, how many deployments of Metropolitan police helicopters there have been in each year since 2000. [31351]

Hazel Blears: The number of flights and flying hours completed by the Metropolitan police helicopters for each year since 2000 is shown in the following table.

	Flying hours	Number of flights
2000	3,098.01	4,037
2001	2,868.11	3,718
2002	2,847.09	3,728
2003	2,993.57	3,992
2004	3,074.16	3,869
2005 (to end October)	2,436.04	3,422
Total	17,317.38	22,766

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of whether savings could be accrued through the centralising of police procurement. [32263]

Hazel Blears: National contracts for the purchase of some items by police forces, for example vehicles, have been in place for many years. Nonetheless, the scope for the police service to deliver efficiency gains through better procurement is recognised in the tri-partite police efficiency strategy. My Department, the Association of Police Authorities and the Association of Chief Police Officers for England and Wales, with support from the Office of Government Commerce, have jointly established the centre for procurement excellence in the police service (PEPS) to help forces develop and use national contracts, strengthen procurement practice and skills, and standardise requirements to achieve discounts through increased purchase volumes.

Not all procurement is best done centrally, however. Part of the service's approach aims to identify and distinguish activity that is best undertaken collaboratively and that which is best undertaken more locally.

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he will take to ensure that newly formed police authorities for amalgamated police forces are democratically accountable. [32852]

Hazel Blears: I refer the hon. member to my reply to a question from the hon. Member for Harwich (Mr. Carswell), *Official Report*, 21 November 2005, column 1763W.

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the request from the Metropolitan Police Commissioner to the permanent secretary at the Home Office on 22 July that section 17 of the Police Reform Act 2002 should be amended. [30332]

Hazel Blears: We have no plans to amend section 17 which provides for the provision of information to the Independent Police Complaints Commission to help it in its investigations.

Parliament recognised there would be occasions when disclosure of information to a complainant or other interested party would not be appropriate and introduced a duty of care.

Having received information and other materials under section 17 of the Police Reform Act 2002 from a police authority or a chief officer, the Independent Police Complaints Commission then has a duty of care not to disclose information that has potential to cause harm. This is known as the sensitivity test and it applies equally to a police authority or a chief officer.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police stations have closed in each of the last five years, broken down by police authority area; and if he will make a statement. [31251]

Hazel Blears: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Winchester (Mr. Oaten) on 4 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 138W and hon. Member for Harwich (Mr. Carswell) on 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2587W.

Ownership and management of the police estate and allocation of resources are matters for each police authority and the chief officer, who are responsible for assessing and responding to local needs.

A number of forces have devised innovative ways of increasing their accessibility to members of the public. In addition to police stations, forces also use kiosks, police boxes, agreements within council offices and libraries. One stop shops and mobile police stations as part of their engagement with the community.

Prevention of Terrorism Acts

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals have *(a)* been detained and *(b)* charged since 11 September 2001 under the Prevention of Terrorism Acts; and if he will make a statement. [32795]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Detention under anti-terrorism legislation is provided for following an arrest under section 41 of the Terrorism Act 2000. The latest figures requested are published on the Home Office website: www.homeoffice.gov.uk/security/terrorism-and-the-law/terrorism-act

These statistics have been supplied by the police. They are compiled from recent police records and are therefore subject to adjustment as cases go through the system. These statistics reflect the operation of specific terrorism legislation. It is important to remember that it is, and will continue to be the case, that terrorist suspects are dealt with by the most appropriate legal means. This could be the legislation for murder, grievous bodily harm or the use of firearms or explosives which are all outside the scope of the Terrorism Act.

Section 45(4) of the Terrorism Act 2000 confers the power to detain a person only for the amount of time reasonably required to conduct a search authorised by virtue of section 44 of the Act. Total stops and searches under section 44 for the financial year 2004–05 will be published in December this year.

Prisons

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reason the cost of telephone calls from within HMP Wormwood Scrubs differs from the cost charged to those who do not reside there, but use the same telecom provider. [32139]

Fiona Mactaggart: The price of prisoners' phone calls is no longer linked to public pay phone rates, they are set under the terms of the contract with BT which allows the Prison Service to set appropriate charges, taking account of the pattern of calls, as well as maintenance costs. The low minimum charge reflects the fact that prisoners' calls tend to be of short duration.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners have been released from prison before their sentence was completed since 1997. [26467]

Fiona Mactaggart: The requested figures can be found in the Home Office Statistical Bulletin: Offender Management Caseload Statistics 2003, a copy of which can be found in the House of Commons Library. Table 10.3 concerns HOC and Table 10.4 parole.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many women have given birth while serving a custodial sentence at a prison in *(a)* England and Wales and *(b)* the Tees Valley since 1997. [26502]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Prison Service has only routinely kept information centrally on births in custody since April 2005. Information before this date is not available. In the period 1 April to 30 September 2005, 55 women gave birth while in a prison in England and Wales. There are no women's prisons in the Tees Valley.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average daily cost of keeping a person in prison in England and Wales was during the latest period for which figures are available. [30272]

Fiona Mactaggart: The average daily cost of keeping a person in prison in England and Wales for the financial year 2004–05 was £77.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many alcohol management courses are accredited for prisons in England and Wales. [30383]

Fiona Mactaggart: No alcohol management courses have been accredited by the Correctional Services Accreditation Panel. No records are held centrally of courses accredited under the Prison Service validation system for regime interventions.

Mr. Clifton-Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) why the Glass House Horticultural Operation at Leyhill Open Prison was discontinued; and what future use will be made of the empty glass house; [30596]

(2) how much the new visitor centre at Leyhill Open Prison cost; and why it is being closed; [30597]

(3) what training and employment opportunities are planned to replace the Glass House and visitor centre projects for prisoners at Leyhill Open Prison. [30598]

Fiona Mactaggart: The decision to close the Leyhill arts and gardens centre was taken because of a significant fall in income. The centre is now a burden on Leyhill's budget and is affecting its ability to deliver core work. While income generation is not the sole purpose of the centre, the opportunities for prisoner employment and the development of community links are not significant enough to override the financial impact.

Most of the market garden glasshouses will be relocated to the prison estate on the closure of the site, removing the impact of closure on prisoner employment. Work opportunities should increase as a wider range of prisoners can be allocated to this work within the main prison. Opportunities for contact between prisoners and the public will be replicated through outside placements. It is anticipated that training will not be impeded by the closure of the centre. Some glasshouses will remain on the site which will be sold or leased. A new centre has not been built.

However, essential refurbishment work was carried out on the existing centre to meet health and safety requirements and cost £200,000.

Proceeds of Crime Act

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much was recovered under the provisions of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 by the Metropolitan Police in respect of crimes at Heathrow Airport in 2004–05. [24095]

Paul Goggins: Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC) is the enforcement authority with lead responsibility for recovering the proceeds of crime at Heathrow Airport. The total amount recovered at Heathrow Airport by HMRC under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 is £4,259,000. The total value of cash seized (subject to forfeiture) and cash forfeiture orders obtained by the Metropolitan Police under the Act in respect of suspected criminal activity at Heathrow Airport in 2004–05 was £56,554.

Probation Service

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Probation Service officers there were in each probation area in each of the last five years. [23832]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information is not available for the full period requested. Data collected prior to 1 April 2003 are unreliable, and not directly comparable with the more accurate figures collected since that time. The figures presented as follows show full time equivalent (FTE) figures at the close of each quarter from 1 April 2003 to 30 June 2005.

2003-04

	Quarter 1		*Quarter 2*		*Quarter 3*		*Quarter 4*	
	Starters	*Leavers*	*Starters*	*Leavers*	*Starters*	*Leavers*	*Starters*	*Leavers*
Senior Probation Officer	4.00	20.00	2.00	20.00	1.50	16.50	1.40	18.50
Senior Practitioner	0.00	3.00	9.00	6.00	1.00	4.00	0.00	7.60
Probation Officer	33.90	78.20	29.10	147.00	34.60	84.10	11.10	95.70
Trainee Probation Officer	2.00	11.00	211.00	15.00	518.00	17.80	135.00	19.00
Probation Services Officer	239.00	111.30	346.10	133.80	229.16	146.01	131.53	113.13
Psychologist	0.00	0.00	1.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	2.50
Other Operational Staff	30.40	56.20	30.70	35.20	49.30	18.30	48.74	23.60
Deputy Chief Officers/Director	1.00	0.00	0.00	3.00	2.00	1.00	0.00	2.00
AGO and Equivalent	1.00	2.00	4.70	9.00	5.00	5.67	5.00	6.20
Area/District Manager	2.00	4.00	0.00	0.00	1.00	2.00	2.00	8.00
Section or Function Head	4.00	5.00	19.00	10.00	8.50	10.00	7.00	16.00
Support Staff -Admin	187.80	87.20	176.60	109.70	244.23	113.57	164.99	117.83
Support Staff Other	44.10	13.00	30.40	39.40	38.91	26.30	21.54	16.11
Other Specialist Worker	7.40	6.60	15.00	25.00	10.60	6.00	7.00	13.60
Total	556.60	397.50	874.60	533.10	1143.80	451.25	535.30	459.77

2004-05

	Quarter 1		*Quarter 2*		*Quarter 3*		*Quarter 4*	
	Starters	*Leavers*	*Starters*	*Leavers*	*Starters*	*Leavers*	*Starters*	*Leavers*
Senior Probation Officer	4.00	22.60	0.00	2.00	0.00	1.00	1.00	6.00
Senior Practitioner	1.00	2.40	0.00	5.00	1.27	1.00	2.00	0.00
Probation Officer	14.50	84.40	0.00	0.00	1.00	3.00	1.50	3.00
Trainee Probation Officer	2.00	16.00	4.00	11.90	8.00	8.07	8.31	13.38
Probation Services Officer	137.44	138.03	171.83	158.52	165.18	110.98	193.51	103.77
Psychologist	0.00	2.00	38.47	13.90	21.58	8.20	27.00	14.09
Other Operational Staff	13.65	19.45	9.30	13.32	9.00	3.60	10.78	5.89
Deputy Chief Officers/Director	0.00	0.00	1.60	24.90	3.00	13.17	6.05	16.10
AGO and Equivalent	0.00	5.00	0.00	3.00	1.00	5.00	0.00	2.90
Area/District Manager	2.00	1.50	4.20	106.96	25.66	93.68	23.64	84.30
Section or Function Head	5.50	9.58	38.00	36.00	430.00	24.00	96.00	9.00
Support Staff -Admin	104.61	142.66	208.18	159.83	255.53	132.86	296.81	106.79
Support Staff Other	27.05	21.98	2.00	2.00	0.00	3.00	0.00	0.00
Other Specialist Worker	10.68	8.00	21.25	20.80	21.44	17.03	36.15	19.10
Total	322.43	473.60	498.83	558.13	942.66	426.58	702.75	383.92

2005-06

	Quarter 1	
	Starters	*Leavers*
Senior Probation Officer	2.00	1.27
Senior Practitioner	0.50	4.00
Probation Officer	1.00	0.00
Trainee Probation Officer	9.00	7.30
Probation Services Officer	177.21	109.30
Psychologist	18.10	15.32
Other Operational Staff	13.50	11.30
Deputy Chief Officers/Director	5.90	15.00
AGO and Equivalent	2.00	10.20

	2005–06 Quarter 1 Starters	Leavers
Area/District Manager	17.90	99.88
Section or Function Head	1.00	13.00
Support Staff -Admin	236.89	124.70
Support Staff Other	0.00	0.60
Other Specialist Worker	22.53	24.41
Total	507.53	436.28

Rape

Jessica Morden: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of contested prosecutions for rape brought by Gwent Crown Prosecution Service resulted in a conviction in the last 12 years. [31503]

Paul Goggins: Data held by the Office for Criminal Justice reform on the number of defendants pleading not guilty of rape and the number and percentage of these found guilty of rape at the Crown court in Gwent police force area are provided in the following table. Figures are presented for the years 1996–2004. Information on plea is not available for years before 1996. Data for 2005 will be available in the autumn of 2006.

Number of defendants pleading not guilty of rape and the number and percentage of these found guilty of rape at the Crown court, Gwent police force area, 1996–2004[1]

	Not guilty pleas	Found guilty	Conviction rate (percentage)
1996	17	6	35
1997	15	8	53
1998	15	1	7
1999	19	7	37
2000	23	6	26
2001	22	8	36
2002	18	8	44
2003	30	11	37
2004	23	5	22

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

Note:
Rape includes rape of a female and male.

Rebranding

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much has been spent on rebranding in his Department and related agencies since 2003–04. [18408]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office has a central identity which presents a unified and coherent appearance to the public and to its employees. Agencies of the Home Office also need to present themselves consistently. The following table outlines money spent on branding work at the Home Office and related agencies since 2003–04:

£

Department/service	Details of branding	Amount spent on branding work
Home Office	Modification and update to branding guidelines	4,680
National Offender Management Service	Identity creation, production of artwork and branding guidelines	45,996
Prison Service	Modification of logo and production of branding guidelines	10,480
Probation Service	Modification of logo and production of branding guidelines	10,230
Total		71,386

Recidivism

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the recidivism rate was among *(a)* female, *(b)* male and *(c)* all prisoners within two years of release in each year since 1997. [30790]

Fiona Mactaggart: Actual re-offending rates are not available. Reconviction rates are a commonly used proxy and two year reconviction rates are published annually.

The most recent data are shown in the table.

Reconviction rates should be used with caution as a number of different factors can influence them. Reconviction rates can be adjusted to take account of the changing characteristics of offenders and these adjusted rates are published annually on the Home Office's website (http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/index.htm).

The most recent adjusted figures for the 2003 cohort show a reduction in reoffending for all offenders (males and females sentenced to community sentences or discharged from prison) of 1.8 per cent. against the 2000 baseline.

Percentage of prisoners reconvicted of standard list offences years of discharge from prison

	Male	Female	Total
1997	59	51	58
1998	59	52	59
1999	59	55	59
2000	n/a	n/a	n/a
2001	61	57	61

Note:
Owing to the administrative costs of matching criminal histories, the results shown relate to the reconviction results for samples of offender, those prisoners discharged in the first three months of the year.

Residential Drug Rehabilitation

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many residential drug rehabilitation places were available in Essex in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [27111]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I have been asked to reply.

This information is not held centrally.

Rights of Way

Mike Wood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects local authorities will be able to use powers in the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 to close rights of way on crime prevention grounds. [19654]

Hazel Blears: I refer my hon. Friend the Member for Southampton, Test (Dr. Whitehead) to the answer I gave on 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 345W.

Road Safety

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons have been *(a)* killed whilst driving stolen cars and *(b)* killed by drivers of stolen cars in (i) Southend and (ii) Essex in the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [29745]

Paul Goggins: The information is not collected centrally.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females have been (i) charged with and (ii) convicted of offences under section 40A of the Road Traffic Act 1988 in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [29851]

Paul Goggins: Statistics on the number of persons charged with a crime are not centrally collected.

Data from the Home Office Court Proceedings database on the number of convictions under section 40A of the Road Traffic Act 1988, England and Wales, 1995 to 2004, are provided in the table.

Number of males and females found guilty for offences under section 40A of the Road Traffic Act 1988 England and Wales, 1995 to 2004[1]

	Male	Female
Offence description: Using vehicle in dangerous condition etc Statute: Road Traffic Act 1988, section 40A (a) and (b) as added by the Road Traffic Act 1991, section 8		
1995	2,688	139
1996	3,009	180
1997	3,246	182
1998	3,706	220
1999	3,317	199
2000	2,797	158
2001	2,342	156
2002	1,782	137
2003	1,627	125
2004	1,754	138

[1] These data are provided on the principal offence basis.

Court statistics for 2005 will be available in autumn 2006.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females have been (i) charged with and (ii) convicted of offences under section 16C of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [29853]

Paul Goggins: Statistics on the number of persons charged with a crime are not centrally collected.

Data from the Home Office Court Proceedings database on the number of convictions under section 16 of the Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, England and Wales, 1995 to 2004 are provided in the table.

Number of males and females found guilty of offences under section 16 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, England and Wales, 1995 to 2004[1]

	Found guilty					
	Contravention of temporary prohibitions of traffic on roads		Contravention of temporary speed limit on roads (not detected by camera devices)		Contravention of temporary speed limit on roads (detected by camera devices)	
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female
1995	2,937	520	90,882	11,219	7,126	1,314
1996	2,463	423	92,655	11,140	14,328	2,885
1997	2,355	435	90,951	12,181	16,760	3,469
1998	4,050	857	108,906	14,826	20,806	4,849
1999	4,760	1,099	99,017	13,990	26,059	6,510
2000	3,011	738	88,721	13,912	24,939	6,531
2001	3,125	767	76,383	12,600	31,507	8,578
2002	2,938	731	62,329	10,887	35,311	10,260
2003	3,331	882	62,492	11,028	47,172	13,234
2004	3,653	965	65,524	12,143	53,396	15,069

[1] These data are provided on the principal offence basis.

Court statistics for 2005 will be available in autumn 2006.

Sex Trafficking

Susan Kramer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Government will ratify the Palermo Protocol against sex trafficking to the UN Convention against Organised Crime; and if he will make a statement. [31437]

Hazel Blears: We consider that, taken together with existing United Kingdom law, the introduction of the trafficking offences contained in section four of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc.) Act 2004 which came into force on 1 December 2004, mean that we fully comply with our legislative obligations under the Palermo Protocol.

To enable us to ratify the protocol we must first ratify the UN convention against transnational organised crime. The legislative measures required to comply with

the Convention have now been introduced and the Home Office and Foreign and Commonwealth Office are taking forward the necessary steps to ratify the convention and Protocol

Rural Crime

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking *(a)* to tackle rural crime and *(b)* to improve detection rates in rural areas. [30571]

Hazel Blears: Effective and responsive policing at neighbourhood level as well as robust partnership working are both essential parts of our strategy to tackle crime and to sustain the confidence and trust of the public in all parts of the country.

We introduced the Rural Policing Fund in 2000–01 specifically to enhance the visibility and accessibility of policing in rural areas. 31 police authorities with the most widespread populations benefit from this additional funding. The annual allocation is £30 million. We are considering rolling-up a number of specific grants, including the Rural Policing Fund, into a single pot for each police authority to give authorities more control over how they may be used. We do not intend to abolish or reduce rural grant allocations. Each authority will receive the current levels of funding but would be expected to honour commitments.

A number of police forces have introduced community support officers (CSOs) in rural areas since their introduction in 2002. The Home Office is also involved in a "Blue Light" pilot which aims to create a community focused, multi-functional role for these officers in some rural villages.

We have made a commitment that by 2008, every area in England and Wales will benefit from dedicated neighbourhood policing teams which will be led by police officers and involve special constables, community support officers, volunteers and neighbourhood wardens among others.

The Government acknowledge the need to improve sanction detection rates across all police forces. For that reason, a major drive has been underway since last summer with the aim of achieving a significant increase in sanction detection rates. This includes a range of operational improvements intended to build the investigative capability of the police service, together with some targeted support for forces with performance concerns.

Safety Cameras

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the revenue was from fines resulting from speed camera convictions in Hertfordshire in the latest year for which figures are available; and what sums were passed to *(a)* the Consolidated Fund and *(b)* the Hertfordshire Speed Camera Partnership. [29900]

Paul Goggins: Information on the total revenue from speed camera convictions is not collected centrally.

The information collected by my Department identifies the number of fixed penalties ordered to be paid and the number and amounts of court fines issued for such offences. Not all fines and fixed penalties will have been paid.

My right hon. Friend the Transport Secretary has advised that details of safety camera programme funding for 2002–03 are given in 'The national safety camera programme Three-year evaluation report', copies of which have been placed in the Library of the House, and are available from the Department for Transport website.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) in what percentage of cases the *(a)* maximum fine and *(b)* minimum fine was imposed for speeding detected by cameras in each year between 1994 and 2004; [29906]

(2) what the *(a)* maximum, *(b)* minimum and *(c)* average fine for camera-detected speeding was in each year between 1994 and 2004. [30448]

Paul Goggins: Available information on court fines for the offence of speeding detected by camera in the calendar years 1994 to 2003 is given in the table.

Information for 2004 will be available early in 2006.

Maximum and minimum fines imposed at the magistrates courts for speeding offences detected by camera[1]: England and Wales, 1994 to 2003

		Percentage of cases where:		
	Standard rate maximum fine[2]	*Maximum (£1,000) fine imposed*	*Minimum (£20 and under) fine imposed*	*Average fine (£)*
1994	L3	[3]—	0.4	94
1995	L3	[3]—	0.4	88
1996	L3	[3]—	0.5	80
1997	L3	[4]0.0	1.1	92
1998	L3	[4]0.0	0.6	115
1999	L3	[4]0.0	0.2	106
2000	L3	[4]0.0	0.2	107
2001	L3	[4]0.0	0.2	111
2002	L3	[4]0.0	0.2	103
2003	L3	[4]0.0	0.1	107

[1] Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, sections 16, 81, 84, 86, 88 and 89; Motor Vehicles (Speed Limits on Motorways) Regulations 1973.
[2] L3 = £1,000.
[3] No maximum fines imposed.
[4] Percentage not significant to one decimal place.
Note:
Coverage and recording practice affecting the statistics:

(A) It is known that for some police force areas, the reporting of court proceedings in particular those relating to summary motoring offences, may be less than complete.
(B) Since 1990, due to the delays in implementing new counting procedures, corrective action on non-keying errors was reduced resulting in a deterioration in the quality of the data on summary motoring proceedings.

Secure Training Centres

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many children have been subject to physical restraint in each of the secure training centres in each of the last four years; and in how many incidents each child was involved; [31370]

(2) What the ethnic origin was of each child subject to physical control in each of the secure training centres in the last 12 months. [31371]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information held centrally on physical restraint in secure training centres does not include the details requested.

Speeding

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the recorded number of traffic speeding violations on roads with *(a)* a 30 mph speed limit and *(b)* a 40 mph speed limit has been in each year between 1994 and 2004. [30374]

Paul Goggins: Information on the number of traffic speeding violations is not held by my Department. Information is held on the number of convictions and for fixed penalty notices issued for speeding offences but this does not identify the speed band registered nor the classification of road on which the offence took place.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much was collected by the Government in speeding fines in each year between 1994 and 2004. [30450]

Paul Goggins: Information on the total revenue from speeding fines is not collected centrally.

Steven John Toplass

Mr. Flello: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether national guidelines were in place at the time of Steven John Toplass's arrest in February 2004 to ensure that appropriate national law enforcement authorities through whose territories a UK-initiated and supervised controlled delivery would pass were made aware of its existence before the cargo concerned was loaded, with particular reference to Spain. [29518]

Hazel Blears: UK agencies engaged in controlled deliveries have standard operating procedures which provide operational guidelines. In addition operational service level agreements exist between relevant UK agencies and overseas partners to govern such operations. These agreements ensure that such operations are only undertaken with the agreement of appropriate authorities within the UK and with the agreement of appropriate national law enforcement authorities in the countries to which the cargo will pass. A European Union manual on controlled deliveries also exists. This manual provides details of the practices and procedures for controlled delivery operations in European Union countries. All these measures were in place in February 2004.

Taser Stun Guns

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 351W, on Taser stun guns, if he will provide the equivalent figures for the proceeding three years. [31047]

Hazel Blears: The Metropolitan police started to deploy Taser in April 2003. Taser is only deployed in circumstances where firearms officers are authorised to carry firearms and is deployed alongside conventional firearms so as to be available in appropriate circumstances as an alternative to them. The commissioner for the Metropolitan police has provided the information in the table.

Metropolitan police—deployment of Taser

Month	*Deployed*	*Fired*
April 2003	261	0
May 2003	353	0
June 2003	313	0
July 2003	308	0
August 2003	365	1
September 2003	282	0
October 2003	300	0
November 2003	279	0
December 2003	279	3
January 2004	255	0
February 2004	252	1
March 2004	316	3
April 2004	244	1
May 2004	353	4
June 2004	269	4
July 2004	288	1
August 2004	248	4
September 2004	241	3

UK-controlled Deliveries

Mr. Flello: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many UK-controlled delivery operations took place involving *(a)* Spanish and *(b)* French territory between 1999 and 2004; and how many were aborted due to the detention of the cargo or driver by the (i) Spanish and (ii) French authorities. [29519]

Hazel Blears: Information on the number and target of controlled delivery operations is not collected centrally.

Victims of Crime

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what funds his Department allocated to programmes on *(a)* alternatives to custody for young offenders, *(b)* projects for witness protection, *(c)* projects to support victims of crime, *(d)* projects to promote restorative justice, *(e)* projects to help tackle

alcohol abuse, *(f)* projects to help tackle drug and solvent abuse and *(g)* projects to help tackle domestic violence in 2004–05; on which programmes such money was spent in each case; how much each project has received; and if he will make a statement. [11970]

Fiona Mactaggart: This information is not held centrally and to obtain would incur disproportionate costs.

Violent Crime

Mr. Vaizey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what steps he is taking to tackle violent crime; [16719]

(2) what steps the Government are taking to deal with alcohol-related crime. [16733]

Hazel Blears: The British Crime Survey shows that violent crime has fallen by 34 per cent. since 1997, and we are determined to see this trend continuing. Our work on sexual offences and gun and knife crime is set out in answers to other questions, so I will not repeat that information here; this reply focuses on our work to tackle alcohol-related crime and domestic violence.

The Licensing Act 2003 will, from 24 November 2005, give the police and courts new powers to close disorderly and noisy premises, issue increased fines for breaching licence conditions and, with local residents, to seek licence reviews.

With the Association of Chief Police Officers, we ran two national enforcement campaigns against alcohol-fuelled disorder and underage drinking during 2004. Further campaigns took place over Easter and summer 2005 and another began on 14 November.

We have provided increased protection for domestic violence victims through the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004, which enables courts to legally protect victims from harassment. We are also rolling out a Specialist Domestic Violence Court programme across 25 areas, and plan to extend it next year. Criminal justice agencies are also improving their response to domestic violence through training front-line staff.

Measures within the Violent Crime Reduction Bill, which is currently before Parliament, will give police and courts new powers to tackle violent criminals and ensure they are effectively punished; give police powers to require licensed pubs or clubs to search for weapons on entry, and; help achieve a culture change in binge drinking, deterring unacceptable behaviour, and protecting people from harm. It also provides new measures on guns and knives.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the percentage change in the level of violent crime in Gravesham has been in each year since 1997. [28645]

Hazel Blears: The available information relates to the Gravesham Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) area and is given in the tables. Statistics at CDRP level have only been collected since April 1999.

It is estimated that the effect of the introduction nationally of the National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) in April 2002 was a 20 per cent. increase in recorded violent crime in its first year.

The second table does not contain a percentage increase for 2002–03 as this is heavily influenced by the impact of NCRS and is therefore not a real reflection of the change in violent crime.

Percentage change in recorded violent crime in the Gravesham Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership area—1999–2000 to 2001–02

Period	*Percentage change compared with previous 12 months*
1999–2000	n/a
2000–01	-8
2001–02	10

n/a = not available

Note:
The data in this table are prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Percentage change in recorded violent crime in the Gravesham Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership area—2002–03 to 2004–05

Period	*Percentage change compared with previous 12 months*
2002/03	[1]
2003/04	17
2004/05	27

[1] Percentage change compared with 2000–01 is 36 per cent. but this is heavily influenced by the impact of NCRS and is therefore not a real reflection of the change in violent crime.

Note:
The data in this table take account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Weapons (Internet Sales)

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with the other Government departments with a view to preventing the advertising and selling of less lethal weapons via the internet. [28501]

Hazel Blears: The internet is regulated by the application of existing law, which applies equally online and offline. It is an offence to sell seventeen offensive weapons, in addition to flick knives and gravity knives to a person of any age; to market a knife in a way which suggests it is suitable for combat; and to sell a knife to a person under 16. We are raising this to 18 in the Violent Crime Reduction Bill currently before Parliament.

Tasers and incapacitant sprays using CS or PAVA are prohibited weapons and cannot be sold, purchased or possessed without authority from the Secretary of State. Baton guns are also controlled under firearms laws and, depending on their size, can be prohibited weapons.

Wheel Clamping

Stephen Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate his Department has made of the number of private firms that have a licence to operate wheel clamps in England and Wales, broken down by constituency. [30667]

Paul Goggins: The Private Security Industry Act 2001 does not require vehicle immobiliser firms to be licensed. It does require people who work as vehicle immobilisers

to be licensed. As of 16 November the number of vehicle immobiliser operatives licences that have been issued regionally are as follows:

Region	Front line operative	Non-front line operative
South West	66	10
Wales	30	3
Midlands	105	21
North West	111	16
North East	116	9
Eastern	43	9
South East	187	58
London	219	22

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adult Education

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) pursuant to the answer of 13 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 576W, on adult education, what assessment she has made of the affordability of courses for adults wishing to study for a non-basic skills qualification at a lower level than level 2 in 2006–07; and if she will make a statement; [31818]

(2) what research she has conducted into the *(a)* ability and *(b)* willingness of (i) employers and (ii) individuals to pay an increased proportion of the cost of adult education courses. [31820]

Phil Hope: On 21 October, we made an announcement setting out the Government's strategic direction for the learning and skills sector for the coming period. Our main purpose for doing so was to ensure the 2006/07 funding allocations process began with a clear and concise message on the principles that will underpin funding over the next two years. Our funding priorities do not affect the existing arrangements whereby my Department funds free tuition for learners who are eligible, however, a rebalancing of responsibilities between Government, employers and learners is central to delivering our skills strategy. My Department will continue to waive fees for all young people; those taking literacy and numeracy; and learners receiving income-based benefits, the pension (guarantee) credit and those on higher levels of the working tax credit.

My Department recently commissioned a public poll asking people about their attitudes towards fees in the learning and skills sector. We published a report of the findings on the Department's website on the 11 November. Other research includes a study of learners (Study of Learners in Further Education (2003)) to ascertain the financial circumstances of learners in FE; and a Prior Qualifications of Adult Learners survey which includes questions about learner attitudes to contributing to the costs of their learning. We have also commissioned two surveys (Fees in Colleges—A Review Of The Use of Discretionary Fee Remission In Further Education (2003); and FE Colleges Fee Charging Policy and Practice (1999)) about fee policies and practices from the college's perspective. DfES published research findings are available on the Department's website at dfes.gov.uk/research/

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is currently researching the impact of the new fee policies in the further education sector. LSC published research findings are available on their website at lsc.gov.uk

There has been no specific research into employer attitudes to payment of fees for adult education courses.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the number of over-45s seeking *(a)* further education and *(b)* skills training who were (i) in the workforce and (ii) seeking re-entry into the workforce in the last period for which figures are available. [31375]

Phil Hope: Analysis of the labour force survey of spring 2005 found that of the people living in England who were aged 45 or more: 9,050,000 were working; 260,000 were unemployed; and 10,499,000 were inactive.

According to the national adult learning survey (2002): 79 per cent. of employed people aged over 45 had done some job-related learning during the previous three years. This compares with 57 per cent. for unemployed people, and 13 per cent. for inactive people of the same age range.

The same survey also found that 58 per cent. of employed people aged 45 or more said they were very likely or fairly likely to do job-related training over the next three years. In comparison, 43 per cent. of unemployed people; and 16 per cent. of inactive people of the same age range said they were very likely or fairly likely to do job-related training over the next three years.

The LSC's individual learner record data showed that in the academic year 2003/04 there were 1,200,000 people aged 45+ who had attended a course at an LSC-funded further education college. The activity status of these students is unknown. We also have no information on the number of people seeking further education.

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people aged *(a)* 30 to 39, *(b)* 40 to 49 and *(c)* 50 years and over received skills training in (i) West Yorkshire and (ii) Normanton constituency since 2001. [31566]

Phil Hope: Analysis of the Local Labour Force Surveys from 2001 to 2005 has produced the following results.

Table 1: Percentage of working aged[1] people who have received skills training[2] in the four weeks prior to interview in West Yorkshire

Age-year	Percentage of people receiving skills training			
	2001/02	2002/03	2003/04	2004/05
16–29	22	26	22	21
30–39	15	16	15	14
40–49	13	12	13	13
50–59/64	9	8	7	8
Total[3]	15	16	15	14

[1] Working age refers to men aged 16 to 64 and women aged 16 to 59.

[2] Skills training is assumed to be job related training for current and future jobs in the four weeks prior to interview.

[3] There were approximately 1,291,000 16 to 59/64-year-olds in West Yorkshire in 2004/05.

Table 1 indicates that approximately 15 per cent. of 30 to 39-year-olds in West Yorkshire received skills training in 2001/02. Older people are less likely to do skills training than younger people. There has been no significant change within age groups in the period 2001 to 2004/05.

Table 2: Percentage of working aged people who have received skills training[1] in the four weeks prior to interview in Normanton

	Percentage of people receiving skills training			
Age/year	*2001/02*	*2002/03*	*2003/04*	*2004/05*
Total 16 to 59/64[2]	14	13	16	13

[1] Skills training is assumed to be job related training for current and future jobs in the four weeks prior to interview.
[2] There were approximately 54,000 16 to 59/64-year-olds in Normanton in 2004/05.

Table 2 indicates that there is little difference between skills training in West Yorkshire as a whole and skills training in Normanton as a whole. The number of people receiving skills training within each age group, in Normanton, who were sampled in the LLFS was too small to yield any meaningful estimates.

Table 3: Percentage of working aged people who have received skills training[1] in the four weeks prior to interview in Normanton, West Yorkshire and UK

	Percentage of people receiving skills training			
Region/year	*2001/02*	*2002/03*	*2003/04*	*2004/05*
Normanton total	14	13	16	13
West Yorkshire total[2]	15	16	15	14
UK total[3]	15	15	14	14

[1] Skills training is assumed to be job related training for current and future jobs in the four weeks prior to interview.
[2] There were approximately 1,291,000 16 to 59/64-year-olds in West Yorkshire in 2004/05.
[3] The UK total for 2001/02 uses the LFS spring quarter 2001, 2002/03 uses LFS spring quarter 2002 and soon.

There is little difference between the percentage of working aged people receiving skills training in Normanton compared to West Yorkshire and nationally.

Quality Mark

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many local education authorities are working with the Basic Skills Agency as part of a primary Quality Mark partnership. [32910]

Jacqui Smith: In England 138 of the 150 local authorities are in the Quality Mark partnership. In Wales all 22 of the LEAs are in the Quality Mark partnership.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools that were assessed for the Basic Skills Agency's Quality Mark failed to gain one. [32911]

Jacqui Smith: There are no figures available on the number of schools who do not attain the Quality Mark, since local authorities are responsible for carrying out the assessments and are not required by the Basic Skills Agency to provide figures on the numbers of schools which fail to gain the Quality Mark.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1280W, on the Basic Skills Agency, how many and what proportion of 11-year-olds achieved level 4 or above in *(a)* reading, *(b)* writing and *(c)* mathematics at (i) schools that had gained the Quality Mark from the Basic Skills Agency and (ii) other schools in the last year for which figures are available. [33205]

Jacqui Smith: The data requested are not available.

Building Schools for the Future Programme

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills who the owner of *(a)* assets created by and *(b)* land associated with a Local Education Partnership under the Building Schools for the Future programme will be (i) during and (ii) after the term of the private finance initiative. [32428]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* Local Education Partnerships are joint ventures, usually between local authorities, Partnerships for Schools and a private sector partner, which will deliver Building Schools for the Future (BSF) investment, using both conventional and private finance initiative (PFI) funding. They will not at any time own or control the assets of any school.

Where a school is in a PFI contract, including in BSF, ownership of the land and buildings of the school is vested in the private sector partner for the life of the contract by way of an operating licence or lease. After that time, ownership of these assets reverts to the local authority, or in the case of a voluntary aided, trust or foundation school, to the voluntary aided body, the trust or the governing body as is appropriate. These bodies own the freehold of the land throughout the contract.

Bullying

Dan Norris: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of different approaches to tackling bullying in schools; and if she will make a statement; [31344]

(2) what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of the no blame approach to tackling school bullying; and if she will make a statement. [31345]

Jacqui Smith: Our guidance to schools on tackling bullying "Don't Suffer in Silence" has been externally evaluated by researchers at Goldsmith's college, University of London. The results, though based on a fairly low response rate from schools, show that the schools found that the pack met their expectations and helped in drawing up their anti-bullying policies.

This evaluation included research into the perceived success of the anti-bullying strategies and interventions recommended in the guidance. Schools generally reported a high level of satisfaction with the interventions they had used. I have placed a copy of the research brief for this project in the Library.

The key feature of the 'No Blame' approach, is that it adopts an explicit stance of discouraging punishment as a response to bullying. The Department does not support this stance and neither does the Anti-Bullying Alliance. Our guidance is clear that support and mediation strategies to change behaviour can, and should, be used in tandem with sanctions where appropriate. We are reviewing the guidance to make this even more explicit.

As we do not promote the 'No Blame' approach for use in schools, we have not undertaken any assessment of its effectiveness.

Departmental Priorities

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what priorities the Department has set for 2005–06; and if she will make a statement. [19666]

Ruth Kelly: My priorities for this year are:

Improving school education by tailoring the offer to the needs of each pupil, allowing schools greater freedom to specialise in what they do best and increasing choice for all parents and pupils so that they have access to the best schools, as set out in the Schools White Paper, "Higher Standards, Better Schools For All";

Implementing the 14 to19 reforms so that young people can choose a vocational training route alongside more traditional academic education;

Implementing the Skills Strategy to ensure that employers, employees and low skilled individuals have access to the training they need alongside reform of the FE sector to ensure it is placed to deliver these changes;

Implementing the new HE student support arrangements and ensuring that young people fully understand them so that participation in HE increases, particularly among those from disadvantaged backgrounds;

Introducing the Childcare Bill to provide a legislative framework for our 10-year Childcare Strategy; and

Continuing to make progress towards our challenging PSA targets.

These will all be achieved within the context of a Department which is smaller and more strategic, with the skills to raise standards for children and learners across the board.

The Department's five-year strategy for children and learners (Command ref: 6272] sets out our longer term priorities.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many personnel were employed in her Department in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* civil servants, *(b)* contractors and *(c)* other staff. [27578]

Maria Eagle: I refer the hon. Member to table c of civil service statistics 2004, which shows permanent FTE staff numbers between 1998 and 2004 for each Department and agency. Civil service statistics 2004 are available in the Library and on the Cabinet Office statistics website at:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management of the civil service/statistics/civil service statistics/index.asp

The data for 1997 is in table c in civil service statistics 2003.

The number of contractors engaged by my Department is not collected centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

The number of days that agency staff were engaged in my Department in each of the last three complete calendar years were:

	Number
2004	16,940
2003	27,087
2002	31,229

Statistics on agency staff are held in days only. Numbers for earlier years are not available.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to her answer of 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 997W, on departmental staff, how much her Department has paid the tutor in basic skills to date. [27962]

Bill Rammell: My Department has made no payment to the basic skills tutor as adult basic skills tuition is delivered at no charge to learners who are eligible for funding from the Learning and Skills Council.

We have paid the Adult Education Service £1500 to tailor a programme for facilities management staff in the Department.

Examination Standards

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions she has had with *(a)* examination boards and *(b)* awarding bodies in respect of (i) examinations, (ii) marking and (iii) grading for 2006; and if she will make a statement. [33113]

Jacqui Smith: Ministers in the Department have had no discussion with awarding bodies in respect of examinations, marking and grading for 2006. Awarding bodies are independent of Government. It is the role of the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority and the other regulatory authorities to regulate awarding bodies and to discuss with them issues around standards and delivery of public examinations.

Free School Meals

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many recipients of free school meals there are in each school in the Oxford, East constituency. [32150]

Jacqui Smith: Information on free school meals in maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools in the Oxford, East constituency is shown in the table.

Maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools[1]: School meal arrangements[2], Oxford, East parliamentary constituency, January 2005

URN	LEA	Estab	School name	Number on roll	Number of pupils taking free school meals[3]	Percentage of pupils taking free school meals[3]	Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	Percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals
122967	931	1005	Bartlemas Nursery School	75	11	14.7	11	14.7
122968	931	1006	Headington Nursery School	71	3	4.2	4	5.6
122969	931	1010	Grandpont Nursery School	69	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]
122970	931	1011	Slade Nursery School	55	7	12.7	n/a	n/a
123021	931	2352	St. Nicholas Primary School	279	25	9.0	36	12.9
123027	931	2401	Sandhills Community Primary School	190	8	4.2	15	7.9
123044	931	2521	Bayards Hill Primary School	351	78	22.2	161	45.9
123046	931	2525	East Oxford Primary School	291	86	29.6	110	37.8
123047	931	2527	The Windmill Primary School	386	24	6.2	34	8.8
123048	931	2529	New Marston Primary School	235	20	8.5	59	25.1
123049	931	2531	Rose Hill Primary School	329	69	21.0	130	39.5
123052	931	2539	Orchard Meadow Primary School	328	100	30.5	157	47.9
123053	931	2543	Larkrise Primary School	293	42	14.3	66	22.5
123074	931	2589	Wood Farm Primary School	235	32	13.6	83	35.3
123078	931	2593	Pegasus School	473	n/a	n/a	156	33.0
123088	931	2606	Windale Community Primary School	317	66	20.8	120	37.9
132752	931	2612	The John Henry Newman CE (A) Primary School	356	49	13.8	81	22.8
123139	931	3210	Church Cowley St. James Church of England Primary School	467	36	7.7	71	15.2
123140	931	3211	St. Andrew's Church of England Primary School	297	38	12.8	54	18.2
123142	931	3213	New Hinksey Church of England Primary School	91	20	22.0	22	24.2
123143	931	3216	St. Michael's Church of England Primary School	205	14	6.8	43	21.0
123171	931	3252	St Christopher's Church of England School, Cowley	323	76	23.5	88	27.2
123172	931	3253	St. Francis Church of England Primary School	295	43	14.6	70	23.7
123212	931	3833	St. Ebbe's Church of England Aided First School	270	11	4.1	34	12.6
123213	931	3834	SS Mary and John Church of England Primary School	329	15	4.6	35	10.6
123215	931	3836	Our Lady's Catholic Primary School	308	13	4.2	32	10.4
123216	931	3838	St. Joseph's Catholic Primary School, Oxford	306	9	2.9	9	2.9
123217	931	3839	St. John Fisher Catholic Primary School, Littlemore	207	34	16.4	48	23.2
123242	931	4074	Peers School	1,049	203	19.4	243	23.2
123252	931	4117	Oxford Community School	1,112	155	13.9	320	28.8
123253	931	4120	Cheney School	1,429	129	9.0	226	15.8
133644	931	4145	St. Gregory the Great VA Catholic Secondary School	950	105	11.1	185	19.5

[1] Includes middles schools as deemed.
[2] Includes dually registered and boarding pupils.
[3] Based upon school level numbers of pupils who had a free school meal on 20 January 2005.
[4] Less than 3 or a rate based on less than 3.

Source:
Annual Schools Census.

Freedom of Information

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many Freedom of Information applications her Department has received; how many have taken more than 20 days to process; and how many of these gave rise to complaints about the time taken. [31213]

Maria Eagle: From January 2005, when the Freedom of Information Act took effect, to June 2005, the Department for Education and Skills received 340 Freedom of Information requests for information of which 29 took more than 20 working days to process giving rise to two complaints about the time taken. The Department for Constitutional Affairs is committed to publishing quarterly updates in relation to departmental performance under FOI, including information on both the volume and outcomes of requests. The bulletin for the second quarter was published on 30 September 2005 and can be found on the DCA website at http://www.foi.gov.uk/statsapar-jun05.htm and in the Libraries of both Houses. The next bulletin for the third quarter will be will be published before Christmas, while an annual report will be published in early 2006.

Missing Children

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children were reported missing from care in each year since 1997, broken down by local authority area. [29554]

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Maria Eagle: The information requested may be found on the Department's website at: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DBA/VOL/v000569/index.shtml.

Further Education

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 817–8W, on further education, how much funding was allocated to the learner support funds in further education in 2004–05. [27459]

Bill Rammell: The following table shows the Department of Education and Skills' expenditure on financial support for learning in FE between 2003–04 and 2007–8 (actual and planned). All amounts are rounded to the nearest £1 million.

	Actual			*Planned*	
	2003–04	*2004–05*	*2005–06*	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
Learner support funds	158	148	122	125	130
Other financial support for learners	171	305	474	586	610
Total financial support for learners in FE	329	453	596	711	740

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures are being taken to ensure that students in the bottom two socio-economic groups are encouraged into further education. [31601]

Bill Rammell: The Government's 14–19 Education and Skills White Paper sets out the prime objective of our 14–19 strategy to ensure all young people have opportunities to stay on and achieve their full potential in learning post-16. We are doing this through widening choice in the curriculum, improving the quality of the learning experience, and providing young people with the guidance and financial support they need. Particularly relevant measures for the bottom two socio-economic groups are:

the pre and post 16 Entry to Employment programmes—(work based learning designed to help disadvantaged or disaffected young people overcome often serious barriers to learning).

the Connexions Service (a front line support service for all young people offering advice on careers and lifestyle issues)

a range of financial support and incentives (especially the income-tested educational maintenance allowance, a weekly payment of up to £30 designed to encourage young people to stay in learning).

Gifted and Talented Youth

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005 to the hon. Member for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton (Mr. Gibb), *Official Report*, column 118W, on gifted and talented youth, how many members of the National Academy of Gifted and Talented Youth there are in each school in Staffordshire. [32015]

Jacqui Smith: There are 863 members of the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY) in Staffordshire schools. The following table includes all Staffordshire local education authority schools plus those independent schools with NAGTY members.

Staffordshire

School	*NAGTY members*
Abbot Beyne School	37
Alleyne's High School A Technology School	69
Belgrave High School	0
Biddulph High School	1
Blake Valley Technology College	38
Blessed William Howard Catholic School	0
Blythe Bridge High School	17
Cannock Chase High School	28
Cardinal Griffin Catholic High School	1
Chase Terrace Technology College	0
Chasetown High School	3
Chasetown Specialist Sports College	0
Cheadle High School	0
Cheslyn Hay Sport and Community College	0
Chesterton Community High School	0
Clayton Hall Business and Language College	48
Clough Hall Technology School	17
Codsall Community High School	22
Codsall Middle School	10
De Ferrers Specialist Technology College	44
Denstone College	34
Edenhurst Preparatory School	1
Edgecliff High School	0
Endon High School	0
Fair Oak Business and Enterprise College	6
Great Wyrley High School	18
Hagley Park Sports College	0
John Taylor High School	70
King Edward VI High School	0
King Edward VI School	0
Kingsmead Technology College	1
Leek High School	0
Madeley High School	15
Maryhill High School	0
Moorside High School	8
Nether Stowe High School	25
Newcastle Community High School	1
Norton Canes High School	0
Ounsdale High School	0
Paget High School	0
Painsley Catholic High School	96
Paulet High School	1
Penkridge Middle School	10
Queen Elizabeth's Mercian School	1
Rawlett School	1
Rising Brook High School	0
Robert Sutton Catholic School	6
Sir Graham Balfour High School	0
Sir Thomas Boughey High School	0
St. Dominic's Priory School	34
St. John Fisher Catholic High School	10
Stafford Grammar School	27
The Friary School	1
The Moorlands Sixth Form Centre	1
Thomas Alleyne's High School	28
Torc High School	0
Walton High School	81
Weston Road High School	17
Westwood High School	0
Wilnecote High School	1

Staffordshire

School	*NAGTY members*
Windsor Park Church of England Middle School	3
Wolgarston High School	0
Wolstanton High School	31
Woodhouse High School	0
Total	863

Leadership Training

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the leadership training involved in the *(a)* Teach First and *(b)* Fast Track Teaching schemes. [33141]

Jacqui Smith: We have commissioned an independent five year evaluation of the Fast Track Teaching programme, which is due to report in 2008. An interim report will be published by the Department in early 2006. This will assess key aspects of Fast Track, including the provision of leadership training. The Training and Development Agency for Schools is funding an evaluation of the initial teacher training element of Teach First.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how the leadership skills of participants in the *(a)* Teach First and *(b)* Fast Track Teaching scheme are assessed. [33142]

Jacqui Smith: In order to be offered a place on either Teach First or the Fast Track teaching programme, applicants are required to demonstrate their leadership potential in a challenging multi-stage selection process. Both programmes use a competency-based application sift and each has its own assessment centre.

Teach First recruits high-calibre graduates to train and qualify as teachers. It runs a compulsory leadership programme in partnership with the Tanaka Business School at Imperial College and the Institute of Education, amongst others. This Foundations of Leadership Programme aims to develop participants' leadership and entrepreneurial skills through internship, coaching, school-based projects and competitions and skills training.

Fast Track recruits teachers in the early years of their teaching career. It supports participants' accelerated leadership development by providing a programme of coaching support, mentoring and development activities, tailored to individual need. Fast Track teachers are assessed against a leadership impact scale which allows their progress to be benchmarked. The ultimate test of these teachers' leadership skills is to compete against other applicants for leadership roles. A number of Teach First participants and Fast Track teachers have achieved leadership positions in their schools. The first Fast Trackteacher to achieve a headship will take up her new post in January 2006.

Learning and Skills Council

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 18 October 2005 to the hon. Member for Fareham (Mr. Hoban), *Official Report*, column 962W, on the Learning and Skills Council, what *(a)* level 4, *(b)* level 5 and *(c)* higher education courses the Learning and Skills Council funded in 2003–04. [24986]

Bill Rammell: The Learning and Skills Council funded a wide range of non-prescribed higher education at level 4, 5 and higher education in 2003/04, including national vocational qualifications; diplomas (including graduate and postgraduate diplomas); graduateship, associateship and fellowship qualifications; qualifications in teaching further education; and other professional and management qualifications.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to introduce Ofsted inspections for the Learning and Skills Council. [33037]

Jacqui Smith: The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is a non-departmental public body, responsible for funding and planning education and training for over 16-year-olds. It is not itself a learning provider, and is not therefore subject to inspection by Ofsted or the adult learning inspectorate (ALI), although the provision it funds is.

National Skills Academies

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Bognor Regis and Littlehampton (Mr. Gibb) of 17 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1456W, on national skills academies, if she will set out the individuals, companies and other bodies who will be preparing the business plans for the first four sectors of the National Skills Academy programme. [32365]

Phil Hope: Each of the four proposals to develop National Skills Academies now moving into detailed business planning are led by the appropriate sector skills council. The sector skills councils are construction skills, the financial services sector skills council, improve (covering the food and drink manufacturing sector) and SEMTA which is leading the development of the proposal for a Manufacturing National Skills Academy.

In the four sectors a number of well-known companies have been involved in developing the proposals for National Skills Academies. This includes Bovis Lend Lease and Kier Homes (construction), Nationwide Building Society and Norwich Union (financial services) Northern Foods plc and Youngs Bluecrest Seafood Ltd (food and drink) Filtronics Components Ltd and Caterpillar (manufacturing). We expect that each of the sector skills councils will continue to work with these employers and to engage others across the sector as they develop their detailed business plans with the Learning and Skills Council. I will ask Mark Haysom, chief executive of the Learning and Skills Council to write to my hon. Friend with full details of the employers involved in the first National Skills Academies, once business plans have been agreed.

National Vocational Qualifications

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assistance the Government are giving adults to pursue national vocational qualifications; and if she will make a statement. [31299]

Phil Hope *[holding answer 23 November 2005]:* The second skills White Paper, "Skills: Getting on in business, getting on in work" published in March 2005, reaffirmed our commitment that all individuals—whether employed or not can get the skills and qualifications they need for sustained and rewarding work, and for personal growth in order for them to maximise their contribution to their communities and society.

The Learning and Skills Council heavily subsidises adults undertaking national vocational qualifications—currently at least 72.5 per cent. of the course fees are paid from public funds. In addition it provides free tuition to those adults who have not yet achieved a first full Level 2 qualification, equivalent to five good GCSEs or an NVQ2. Today, there are around 10 million adults in England who lack a full Level 2 qualification and it is vital for the nation's social and economic future that they receive the help and support they need to achieve a platform of skills for employability. The Government's target is to reduce the number of people in the workforce lacking a full Level 2 or equivalent qualification by 40 per cent. (3.6 million) by 2010.

There are a number of other assistance channels for adult learners, which, depending upon individual circumstances, could include an adult learning grant which pays up to £30 a week for those on low incomes studying full-time (defined as at least 12 hours per week) for a first full Level 2 and for a first Level 3 for those between 19–30, access to an integrated information and advice service through learndirect and local nextstep services, additional help from Learner Support Funds for those who need extra help with child care, transport costs and other costs of learning, and skills coaching from April 2005 (in eight Jobcentre Plus areas) offering intensive personal guidance service for adults on inactive and active benefits to help them move into sustainable employment

Pre-school Education

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on trends in *(a)* emotional and social development and *(b)* linguistic skills in pre-school children. [31419]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* 2004 is the first year for which full official results for the foundation stage profile are available. These show that, across England as a whole, 83.7 percent. of children achieved a score of 18 or higher across the three assessment scales within the personal, social and emotional development area of learning, while 77.4 percent. achieved a total of 24 or higher across the four assessment scales within the communications, language and literacy area of learning. Children assessed as scoring six points on any assessment scale within the foundation stage profile are working securely within a wide range of goals across a broad curriculum.

We shall continue to monitor trends within the foundation stage profile results in the future.

Results from the Sure Start Language Measure (SSLM) show a significant rise in the percentage of children with both high word scores and parents free from concern about their child's language, rising from 70 percent. in 2001 to 76 percent. in 2004. Results from the 2005 SSLM national data collection are still being analysed.

Schools

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps her Department is taking to encourage schools to select pupils by aptitude. [33229]

Jacqui Smith: It is for schools' admission authorities to determine whether they wish to adopt such arrangements.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research her Department has undertaken into the relationship between a school's admissions policy and its stated ethos. [32721]

Jacqui Smith: My Department has not commissioned research into the relationship between a school's admission policy and its ethos.

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of the Transforming Youth Work (Development Funding) funding stream from the Government Office for London was made available to the London borough of Croydon in 2004–05. [32280]

Maria Eagle: London borough of Croydon received £57,666 in 2004/05 from the Transforming Youth Work Development Fund. Croydon's proportion of the London regional allocation (£1,340.876) was 4.3 per cent.

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance is given to local authorities when tendering for school transport on ensuring confidentiality of the identity of young people. [31648]

Maria Eagle: Confidentiality of information is governed by the Data Protection Act 1998. Further advice is contained in the Disability Rights Commission code of practice for schools. This recognises that information is often needed in order for authorities to make reasonable adjustments to cater for the transport requirements of a child with special needs. It explains that schools should seek the necessary consents before passing such information on. It is also clear that, should a request for confidentiality under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 be made, information may not, from that point, be passed on for the purposes of making reasonable adjustments.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how the role of the Northamptonshire local education authority will change as a result of the proposals in the recent schools White Paper. [31918]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* The White Paper sets out an enhanced role for local authorities as the champions of parents and pupils,

rather than the direct provider of school places. Local authorities will have new powers to commission school places and to intervene where provision is poor.

We expect all local authorities, including Northamptonshire to take on this role. However it will be for Northamptonshire local authority to determine their priorities on the basis of local need, and in accordance with relevant statutory provisions and guidance.

Scout Association

Stephen Pound: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what financial support is to be provided to assist the UK Scout Association in hosting the centenary programme in 2007. [32295]

Maria Eagle: There are currently no plans to provide funding specifically for the centenary event. However, the DfES is currently providing funding to the Scouts of £309,453 over the three year period 2005–08 through the National Voluntary Organisations Grant Scheme.

Specialist Schools

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children with *(a)* special needs and *(b)* social and behavioural needs are being taught in specialist schools in (i) England and (ii) the Tees Valley. [26487]

Maria Eagle: Information on the number of pupils with special educational needs and behaviour, emotional and social difficulties in specialist schools and special schools is shown in the table.

Specialist schools and special schools: Number and percentage of pupils with special educational needs—January 2005: England and Tees Valley

	Number of schools	Total pupils	Pupils with a statement of SEN		Pupils with SEN without statements		Pupils whose primary need is behaviour, emotional and social difficulties[1]	
			Number	Percentage[2]	Number	Percentage[3]	Number	Percentage[4]
Specialist schools[5]								
England	1,954	2,151,170	49,470	2.3	277,850	12.9	34,790	27.0
Tees Valley[6]	27	26,800	1,010	3.8	3,950	14.7	570	22.4
Special Schools[7, 8]								
England	1,122	90,370	88,030	97.4	1,790	2.0	12,470	13.9
Tees Valley[6]	13	1,520	1,500	98.7	20	1.3	280	18.2

[1] Pupils at School Action Plus and those with a statement of SEN provided information on their primary need and, if appropriate, their secondary need. Information on their primary need only is given here.
[2] Number of pupils with statements expressed as a percentage of the total number of pupils on roll.
[3] Number of pupils with SEN without a statement expressed as a percentage of the total number of pupils on roll.
[4] Number of pupils with behaviour, emotional and social difficulties expressed as a percentage of all pupils at School Action Plus or with a statement of SEN.
[5] Includes maintained secondary schools and special schools designated as specialist schools as at January 2005.
[6] Includes Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar and Cleveland, Stockton-on-Tees and Darlington local authorities.
[7] Includes maintained and non-maintained special schools.
[8] Number and percentage of pupils with SEN without statements and pupils by type of need excludes general hospital schools.
Note:
Pupil numbers have been rounded to the nearest 10.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Information was collected from schools on pupils at School Action Plus and those pupils with a statement or SEN about their main or primary need and, if appropriate, their secondary need fro the first time in 2004.

There are a range of factors which may affect the data recorded, including:

Local interpretation of definitions

Classification of children with multiple needs

Differences in diagnoses between education and health professionals

Availability of special provisions in Authorities

Swimming

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of performance against the key stage 2 target on swimming by schools in each of the last five years. [32056]

Jacqui Smith: This information is not collected centrally on a regular basis. In 2000, an Ofsted report on swimming at key stage 2 found that 83 per cent. of pupils could swim the 25 metre standard. It also found that the teaching of swimming was good or better in four out of five lessons.

Our Physical Education, School Sport and Club Links strategy, being implemented jointly with the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, provides targeted support to enhance school swimming. Since 2001, we have:

created a new swimming and water safety website

(www.nc.uk.net/safeswimming) which provides practical support for schools and swimming teachers;

published, in December 2003, a Swimming Charter, which sets out guidelines, shares best practice and provides practical support to help schools overcome many of the challenges they face when planning and delivering swimming; and

carried out a pilot programme which tested out how best to support those children who reach the end of key stage 2 and are not able to swim 25 metres.

As a result of the success of the pilot, we intend to implement this programme nationally from April 2006. £5.5 million has been allocated to support a national key stage 2 swimming scheme between April 2006 and March 2008.

Teachers

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teachers of *(a)* physics and *(b)* mathematics do not hold a degree level qualification in a relevant subject; what estimate she has made of the percentage of teachers with a physics, mathematics or engineering degree who are likely to retire in the next 10 years; and what the availability is of supply teachers with appropriate subject qualifications. [31893]

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teachers of physics at *(a)* A-level, *(b)* AS-level and *(c)* GCSE level had a degree in physics in the latest period for which figures are available, broken down by Key Stage. [32627]

Jacqui Smith: The information is not available in the format requested.

Table 24 of the Statistics of Education, School Workforce in England Volume, 2004 edition, shows the highest qualification held by secondary school teachers in the subjects that they taught to years 7 to 13 in 2002, the latest year for which data are available. A copy of the volume has been placed in the House of Commons Library. It may also be accessed at the following URL: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000554/index.shtml.

Table 25 of the same publication provides the proportion of subject periods delivered by teachers with a degree level qualification in that subject.

Table 5 of the Secondary Schools Curriculum and Staffing Survey 2002 Statistical First Release shows the age breakdown of full time teachers by subject of highest post A-level qualification. A copy of the Statistical First Release has been placed in the House of Commons Library. It may also be accessed at the following URL: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000413/sfr25-2003.pdf.

There is no fixed retirement age for teachers, although unreduced pension benefits are payable under the provisions of the Teachers' Pension Scheme to existing scheme members from age 60. Teachers currently aged 53 and over will reach age 60 by 2012 and would be able to take their pension benefits at that point. Actuarially reduced pension benefits are also available to members of the Teachers' Pension Scheme between the ages of 55 and 60.

Information is not available on the qualifications of supply teachers or the numbers of teachers who teach their degree or related subject by examination or key stage level.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what steps the Department takes to manage the number of teacher trainees in different subjects to ensure adequacy of supply; [32622]

(2) what assessment the Department has made of the ratio of supply and demand for teachers of modern languages. [32623]

Jacqui Smith: The number of initial teacher training places, including those for modern foreign languages, made available each year are agreed between the Department and the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA). Their decision is informed by the teacher supply models, which take into account recent and expected flows in and out of teaching, the age structure of the teaching profession, the latest pupil projections and expected changes in demand arising from new policy initiatives with an analysis by age, phase and (for secondary schools) subject. These also take account of expected wastage during training. Consideration is also given to:

the latest evidence on vacancy rate by subject

the evidence of the secondary schools curriculum and staffing survey e.g. on levels of out-of-subject teaching

evidence from Ofsted on particular subjects, where available

the desirability for a degree of stability in the training provider market.

Since 2000 we have provided £6,000 bursaries to all PGCE trainee teachers. We have also provided those teaching priority subjects, which includes modern foreign languages, with a £4,000 Golden Hello once they have successfully completed their induction. From September 2005 trainee science and maths teachers have received an enhanced bursary of £7,000 bursary and a £5,000 Golden Hello. The financial package remained the same for other subjects. For PGCE trainee teachers of secondary priority subjects the bursary will increase again from September 2006 to £9,000. Those teachers who received the increased bursary will also be provided with a Golden Hello, of £5,000 for those teaching maths and science and £2,500 for other priority subjects, once they have successfully completed their induction.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research she has evaluated on what motivates *(a)* teachers and *(b)* administrators to enter the education sector at (i) primary, (ii) secondary, (iii) further education and (iv) university level. [31373]

Jacqui Smith: In 2003, the Department, in collaboration with the General Teaching Council for England (GTCE) and the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA), commissioned a six year study of teachers' experiences of initial teacher training and early professional development in England entitled "Becoming a Teacher". This has already explored what motivates people to enter the teaching profession.

This research has revealed that the three most influential sets of reasons which attracted the survey respondents to undertake an initial teacher training programme were related to: altruistic motives e.g. helping young people to learn; the perceived benefits of teaching and training e.g. long holidays; and being a teacher in today's society e.g. the challenging nature of the job.

The research has further revealed some differences across teaching phases, including: more primary trainees than secondary trainees were attracted by working with children and young people, and helping young people to learn; while at the same time, a higher

proportion of secondary trainees than primary were attracted by staying involved with a subject specialism and opportunities for career development.

We have also looked at what motivates teachers in further education as part of a recent study entitled "Recruitment and Retention in the Post-16 Learning and Skills Sector". Respondents cited a range of factors, including wanting to help people to develop and wanting to work with a wider range of people/learners. The two major personal reasons mentioned by respondents were for their own personal development and wanting to change their career path.

In relation to university level, we have also funded a study by the National Institute of Economic and Social Research called the 'Recruitment and Retention of Academic Staff in Higher Education'. This looked at what motivates existing staff, and what the motivating factors are attracting staff into higher education. The motivating factors included: teaching; ability to undertake personal research; flexibility of hours; autonomy; and stability of employment.

We do not have any specific research results on what motivates administrators in schools, the learning and skills sector, or at university level.

Vocational Qualifications

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to her answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1326W, on vocational qualifications, how many 15-year-olds achieved five A*-C grades at GCSE or equivalent, including a full intermediate GNVQ *(a)* as a proportion of all 15-year-olds and *(b)* as a proportion of all 15-year-olds who achieved five grades A*-C at GCSE or equivalent. [27963]

Phil Hope: Provisional figures for 2005 are available in the following table:

Proportions of 15-year-old pupils1 achieving five A-C grades at GCSE and equivalent including a full intermediate GNVQ in 2005[2]*

Five A*-C grades at GCSE and equivalent including a full intermediate GNVQ	4,666
Total number of 15-year-old pupils	637,194
Percentage of all 15-year-olds who achieved five A*-C at GCSE and equivalent including a full intermediate GNVQ	0.7
Five A*-C grades at GCSE and equivalent including a full intermediate GNVQ	4,666
Five A*-C grades at GCSE and equivalent	23,688
Percentage of those achieving five A*-C grades at GCSE and equivalent whose achievement included a full intermediate GNVQ	19.7

[1] Pupils aged 15 at the beginning of the academic year (i.e. 31 August).
[2] Figures for 2005 are provisional.
Note:
These figures are only based on those who achieved five A*-C GCSE and equivalent results, not five or more A*-C GCSE and equivalent results.

Young Apprenticeship Scheme

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much the Young Apprenticeship Scheme *(a)* cost in 2004–05 and *(b)* is expected to cost in (i) 2005–06 and (ii) 2007–08; how many people dropped out of the scheme in 2004–05; whether schools will be able to use grades from the scheme in their GCSE league tables; how scheme grades are calibrated; and how they relate to the calibration for GCSE. [31262]

Phil Hope: There are around 1,000 pupils on cohort 1 of the programme, which began in September 2004, and around 2,000 on cohort 2, which began in September 2005.

Funding for the delivery of the Young Apprenticeship (YA) Programme is routed to local partnerships via the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) on an individual pupil basis. A total of up to £6,000 per pupil is available for the two years of the programme, £3,500 in the first and £2,500 in the second year.

In addition, the Department are providing funding to the Sector Skills Councils (SSCs) and sector bodies involved in the programme, to provide strategic input to policy development on behalf of their sectors and develop sector support for partnerships and teachers.

In 2004–05 the Young Apprenticeship Programme cost £3,948,855.63, of which £3,153,000 was allocated through the Learning and Skills Council to cover pupil costs and LSC support for partnerships, the remainder being allocated by the Department for central and sector specific support.

In 2005–06 the programme is expected to cost in the region of £10,700,000. Costs in 2007–08 (and in 2006–07) will depend on the number of pupils on the programme, yet to be confirmed.

Confirmed figures for the number of pupils who dropped out of the scheme in 2004–05 will not be known until the analysis of baseline data has been completed. This is currently scheduled for the end of 2005.

No new qualifications have been developed for the YA programme. Pupils are studying existing qualifications, which are approved as appropriate for use pre-16, either GCSEs in vocational subjects, NVQs or vocationally-related qualifications. SSCs and sector bodies have provided advice on which qualifications are most appropriate to accredit achievement in particular sectors and have clear progression routes post-16. Pupils on the programme are expected to achieve Level 2 outcomes (equivalent to A* to C at GCSE). The qualifications all have an established equivalence to GCSEs in the Secondary Achievement and Attainment Tables. Qualification outcomes for pupils on the programme will be included in the table for their school.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 30 November 2005

HEALTH

Ambulance Service

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the impact upon the Tees, Yorkshire and Humberside Ambulance Service of the recent reconfiguration. [30317]

Mr. Byrne: There has been no reconfiguration in this geographical area since the Tees, East and North Yorkshire Ambulance Service National Health Service Trust was formed in 1999.

In order to deliver the benefits of the recent review of ambulance services, Taking Healthcare to the Patient: Transforming NHS Ambulance Services, ambulance trusts need to be of a size that enables investment in people and resources to underpin advanced services. We are therefore proposing that there should be fewer, bigger ambulance trusts and will be undertaking public consultation on these proposals this winter. These proposals will ensure resources are targeted at improving patient care and supporting front-line services.

Care Home Regulations 2001

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health, how many care homes *(a)* exceeded, *(b)* met, *(c)* almost met and *(d)* failed to meet (i) the national minimum standard for complaints procedures and (ii) Regulation (A) 5 and (B) 6 of the Care Home Regulations 2001 in each of the last five years. [22378]

Mr. Byrne: I understand from the chair of the Commission for Social Care Inspection, that data are collected on how care homes are meeting the national minimum standards. How care homes have met these standards is shown in the tables.

Regulations 5, 5A and 6 set out requirements on information to be provided to the service users. Regulation 22 sets out requirements for the complaints procedure. Compliance with these regulations is a legal condition that must be met in order for a home to be registered.

Care homes for older people

	4-Exceeded	*Percentage*	*3-Met*	*Percentage*
2002–03				
Standard 1- Information	198	2	2,199	24
Standard 2- Contract	92	1	4,442	48
Standard 16- Complaints	106	1	4,622	50
2003–04				
Standard 1- Information	311	3	6,357	54
Standard 2- Contract	115	1	8,096	71
Standard 16- Complaints	154	1	9,038	77
2004–05				
Standard 1- Information	219	2	6,573	61
Standard 2- Contract	65	1	7,601	74
Standard 16- Complaints	115	1	8,983	79

	2- Almost met	*Percentage*	*1- Failed to meet*	*Percentage*
2002–03				
Standard 1- Information	4,748	51	2,201	24
Standard 2- Contract	3,828	41	954	10
Standard 16- Complaints	3,850	41	754	8
2003–04	4,157	35	954	8
Standard 1- Information	2,667	23	548	5
Standard 2- Contract	2,199	19	398	3
Standard 16- Complaints				
2004–05				
Standard 1- Information	3,375	31	627	6
Standard 2- Contract	2,184	21	394	4
Standard 16- Complaints	1,963	17	282	2

Care homes for younger adults

	4-Exceeded	*Percentage*	*3-Met*	*Percentage*
2002–2003				
Standard 1-Information	116	2	1,010	15
Standard 5-Needs Assessment	51	1	2,235	34
Standard 22-Concerns and Complaints	78	1	3,074	46

Care homes for younger adults

	4-Exceeded	*Percentage*	*3-Met*	*Percentage*
2003–2004				
Standard 1-Information	115	2	2,601	44
Standards 5-Needs Assessment	48	1	2,727	52
Standard 22-Concerns and Complaints	108	2	4,361	71
2004–2005				
Standard 1-Information	83	2	2,042	57
Standard 5-Needs Assessment	20	1	1,950	62
Standard 22-Concerns and Complaints	57	1	3,420	79

	2-Almost met	*Percentage*	*1-Failed to meet*	*Percentage*
2002–2003				
Standard 1-Information	3,646	55	1,844	28
Standard 5-Needs Assessment	2,850	44	1,388	21
Standard 22-Concerns and Complaints	2,838	43	624	9
2003–2004				
Standard 1-Information	2,567	43	647	11
Standards 5-Needs Assessment	1,891	36	618	12
Standard 22-Concerns and Complaints	1,415	23	224	4
2004–2005				
Standard 1-Information	1,285	36	194	5
Standard 5-Needs Assessment	949	30	227	7
Standard 22—Concerns and Complaints	755	17	104	2

Note:
The total number of homes scored against standard 1 does not always match the total number of homes scored against Standard 2 and Standard 16 for each inspection year in the tables, as not all homes are inspected against every standard.
Source:
Registration and Inspection (R&I) Database, 1 October 2005

Childhood Vaccinations

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has had with *(a)* the Joint Committee on vaccinations and immunisations and *(b)* other interested parties on whether to extend the routine childhood vaccination programme to include immunisation against pneumococcal disease. [28706]

Caroline Flint: The Joint Committee on vaccinations and immunisations provided advice on a proposed childhood pneumococcal vaccination schedule at their meeting in October 2005. This advice is currently being considered by the Department.

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what mechanisms are in place to assess the effectiveness of consultant-led projects in her Department; what sanctions are available to penalise consultants who run unsuccessful projects; how many projects conducted by consultants were assessed as unsuccessful in each year since 2000; and what sanctions were imposed in each case. [29071]

Jane Kennedy: The Office of Government Commerce's Gateway process provides assurance at critical stages of a programme's or project's lifecycle and is applicable to programmes and projects managed by both internal and external resources.

The information requested in relation to individual projects is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps the Department takes to ensure that consultancies do not claim excessive expenses while working for her Department and its agencies. [29072]

Jane Kennedy: In order to prevent excessive expenses being claimed, the Department either includes them as part of the total work contract or allows them to be claimed in line with departmental guidelines.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Health who the Director of Finance is of her Department; what specialist finance qualifications he or she holds; and what the details are of his or her career to date. [26322]

Mr. Byrne: The finance director is Richard Douglas. He is a member of the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy. In summary his career history is:

Department of Health Finance Director since 2001

National Savings Finance Director 1999–2001

NHS Executive Deputy Director of Finance 1996–1999

National Audit Office Director 1994–96

National Audit Office 1980–1994

HM Customs and Excise 1978–1980

Hepatitis

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if the Government have set targets for the diagnosis of hepatitis *(a)* B and *(b)* C on an annual basis. [30845]

Caroline Flint: There are no national targets for the diagnosis of hepatitis B or C. In the Hepatitis C Action Plan for England, there are two national outcome indicators intended to track increased testing. Both these indicators, drawn from epidemiological surveillance by the Health Protection Agency, should increase the proportion of those attending treatment and support agencies for injecting drug users who are aware of their hepatitis C infection and the total number of laboratory confirmed hepatitis C infection reports.

HIV/AIDS

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to raise awareness of HIV/AIDS among primary care staff; what guidance she has issued to primary care staff to ensure the care received by those with HIV/AIDS is fair and equitable; and what plans she has to issue further guidance on this issue. [26018]

Caroline Flint: "Recommended standards for NHS HIV services" was published in 2003. This includes a chapter on primary health care for people with HIV. This document was produced jointly by the Department and the Medical Foundation for AIDS and Sexual Health (MEDFASH). The latter has also produced a booklet, "HIV in Primary Care—an essential guide to HIV for general practitioners, practice nurses and other members of the primary health care team".

The British Association of Sexual Health and HIV (BASHH) also has guidelines on HIV testing in primary care.

The National HIV Nurses Association is due to publish a set of HIV nursing competencies in 2006. All these guidelines help ensure that HIV/AIDS care is fair and equitable.

Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list public consultations undertaken by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority in each of the last 10 years; and what conclusions were reached in each case. [30412]

Caroline Flint: Information on the public consultation exercises undertaken by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) can be found on its website at www.hfea.gov.uk. Where the outcome is not shown, the consultation has resulted in amendments to the HFEA's code of practice or the issue of new or revised directions.

Infertility Treatment

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether all primary care trusts in England are providing at least one cycle of IVF to eligible couples with infertility; and if she will make a statement; [29837]

(2) what assessment she has made of the extent to which primary care trusts are limiting the provision of NHS-funded infertility treatment to couples with no existing children; and if she will make a statement;[29838]

(3) what assessment she has made of whether primary care trusts are applying more restrictive female age criteria to couples seeking NHS-funded infertility treatment than the 23 to 39 years range set by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence; and if she will make a statement. [29839]

Caroline Flint: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2110W.

Influenza Virus

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the evidential basis was for the statement on page 44 of the UK pandemic influenza contingency plan, published on 19 October, in relation to pneumococcal immunisation preventing some of the complications due to secondary pneumococcal infection following influenza infection; and whether the evidence indicates that this is an effective course of action for *(a)* adults over 65 years and *(b)* children. [28705]

Caroline Flint: Both pneumococcal vaccines used to vaccinate children and older people in clinical risk groups, including adults over 65 years have been shown to provide protection against pneumococcal bacteraemia. In the case of the vaccine that is recommended for children under five years who are in a risk group, the vaccine also provides protection against non-bacteraemic infections such as pneumonia and ear infections.

It is well documented that secondary bacterial infection follows influenza infection during seasonal flu epidemics. It is reasonable to assume that there may be an increase in pneumococcal disease during a pandemic. It would be prudent to ensure that there is high vaccine coverage among the risk groups recommended pneumococcal vaccine.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made of the possibility of *(a)* co-infection within a single human host of a human-adapted influenza virus and H5N1, with a consequent interchange of genetic material between the viruses and *(b)* random mutation giving rise to a new pandemic influenza virus; [23988]

(2) what assessment she has made of whether there are human influenza strains which could combine with an H5N1 strain giving rise to mutagenesis from which a virulent, human host adapted strain could emerge. [25463]

Caroline Flint: There are little data available on this issue. There is good evidence that the 1918 pandemic virus arose from random mutation giving rise to a new human virus. There is also good evidence that the 1957 and 1968 pandemic viruses arose from reassortment between a human virus and an animal virus. At this time, it is impossible to determine how a new human pandemic virus might be created and which influenza strains might be involved in the reassortment.

Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the expenditure was on the Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority in 2004–05; and what the planned expenditure is for 2005–06 and 2006–07 in *(a)* cash and *(b)* real terms, including the reductions proposed in the NHS non-departmental body review; [30459]

(2) how many full-time equivalent staff were employed by the *(a)* Pharmaceutical Pricing Authority and *(b)* Health Protection Agency (i) in total and (ii) in each (A) region, (B) country and (C) main office location in each of the last five years; and what job reductions are planned in each case. [30460]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* Expenditure by Prescription Pricing Authority (PPA) in 2004–05, taken from the finance report and accounts, shows a net resource out-turn of £72.676 million; capital expenditure of £4.702 million; and a net parliamentary funding of £76.477 million.

PPA expenditure for 2005–06, taken from the latest finance report and accounts indicates a net resource out-turn of £76.192 million (forecast); capital expenditure of £6.03 million (forecast); and a net parliamentary funding of £78.095 million.

The gross domestic product deflator for 2005–06 was 2.5 per cent.

In terms of planned expenditure for 2006–07, the PPA will become part of the new NHS Business Services Authority. Individual budgets will no longer be allocated to the component organisations within the NHS Business Services Authority as synergy through the merger will be used to realise efficiencies.

In terms of the numbers of staff employed by the PPA, the figures in the finance report and accounts, shows the number of employees (whole-time equivalent) as being:

	Number
2004–05	2,123
2003–04	2,108
2002–03	2,260
2001–02	2,080
2000–01	2,145

This excludes those employed on behalf of other agencies.

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) was created on 1 April 2003. Published information on staffing levels is available in its annual reports and accounts for 2003–04 and for 2004–05, both of which are available in the Library. The Department does not have information about HPA staffing in each region or county. Sites at which HPA currently operates and the whole-time equivalent staff numbers at each site as at 1 April 2005 has been placed in the Library.

Both the PPA and the HPA are in discussion with the Department about reductions in staffing levels in response to the arms length body review.

Notes:

1. 2005–06 forecast out-turn assumes £1.173 million underspend.

2. Figures are not really comparable due to European Health Insurance Card provision in 2005–06 of £8.5 million plus cost improvement programme, etc. Therefore, it would be misleading to increase the 2004–05 out-turn by 2.5 per cent. to £74.5 million without taking all the other funding changes into account.

Pneumococcal Vaccine Supply

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which manufacturers supply pneumococcal vaccines to the NHS; and what evidence she has received on the relative effectiveness of each. [28707]

Caroline Flint: The pneumcococcal polysaccharide vaccine is supplied by Sanofi Pasteur MSD Ltd and is the vaccine recommended for those aged two years and over in at-risk groups, including all those aged 65 years and over.

The vaccine provides protection against 23 pneumococcal strains. Overall effectiveness in preventing pneumococcal bacteraemia, invasive pneumococcal pneumonia, septacaemia and meningitis, is around 50 to 70 percent, for this vaccine[1]. Current evidence suggests that the polysaccharide vaccine is not effective in protecting against non-bacteraemic pneumococcal infection such as pneumonia[2].

The pneumococcal conjugate vaccine is supplied by Wyeth vaccines as is the vaccine recommended for at-risk children under five years.

The vaccine provides protection against seven common pneumococcal strains. Pre and post-licensing studies have shown the vaccine to be 97 percent, effective in preventing pneumococcal bacteraemia caused by these strains. The vaccine also provides protection against pneumonia and otitis media[3].

Notes:

[1] Mangtani et al., 2003; Fedson, 1999; Fine et al., 1994; Butler et al., 1993; Melegaro and Edmunds, 2004.

[2] Jackson et al, 2003.

[3] Black et al., 2000; Black et al, 2002.

Source:

Black S et al. (2000) Efficacy, safety, and immunogenicity of heptavalent pneumococcal conjugate vaccine in children. Pediatr Infect Dis J19: 187–95.

Black S et al. (2002) Effectiveness of heptavalent pneumococcal comjugate vaccine in children younger than five years of age for prevention of pneumonia. Pediatr Infect Dis J21: 810–15.

Butler JC et al. (1993) Pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine efficacy: an evaluation of current recommendations. JAMA 270: 1826–31.

Fedson DS (1999) The clinical effectiveness of pneumococcal vaccination: a brief review. Vaccine 17: S85–90.

Fine MJ et al. (1994) Efficacy of pneumococcal vaccination in adults: a meta-analysis of randomised controlled trials. Arch Int Med 154: 2666–77.

Mangtani P et al. (2003) Efficacy of polysaccharide pneumococcal vaccine in adults in more developed countries: the state of the evidence. Lancet Infect Dis 3. 71–8.

Melegaro A and Edmunds WJ (2004) The 23-valent pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine.

Part I. Efficacy of PPV in the elderly: a comparison of meta-analyses. Eur J Epidemiol 19: 353–63.

Tuberculosis

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list countries from which people applying for a visa to stay in the UK for longer than six months have to provide a certificate proving that they are free from infectious tuberculosis; and what estimate she has made of the incidence of infectious tuberculosis in those countries. [29506]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 17 November 2005]:* As part of the Home Office five-year strategy, the International Organisation of Migration (IOM) have started a phased implementation of pre-entry screening in Tanzania, Thailand, Sudan and Bangladesh. United Kingdom entry clearance officers in these countries have begun to advise all applicants applying for UK entry certificates that they need to be screened for infectious pulmonary tuberculosis, and will be required to bring a health certificate issued by IOM with them to the UK in order to get entry clearance. Applicants found to have infectious TB will not be issued with a health certificate until they have completed treatment in line with World Health Organisation guidelines.

Details of the incidence of infectious tuberculosis in the four, and other, countries have been published by the WHO at:

www.who.int/tb/publications/global_report/2005/en/

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the reasons for the rise in the number of cases of tuberculosis in England. [29507]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 17 November 2005]:* The chief medical officer's action plan "Stopping Tuberculosis in England" (October 2004) recognised that tuberculosis (TB) in England increased by 25 per cent. over the previous 10 years, and is still rising.

There are a number of factors that contribute to the rise in TB. TB is so common in certain parts of the world that people who live there are at a higher risk of catching it. The disease follows patterns of migration, and in England around two-thirds of TB patients are born abroad. Among these people, TB as a disease may not develop until five to 10 years later. Apart from the changing patterns of migration, other factors for increasing rates of TB include increased opportunities for international travel; homelessness in inner cities and increasing alcohol and other substance misuse. Also, HIV infection weakens a person's immunity to TB, although this only accounts for a small proportion, around 3 per cent. of the total.

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) implemented a system of continuous enhanced tuberculosis surveillance in England in 1999 in response to the increase in cases of tuberculosis reported through the statutory notification system for infectious diseases, and aimed to better inform understanding of the changing epidemiology of tuberculosis.

Annual tuberculosis surveillance reports are available from the HPA's website at www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/tb/epidemiology/reports.htm

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Crime Statistics

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Solicitor-General how many successful prosecutions for *(a)* violent crime and *(b)* gun crime there have been in each of the last five years. [22261]

Hazel Blears: I have been asked to reply.

The available information from the Home Office Court Proceedings database is contained in the table. It shows the number of successful prosecutions for violent crime (including all offences of violence against the person, sexual offences and robbery) in England and Wales, 1999 to 2003.

It is not possible to identify the number of offenders found guilty of gun crime as the individual circumstances of the offence are not collected.

Statistics on court proceedings for 2004 will be published in late November.

Offenders[1] found guilty at all courts for violent crime offences,[2] England and Wales, 1999 to 2003

	Number
1999	45,630
2000	45,104
2001	46,163
2002	49,803
2003	49,694

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

[2] Violent crime includes all offences of violence against the person, sexual offences and robbery.

Equitable Life

Dr. Cable: To ask the Solicitor General when the Serious Fraud Office will report back on its examination of Equitable Life, commissioned by his Department in January 2004. [33047]

The Solicitor-General: I am informed that the Serious Fraud Office has taken counsel's opinion but will not complete consideration of the matter until the current civil actions are complete.

Serious Fraud Office

Chris Huhne: To ask the Solicitor General how many people have been proceeded against by the Serious Fraud Office in the 2005–06 financial year; and how many were acquitted by *(a)* jury and *(b)* order of the judge. [32465]

The Solicitor-General: During the financial year to date the Serious Fraud Office have secured convictions against nine defendants out of those proceeded against in seven cases whilst two have been acquitted by the verdict of a jury: Two further defendants have had the charges dismissed against them by order of the judge.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Bees

Mr. Willis: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to address the increase in the incidence of European foulbrood in bee colonies. [29284]

Jim Knight: Data provided by the National Bee Unit indicate that there has been a slight decline rather than an increase in the incidence of European foul brood disease in England in recent years. This year, 664 colonies were found infected with European foul brood compared to the 1007 cases recorded in 2000.

The effectiveness of measures to control European foul brood is subject to continuous assessment by the National Bee Unit. The unit is currently evaluating the effectiveness of the shook swarm technique for improved control of the disease. If successful, this will eliminate the need for the application of antibiotic by bee health inspectors.

Cattle Passports

Mr. Lidington: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how many *(a)* farmers, *(b)* cattle owners and *(c)* cattle keepers have had an application for at least one cattle passport rejected on the grounds of the late return of the form since September 2003; [30585]

(2) how many applications for cattle passports have been made since September 2003; how many of those applications were rejected; and how many were refused on the grounds of the late return of the form in each month; [30586]

(3) in how many cases where applications for cattle passports were refused on the grounds of late return of the form since September 2003 *(a)* a passport was subsequently issued after an appeal, *(b)* the animal concerned was slaughtered and *(c)* the animal concerned died; and if she will make a statement. [30587]

Jim Knight: The Cattle Tracing System database (CTS) does not distinguish between farmers, cattle owners and cattle keepers. It contains details of cattle holdings. Each holding is associated with the name of a cattle keeper but the database does not indicate whether the keeper is also the owner of the cattle. A keeper may have more than one holding.

A passport is withheld when the application is received late. This rule has been strictly enforced since 21 November 2003. Before that date a less rigorous approach was taken. In the period from 28 September 1998 to 20 November 2003, a total of 13,448 passport applications were rejected because they were not received within the legal time limits and the identity and traceability of the animal could not be established.

Between 21 November 2003 and 31 October 2005, 14,995 holdings have had at least one cattle passport refused on the grounds of late application. In this period 5,551,571 passport applications were recorded onto the CTS of which 44,734 applications were refused on the grounds of late return of the form. Monthly figures are shown in the following table.

	Passport applications	*Refused passports*
21–30 November 2003	44,982	745
December 2003	169,944	3,122
January 2004	175,311	4,139
February 2004	177,562	2,425
March 2004	314,576	2,527
April 2004	383,512	3,336
May 2004	319,045	2,648
June 2004	306,653	3,519
July 2004	222,989	1,867
August 2004	236,334	2,000
September 2004	229,619	1,837
October 2004	197,708	1,385
November 2004	196,104	1,255
December 2004	151,008	1,061
January 2005	161,653	1,363
February 2005	164,482	1,264
March 2005	281,472	1,209
April 2005	360,409	1,199
May 2005	340,146	1,643
June 2005	258,330	1,688
July 2005	214,438	1,198
August 2005	227,453	1,236
September 2005	222,609	1,150
October 2005	195,232	918

During the period 10,504 passports were issued following a successful appeal, after initially being refused because of late application.

Of the animals which have been refused passports during the period 21 November 2003 to 31 October 2005, 11,202 have since been recorded as dead on the Cattle Tracing System database. This figure excludes import applications as the deadline dates are different for these application types.

It is not possible to distinguish between those which have been slaughtered and those which have died of natural causes. The database only records the date and place of death, not the cause of death.

The Department is currently reviewing all the domestic legislation implementing the ED cattle identification requirements, and I have asked officials to ensure that the rules on late passport applications are included. There will be a full public consultation on this review shortly. However, I must emphasise that if any changes to procedures are considered in this context, we will continue to give priority to the maintenance of an accurate and reliable database.

Civil Service Relocation (Scotland)

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many departmental civil service jobs have been relocated to Scotland in each year since 2001. [32375]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* Since DEFRA was created in June 2001, no staff have transferred to Scotland with funding assistance from the Department.

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the meetings of EU Agriculture Ministers in the last 12 months at which reform of the Common Agricultural Policy was discussed. [32513]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* Discussions of CAP reform within the last 12 months has focused on reform of the sugar regime. This was discussed at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on the following dates: 22–23 November 2004, and 24 January, 18–19 July, 19–20 September, 24–25 October, 22–24 November 2005. Agreement on reform was reached at the meeting in November 2005.

Countryside Stewardship Scheme

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many agreements under the Countryside Stewardship scheme are live; how many hectares are covered by such agreements; how many agreements provided access for the public within two miles of *(a)* an urban area and *(b)* the coast; and how many hectares are covered in those areas. [31838]

Jim Knight: There are currently 16,747 live Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) agreements covering 524,604.58 hectares. More specifically, the number and hectarage of live CSS agreements providing both linear and open access for the public are as follows:

(a) Within two miles of an urban area there are 1,127 agreements covering 3,697.87 hectares and

(b) Within two miles of the coast there are 295 agreements covering 1,283.53 hectares

All figures are taken from the 2004 agreement year which represents the latest available data.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the access authorities which have taken part in the Access Management Grant Scheme; and what total level of funding has been granted to each such authority since the scheme's inception. [31842]

Jim Knight: Up to 1 November 2005, 52 access authorities in England have been granted a total of £3,063,591 in funding under the Access Management Grant Scheme, as follows:

	£
Barnsley	15,018
Bath and North East Somerset	2,475
Bedfordshire	11,260
Blackburn with Darwen	9,333
Bolton	6,026
Bracknell Forest	269
Bradford	27,076
Brighton and Hove	19,955
Buckinghamshire	41,432
Calderdale	123,525
Cambridgeshire	17,392
Cornwall	86,333
Cumbria	322,952
Derbyshire	3,777
Devon	135,821
Doncaster	19,845
Dorset	337,316
Durham	184,884
East Riding of Yorkshire	42,477
East Sussex	42,953
Essex	12,000
Gloucester	28,692
Hampshire	95,596
Herefordshire[1]	41,463
Hertfordshire	11,865
Kent	23,213
Kirklees	21,313
Leeds	221,045
Leicestershire	23,608
Lincolnshire	39,000
Norfolk	9,016
North Lincolnshire	39,000
North Yorkshire	5,807
Northumberland	159,281
Nottinghamshire	144,805
Oldham	12,190
Oxfordshire	8,714
Poole	31,080
Redcar and Cleveland	8,038
Rochdale	381
Shropshire	4,219
Somerset	67,380
South Downs (East Sussex)	31,397
South Gloucestershire	110,932
Staffordshire	17,261
Suffolk	26,239
Tameside	196,105
Wakefield	5,100
West Berkshire	10,639
West Sussex	2,225
Wiltshire	130,350
Worcestershire	50,388

[1] Excludes funding for the Open Access Black Mountains project.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs who the Finance Director is in her Department; what specialist finance qualifications he or she holds; and what the details are of his or her career to date. [26319]

Jim Knight: Defra's acting finance director is Ian Grattidge. He joined Defra on 18 February 2002 and was appointed acting director on 7 November 2005. Ian Grattidge is a Fellow of the Institute of Certified Chartered Accountants.

Prior to joining Defra Ian Grattidge held finance director posts at the Food Standards Agency and the Veterinary Laboratories Agency. He has also held posts in the finance management division of former MAFF and at the BBC; was head of finance and business administration at the Laboratory of the Government Chemist, DTI; financial accountant at NMI Ltd; an internal auditor for the DTI and a tax inspector for HM Customs and Excise.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many staff in her Department have been relocated into London and the South East in each of the last five years for which records are available. [31765]

Jim Knight: DEFRA was created in June 2001 and the information in this answer covers the period since then. The following table shows the number of staff who have been relocated into London and the South East with funding assistance from the Department.

	Number
2001 (June to December)	11
2002	22
2003	11
2004	10
2005 (January to November)	7

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to relocate staff in her Department and related agencies into London and the South East. [31766]

Jim Knight: The Department and related agencies have no plans to relocate staff into London and the South East.

Departmental Transport

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what guidance her Department has issued to departmental offices on *(a)* producing a transport plan for staff and contractors and *(b)* reducing the environmental impact of car parking and car use by staff and contractors. [30368]

Jim Knight: All Defra and executive agency workplaces with more than 50 people working on-site are required to produce travel plans to reduce the impact of travel-related activities on the environment. Targets and actions are reviewed for progress and sites are surveyed biennially so that travel plans can be updated. Comprehensive guidance is provided through access to the Energy Savings Trust's Travel Plan Resource Pack for Employers.

Travel plans are site-specific and each addresses significant transport-related environmental impacts according to local circumstances. At sites where car parking and car use are identified as significant impacts constructive solutions are sought to reduce the negative impacts.

Energy Efficiency

Sir Robert Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 19 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1054W, on energy efficiency (commercial sector), what *(a)* the cost effective potential and *(b)* the technical potential for carbon savings in the commercial and services sector through energy efficiency measures is by (i) 2010 and (ii) 2020, expressed in megatonnes of carbon. [30822]

Mr. Morley: The information is as follows:

(a) 2010: The cost effective potential (10 per cent.) is around 2MtC.

2020: This figure is more difficult to estimate but may also be around the 10 per cent. level, with the draw-down of existing measures generally balanced by the influx of new ones, as has happened in the past. The corresponding carbon figure may be somewhat under 2MtC, but the precise value will depend on the impact of future carbon reduction policies in this particular sector, the sector's underlying growth rate and any structural changes occurring within it.

(b) The current technical potential is approximately 6MtC. The figures for 2010 and 2020 are likely to be similar, perhaps slightly lower in 2020 if emissions fall as planned.

Farm Subsidies

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the forecast number of applicants for the 2005 single farm payment in England was; and how many farmers have applied. [29789]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* A total of 120,367 claim forms have been received under the Single Payment Scheme in England. The overall number is subject to revision as it includes some duplicate claims and claimants. The number of claims received is in line with forecasts, which ranged from 110,000 to 130,000.

Flood Defences

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to increase investment on flood defences in Robertsbridge, East Sussex. [33126]

Mr. Morley: Following the serious flooding in Robertsbridge during autumn 2000, the Environment Agency has invested £4.5 million on a flood alleviation scheme for the town, which was completed in 2004. The Environment Agency undertakes annual routine maintenance of the flood defences in the form of river clearance, embankment mowing and weed screen clearance.

The Environment Agency's Rother and Romney catchment flood management plan is due for completion in 2007 and will identify the long-term policy and investment needs for the catchment, including Robertsbridge.

Global Monitoring for Environment and Security

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she had concerning the global monitoring for environment and security programme since September with *(a)* the Prime Minister, *(b)* the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and *(c)* the European Commission; and if she will make a statement. [32167]

Mr. Morley: I have regular meetings with the Prime Minister and other Cabinet colleagues on a range of issues.

The Government support the concept of GMES and has played an active role in shaping its development as a user-driven initiative.

GMES has the potential to improve the development and implementation of environment policy in the UK, Europe and on a global scale, but there is work to be done to ensure that this potential is realised.

Over the coming months the Government will continue to work with the European Commisson to try to ensure that GMES will deliver the information and services we need in the long term.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Mr. Binley: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the United Kingdom is on track to meet the Government's target to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 20 per cent. from 1990 levels by 2010. [33177]

Mr. Morley: The Government are aware that more needs to be done to achieve their 2010 goal—latest published projections indicate that emissions of carbon dioxide will be about 13 per cent. below 1990 levels in 2010.

The current review of the UK Climate Change Programme is looking at how existing policies are performing and the range of policies that might be put in place to put the UK back on track towards a 20 per cent. reduction in carbon dioxide emissions by 2010.

Japanese Knotweed

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what guidance she has issued to local authorities and other relevant bodies on dealing with Japanese knotweed. [32146]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* Japanese knotweed is a vigorous and invasive non-native plant that appears to have no natural enemies in Britain. It can colonise most habitats, expanding rapidly and excluding other plants. It can also damage property (and therefore needs to be cleared from development sites) and cause problems in terms of flood management. Material containing Japanese knotweed is treated as controlled waste under the Environmental Protection Act 1 990 to help prevent its further spread. The Environment Agency and local authorities have enforcement functions for the 1990 Act.

The Environment Agency and the Centre for Aquatic Plant Management have therefore produced detailed guidance on control of Japanese knotweed, including what methods are appropriate in different circumstances. This is readily available on the web at:

www.environment-agency.gov.uk/subjects/conservation/840870/840894/840941/?version = 1&l ang = _e.

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) if she will introduce more user friendly reporting of progress against 2004 public service agreement target 8; [29951]

(2) What timescales have been set by the Department for achievement of 2004 PSA Target 1; [30055]

(3) What data sources she intends to use to measure progress towards internationally-agreed commitments to tackle climate change, as required for the measurement of 2004 public service agreement target 1; [30056]

(4) How she will define the term rural area as required for the purpose of measuring achievement of the 2004 public service agreement target four. [30057]

Jim Knight: The Department provides regular performance updates against its outstanding public service agreement targets through its annual departmental report and its autumn performance report published in spring and autumn respectively which the Department aims to make accessible. The 2005 departmental report (Cm6537), which is the most recently published, is available in the House Libraries and online at:

http://www.defra.gov.uk/corporate/deprep/default.htm

Defra's 2005 autumn performance report is due for publication in mid-December and this will be the first time the Department has reported against its 2004 spending review targets.

A short summary of progress against our 2004 Spending Review targets can be found in appendix six of the forthcoming autumn performance eport, with more detailed information available in chapter two.

Radioactive Waste Policy Group

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs who the members are of the Radioactive Waste Policy Group; on what dates the Group has met in the last 12 months; when the Group plans to meet in the next 12 months; and if she will place in the Library a copy of the minutes of meetings held in the last 12 months. [28503]

Mr. Morley: The Radioactive Waste Policy group (RWPG) is chaired and managed by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra). It is made up of representatives from:

Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Department of Trade and Industry; Nuclear Decommissioning Authority; Department of Health; Department of Transport; Department for Education and Skills; Department for Culture, Media and Sport; Department for Work and Pensions; Ministry of Defence; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister; Treasury; Cabinet Office; Scottish Executive; Welsh Assembly Government; Department of the Environment Northern Ireland; Health and Safety Executive; Environment Agency; Scottish Environment Protection Agency; Office for Civil Nuclear Security and the Food Standards Agency.

Some of these participate fully while others are corresponding members who attend meetings as the agenda demands.

Meetings have taken place on the following dates over the past 12 months:

7 October 2004

12 April 2005

13 July 2005

8 November 2005

There are no confirmed dates for future meetings, although the next is likely to take place in the first half of February 2006.

As an inter-departmental body, the release of the minutes of meetings of RWPG may prejudice the full and frank exchange of views in the development of policy in this area. I will, however, give further consideration to the request and undertake to write to the hon. Member in due course. Meanwhile, the bulk of recent discussion in the Group has been on the subject of the Government's review of low level radioactive waste management policy on which there has been extensive stakeholder consultation. Details of this are given on the website http://www.peoplescienceandpolicy.com/llw/index.html

Tenant Farmers

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress has been made since 2001 in establishing a retirement scheme for tenant farmers in the livestock sector as stated in the Labour Party's 2001 general election manifesto. [29787]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The Government have decided against introducing a retirement scheme for farmers as it would not provide value for money compared with the large costs likely to be involved and would offer little public benefit—a view shared by the Policy Commission on the Future of Farming and Food. In addition, funding a retirement incentive scheme could mean having to close down or shrink other grant schemes, which are providing valuable public benefits such as the agri-environment schemes.

Research commissioned by Defra on entry to and exit from farming in the UK concluded that entry and exit decisions are generally rational and driven by strong market forces and personal motivations. Intervention to affect the rate of entry or exit via financial inducements is likely to be expensive and ineffectual in the longer term. (The research can be found at:

http://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/reports/entrvexit/finalreport.pdf)

However Defra is supporting an industry-led initiative called fresh start. Fresh start aims to secure a sustainable future for farming in England through encouraging new entrants into farming. A further element of the fresh start initiative is to stimulate existing farmers to think about how they might respond to the changes brought about by CAP reform, whether this means expanding their business, diversifying into other activities or retiring from the industry. Such choices will serve to create opportunities for new entrants wishing to develop their careers in the industry.

As part of fresh start, Defra has produced a detailed information pack designed to support professional agricultural advisers when discussing retirement and other exit options with their farmer clients. The pack provides an overview of all the issues that need to be considered as part of the process of planning for what may be a radical change, whether that be a transition to retirement or a move to another career.

Recently fresh start has established a new relationship with a number of organisations working in the field of farmer retirement, including the Arthur Rank Centre and Farm Crisis Network, to provide support to potential retirees including matching and mentoring services to help retirees link-up with potential new entrants.

Trade Effluent

Chris McCafferty: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many significant consents to discharge trade effluent to watercourses were held by industry in *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003 and *(c)* 2004; what percentage of these consents were monitored for compliance purposes and inspections made by the Environment Agency; what the level of compliance with these consents was; what enforcement actions were taken against sites that breached their consents; what percentage of these consents were reviewed; how many reviews led to a tightening of the discharge consent; and what percentage of consents included red list substances. [31923]

Mr. Morley: The table details the significant consents issued to industry by the Environment Agency for trade effluent discharges to watercourses and the corresponding information my hon. Friend requested.

	2002	*2003*	*2004*
Number of significant discharge consents	4109	4119	2858
Percentage monitored for compliance purposes and inspections made by EA	58.7	65.4	63.0
Level of compliance (percentage)	817	82.3	80.0
Enforcement action taken against sites that breached consents			
Cautions	18	20	20
Prosecutions	8	18	10
Percentage of consents reviewed	0.1	0.1	0.3
Number	4	4	9
Number of reviews which led to tightening of consent	0	0	8
Percentage	—	—	90
Percentage of consents including List I/I I (red list) substances	13	13	11

Urban Gulls

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will estimate the number of urban gulls in *(a)* England, *(b)* each region and *(c)* each sub-regional area; and if she will provide corresponding estimates for any earlier period for which estimates are available. [32020]

Jim Knight: The Seabird 2000 survey was conducted by Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) in partnership with other organisations including English Nature and RSPB. The survey looked at breeding populations of seabirds between 1998 and 2002. A full report of the survey can be found at:

http://www.incc.gov.uk/pdf/Summary Britain Ireland seabird breeding numbers.pdf

The report includes a number of tables setting out seabird populations which provides figures for Operation Seafarer and Seabird Colony Register census in comparison to Seabird 2000 at administrative area and country level. Specific data for each region and sub regional area is not available.

It can be seen from the report that the number of roof nesting gulls in England were approximately;

Herring Gulls 47,400 pairs

http://www.jncc.gov.uk/PDF/S2000 14 heg tabs and figs web.pdf

Lesser Black—backed Gulls 44,200 pairs

http://www.jncc.gov.uk/PDF/S2000 13 lbbg tabs and figs web.pdf

Great Black-backed Gulls 1470 pairs

http://www.jncc.gov.uk/PDF/S2000 15 gbbg tabs and figs web.pdf

Warm Front Scheme

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many households in Tamworth constituency have received assistance under the Warm Front scheme in each year since its introduction. [32035]

Mr. Morley: Between the launch of the Warm Front Scheme in June 2000 and the end of March 2005, the number of households assisted in each year in Tamworth constituency are as follows:

Period	*Number assisted*
2000–01	309
2001–02	391
2002–03	303
2003–04	279
2004–05	414
Total	1,696

Wild Birds

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what information she collects on numbers of wild birds in the United Kingdom; and if she will make a statement. [31336]

Jim Knight: DEFRA annually monitors the numbers of a whole range of birds, through the Breeding Bird Survey. This survey, conducted and funded jointly by the British Trust for Ornithology, the RSPB and the Joint Nature Conservation Committee, assesses trends in the numbers of common species of birds across the country. A range of other surveys, funded by these organisations, assesses trends in scarcer species. Annual reports are produced for each of the surveys, but summary information derived from them is contained in the report "The State of the UK's Birds 2004"[1] which was published in July 2005.

This report revealed:

Major successes since 1970 include scarce breeders with mainly southern distributions, such as little ringed plovers, woodlarks and Dartford warblers, that may be benefiting from climate change; species such as the buzzard that may be experiencing less persecution than in the past; and species such as the woodpigeon, which may be benefiting from changes in agricultural cropping patterns.

Recent surveys have detected encouraging increases for some of our most vulnerable breeding species: corncrakes, bitterns and nightjars. One species, the hen harrier, showed encouraging increases in the north and west but worrying declines elsewhere in its range.

The all-species, farmland and woodland wild bird indicators for the UK have all shown a slight increase over the last year. However, the farmland bird indicator remains below 60 per cent. of its 1970 value.

2004 was the poorest breeding season on record for many of our seabirds, such as kittiwakes and guillemots, raising concerns about environmental changes in the seas surrounding the UK.

The report recognised encouraging progress towards meeting species' targets in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan where concerted conservation action has resulted in increases in numbers of bitterns, corncrakes, stone-curlews and cirl buntings—all species that were at serious risk of extinction as recently as the mid-1990s. While there is no reason for complacency, indications are that the dramatic rate of long-term decline in overall bird populations may have been halted.

[1] Eaton M. A., Noble D. G., Cranswick P. A., Carter N., Wotton S., Ratcliffe N., Wilson A., Hilton G. M., and Gregory R D., 2004. The state of the UK's birds 2003. BTO, the RSPB and WWT, Sandy.

TREASURY

Deaths (Statistics)

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many people under the age of 18 years have been killed in accidents in each of the last five years; [32116]

(2) how many people under the age of 18 years have committed suicide during each of the last five years.[32117]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 30 November 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent questions concerning how many people under the age of 18 years have *(a)* been killed in accidents and *(b)* committee suicide, during each of the last five years. I am replying in her absence. (32116, 32117)

The most recent available figures are for the calendar year 2004. The figures below show the number of deaths from *(a)* accidents and *(b)* intentional self harm among those aged 0 to 17 for the calendar years 2000 to 2004.

Number of deaths among people aged 0 to 17 years from accidents, suicide and injury of undetermined intent, England and Wales, 2000 to 2004[1]

	Aged 0–12		*Aged 13–17*	
	Accidents[2]	*Suicide*[3]	*Accidents*[2]	*Suicide and injury of undetermined intent*[4]
2000	245	—	245	78
2001	216	—	272	63
2002	208	—	232	70
2003	202	—	233	57
2004	178	—	252	55

[1] Figures are for deaths occurring in each calendar year.

[2] The cause of death for accidents was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes E800-E869 and E880-E928 for the year 2000, and, for the years 2001 to 2004, the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes V01-X59.

[3] The cause of death for suicide was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes E950-E959for the year 2000, and, for the years 2001 to 2004, the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes X60-X84.

[4] The cause of death for injury of undetermined intent was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes E980-E989 excluding E988.8 for the year 2000, and, for the years 2001 to 2004, the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes Y10-Y34 excluding Y33.9 where the coroner's verdict was pending. It is assumed likely that most of these deaths at ages 13 and over are cases where the harm is self-inflicted but there was insufficient evidence to prove

that the deceased deliberately intended to kill themselves. As there were no intentional self harm deaths in children under the age of 13, data for injury of undetermined intent have not been included.

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in how many deaths in *(a)* Houghton and Washington, East, *(b)* Sunderland and *(c)* Tyne and Wear alcohol was the primary cause in each of the past five years. [32871]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 30 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking in how many deaths in *(a)* Houghton and Washington East, *(b)* Sunderland and *(c)* Tyne and Wear alcohol was the primary cause in each of the last five years. (32871)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2004. The table below shows the numbers of deaths among residents of the parliamentary constituency of Houghton and Washington East, metropolitan district of Sunderland and former metropolitan county of Tyne and Wear where the underlying cause of death indicated a condition directly related to alcohol use in the years 2000 to 2004.

Alcohol-related deaths[1] to usual residents of the parliamentary constituency of Houghton and Washington, East, the metropolitan district of Sunderland and the former metropolitan county of Tyne and Wear, registered 2000–04

Number of deaths

	Houghton and Washington, East	*Sunderland*	*Tyne and Wear*
2000	11	48	174
2001	13	40	150
2002	13	44	167
2003	19	45	188
2004	7	37	221

[1] For the year 2000 the cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9). The codes used by ONS to define alcohol-related deaths are listed as follows:
291—Alcoholic psychoses
303—Alcohol dependence syndrome
305.0—Non-dependent abuse of alcohol
425.5—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy
571—Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis
E860—Accidental poisoning by alcohol
For the years 2001–04 the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) was used. To maintain comparability with earlier years the following codes were used:
F10—Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol
142.6—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy
K70—Alcoholic liver disease
K73—Chronic hepatitis, not elsewhere classified
K74—Fibrosis and cirrhosis of liver
X45—Accidental poisoning by and exposure to alcohol

Notes:
1. Deaths were selected using the original underlying cause.
2. The selection of codes to define alcohol-related deaths is described in:
Baker A and Rooney C (2003). Recent trends in alcohol-related mortality, and the impact of ICD-10 on the monitoring of these deaths in England and Wales. "Health Statistics Quarterly" 17, pp 5–14.

Freedom of Information

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many Freedom of Information applications his Department has received; how many have taken more than 20 days to process; and how many of these gave rise to complaints about the time taken. [31220]

John Healey: The Department for Constitutional Affairs is committed to publishing quarterly updates in relation to departmental performance under FOI, including information on both the volume and outcomes of requests. The bulletin for the second quarter was published on 30 September 2005 and can be found on the DCA website at http://www.foi.gov.uk/statsapr-jun05.htm and in the Libraries of both Houses. The next bulletin will be published before Christmas, while an annual report will be published in early 2006. To the period to end June 2005 the Treasury has received one procedural review on grounds of late response.

Business Mileage Allowance

Philip Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he plans to re-evaluate the business mileage allowance tax scheme. [33427]

Dawn Primarolo: The Chancellor keeps the statutory tax free mileage allowance rates under review and considers changes in the context of the Budget and pre-Budget report statements.

Biofuels

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what changes *(a)* have been made and *(b)* are due to be made in the taxation of biofuels; [32342]

(2) what changes *(a)* have been made and *(b)* are due to be made in the taxation of red diesel. [32343]

John Healey: Duty rates for all fuels are reviewed annually as part of the Budget process. The following table sets out duty rates for rebated gas oil (red diesel) and biofuels (bioethanol and biodiesel) since 1997.

Date of rate change	*Gas oil (red diesel)*	*Biodiesel*	*Bioethanol*	*Biodiesel used off-road*
2 July 1997	2.58	—	—	—
17 March 1998	2.82	—	—	—
9 March 1999	3.03	—	—	—
21 March 2000	3.13	—	—	—
26 July 2002	—	25.82	—	3.13
9 April 2003	4.22	—	—	—
1 October 2003	—	27.10	—	—
3 December 2004	5.22	—	—	—
1 January 2005	—	—	27.10	—

Notes:
All duty rates listed are given in terms of pence per litre. Before the introduction of biodiesel rates in 2002, biodiesel was liable at the ultra low sulphur diesel rate and biodiesel used off-road was liable at the same rate as red diesel. Before the introduction of a separate bioethanol rate in 2005 bioethanol was liable at the same rate as ultra-low sulphur petrol.

Budget Reports (Chart B6)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will set out the calculations and background statistics used in the compilation of Chart B6 of the Financial Statement and Budget Report of March 2005, HC 372, showing business investment relative to gross domestic product. [32670]

John Healey: The data sources for Chart B6 of the 2005 Financial Statement and Budget Report (FSBR) are available on the HM Treasury website, in a document entitled "Budget 2005: data sources"

(http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/B07/A9/bud05_data_sources.pdf). The workings behind Chart B6 are set out after the chart on page 233 of the 2005 FSBR.

Child Trust Fund

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many Child Trust Fund vouchers had been *(a)* issued and *(b)* invested as at 20 November; and if he will make a statement. [31239]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The latest quarterly Child Trust Fund statistics were published this morning at http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/child_trust_funds/child-trust-funds.htm

These are the third set of statistics to be published under our schedule.

Correspondence

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the qualitative experiences of those receiving the new tax credits. [13874]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government have, and will continue to, monitor all aspects of the operation of the tax credits system. Where appropriate this will include the commissioning of research.

Departmental Relocation

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which buildings and sites used by his Department and related agencies *(a)* have ceased to be used in the last year and *(b)* will be closed under current plans for relocation. [31751]

Dawn Primarolo: The following Departments and agencies have not ceased to use any buildings or sites within the last year and do not have any plans to do so:

HM Treasury

Government Actuary's Department

Debt Management Office

Office for National Statistics

National Savings and Investments

Royal Mint

Office of Government Commerce (OGC)

However, OGCbuying.solutions will no longer have a permanent staff presence situated within London with effect from 31 September 2006. 20 posts will be relocated to Liverpool and a further eight posts will be re-classified as 'home based' workers. As a consequence, OGCbuying.solutions will vacate its offices in 35 Great Smith Street, London SW1.

HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC)

51 buildings and sites used by HMRC and the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) have ceased to be used in the last year. These are as follows:

Building name	*Town*	*Valuation date*
East Midlands Airport Kennels	Nr Castle Donnington	3 November 2004
Portacabins, Falmouth	Falmouth	20 November 2004
Crown Buildings	Chester Le Street	15 December 2004
Unit 8 Orchard Trading Estate	Manchester	24 December 2004
Containerbase	Coatbridge	13 January 2005
Dog Kennels	Plymouth	20 January 2005
Swinson House (Unit 5)	York	30 January 2005
Chesterfield House	Wembley	31 January 2005
Building 109 Beverly Road	Nr Castle Donnington	1 February 2005
Crown House	Hitchin	5 February 2005
Unicorn House	London	10 February 2005
Trinity Park House	Edinburgh	11 February 2005
Princess House	Barnstaple	27 February 2005
Cumberland House	Birmingham	28 February 2005
Whitehall	Shrewsbury	4 March 2005
Woburn Place	London	24 March 2005
Cater House	Chelmsford	31 March 2005
Unit 3 Crown Court	Colchester	31 March 2005
Imperial Buildings	Falmouth	31 March 2005
Victoria Street Car Park	Grimsby	31 March 2005
Melbourne House	London	31 March 2005
Hadrian House	Middlesbrough	31 March 2005
St. James House	Newcastle Upon Tyne	31 March 2005
1st Floor, Units 3 & 4, Silverlink Business Park	Wallsend	31 March 2005
Paxton House	Swindon	8 April 2005
Duchy House	London	15 April 2005
Aviation House,	London	25 April 2005
Angel Yard Car Park	Chesterfield	30 April 2005
TPF Site	Londonderry	30 May 2005
Lower Upnor Depot	Rochester	14 June 2005
Scapa Pier	Orkney	22 June 2005

Building name	Town	Valuation date
Pinnacle House	Bootle	24 June 2005
City Gate House	London	24 June 2005
Conquest House	London	27 June 2005
5th Floor, 10 Great George Street	London	27 June 2005
Custom House	Berwick	30 June 2005
Llangennach Folder Store	Llanelli	30 June 2005
Unit 14 Orchard Trading Estate	Manchester	30 June 2005
Harbour Masters Office	Rye	30 June 2005
Custom House	Shoreham	30 June 2005
Tyne Bridge Tower	Gateshead	22 July 2005
Custom House	Isles of Scilly	31 July 2005
Heath House	Southend	31 July 2005
Greyfriars House	Aberdeen	18 August 2005
Lancaster House	London	21 August 2005
Surrey House	London	7 September 2005
Fuller House, 1st Floor	Telford	30 September 2005
Park House	Croydon	18 October 2005
Lock Up Garage 5 Forest Road	Torquay	22 October 2005
Lock Up Garage 128 Union Street	Torquay	22 October 2005
Bentinck House	Gloucester	29 November 2005

HMRC is preparing business plans to meet its efficiency savings for 2005–08. These targets include a net reduction of 12,500 in its staff and moving 1,950 posts out of London and the South East under the Government Relocation programme. Delivering these targets means that the Department will be reviewing its estate on an ongoing basis to ensure that it remains in line with its needs. When HMRC takes any decision to close offices in future, letters will be sent to the Members of Parliament for the constituencies in which those offices are located and these letters, and the accompanying press release, will be placed in the Library of the House.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff in his Department were *(a)* civil servants, *(b)* contractors and *(c)* other staff in each year since 1997. [27458]

John Healey: The number of civil servants working in the Department can be found in Civil Service Statistics, published by the Cabinet Office. This publication is available in the Library or online at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_of_the_civil_service/statistics/civil_service_statistics/index.asp.

Information concerning contractors and other workers is shown in the Department's Resource Accounts within the Department Report for the 2004–05 period only. This is available in the Library or online at http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/about/departmental_reports/deptreport_index.cfm. This information for previous years has not been centrally recorded and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

ECOFIN Meetings

Mr. Brady: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which Treasury Minister has attended each ECOFIN meeting since 1 May 1997. [31922]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Ministerial attendance and the outcome of each ECOFIN have been reported either by written ministerial statement, written answer or, occasionally, by letter to the chairman of the European Scrutiny Committee.

EU Budget Rebate

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the income tax rate equivalent is of the UK's EU budget rebate. [32199]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: In 2004–05 the value of the UK abatement was equivalent to 2.9 per cent. of revenue raised from income tax in that year.

Exports

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total value was of British exports to *(a)* the Eurozone area, *(b)* the pre-enlargement 15 EU member states and *(c)* the post-enlargement 25 EU member states in each year since 1997. [32649]

John Healey: The Information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnel, dated 30 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking for the total value of British exports to *(a)* the Eurozone area, *(b)* the pre-enlargement 15 EU member states and *(c)* the post-enlargement 25 EU member states in each year since 1997 (32649).

The attached table shows exports on a Balance of Payments basis in £ million for goods and services for those years for which the data are available. They are consistent with the estimates published on 9 November 2005 in the UK trade First Release and on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk = 1119.

	Exports of goods			Exports of services		
	Eurozone area	*EU15 (£ million)*	*EU25 (£ million)*	*Eurozone area*	*EU15 (£ million)*	*EU25 (£ million)*
1997	89504	96,048	n/a	20012	22,254	n/a
1998	89241	95,690	98,995	22935	25,536	n/a
1999	91771	97,860	101,191	25896	28,487	29,340
2000	101464	107,990	111,955	28605	31,600	32,574
2001	103493	109,710	113,893	30131	33,605	34,665
2002	103215	109,815	114,123	31214	34,504	35,704
2003	99893	105,896	110,589	33063	36,677	37,998
2004	99875	106,274	110,904	34777	38,391	40,066

n/a = not available.

Financial Inclusion Task Force

Ben Chapman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he expects the Financial Inclusion Task Force to report on lower income groups' access to non-charging cash machines. [33702]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Financial Inclusion Task Force was set up by Government to monitor progress towards financial inclusion, in particular, access to banking, affordable credit and free face-to-face money advice. The terms of reference of the taskforce do not require it to report on fee-charging ATMs, however, it has commissioned research into how low income households access their cash and transmit money. Among other things, this work will identify the extent to which fee-charging ATMs are disproportionately used by the financially excluded. The results of this work are expected next year. In addition, the Treasury continues to maintain regular contact with LINK to discuss issues relating to the ATM market and to keep up to date with any developments.

HMRC

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many officers from Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs Department have been *(a)* permanently and *(b)* temporarily based outside the United Kingdom in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [33237]

Dawn Primarolo: The following table shows the numbers of HM Revenue and Customs staff based overseas at the 1 April in each of the last five years.

	Permanently based[1]	*Temporarily based*
2001	279	18
2002	268	18
2003	284	17
2004	285	14
2005	230	19

[1] Based at the channel tunnel entry point at Coquelles, France.

HMRC also has staff based overseas on intelligence and criminal investigation duties, but information on these cannot be made available as it might prejudice the security of those officers and HMRC operations. .

Home Information Packs

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 20 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1137W, on home information packs, when the Government expects to take a decision on whether to levy VAT on home information packs. [31832]

Dawn Primarolo: The exact nature of the packs, and how they will be provided, is still under consideration by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). Draft regulations have been published for consultation by the ODPM and the consultation period ends on 30 December.

The packs will be subject to the normal rules of VAT, as set out in the VAT Act 1994. HM Revenue and Customs will discuss the VAT position in detail with ODPM.

IT Projects

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the current *(a)* estimated cost and *(b)* expected completion date is of each information technology project on the list deposited by his Department in the Library on 19 January 2004. [18870]

John Healey: The information requested is being placed in the Library of the House.

Life Expectancy

Jim Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the life expectancy of *(a)* men and *(b)* women in each (i) region, (ii) county, (iii) socio-economic group and (iv) age cohort (A) 30 to 39, (B) 20 to 29, (C) 10 to 19 and (D) 0 to 9 years. [32416]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the national statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 30 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking what estimate has been made of the life expectancy of *(a)* men and *(b)* women (i) by region and county, (ii) by socio-economic group and (iii) by age cohort (A) 30 to 39, (B) 20 to 29, (C) 10 to 19 and (D) 0 to 9 years. (32416)

(i) Figures on life expectancy at birth for males and females for English regions are published annually by ONS based on three-year rolling averages. The most recent results, for 2002–2004, are included in the table below. Results for earlier years, from 1991–1993 onwards, are available on the National Statistics website at:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Product.asp?vlnk = 8841

ONS does not publish life expectancy results at county level. However figures for current English counties have been calculated by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, using data from ONS.

These are available on their website at:

http://www.neighbourhood.gov.uk/fti

(ii) Figures on life expectancy for males and females by socio-economic group are available from the ONS Longitudinal Study, a one per cent sample of the population. Figures showing life expectancy at birth and at age 65 by the Registrar General's Social Classes are available for the periods 1972–1976 to 1997–2001. These are available on the National Statistics website at:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk = 8460

(iii) All the figures referred to above are period life expectancies. For a particular area or social class in a given time period these figures are estimates of the average number of years a new-born baby would survive if he or she experienced the age-specific mortality rates for that area or social class in that time period throughout his or her life.

The Government Actuary's Department has also calculated cohort life expectancies. For people of a given age their cohort life expectancy is an estimate of how long they would live, on average, if they experienced the actual or projected age-specific mortality rates relevant to their cohort in subsequent years.

Cohort life expectancies at birth and five-yearly age intervals for the years 1981 to 2054 for the United Kingdom and its constituent countries, calculated using historic mortality rates and projected mortality rates from 2004-based national population projections, can be accessed from the GAD website at:

http://www.gad.gov.uk/Life_Tables/Period_and_cohort_eol.htm

Life expectancy at birth (years), by Government office region in England, 2002–04

Government office region	*Males*	*Females*
North East	75.0	79.6
North West	75.1	79.7
Yorkshire and The Humber	75.8	80.4
East Midlands	76.5	80.7
West Midlands	75.9	80.6
East of England	77.6	81.6
London	76.5	81.1
South East	77.7	81.8
South West	77.8	82.0

Lyons Inquiry

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the Valuation Office Agency has made a written submission to the Lyons Inquiry on local government finance. [31729]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Member to the answer she received on 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2431W from the Minister for Local Government.

Maladministration

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many payments for maladministration have been made by *(a)* his Department, *(b)* its agencies, *(c)* its non-departmental public bodies and *(d)* other bodies for which his Department has responsibility in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [32237]

John Healey: Information concerning payments related to maladministration is not available.

National Insurance

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much was raised in *(a)* national insurance contributions and *(b)* income tax from 16 to 18-year-olds during the 2004–05 financial year. [31026]

Dawn Primarolo: The information on the amounts raised in the national insurance contributions and income tax from 16 to 18-year-olds in the last financial year is not available.

Northern Ireland (Fiscal Regime)

David Simpson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he is taking to ensure that Northern Ireland presents a more attractive fiscal regime. [32182]

Mr. Des Browne: The funding arrangements for Northern Ireland are set out in the Statement of Funding Policy published by the Treasury in July 2004. Public spending per head in Northern Ireland is higher than in any other region of the UK.

Predictive Diallers

John Hemming: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many calls were made by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs in 2004–05 using predictive diallers; how many such calls resulted in contact being made with the recipient without a Government agent available to talk to them; and what assessment he has made of the likely impact of Ofcom's policy on silent calls on the use of predictive diallers by his Department. [30683]

Dawn Primarolo: In respect of the Treasury, I refer the hon. Member to the Financial Secretary's reply of 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1209W. The Treasury does not use predictive diallers.

HM Revenue and Customs was created as a legal entity on 7 April 2005. Of the two former Departments, HM Customs and Excise did not make use of predictive diallers during the period.

It is estimated that the Inland Revenue—and contractors acting on its behalf—made around 7.5 million calls using predictive diallers during 2004–05. Full information is not available on the number of calls where contact was made but operators were not available.

HMRC is considering Ofcom's latest policy and guidance on silent calls alongside the associated Ofcom Consultation Document which was published on 31 October.

Private Finance Initiative

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total value of private finance initiative contracts on the Government Balance Sheet was as at July. [27043]

John Healey: Based on departmental returns, the total value of private finance initiative contracts on the Government Balance Sheet is £23.1 billion. This figure is the aggregate of the initial capital values of on-balance sheet PFI contracts signed.

Race Equality Impact Assessments

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many race equality impact assessments his Department completed between *(a)* April 2004 and March 2005 and *(b)* April 2005 and November 2005; and how many assessments in each period resulted in a change of policy. [32835]

John Healey: The Treasury actively embraces its duties under the Race Relations Act. It works with other departments on a wide range of policies, and in turn those departments are responsible for producing race equality impact assessments (REIAs). In addition, successive Pre-Budget and Budget reports have given explicit commitments to promoting equality, fairness and opportunity and have published the distributional analyses necessary to deliver change.

The Treasury has not led on any REIAs between April 2004 and November 2005. A copy of the Treasury's race equality scheme, which gives information on how the Treasury meets its duties to promote race equality, can be accessed via the following link:
http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk./media/1B7/85/race_equality_scheme050705–1.pdf

Railways

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much debt the Government holds on and off balance sheet for London and Continental Railways Ltd.; and whether this debt assumes par value. [26222]

Derek Twigg: I have been asked to reply.

The most recent accounts produced by London and Continental Railways Ltd. (LCR) showed that, as of 31 December 2004, it held total debt of £6.2 billion.

The Government do not hold any debt for LCR. However, the Office for National Statistics currently classifies £1.25 billion of the debt held by LCR as government borrowing in the National Accounts. The remainder of LCR's debt is classified to the private sector.

Renewable Fuels

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will reduce duty on renewable fuels to accompany the introduction of the Government's Renewable Transport Fuel Obligations. [33039]

John Healey: The Chancellor announces changes to taxation policy in the context of the Budget.

Road Fuel Imports

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people have been stopped by HM Customs and Excise for importing road fuel in excess of the 10 litres allowed free of excise duty in each year from 2001. [32484]

John Healey: HM Revenue and Customs record seizures of road fuel improperly imported. The following table details the numbers of seizures in calendar years.

Calendar year	Number of seizures of imported oil	
	Under 100 litres	Over 100 litres
2001	7	85
2002	5	66
2003	6	24
2004	6	8

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether it is possible for a tax credit award in payment to be fraudulently redirected to a new bank account without detection; and what systems exist to prevent this; [25244]

(2) in how many cases identity fraud has been suspected following contact from tax credit recipients asking why their award has stopped, for each month since April 2003. [25245]

Dawn Primarolo: Tax credit claimants can notify HMRC of changes to their bank details. This is normally done by telephone to one of the Department's contact centres. Before any change to a person's details are made; however, the caller must satisfy a variety of security questions designed around personal information held about them by HMRC.

HMRC have a number of sophisticated measures in place to help them detect fraud and to minimise the risk of fraudulent payments being made this way.

The information requested on the number of cases where identity fraud has been suspected following contact from tax credit recipients is not available.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what is the average time taken to process annual tax credits declarations; what measures have been put in place to speed up current processing times; and whether a new annual tax credits declaration may be submitted before a dispute about an overpayment for previous years has been settled. [28419]

Dawn Primarolo: For average processing times, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Guildford (Anne Milton) and my right hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) on 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1058W.

Claimants who are required to make a declaration must do so by 30 September, following the end of the year of claim, whether or not they have an ongoing dispute with HM Revenue and Customs about a tax credits overpayment.

David Simpson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total estimated cost of dealing with tax credit overpayments made to people in Northern Ireland has been; and what the average cost was of a tax credit overpayment in Northern Ireland in 2005. [32126]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is not available.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in how many tax credit cases from 2003–04 in Scotland an overpayment was identified where there was no ongoing award. [33020]

Dawn Primarolo: There were around 25,000 2003–04 tax credit awards made to families in Scotland, where an overpayment was identified at April 2004 but there was no ongoing award.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what definition of product development he uses in relation to tax credits; and whether this includes design development. [33368]

John Healey: Research and development (R&D) tax credits are available for expenditure on qualifying activities, defined under the DTI's guidelines of 5 March 2004. R&D takes place where an activity seeks to achieve an advance in science or technology—through the resolution of scientific or technological uncertainty.

Product development activities qualify for R&D tax credits where they meet the definition in DTI guidelines.

Design permeates the process of new product development; design activities also qualify for R&D tax credits where they meet this definition.

Tax Revenue

Chris Huhne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the annual yield from taxes with an ecological impact in each year from 1996–97 to 2005–06; and what the amount is as a percentage of *(a)* total tax revenue and *(b)* GDP for each tax. [32436]

John Healey: The information requested on the environmental taxes (landfill tax, Climate Change Levy and Aggregates Levy) are given in the following table.

	Yield[1] *(£ million)*	*Percentage of net taxes and social security contributions*	*Percentage of GDP*[2]
Landfill Tax			
1996–97[3]	113	0.04	0.01
1997–98	361	0.12	0.04
1998–99	333	0.10	0.04
1999–2000	430	0.13	0.05
2000–01	462	0.13	0.05
2001–02	502	0.14	0.05
2002–03	541	0.14	0.05
2003–04	607	0.15	0.05
2004–05	674	0.16	0.06
2005–06[4]	700	0.16	0.06
Climate Change Levy			
2001–02	555	0.15	0.06
2002–03	829	0.22	0.08
2003–04	832	0.21	0.07
2004–05	772	0.18	0.07
2005–06[4]	800	0.17	0.06
Aggregates levy			
2002–03	247	0.07	0.02
2003–04	339	0.08	0.03
2004–05	335	0.08	0.03
2005–06[4]	300	0.07	0.03

[1] Cash receipts, Source: HM Revenue and Customs.
[2] Money GDP, Source: HM Treasury.
[3] From October 1996.
[4] Projected.

Unemployment

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of the registered unemployed in the Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland constituency were *(a)* 25 years and under, *(b)* 26 to 35 years, *(c)* 36 to 45 years, *(d)* 46 to 55 years and *(e)* over 55 years on the latest date for which figures are available. [32756]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 30 November 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about unemployment. (32756)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) compiles unemployment statistics for small areas from the Annual Population Survey following International Labour Organisation definitions.

Table 1 shows the percentage of unemployed, by specified age groups, who were resident in the Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland Parliamentary Constituency for the 12 month period ending in March 2005. These estimates, as with any from sample surveys, are subject to sampling variability.

ONS also compiles statistics for local areas of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (ISA). Table 2 shows the percentage of ISA claimants, by age bands, resident in the Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency for October 2005.

Table 1: Percentage of unemployed by age bands resident in the Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency—12 months ending March 2005

Age band	*Percentage*
25 and under	44.4
26 to 35	16.3
36 to 45	16.5
46 to 55	10.6
Over 55	12.2
Total number unemployed	2,800

Source:
Annual population survey

Table 2: Percentage of claimants of jobseekers allowance by age bands resident in the Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency—October 2005

Age band	*Percentage*
25 and under	40.2
26 to 35	20.8
36 to 45	17.3
46 to 55	14.8
Over 55	6.8
Total number JSA claimants	1,660

Source:
Jobcentre Plus administrative system

Valuation Office Agency

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether the Valuation Office Agency's computer assisted mass appraisal system will be used for *(a)* inheritance tax purposes and *(b)* property-based taxes other than council tax or business rates; [31728]

(2) whether the Valuation Office Agency uses *(a)* dwelling house codes and *(b)* value significant codes to assess the value of domestic properties for (i) inheritance tax purposes (ii) capital gains tax and (iii) property-based taxes other than council tax or business rates; [31801]

(3) whether the Inland Revenue will have access to the Valuation Office Agency's Automated Value Model computer database used for council tax valuations. [33159]

Dawn Primarolo: The Valuation Office is an executive Agency of Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs (HMRC). The Commissioners for Revenue and Customs Act 2005 provides for the sharing of information across HMRC for tax purposes.

The Valuation Office Agency uses information it has gathered for council tax purposes for other functions where it has statutory authority to do so. This includes making valuations of domestic properties for (i) inheritance tax (ii) capital gains tax and (iii) other property based taxes.

As my hon. colleague the Minister for Local Government indicated in Standing Committee on 16 November, the Valuation Office Agency is currently considering other uses to which the automated valuation model can be put and the benefits it can bring.

WALES

Smoking

7. **Daniel Kawczynski** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what assessment he has made of the likely impact on pubs along the Shropshire-Wales border of a smoking ban in England. [31673]

Nick Ainger: Assessments on the impact of any ban on smoking in pubs in cross border areas will be addressed in the regulatory impact assessments that will accompany the Health Bill.

I am pleased to have secured provisions in the Health Bill to enable the Assembly to implement a full ban on smoking in enclosed public places in Wales. One of the most important cross-border implications of the ban in Wales will be that English visitors to Wales will enjoy a smoke-free environment in all enclosed public places.

Employment

8. **Mrs. Betty Williams** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on employment levels in *(a)* Conwy and *(b)* Wales. [31674]

Mr. Hain: Employment in Wales continues to rise, with more people in work than ever before. According to latest figures, the number of people in employment in Wales rose by 27,000 in the last quarter compared with the same period a year earlier and the employment rate in Conwy remains above that of Wales as a whole.

Council Tax

9. **Mr. Llwyd** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the revaluation of Welsh properties for the purposes of council tax. [31675]

Nick Ainger: My right hon. Friend and I regularly discuss matters relating to local government in Wales with our ministerial colleagues.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many appeals there were in Wales against council tax banding following the 2005 council tax revaluation; and how many appeals have so far been *(a)* wholly and *(b)* partly (i) refused and (ii) granted. [33117]

Mr. Hain: As at 31 October 2005 the Valuation Office Agency had received 8,567 formal appeals against the 2005 council tax lists. As at the same date 2,838 had been settled, of which 1,765 resulted in an amendment to the council tax band.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether the Government intended the council tax revaluation in Wales to be revenue neutral. [33160]

Mr. Hain: The council tax revaluation in Wales was a matter for the Welsh Assembly Government. The purpose of revaluation was to keep council tax banding up to date with changing property prices. It was intended to be, and was, revenue neutral.

There is no direct relationship between the revaluation and the overall amount of tax revenue.

New Hospitals

10. **Mr. Harper**: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with the National Assembly for Wales Minister for Health on funding for the provision of new hospitals serving patients in Wales. [31676]

Nick Ainger: I regularly meet the Assembly Minister for Health and Social Services to discuss a range of issues including funding for the provision of new hospitals in Wales.

Capital expenditure for building hospitals is detailed within the Welsh Assembly's Capital Investment Plan. This includes a major rebuilding scheme aimed at modernising health and social care and increasing capacity.

Nuclear Power Stations

11. **Hywel Williams**: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues about building new nuclear power stations in Wales. [31677]

Mr. Hain: I have regular discussions with Cabinet colleagues on a range of issues including energy.

The Prime Minister has said that the Government will be publishing proposals on energy policy next year. In developing these proposals, we will be looking at the impact of new nuclear build on helping us to meet our Energy White Paper goals. The review will be examining a wide-range of options for helping us meet these goals.

Health Service (Commissioning)

12. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on proposals for commissioning in the Health Service in Wales. [31678]

Nick Ainger: The commissioning and provision of health and social care services in Wales is a matter for local health boards to determine, based on their judgement of competing priorities.

Renewable Energy

13. **Mr. Roger Williams:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on grants for domestic renewable energy facilities in Wales. [31679]

Mr. Hain: I have regular discussions with DTI colleagues on a range of energy matters, including renewable programmes. A £30 million funding package for microgeneration has recently been announced.

Licensing Hours

14. **Paul Flynn:** To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many applications have been granted for 24 hour sale of alcohol licences in *(a)* Newport and *(b)* Wales. [31680]

Nick Ainger: I understand that three applications have been granted by Newport city council, all for retail sites. I further understand that 61 applications have been granted by local authorities in Wales, and that 40 of these are for retail sites.

Local Government

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what estimate the Government has made of the cost to local councils in Wales of the implementation of section 77 of the Local Government Act 2003. [31805]

Mr. Hain: Revaluation was undertaken by the Valuation Office Agency and the costs were met by the Agency out of the funding it receives from the Welsh Assembly Government.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether his Department has made a written submission to the Lyons Inquiry on local government finance. [31806]

Mr. Hain: I refer the hon. Lady to the answer given to her by the Minister for Local Government on 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2431W.

Maladministration

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many payments for maladministration have been made in each of the last five years by his Department; and if he will make a statement. [32156]

Mr. Hain: None.

Sick Leave

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many of his Department's employees who are within one year of the official retirement age are on extended sick leave. [32592]

Mr. Hain: None.

UK Energy Policy

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with the Welsh Assembly and his ministerial colleagues regarding an integrated energy policy for the UK. [31666]

Mr. Hain: I have regular such discussions with both. The Energy White Paper, which was developed in collaboration with the Assembly, provides the framework for energy policy in the UK.

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Equal Pay

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what recent steps the Government have taken to reduce the pay gap between men and women; and what evaluation she has made of the effectiveness of these steps. [26802]

Meg Munn: The pay gap between men and women is gradually decreasing, this year the full-time median gender pay gap went down from 14.5 per cent. in 2004 to 13.2 per cent. This is an achievement we are proud of and committed to build upon.

As part of their remit, the Women and Work Commission have looked at the different labour market factors which act as barriers to women's chances of entering and progressing through work, in particular, to ensure employers make the best use of the skills and potential of women returning to the labour market. I look forward to their final report early in the new year, which will contain recommendations to further tackle to the gender pay gap.

We have also introduced a number of measures to tackle the gender pay gap. Since we introduced the right to request flexible working, almost a quarter of parents with children under six have requested to work flexibly—these requests are most likely to be from female employees. The Work and Families Bill, published last month, will extend the scope of flexible working law to carers of adults.

The national minimum wage, which increased to £5.05 in October this year, continues to play a part in reducing the gender pay gap. Around 70 per cent. of the beneficiaries of the uprating of the national minimum wage in October 2004 were women.

We have made progress in tackling this issue and with the findings of the Women and Work Commission and with the appropriate measures in place, we hope to progress further in reducing the gap between men and women.

DEFENCE

Army Prosecuting Authority

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the outcomes of all cases handled by the Army Prosecuting Authority in the last 12-month period for which figures are available in which all proceedings are complete; in what percentage of cases proceedings were abandoned; and what the reasons were in each case. [32944]

The Solicitor-General: I have been asked to reply.

In the period from 1 November 2004 to 31 October 2005, 856 cases were referred to the APA for consideration as to whether trial should be directed. Of

those cases, 641 were directed for trial. 65 cases were discontinued after direction for trial, leaving 576 which proceeded to trial. The outcome of cases are not centrally recorded, nor are the reasons for abandonment, and to retrieve this information would incur disproportionate cost.

Astute-class Submarines

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has for submarines to be built at Barrow-in-Furness after the completion of the first three Astute-class boats. [32170]

Mr. Ingram: The Barrow yard will remain the UK's centre of excellence for submarine building.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of possible economies which may be achieved by ordering future Astute-class submarines more than one at a time. [32172]

Mr. Ingram: The procurement strategy for future Astute boats is currently being considered and announcements will be made at the appropriate time.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the timetable for building further Astute-class submarines is compatible with that for building future ship submersible ballistic nuclears to replace the Vanguard-class. [32173]

John Reid: No decisions on any replacement for the Vanguard-class submarines have yet been taken. Orders for further Astute-class submarines, beyond the three already on order, are being considered and announcements will be made at the appropriate time. There is no reason to believe that there is any incompatibility between the possible future demands that may arise from these potential requirements.

Civil Service Relocation (Scotland)

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many departmental civil service jobs have been relocated to Scotland in each year since 2001. [32260]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* Details of the number of departmental civil service jobs relocated to Scotland are not available, as this information is not held centrally by the Department, and obtaining the data would incur disproportionate costs.

Departmental Finance

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he plans to remove in-service fighting equipment and associated intangible assets from the top-level budget-holder balance sheets to a central balance sheet; and if he will make a statement. [32704]

John Reid: Yes, this is part of a wider programme to simplify and improve our financial management processes, in order to yield efficiencies and enhance decision making.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence by how much his Department's end of year flexibility was changed under the Treasury's cash management scheme in financial year 2004–05. [32707]

John Reid: Following the introduction of the Treasury's cash management scheme, the Ministry of Defence's end year adjustment was £25,000 in 2003–04 (net charge) and £95,000 in 2004–05 (net rebate). These adjustments were reflected in the carry forwards for 2004–05 and 2005–06 respectively.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many staff in his Department were *(a)* civil servants, *(b)* contractors and *(c)* other staff in each year since 1997. [27443]

Mr. Touhig: The following table gives details of Ministry of Defence civilian strength by Full Time Equivalence (FTE) as at 1 April for the years 1997 to 2005. Data for the number of contractors employed over the listed period are not centrally held.

FTE

April	*Civil servants*[1]	*Other*[2]	*Total*
1997	117,470	15,860	133,330
1998	111,140	15,160	126,290
1999	108,140	14,870	123,010
2000	106,440	14,850	121,290
2001	104,820	13,340	118,170
2002[3]	95,980	14,120	110,090
2003	93,740	13,840	107,580
2004	93,620	15,430	109,050
2005	92,810	15,660	108,470

[1] Total for civil servants includes all permanent and casual staff, as well as staff employed by Trading Funds and the Royal Fleet Auxiliary, but excludes staff employed as Locally Engaged civilians.

[2] Total for Other is comprised of locally engaged civilian staff who are employed overseas.

[3] In 2001 the QinetiQ portion of the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency (8,000) was established as a private company.

Note:

Due to the rounding methods used, figures are rounded to the nearest 10, and individual totals for each year may not match precisely to the overall total.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many staff in his Department have been relocated into London and the South East in each of the last five years for which records are available. [31782]

Mr. Touhig: Details of the number of departmental civil service jobs relocated to London and the South East are not available, as this information is not held centrally by the Ministry of Defence, and obtaining the data would incur disproportionate costs.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* officers, *(b)* other ranks, *(c)* support personnel and *(d)* administrative staff were employed by his Department in each year since 1997; and what proportion of his Department's budget was attributed to the employment of each group. [32205]

Mr. Touhig: The following table gives details of Ministry of Defence personnel strength for officers, other ranks, support personnel and administrative staff as at 1 April for the years 1997 to 2005. This includes

Full-time Reserve Service Personnel, Gurkhas, Royal Irish Regiment (Home Service), Gibraltar Permanent Cadre and Non-regular Permanent Staff (NPRS).

Civilian support staff are the Locally Engaged Civilians and Royal Fleet Auxiliaries, with administrative staff consisting of all other civil servants within the MOD.

	As at 1 April				
	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*
UK Regular Strength[1, 6]					
All Services	210,820	210,140	208,640	207,620	205,650
Officers	32,680	32,620	32,240	32,520	32,630
Other Ranks	178,150	177,510	176,400	175,100	173,020
Non-Regular Strength[6]					
FTRS[2, 3, 4]	n/a	130	630	[7]1,040	[7]1,600
FTRS Officers[4]	n/a	50	190	[7]330	[7]670
FTRS Ranks	n/a	80	440	710	930
Gurkhas	3,760	3,640	3,580	3,670	3,780
Officers	150	130	130	130	130
Soldiers	3,610	3,510	3,460	3,540	3,660
Royal Irish Regiment (Home Service)	4,770	4,620	4,450	4,170	3,840
Officers	200	210	200	210	190
Ranks	4,570	4,410	4,250	3,950	3,650
Gibraltar Permanent Cadre	140	160	160	160	160
Officers	10	10	10	10	10
Ranks	130	150	140	150	150
Non-regular Permanent Staff (NRPS)[5]	1,420	1,400	1,400	1,390	1,210
Officers	430	400	400	430	400
Ranks	990	1,000	1,000	960	810

	2002	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
UK Regular Strength[1, 6]				
All Services	204,690	206,920	207,020	201,100
Officers	32,750	33,160	33,450	33,000
Other Ranks	171,940	173,770	173,580	168,100
Non-Regular Strength[6]				
FTRS[2, 3, 4]	[7]1,960	[7]2,360	[7]2,220	1,690
FTRS Officers[4]	[7]670	[7]800	[7]740	620
FTRS Ranks	1,290	1,560	1,480	1060
Gurkhas	3,800	3,760	3,720	3,690
Officers	130	140	130	130
Soldiers	3,670	3,630	3,590	3,560
Royal Irish Regiment (Home Service)	3,640	3,500	3,410	3,220
Officers	230	220	210	200
Ranks	3,410	3,280	3,200	3010
Gibraltar Permanent Cadre	180	180	180	180
Officers	10	20	20	10
Ranks	160	160	160	170
Non-regular Permanent Staff (NRPS)[5]	1,140	1,100	1,110	1080
Officers	340	300	270	210
Ranks	800	800	840	870

n/a = denotes not applicable

[1] Figures show trained and untrained personnel.

[2] FTRS were created by the Reserve Forces Act 1996 and none existed before late 1997 they were formally recorded from late 1998 only.

[3] FTRS figures include full commitment (FC), home commitment (HC) and limited commitment (LC) individuals. For the Army, FC and LC individuals serve against the requirement whilst HC individuals fill posts specifically for the FTRS personnel. For the RAF, FC individuals serve against the requirement whilst HC and LC individuals fill posts specifically for the FTRS personnel.

[4] Army FTRS officer figures from 2000 to 2004 are currently under review and should be considered provisional. Figures from 2001 to 2004 have been supplied by Army Personnel Centre. 1 April 2001 figure is not available, figure is for 1 March 2001.

[5] Non-regular permanent staff (NRPS) are Territorial Army personnel who provide training and administration to Territorial Army units on a permanent full-time basis. They are included within the Territorial Army Group B, together with Officer Training Corps personnel. Further details may be found in Tri-Service Publication (TSP) 7, UK Reserves and Cadets, a copy of which is held in the Library of the House.

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[6] Due to the founding methods used, totals may not always equal the sum of the parts. When founding to the nearest 10, numbers ending in five have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.
[7] Provisional.
Source:
DASA(Tri Service)

Civilians (FTE[4, 5])	As at 1 April 1997	1998	1999	2000	2001
All Civilian personnel	133,530	126,490	123,120	121,390	118,220
LEG[1]	15,860	15,160	14,870	14,850	13,340
Manually paid staff overseas	200	200	100	100	50
RFA[2]	2,210	2,360	2,360	2,420	2,360
Other Civil Servants	115,260	108,770	105,780	104,020	102,460

Civilians (FTE[4, 5])	2002	2003	2004	2005
All Civilian personnel	110,090	107,580	109,050	108,470
LEG[1]	14,120	13,840	15,430	15,660
Manually paid staff overseas	—	—	—	—
RFA[2]	2,370	2,450	2,310	2,350
Other Civil Servants	[3]93,610	91,280	91,310	90,460

[1] LEC are locally engaged civilians who support the department overseas and are not civil servants.
[2] RFA are Royal Fleet Auxiliaries who support the Navy but are civil servants.
[3] In 2001 the QinetiQ portion of the Defence Evaluation and Research Agency (8,000) was established as a private company.
[4] Due to the rounding methods used, totals may not always equal the sum of the parts. When rounding to the nearest 10, numbers ending in 5 have been rounded to the nearest multiple of 20 to prevent systematic bias.
[5] Full-time equivalent (FTE) results show part time civilian staff as a proportion of the hours they work.
Source:
DASA(Civilian).

The following table show Ministry of Defence personnel expenditure data broken down for both civilian and the UK armed forces for the same period as above and also expressed as a proportion of the aggregate defence budget.

Financial outturn for each financial year

	£ million	*Inclusive of non-recoverable VAT at current prices (£million)* Service	Civilian	Percentage service	Percentage civilian
Adjusted Defence Budget[1]					
1996–97	22,345	5,938	2,355	26.6	10.5
1997–98	21,610	6,286	2,270	29.1	10.5
1998–99	22,475	6,257	2,273	27.8	10.1
1999–2000	22,549	6,500	2,268	28.8	10.1
2000–01	23,538	6,223	2,409	26.4	10.2
Using net cash requirement2					
2001–02	26,100	7,014	2,442	26.9	9.4
2002–03	27,334	7,385	2,584	27.0	9.5
Using defence spending3					
2003–04	31,078	7,974	2,461	25.7	7.9
2004–05[4]	32,597	8,274	2,662	25.4	8.2

[1] The adjusted defence budget was used when the department reported under a cash regime to provide consistent figures for defence spending. For further details please refer to Footnote 6 of table 1.1, UK Defence Statistics 2001.
[2] During 2001–02 and 2003–03 the Department introduced resource accounting and budgeting (RAB) in two stages. To provide roughly comparable figures with pre and post full RAB the net cash requirement to represent the "defence budget". The net cash requirement (NCR) is the actual money that MOD requests from the Government in order to fund its activities. The NCR takes account of movements in working capital levels (debtors, creditors, stock) whilst excluding all non-cash costs.
[3] Following the full introduction of RAB, the "Defence Spending" line from UK Defence Statistics Table 1.1a has been employed (UK Defence Statistics 2005, page 14).
[4] Provisional outturn data are provided for 2004–05.
Source:
UK Defence Statistics

Departmental Websites

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will take steps to ensure the Department's websites attain the W3C AAA standard of accessibility for people with visual and other disabilities; and if he will set a target date for this standard to be achieved by. [30964]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence has five principal corporate websites, and we take seriously the requirement to make them accessible for people with visual and other disabilities. The e-Government unit of the Cabinet Office mandates the W3C 'A' standard of accessibility, and identifies some elements of the 'AA' and 'AAA' standards as best practice. We aspire to achieve the 'AA' standard in full, as well as the best practice elements of 'AAA'. Where this is not currently being met we have a programme of work to ensure that we will achieve it. The status of current and future achievement of this aspiration is set out in the following table:

Site	Current status	Future development
www.mod.uk	Majority of the site meets the 'A' standard or above	Following launch of redeveloped site in January 2006, whole site will aim to achieve the 'AA' standard
www.foi.mod.uk	Partially meets the 'A' standard	Is being amalgamated into the corporate site and so will also aim to achieve the 'AA' standard from January 2006
www.army.mod.uk	Partially meets the 'A' standard	Site software currently being amended to allow addition of alternative text to images. This will be enabled from end of November 2005 leading to significant improvement in accessibility compliance
www.royal-navy.mod.uk	Partially meets the 'A' standard	Following launch of redeveloped site in Jan 2006, whole site will aim to achieve the 'AA' standard
www.raf.mod.uk	Partially meets the 'A' standard	A redeveloped site will launch late 2006 and will aim to achieve the 'AA' standard

A number of other, generally small, websites are maintained by subsidiary organisations of the MOD and armed forces. However, information on their standards of accessibility is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

European Airlift Transport Co-ordination Cell

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether it is his policy that the United Kingdom should join the European Airlift Transport Co-ordination Cell. [32711]

John Reid: I assume that the question refers to the European Airlift Centre. The UK was a founding member of this organisation. The other members are Belgium, France, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, and Spain. Nations that are members of the European Airlift Centre can use its services in support of their own national requirements and also in support of international organisations such as NATO and the EU.

Nuclear Deterrent

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish consultation documents relating to the decision on the replacement of Trident. [32474]

John Reid: I have nothing to add to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Pendle (Mr. Prentice) during defence questions on 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 692.

Race Equality Impact Assessments

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Race Equality Impact Assessments his Department completed between *(a)* April 2004 and March 2005 and *(b)* April 2005 and November 2005; and how many assessments in each period resulted in a change of policy. [32829]

Mr. Touhig: Between April 2004 and March 2005 the Ministry of Defence completed 20 Race Equality Impact Assessments (REIAs). Of these, one resulted in a policy change. No centrally co-ordinated figures are yet available for the period April 2005 to November 2005 as we collect statistics on an annual basis. Figures for 2005–06 will be collected as part of our next Race Equality Scheme (RES) data monitoring exercise and published in our 2005–06 RES report.

UK Service Medals

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the theatres of service in which UK service medals other than general service medals have ceased to be awarded, broken down by *(a)* date and *(b)* reasons for the decision in each case. [32611]

Mr. Touhig: Campaign or operational service medals no longer in issue would have been terminated because the operation ended or the risk and rigour diminished. Other than general service medals, the following UK campaign and operational service medals have been awarded since the end of the Second World War:

Medals for Individual Campaigns or Operations:

Korea Medal-1 July 1950 to 27 July 1953

Rhodesia Medal-1 December 1979 to 20 March 1980.

South Atlantic Medal-2 April to 12 July 1982.

Gulf Medal-2 August 1990 to 7 March 1991.

Iraq Medal-20 January 2003 to a date to be decided. (Clasp '19 March to 28 April 2003')

Operational Service Medal with Ribbon for:

Sierra Leone-5 May 2000 to 31 July 2002

Afghanistan-11 September 2001-to a date to be decided.

White Phosphorus

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with US authorities regarding the use of white phosphorous in Iraq. [33290]

John Reid: None.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Departmental Staff

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much it costs to employ *(a)* (i) multiple part-time and (ii) jobshare staff to a full-time post and *(b)* a full time member of staff for (A) her Department and (B) the Learning and Skills Council. [31265]

Maria Eagle: 'Part-time, jobshare and full time staff in both the Department and the Learning and Skills Council are paid at the same hourly rate as one another. The overall costs and benefits of employing part-time, jobshare or full-time staff depend on the particular circumstances and individuals involved.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* temporary and *(b)* agency staff she has had working in her Department in the last three years; how long each one has been employed for in total over that period and how many have been taken on as permanent staff. [31256]

Maria Eagle: My Department was established in June 2001. Statistics for temporary agency staff are recorded by days worked and the information detailed in the following table is for the calendar years 2002, 2003, and 2004.

Calendar year	*Days worked*
2002	31,229
2003	27,087
2004	16,940

The number of temporary staff engaged during the same period varied on a month by month basis. The average use for the calendar years 2002, 2003, 2004 is detailed in the following table:

Calendar year	*Average number of temporary staff*
2002	112.2
2003	99.6
2004	72.8

We do keep statistics on the length of time each individual was employed for. We can also confirm that no agency or temporary staff were subsequently offered permanent appointments.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Shona McIsaac: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students aged 16 to 18 years of age are in receipt of education maintenance allowance in each institution in *(a)* North East Lincolnshire and *(b)* North Lincolnshire. [18474]

Maria Eagle: This is a matter for the Learning and Skills Council, who operate Education Maintenance Allowances for the DfES and hold the information about take-up of the scheme. Mark Haysom, the Council's Chief Executive, will write to my hon. Friend with the information requested and a copy of his reply will be placed in the House Libraries.

Letter from Mark Haysom to Ms McIsaac, dated 7 November 2005:

I am writing in response to your Parliamentary Question that asked "how many students aged 16 to 18 years of age are in receipt of educational maintenance allowance in each institution in *(a)* North East Lincolnshire and *(b)* North Lincolnshire?"

Educational Maintenance Allowance is available to 16–19 years olds in full-time Further Education. The number of young people in receipt of Education Maintenance Allowance in each institution in North East Lincolnshire and North Lincolnshire Local Authority Areas at 25 October was 1,932 and 1,252 respectively. The following table displays this data at institute level.

LA	*URN*	*Provider*	*Young people receiving EMA*
North East Lincolnshire	130585	Grimsby College	1,242
North East Lincolnshire	130586	Franklin College	498
North East Lincolnshire	118091	Tollbar Business and Enterprise College	68
North East Lincolnshire	118096	The Lindsey School and Community Arts College	45
North East Lincolnshire	118113	Matthew Humberstone Church of England School	40
North East Lincolnshire	118086	The Immingham School	33
North East Lincolnshire	118143	Humberston Park School	5
North East Lincolnshire	118124	St. James' School	1
North Lincolnshire	130587	North Lindsey College	642
North Lincolnshire	130588	John Leggott Sixth Form College	548
North Lincolnshire	118109	Baysgarth School	37
North Lincolnshire	118100	Vale of Ancholme Technology College	23
North Lincolnshire	117706	Young Mums Unit	2

I hope this information is helpful and addresses your question. If you would like further details please contact Chris Bradley at the LSC National Office on 0114 207 4512 or christopher.bradley@lsc.gov.uk

Extended Schools Programme

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what estimate she has made of the number of schools in *(a)* West Yorkshire, *(b)* Wakefield district and *(c)* Normanton constituency that will be delivering extended services in (i) 2006, (ii) 2007 and (iii) 2008; and to how many children and parents such provision will be available; [32437]

(2) how much has been allocated to *(a)* the local authority and *(b)* local schools in Wakefield to develop and roll out the extended schools programme in (i) 2005–06, (ii) 2006–07, (iii) 2007–08 and (iv) 2008–09 financial years. [32438]

Beverley Hughes: This Government want all schools to provide access to a core offer of extended services by 2010, with half of all primary and a third of all secondary schools doing so by 2008. We want to see at least 2,500 schools providing access to the core offer by September 2006. The core offer, which should be available to all parents and pupils of the school, comprises: high quality child care; a varied menu of study support activities; parenting support programmes; swift and easy referral to a wide range of specialised support services; and wider community access. It will be for individual local authorities, in discussion with all schools in their area, to take a strategic approach to developing access to the core offer through schools. This will include determining how many primary and secondary schools develop access to the core offer in each year. On 29 September 2005 my Department published its report on the baseline survey of extended services in schools which it commissioned earlier in the year. The survey showed that nationally the

vast majority of schools were providing access to some form of extended activity. The survey did not provide figures at local authority level.

On 13 June 2005 my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced funding of £790 million over 2005–08 to support the development of extended schools. £110 million of this was allocated in 2005–06 and Wakefield received £815,005. Of the £680 million to be allocated across 2006–08, £250 million will go direct to schools through the School Standards Grant and the formula for calculating each school's allocation for 2006–07 will be announced in the near future. The remaining £430 million will be distributed to local authorities through the Standards Fund and the General Sure Start Grant. Of this Wakefield will receive £1,203,051 in 2006–07 and £1,453,835 in 2007–08. Funding will be released to schools in accordance with each local authority's extended schools strategy. My Department wrote to each local authority on 13 June 2005 detailing what their extended schools allocation, excluding the School Standards Grant, will be over the period 2005–08.

Funding for extended schools beyond 2007–08 is subject to the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review in 2007 when the Department will be reviewing all its programme budgets.

Information Sharing Protocols

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 821W, on information sharing protocols, which local authorities were 'a bit behind' in *(a)* March 2004 and *(b)* July 2004. [30681]

Beverley Hughes: The Green Paper 'Every Child Matters', published in September 2003, required local authorities to meet nine minimum requirements in relation to information sharing. These included putting in place information sharing protocols, covering health, education and social care, and to have them in development with other agencies providing services to children and young people, by March 2004. All 150 top-tier local authorities were provided with funding in the financial year 2003–04 to meet these requirements.

Independent research carried out by Royal Holloway, University of London reported that 43 authorities were 'a bit behind' in March 2004. Royal Holloway did a further check in July 2004 which indicated only 10 local authorities were still in this category. The authorities are as listed in A and B respectively.

A more recent assessment of local authorities' progress carried out by our Regional Change Advisers in October 2005 indicates that a further four of these 10 authorities—Lambeth, North East Lincolnshire, Northamptonshire and Sandwell—have put information sharing protocols in place. Regional Change Advisers will continue to work with the remaining authorities to help them develop effective information sharing arrangements.

Requirement—have protocols for information sharing in place, covering health, education and social care; and in development for other agencies providing services to children and young people.

A: Local authorities reported as 'a bit behind' in March 2004

Barking and Dagenham
Barnet
Bexley
Blackpool
Brent
Bromley
Buckinghamshire
Bury
Devon
Dudley
Ealing
Greenwich
Hammersmith and Fulham
Harrow
Havering
Hertfordshire
Hounslow
Isle of Wight
Kent
Kirklees
Lambeth
Lancashire
Leeds
Norfolk
N.E. Lincolnshire
North Tyneside
Northamptonshire
Northumberland
Nottingham
Nottinghamshire
Oldham
Peterborough
Redbridge
Salford
Sandwell
Sefton
South Tyneside
Stockport
Torbay
Trafford
Waltham Forest
Wiltshire
Windsor and Maidenhead

B: Local authorities reported as 'a bit behind' in July 2004

Barnet
Brent
Havering
Hounslow
Lambeth
Lancashire
N.E. Lincolnshire
Northamptonshire
Oldham
Sandwell

Marshall Aid/Scholarships

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the criteria are for a scholarship under the Marshall Aid Commemoration Act 1953; and if she will make a statement. [29844]

Ian Pearson: I have been asked to reply.

The criteria for awarding Marshall scholarships, as laid down in the Marshall Aid Commemoration Act 1953, are that recipients must be:

"... citizens of the United States of America, who are graduates of recognised institutions of higher learning in the United States of America ..."

There are no references to selection in the Act of 1959, but the current administrative regulations do establish further criteria, a copy of them will be placed in the Library of the House.

Post-16 Education

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much *(a)* capital and *(b)* revenue spending has been allocated for the education of 16 to 19-year-olds in (i) school sixth forms, (ii) sixth form colleges and (iii) further education colleges in Warrington in each year since 1997. [26584]

Bill Rammell *[holding answer 9 November 2005]:* As the allocation of funding in local areas relates to the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) operational responsibilities. The LSC's chief executive Mark Haysom has written to my hon. Friend with the information requested for sixth form colleges, further education colleges and the revenue information for schools sixth forms since 2002–03. A copy of his reply will be placed in the Library. However, we are not able to provide details of capital spend for schools sixth forms as capital allocations for investment in schools have not separately identified funding for sixth form provision. Decisions on priorities for capital investment in schools have been taken locally in accordance with local asset management plans. The new 16–19 Joint Capital Fund will combine schools and post-16 budgets bringing greater coherence to investment decisions on projects requiring investment in new post-16 education and training provision.

Before the LSC took on the responsibility, in 2002–03, of funding for sixth-formers in schools, local authorities were provided with allocations for these pupils through the "post 16" and "Other" sub-blocks of the Education Standard Spending Assessment. Further funding for schools with sixth forms has been provided to authorities through grants such as the School Standards Grant and the Standards Fund. However, it is not possible to determine how much of the funding through formula or grants has been directed towards sixth forms since it is for the authority to decide how much funding an individual school receives, and a school to direct appropriate resources towards its sixth form. Any apportionment is likely to be inaccurate.

Letter from Mark Haysom, dated 30 November 2005:

I write following your Parliamentary Question about capital and revenue funding for 16–19 year olds in school sixth forms, sixth form colleges and further education colleges in Warrington since 1997. I thought it might also be helpful to pick up a couple of related points following the evidence that Chris Banks and I gave to the recent Education and Skills Select Committee on 7 November.

I should begin by explaining that there are a number of limitations on the information that the Learning and Skills Council can provide in response to your question on funding. Firstly, as the LSC was established in April 2001 I cannot provide information prior to April 2001. Those allocations (including for the 2001–02 academic year) were made by one of the LSC's predecessor agencies, the former Further Education Funding Council (FEFC).

Secondly, school sixth forms did not come under the LSC's remit until the 2002–03 academic year; until that time revenue funding was allocated by Warrington's local education authority. Similarly, capital funding for school sixth forms is not currently within the LSC's remit and so we cannot provide those figures.

Finally, in relation to capital expenditure, the elements of capital spending in colleges that relate specifically to 16–19 year olds are difficult to apportion, as most further education college facilities are used by adult learners as well as 16–19 year olds. The same is true of sixth form college facilities, although to a lesser extent.

Therefore, the information I can provide consists of:

revenue funding for 16–19 year olds in the town's further education college (Warrington Collegiate) and sixth form college (Priestley College) from 2002–03 to 2005–06

revenue funding for the borough's seven school sixth forms from 2002–03 to 2005–06

capital grants for the sixth form college and further education college since 2001.

The details of these allocations are set out below.

Revenue funding

The table below gives details of revenue funding allocated by the LSC.

£

	School sixth forms	*Sixth form college*	*FE college*
2001–02	[1]	[2]	[2]
2002–03	4,755,396	3,716,679	3,026,089
2003–04	5,510,749	4,441,250	3,591,870
2004–05	5,892,168	4,793,440	4,019,992
2005–06	5,913,274	5,321,521	4,719,652

[1] Allocations made by LEA
[2] Allocations made by FEFC

Note:

The amount actually paid each year might vary from the allocation by around 2–3 per cent. depending on how far learner numbers differ from the projections on which allocations were based.

Capital spending

Capital projects in sixth form colleges and further education colleges are funded on the same basis. Until 2003 there was an assumption that the LSC would provide approximately 35% of the costs of a project, with the exception of works needed to meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) which receive a higher level of funding (up to 75%). The balance would be from a variety of sources that might include colleges' cash reserves, the proceeds from the sale of surplus land, private finance or buildings borrowing.

However, since 2003 LSC capital project funding has been based on affordability; if colleges can use their own cash reserves and borrow to a reasonable level they are now expected to do so before the LSC will agree the level of grant it will pay.

The table below gives details of the capital grants that have been allocated in Warrington.

	LSC grant (£)	Overall project cost (£)	Project summary
School sixth forms	[1]	[1]	[1]
Priestley College (sixth form college)			
2005	2,850,000	5,700,000	Construction of new build; refurbishment of existing accommodation; demolition of unsuitable temporary accommodation
2005	750,000	1,032,179	Works needed to comply with Disability Discrimination Act (DDA)
2002	595,000	1,700,000	Development of sports facilities to encourage growth and quality improvement of sports courses; extension of catering and recreational space and Learning Services area
2001	38,500	77,001	Works needed to comply with DDA
Total	4,233,500		
Warrington Collegiate (FE college)			
2004	8,100,000	27,000,000	Redevelopment of the Winwick Road campus; demolition of existing buildings; vacation of Padgate Road campus
2003	30,039	40,052	Works needed to comply with DDA
Total	8,130,039		

[1] Information not available as capital funding for sixth forms is not within the LSC remit

I should like to follow up some of the related questions put to Chris Banks and me by your colleagues on the Select Committee last week.

We discussed the findings of the Learning and Skills Development Agency's research into the funding gap for full-time 16–18 year old learners in schools and colleges. The report found that had FE colleges been funded on the same basis as school sixth forms, they would have received an additional 13%.

However, it did not suggest that simply uplifting college funding rates is the way to level the playing field, as the gap in the actual funding rate is only just over 2%. A large part of the difference is caused by technical issues such as special pensions arrangements for teachers in schools, differences in the way that data (particularly learner number information) is collected and used, and the impact of the Government's 'real terms guarantee' which stated that no school that maintained its student numbers would receive less funding in real terms under the LSC funding formula than under the previous LEA arrangements.

Today around one in seven schools still benefits from this guarantee by receiving more than they would under the LSC formula.

As Chris and I said last week, the funding inequity is one of the issues that the LSC's "agenda for change" programme aims to address. When Sir David Normington and I gave evidence to the Committee of Public Accounts in October, Sir David reiterated the Government's commitment to narrowing the gap, but he noted that any changes must be carefully planned and rolled out so as not to destabilise the school system by simply taking money away from them to give to the colleges. By its very nature this process cannot be a quick one, but with our new funding arrangements we will make progress.

Finally, I should like to touch briefly on your concerns about funding for adult learning. I know that Liz Davis has written to you to explain the funding issues and I understand that Warrington Collegiate has historically taken a very inclusive approach to fee setting in order to ensure that those who are most in need of learning continue to be able to access it. Colleagues at the local LSC, together with the two colleges and Warrington Borough Council's community services department, met recently to discuss the best way to manage the impact of future changes and developments in adult learning in Warrington.

Although this group's discussions are at an early stage I have asked Liz to ensure that you are kept informed of progress over the coming weeks.

If you would like to discuss this or any of the matters in this letter in more detail I know that Liz would be pleased to meet with you at your convenience. Liz can be contacted on 01606 320022.

I hope that this is helpful.

Sure Start

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the national performance targets are for Sure Start centres; and what the performance of Sure Start centres in Torbay has been against those targets. [32055]

Beverley Hughes: The progress of Sure Start local programmes (SSLPs) is measured through the SR02 public service agreement targets. It should be noted that Sure Start local programmes are currently being converted into children's centres. 90 per cent. of SSLPs are expected to have been converted by April 2006 and the remainder by April 2008. They will then operate under the targets set for children's centres.

Children's Centre Targets

The Government's overall target for phase 1 children's centres is for them to reach at least 650,000 children under five by March 2006. Each local authority was given a target number of children under five to reach, plus a target of new child care places to create by March 2006. Torbay has a reach target of 5,575 children under five and child care places target of 172 in phase 1.

In phase 2, we have set targets for local authorities to develop a minimum number of Sure Start children's centres to reach a minimum number of children by 2008. Torbay has been asked to develop three Sure Start children's centres to reach 2,574 children under five by March 2008. Phase 1 targets are expected to be met by June 2006; phase 2 targets are making good progress.

Progress against SR02 PSA Targets

All targets refer to fully operational Sure Start local programmes and cover the period 2003–06.

PSA 1—Improve the proportion of children aged 0–5 with normal levels of personal, social and emotional development—following delays in implementation of the foundation stage profile and concerns over data quality it was not possible to set a baseline or target level. It is therefore not possible to report progress of SSLPs against the SR02 target.

PSA 2—Reduce by 6 per cent. percentage points the proportion of mothers continuing to smoke during pregnancy—2003–05 data shows that the two Torbay SSLPs saw a rise in smoking levels (Paignton—56 per cent. to 62 per cent. Torquay—30 per cent. to 37 per cent.). Nationally, there was a 1.4 per cent. drop between 2002 and 2004, the national data for 2005 is currently being analysed.

PSA 3, part *(a)*—Improve proportion of children aged 0–5 with normal levels of communication, language and literacy at the end of the foundation stage—see PSA 1.

PSA 3, part *(b)*—Increase the proportion of children aged two with satisfactory speech and language development—nationally there was a 3 per cent. rise (73 per cent.—2003, 76 per cent.—2004) as measured through the Sure Start speech and language measure. It is not possible to report on the progress of individual SSLPs for this period.

PSA 4—Reduce by 12 per cent. the proportion of children aged 0–4 living households where no one is working—the percentage has risen very slightly between 2003 and 2004 in the Paignton SSLP area (25.7 per cent. to 25.6 per cent.), but has fallen in the Torquay Project SSLP area (29.9 per cent. to 27.3 per cent., a reduction of 8.6 per cent.). Nationally there was a 7.3 per cent. drop in SSLP areas.

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children living in disadvantaged areas of *(a)* Wakefield district and *(b)* Normanton constituency are participating in Sure Start local progammes. [32451]

Beverley Hughes: There are four Sure Start local programmes in Wakefield reaching a total of 2,953 children under the age of four. Sure Start Wakefield West covers 773 children; Sure Start Ferry Fryston and Airedale covers 651 children; Sure Start Hemsworth, Kinsley and Fitzwilliam covers 610 children and Sure Start Wakefield East involves 919 children under four. All four Sure Start local programmes are part of or are becoming children's centres.

There are 14 neighbourhood nurseries in Wakefield providing 596 full day care places. Seven of these nurseries are involved in phase one children's centres. Wakefield has one early excellence centre which forms part of Castle children's centre. The centre is also based on the Sure Start Wakefield East local programme and a neighbourhood nursery. The centre was designated in April 2005.

Wakefield has 13 children's centres planning to reach a total of 7,886 children under the age of five: 10 of the centres have received approval to proceed from the Sure Start unit and three centres have been designated by the unit.

There is one children's centre in Normanton. Newlands children's centre is based on a primary school and serves 570 children under five. There are also two neighbourhood nurseries based within the constituency, offering a total of 88 full-day care places. There are no Sure Start local programmes in Normanton.

Young People (Statistics)

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the number and proportion of *(a)* 16, *(b)* 17 and *(c)* 18-year-olds not in full-time education or training, broken down by local education authority area. [30799]

Phil Hope: Estimates of the number and percentage of young people aged *(a)* 16 and *(b)* 17 who were not in full-time education or work-based learning (e.g. apprenticeships) in local authorities in England are given in the table. Figures for 18-year-olds are not available at a local level.

These estimates are provisional and are snapshot information as at the end of the calendar year 2003. They are derived from the Department's Statistical First Release (SFR 11/2005) entitled, 'Participation in Education and Training by 16 and 17 year olds in Each Local Area in England: 2002 and 2003'.

Number and percentage of 16 and 17-year-olds not in full-time education or work based learning by local authorities in England, 2003 provisional

	16-year-olds		*17-year-olds*	
East Midlands	*Number* 13,000	*Percentage* 23	*Number* 18,000	*Percentage* 33
Derbyshire	3,100	25	4,100	34
Derbyshire	2,300	24	3,000	33
Derby	900	28	1,200	38
Leicestershire	2,300	19	3,500	28
Leicester	700	17	1,200	29
Leicestershire	1,600	20	2,100	28
Rutland	100	12	200	23
Lincolnshire	2,100	24	2,800	35
Northamptonshire	2,000	23	3,000	35
Nottinghamshire	3,600	26	4,500	35
Nottingham	1,000	27	1,200	36
Nottinghamshire	2,600	26	3,300	35
West Midlands	16,300	22	23,900	34
Birmingham	4,200	28	5,300	37
Coventry	900	22	1,400	34
Dudley	1,100	27	1,300	34
Hereford and Worcester	1,600	17	2,700	29
Herefordshire	400	20	800	34
Worcestershire	1,200	16	1,900	28
Sandwell	1,000	26	1,500	38
Shropshire	1,200	20	2,000	32
Shropshire	600	17	1,200	31
Telford and Wrekin	600	26	800	36
Solihull	700	24	900	32

Number and percentage of 16 and 17-year-olds not in full-time education or work based learning by local authorities in England, 2003 provisional

	16-year-olds		17-year-olds	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
East Midlands	*13,000*	*23*	*18,000*	*33*
Staffordshire	2,900	21	4,600	34
Staffordshire	2,100	20	3,300	31
Stoke-on-Trent	800	25	1,300	43
Walsall	800	23	1,300	37
Warwickshire	1,200	18	1,900	29
Wolverhampton	700	20	1,000	32
East of England	14,200	21	21,200	31
Bedfordshire	1,500	19	2,400	31
Bedfordshire	800	16	1,500	30
Luton	700	25	900	33
Cambridgeshire	2,000	22	2,900	32
Cambridgeshire	1,400	20	2,100	30
Peterborough	600	27	800	38
Essex	4,700	23	7,000	35
Essex	3,600	22	5,400	33
Southend-on-Sea	500	25	700	34
Thurrock	500	28	900	49
Hertfordshire	1,800	13	2,900	22
Norfolk	2,300	24	3,500	37
Suffolk	1,900	22	2,600	31
Greater London	16,200	18	24,300	28
Inner London[1]	6,900	22	9,100	29
Outer London	9,300	16	15,200	27
Barking and Dagenham	500	23	1,000	45
Barnet	700	19	900	23
Bexley	500	19	1,000	34
Brent	500	14	800	23
Bromley	700	20	900	26
Croydon	800	17	1,100	24
Ealing	600	16	1,200	30
Enfield	500	13	900	26
Greenwich	70	23	1,000	34
Harrow	300	11	500	18
Havering	500	17	1,000	34
Hillingdon	600	18	800	27
Hounslow	600	22	900	33
Kingston upon Thames	200	14	400	23
Merton	300	16	600	29
Redbridge	300	10	700	23
Richmond upon Thames	200	9	300	18
Sutton	400	17	600	29
Waltham Forest	300	12	700	24
North East	6,900	20	11,500	33
Cleveland	1,600	19	2,700	33
Hartlepool	300	19	500	34
Middlesbrough	400	19	800	35
Redcar and Cleveland	500	24	600	32
Stockton-on-Tees	400	15	900	32
Durham	1,600	22	2,600	34
Darlington	300	22	400	33
Durham	1,300	21	2,100	34
Gateshead	600	22	900	35
Newcastle upon Tyne	600	18	1,000	31
North Tyneside	400	18	800	33
Northumberland	800	21	1,200	31
South Tyneside	400	20	700	33
Sunderland	800	20	1,500	37
North West	20,000	21	29,600	32
Bolton	700	20	1,200	31
Bury	500	21	800	31
Cheshire	2,600	20	3,600	28
Cheshire	1,700	20	2,300	27
Halton	300	18	500	29
Warrington	600	23	800	31

Number and percentage of 16 and 17-year-olds not in full-time education or work based learning by local authorities in England, 2003 provisional

	16-year-olds		*17-year-olds*	
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
East Midlands	*13,000*	*23*	*18,000*	*33*
Cumbria	1,100	17	1,600	27
Knowsley	500	20	900	40
Lancashire	4,500	23	6,500	33
Blackburn with Darwen	400	17	600	28
Blackpool	400	22	700	40
Lancashire	3,700	24	5,100	33
Liverpool	1,300	21	2,300	36
Manchester	1,300	22	1,800	31
Oldham	800	25	1,100	34
Rochdale	900	29	1,100	37
St. Helens	600	24	700	31
Salford	700	26	1,300	44
Sefton	700	18	1,000	26
Stockport	800	21	1,100	29
Tameside	700	24	1,100	38
Trafford	600	20	900	30
Wigan	1,000	24	1,400	35
Wirral	700	16	1,300	30
Yorkshire and the Humber	20,000	24	23,500	35
Barnsley	900	30	1,200	42
Bradford	1,700	24	2,400	35
Calderdale	600	23	800	33
Doncaster	1,200	28	1,600	40
Humberside	2,400	20	3,600	30
East Riding of Yorkshire	700	17	800	21
Kingston Upon Hull, City of	800	21	1,300	37
North East Lincolnshire	600	26	800	35
North Lincolnshire	300	17	600	30
Kirklees	1,400	26	1,800	35
Leeds	3,100	32	3,700	39
North Yorkshire	1,600	16	3,300	33
North Yorkshire	1,200	15	2,700	34
York	400	17	600	28
Rotherham	800	25	1,300	40
Sheffield	1,400	23	1,900	33
Wakefield	1,200	28	1,700	39
South East	19,499	19	30,300	30
Berkshire	1,900	18	2,500	23
Bracknell Forest	400	23	500	31
Reading	300	17	500	32
Slough	300	21	600	34
West Berkshire	400	19	600	28
Windsor and Maidenhead	300	15	400	22
Wokingham	200	11	—	—
Buckinghamshire	1,800	20	2,800	31
Buckinghamshire	1,200	20	1,700	27
Milton Keynes	600	20	1,200	38
East Sussex	1,700	19	2,800	32
Brighton and Hove	400	16	800	31
East Sussex	1,200	20	2,000	33
Hampshire	4,200	20	6,700	32
Hampshire	3,000	19	5,000	30
Portsmouth	500	22	800	35
Southampton	700	27	900	39
Isle of Wight	400	21	600	34
Kent	4,400	21	6,600	32
Kent	3,500	20	5,300	31
Medway	900	25	1,300	38
Oxfordshire	1,300	18	2,100	28
Surrey	2,000	15	3,600	27
West Sussex	1,800	19	2,600	30

Number and percentage of 16 and 17-year-olds not in full-time education or work based learning by local authorities in England, 2003 provisional

	16-year-olds		17-year-olds	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
East Midlands	*13,000*	*23*	*18,000*	*33*
South West	12,000	19	17,700	29
Avon	2,500	20	3,800	31
Bath and North East Somerset	300	14	500	23
Bristol, City of	1,000	20	1,600	33
North Somerset	500	22	700	29
South Gloucestershire	700	24	1,000	34
Cornwall	1,100	17	1,800	28
Devon	2,700	20	4,000	30
Devon	1,700	19	2,400	28
Plymouth	600	19	1,00	33
Torbay	400	26	500	34
Dorset	1,800	21	2,100	25
Bournemouth	400	23	500	31
Dorset	1,000	20	1,100	21
Poole	400	23	500	28
Gloucestershire	1,300	17	2,100	29
Somerset	1,200	17	1,800	27
Wiltshire	1,400	17	2,200	29
Swindon	400	18	700	32
Wiltshire	900	17	1,500	28
England[2]	134,300	21	200,000	31

[1] Figures for individual Inner London LEAs cannot be estimated reliably, therefore only a total is provided. See paragraphs 19 of the SFR for further information.

[2] Definitive national figures for participation in education and training are published in the SFR entitled "Participation in education, training and employment by 16 to 18-year-olds in England", see section E in Notes to Editors.

Note:

Due to the margin of error surrounding local level participation estimates and the use of school level data for independent schools, participation rates can be over 100 per cent. For these areas, an asterisk is placed in the table.

Pre-school Education

Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations she has received about the funding of three-year-old children for 33 weeks of pre-school education; and if she will make a statement. [32544]

Beverley Hughes: The Secretary of State does receive, from time to time, representation from a range of stakeholders, including local authorities, early years providers and national associations about funding for the free entitlement for early education for three and four-year-olds. From April 2006, the minimum entitlement will be increased from 33 weeks to 38 weeks a year.

All local authorities receive, through the under-fives sub-block of the education formula spending share (EFSS), sufficient funding to enable them to meet their statutory responsibilities to provide a free early education place for all three and four-year-olds. Local authorities are responsible for determining the specific level of funding to providers in their area taking account of local needs and circumstances.

Special Educational Needs

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the Academies Special Educational Needs Dispute Resolution Service. [32659]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 29 November 2005]:* Academies are fully inclusive schools and are required by law to cater for children of all abilities. They cannot cherry pick their intake, but must have regard to the SEN code of practice and statutory guidance on inclusion. An Academies independent status, does not affect parents rights to appeal to the SEN and Disability Tribunal.

The Department launched an independent, free and entirely voluntary SEN Dispute Resolution Service for Academies in January 2005. The service was made available to support good and timely local decision making with regards the admission of pupils with SEN to Academies. The service has been well used by Academies and well received by both Academies and local authorities.

On average Academies admit more pupils with SEN (both with and without statements) than other schools in England. They also, on average, admit more SEN pupils (both with and without statements) than their predecessor schools.

TRANSPORT

Airports (Security Costs)

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list airports that *(a)* pay for and *(b)* do not contribute towards their security and policing costs; and if he will make a statement. [32676]

Ms Buck: Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Birmingham, Manchester, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Prestwick are designated airports under section 25 of the Aviation Security Act 1982 and as such the aerodrome manager must pay such policing costs as he and the relevant police authority may agree. Non-designated airports are not obliged to contribute in the same way. All UK airports contribute to the costs of security.

The Secretary of State made a statement on 21 November announcing a review of policing at airports.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* consultants and *(b)* special advisers were employed by his Department in each year since 1997; what the cost of each was in each year; and if he will make a statement. [27414]

Ms Buck: The Department for Transport only came into existence on 29 May 2002. The number of consultants employed by the Department in the years since 29 May 2002 is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

In relation to special advisers, I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Cabinet Office on 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1257W.

Arriva Buses

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many complaints about Arriva Buses have been received by the Traffic Commissioners in *(a)* England, *(b)* the North East Government Office and *(c)* the boroughs of the Tees Valley sub-region in each of the last 10 years. [32671]

Dr. Ladyman: Complaints about Arriva Buses received by the Traffic Commissioners, for the years that records are available, are shown in the following table:

	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
NETA	26	20	26	24	26	24
Tees Valley	0	5	7	1	12	1
England	46	53	46	62	41	42
Total	72	78	79	87	79	67

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many complaints against Arriva Buses made to the Traffic Commissioners have resulted in that company being forced to amend operating practices in *(a)* England, *(b)* the North East Government Office area and *(c)* the boroughs of the Tees Valley sub-region in each of the last 10 years. [32672]

Dr. Ladyman: It is not possible to determine the number of complaints against Arriva Buses that have resulted in Arriva Being forced to amend its operating practices.

Arriva has been directed to amend its practices on the number of occasions shown in the following table:

	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
NETA	0	0	0	3	0	1
Tees Valley	0	0	0	0	0	0
England	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total	0	0	0	3	0	1

Such action will only be taken when a series of complaints has been made, where the operator has failed to address problems, rather than as a result of a single complaint.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how much revenue was obtained by Arriva Buses from local authorities and passenger transport executives in each year in respect of concessionary fares in *(a)* England, *(b)* the North East Government Office Region and *(c)* the boroughs of the Tees Valley sub-region since 1995; [32812]

(2) how much revenue was obtained by Arriva Buses for running subsidised services on behalf of local authorities and passenger transport executives in *(a)* England, *(b)* the North East Government Office area and *(c)* the boroughs of the Tees Valley sub-region in each year since 1995. [32813]

Ms Buck: It is not possible to answer this question from the information available to the Department. Such information as we do have from Arriva Buses on its revenue from subsidised bus contracts and concessionary fares reimbursement has been supplied for aggregate statistical purposes and is commercially restricted under the terms of the Statistics of Trade Act 1947.

Concessionary Travel (South Gloucestershire)

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 284W, on concessionary travel (South Gloucestershire), what he estimates to be the current cost to each local authority of the existing half-fare scheme. [32013]

Ms Buck: The cost of concessionary fare reimbursement to bus operators is reported to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister by each local authority. Aggregate data is published in the DfT's 'Public Transport Statistics Bulletin GB: 2005 Edition Supplement' copies of which are placed in the Libraries of the House.

A table showing estimates of total spending on all concessionary bus travel reimbursement in 2004–05 by individual authority including discretionary spending on enhanced schemes, for example, providing cross-border travel or county-wide schemes, entitlement to travel in peak hours and concessionary travel for children has been placed in the Libraries of the House. It is not possible to disaggregate the cost of providing a statutory half-fare scheme for older and disabled people.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Geoffrey Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how often on average civil servants moved posts within his Department in the last 10 years. [27968]

Ms Buck: The average length of time in each post for civil servants since the Department was created in 2002 was 2.95 years for staff in the centre and 2.27 years for staff in the Driving Standards Agency. The data for the other Executive Agencies is not available.

Driver Licences Directive

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what estimate he has made of the cost to the consumer of gaining an unlimited access motorcycle licence under the proposed Third European Directive on Driver Licences; and if he will make a statement; [32504]

(2) what assessment he has made of the likely effect of the Third European Directive on Driver Licences on motorcycle manufacturers in the UK; and if he will make a statement; [32509]

(3) what assessment he has made of the likely impact on casualty numbers of the second motorcycle riding test proposed in the Third European Directive on Driving Licences. [32510]

Dr. Ladyman: The proposed Third European Community Directive on driving licences remains under negotiation in the Council of Ministers.

The Government's assessment of the potential impact of the original Commission proposals was provided to the Parliamentary Scrutiny Committees. We concluded that the proposals for motorcycles bore no clear relationship to the road safety problems of which we have evidence in the UK. An update to the impact assessment was provided to the Committees on 23 December 2004, and a further substantive letter on 13 June 2005.

In its present form, the draft Directive may impose additional testing or training costs on motorcyclists under the age of 24 who wish to ride larger machines, but such costs cannot be quantified at this stage. The amount would depend on the final form of any Directive adopted, and on subsequent decisions by the Government about how to implement the Directive in the United Kingdom. For the same reasons, the Government cannot at this stage quantify any potential effects of the Directive on UK motorcycle manufacturers or on casualty numbers.

If the proposed Directive is adopted, the Government will consult widely about how to implement it in a way that minimises potential adverse effects.

DVLA

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what *(a)* targets the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) has for responding to complaints; and *(b)* how many complaints received by (i) telephone, (ii) letter and (iii) electronic mail the DVLA responded to within those target times in each year since 1997, broken down by type of complaint. [33367]

Dr. Ladyman: DVLA has two internal targets for responding to complaints. These are:

to acknowledge all complaints within one working day; and

to provide a substantive response to all complaints within 10 working days.

Information on how the complaints were received is not available.

The following table shows how many complaints were received and how the Agency performed against each target in the years requested.

Complaints received

Category	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Drivers (including drivers medical)	250	384	908	597	553	684	1,028	812
Vehicles	913	1,173	1,101	983	2,115	1,747	2,357	2,560
Telephone service	198	134	157	137	142	122	119	111
Processing procedures	5	6	18	322	212	236	331	614
Other	102	119	195	398	570	600	741	680
Total	1,468	1,816	2,379	2,437	3,592	3,389	4,576	4,777

Numbers and percentage responded within target (totals only available)

Target 1		*Target 2*	
Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
1,458	99.3	1,449	98.7
1,816	100	1,765	97.2
2,379	100	2,303	96.8
2,437	100	2,240	91.9
3,592	100	3,467	96.5
3,389	100	3,295	97.2
4,576	100	4,458	97.4
4,777	100	4,663	97.6

Festivals

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps his Department took to celebrate and promote the events of *(a)* Ramadan, *(b)* Diwali and *(c)* Chinese New Year in 2005. [31168]

Ms Buck: The Department for Transport and the Executive agencies promote religious dates and cultural events through the publication of an informative annual religious calendar which is accessible to all employees. In addition to advertising and promoting specific dates, it also provides information about particular religions and festivals.

In addition to this, policy and guidance has been published regarding religious and cultural leave and the availability of prayer and reflection rooms.

Many activities have also been organised across the Department. For example; DfT(C) held a Celebration of Culture Event on Friday 11 November for staff to celebrate Diwali and Eid; DVLA's Diversity Team supported the Swansea Chinese Association this year by attending their event to celebrate the Chinese New Year. The Highways Agency took part in the 2004 Diwali event at the NEC in Birmingham and in October 2005 attended the Asian Mela also held at the NEC.

Freedom of Information

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many Freedom of Information applications his Department has received; how many have taken more than 20 days to process; and how many of these gave rise to complaints about the time taken. [31221]

Ms Buck: The FOI Act 2000 came fully into effect on 1 January 2005. Prior to 2005, the Department (as with all Government Departments) was operating under the non-statutory code of practice on access to government information and there is no centrally held record of those cases.

Between 1 January and 30 June 2005, DfT (including its Executive agencies) received 893 FOI requests.

738 (83 per cent.) of these were answered within the 20 day deadline. A further 49 (5 per cent.) were answered within a permitted extension to the 20 day deadline to consider complex public interest tests. Where such an extension is made, officials are instructed to keep applicants informed as to the likely time within which a reply can be expected.

In summary, the total number of cases answered after the 20 day deadline was therefore 155, of which 106 had not been subject to a formal extension of the deadline to consider a public interest test.

A total of three complaints have been received in respect of requests during the period about the time taken to respond.

The Department for Constitutional Affairs is committed to publishing quarterly updates in relation to departmental performance under FOI, including information on both the volume and outcomes of requests. The bulletin for the second quarter (ie April to June 2005) was published on 30 September 2005 and can be found on the DCA website at http://www.foi.gov.uk/statsapr-jun05.htm and in the Libraries of both Houses. The next bulletin will be published before Christmas, while an annual report will be published in early 2006.

Heavy Goods Vehicles (Restrictions)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has made an assessment of the effectiveness of the restriction on heavy goods vehicles using the outside lane on parts of the M42/A42; and if he will make a statement. [32668]

Dr. Ladyman: At present it is too early to assess the effectiveness of the trial over a three mile section of the northbound carriageway of the M42 between junctions 10 and 11. The restriction was introduced on 10 October for an experimental period of up to 18 months. The Highways Agency is monitoring the performance of the restriction to assess what benefits have resulted. Additionally the Agency is inviting comments from all road users to gauge their reaction.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will introduce a restriction on heavy goods vehicles using the outside lane on the two-lane stretches of the M18 motorway. [32669]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency is currently trialling the restriction of heavy goods vehicles using the outside lane on the M42. The trial is at an early stage and no decisions have been taken on whether or not to introduce such a restriction elsewhere on the motorway network.

IT Projects

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many IT projects which cost over £1 million and were introduced since 1997 are in use in his Department. [26594]

Ms Buck: 64 IT projects which cost over £1 million have been introduced since 29 May 2002 and are in use in the Department for Transport and its agencies.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many of the IT projects costing over £1 million in use in his Department and introduced since 1997 have been scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee; and if he will list them. [26606]

Ms Buck: No IT projects costing over £1 million in use in this Department have been scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee since the formation of the Department on 29 May 2002.

London Buses

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what was the average number of passengers per mile travelled by London buses in 1999–2000. [31712]

Ms Buck: Buses in London are the responsibility of the Mayor and Transport for London (TfL). However, they have informed me that the total number of miles operated by buses in 1999–2000 was 220,136,730. During this period 1,296,000,000 passenger journeys were made. Therefore 5.88 journeys were made per mile operated.

London Olympics

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the extent to which the construction of Olympic transport projects and Crossrail will affect each other. [31722]

Ms Buck: The project teams from both the Crossrail and Olympic projects are liaising closely with each other to ensure that the programmes of construction are properly co-ordinated. We therefore expect the impact of each programme on the other to be minimal.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what precautions will be taken to ensure that dust and pollution from Crossrail construction will not adversely affect air quality at the time of the 2012 Olympics. [31723]

Ms Buck: In consultation with local authorities and other stakeholders, we are developing a range of mechanisms to ensure the construction impacts of Crossrail are suitably controlled. This includes a Construction Code that details how Crossrail construction activities will be carried out including measures for the control of dust and other air pollutants. Any nominated undertaker appointed to construct Crossrail will be required to comply with the Construction Code.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the measures taken to explain to the public the relationship between the availability of funding for transport for the 2012 Olympics and the availability of funding for regional transport schemes and projects. [31724]

Ms Buck: We have always been clear that the transport plans published as part of the Olympic bid were based on making the best use of the existing network and improvements which were planned to have taken place before 2012 regardless of the Olympics. These planned improvements include schemes such as the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, East London Line Extension and extensions to the Docklands Light Railway, all funded by the relevant body regardless of the Olympic decision.

As has been made clear throughout the development of the bid, additional schemes needed specifically for the Olympics will be funded from the Public Sector Funding Package of £2.375 billion. This is made up of funding from the lottery and contributions from London council tax and the London Development Agency.

We therefore would not expect the Olympics to affect the availability of funding for other transport schemes. We have consistently made it clear that, in taking funding decisions in connection with the Olympics or wider transport development, our objective will always be to secure the very best value for money.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of whether the capacity on the Docklands Light Railway will be sufficient to meet planning needs for the 2012 Olympics. [31795]

Ms Buck: We believe that the Docklands Light Railway (DLR) will have sufficient capacity to meet the needs of the 2012 Olympics. Planned works on the Docklands Light Railway, due for completion before 2012, include the extension to London City airport, the extension to Woolwich and capacity enhancements on stations between Bank and Lewisham. The Secretary of State is also currently considering proposals to convert the North London Line to DLR.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the total amount is to be spent on transport schemes connected to the 2012 Olympics.[31808]

Ms Buck: The transport plans for the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games were set out in the Bid documents submitted to the International Olympic Committee in November 2004. This identified some £7.2 billion for transport projects connected with the Games. This includes planned schemes, such as Phase 2 of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link, which would have taken place regardless of the Olympics, as well as a number of schemes which are funded through Olympic budgets.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of whether adequate planning has been made to ensure that transport for the 2012 Olympics will be fully sustainable. [31809]

Ms Buck: London 2012 will be a sustainable Games—with this in mind, the Olympic Transport Plan will encourage 100 per cent. spectator use of public transport, walking and cycling. The successful Olympic bid was founded on existing and planned transport infrastructure in 2012, minimising the need for additional Olympic specific schemes and services. Wherever possible, vehicles producing low (or no) emissions will be used for both spectator and Olympic family transport.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what park and ride schemes have been planned in connection with the 2012 Olympics. [31810]

Ms Buck: The bid documents proposed two major park-and-ride schemes bus, situated off the M25. The main Northern site would be near the M11 and M25 junction and would have over 6,000 parking spaces. The Southern site, near Dartford river crossing, would also provide 6,000 parking spaces. These sites would be 20 to 25 minutes ride from the venues.

9,000 park-and-ride rail spaces will be available at Ebbsfleet station, which will link spectators to the Olympic Javelin service, providing access to the Olympic Park in 10 minutes. 10,000 park-and-ride bus spaces will be made available at Windsor Racecourse, a 10-minute ride from Eton Dorney, the Olympic rowing and canoeing venue. Wimbledon and other established sporting venues will make use of existing, established schemes.

Since the Games were awarded to London in July, we have taken the opportunity to step back and look again at these schemes and whether alternatives may offer even better value for money.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what assessment he has made of whether the transport arrangement for the 2012 Olympic Games will be efficient without the completion of the Thameslink box development; [31811]

(2) whether the Thameslink box was a scheme included in the bid for the 2012 Olympic Games; [31812]

(3) what assessment he has made of the effect on passengers using transport services at the 2012 Olympic Games of the non-completion of the Thameslink box. [31813]

Ms Buck: The transport schemes needed for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games were set out in the Bid documents submitted to the International Olympic Committee (IOC) in November 2004. In addition, in February 2005 the Department announced that, following a review, the King's Cross Northern Ticket Hall and Western Concourse would be completed in time for the 2012 Games. This will improve the passenger interchange with the Olympic. Javelin Service operating out of St. Pancras.

The Thameslink Box was not included in the Olympic Bid documents or in any subsequent commitments to the IOC. Modelling produced in the development of the Bid has shown that adequate facilities will be in place at King's Cross and St. Pancras to cope with Olympic spectators. However, the Department is investigating the feasibility of an earlier fit out of the box in line with the completion of the CTRL Project and the transfer of Eurostar services to St. Pancras.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the need for *(a)* a travelator and *(b)* another mechanised link between Stratford Regional Station and Stratford International Station for the 2012 Olympics. [31814]

Ms Buck: The proposed travelator is not part of the Olympic Transport Plan. Subject to the approval of applications which are currently before the Secretary of State, from 2010 the DLR will provide direct access to the wider transport network from both stations and to all Olympic venues.

In particular, during the Paralympic Games when spectators hold day tickets, the DLR will facilitate efficient spectator transfer from the Olympic Park to the River Zone cluster of competition venues.

Motor Vehicle Accidents (Private Land)

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has for reducing deaths from motor vehicle accidents on private land. [32281]

Dr. Ladyman: We are aware that the use of motor vehicles on private land causes nuisance from time to time. However, we are not aware that there is a significant number of deaths involving motor vehicles on private land. The road accident statistics we collect are for on road use of motor vehicles. We do not collect data on accidents that occur on private land. There are sufficient powers to regulate the use of motor vehicles off road. It is for the police to enforce them.

National Minimum Wage

Ms Katy Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many employees in his Department were affected by the rise in the national minimum wage on 1 October. [28977]

Ms Buck: The rise to the National Minimum Wage on 1 October did not affect any of the Department's employees.

Northern Rail Services Review

Mrs. Riordan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the Review of Northern Rail Services has been completed. [32586]

Derek Twigg: The Review of Northern Rail services is still in progress, and I expect to receive recommendations early in 2006.

Parliamentary Questions

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will reply substantively to the questions tabled by the hon. Member for Liverpool, Riverside for answer on 8 November, reference *(a)* 26246 and *(b)* 26249. [32422]

Derek Twigg: I have replied to both of my hon. Friend's questions. Ref 26246 was answered on 24 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2218W and ref 26249 was answered 29 November 2005.

Pedicabs

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with Transport for London about the safety of pedicabs. [31466]

Ms Buck: I discussed the question of regulation of pedicabs, including with respect to safety, with representatives of Transport for London on 4 October. The Department is very willing to hold further meetings with interested parties but of course Transport for London are in the lead on the introduction of a licensing regime.

Rail Infrastructure

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what extra security measures have been taken along the *(a)* Hastings to London Victoria, *(b)* Hastings to Charing Cross and *(c)* Brighton to London Victoria train lines since the 7 July terrorist attacks in London. [29817]

Derek Twigg: Following the attacks on 7 July the threat to the whole UK rail network was re-assessed, resulting in additional security requirements. It would be inappropriate to go into detail for obvious security reasons but the situation is kept under review to ensure that these measures are commensurate with the risk.

Railways

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent on the National Train Passenger Survey in each year from 1997–98 to 2004–05; and what funding is planned for future financial years. [25615]

Derek Twigg: The National Passenger Survey was set up in 1999. The following table outlines how much has been spent on the survey in each financial year since then, inclusive of VAT.

	Cost
1999–2000	251,475
2000–01	466,768
2001–02	507,515
2002–03	582,840
2003–04	642,396
2004–05	681,192

The contract for the National Passenger Survey is open to competition. It would therefore be inappropriate to make future funding figures available to potential bidders.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans Network Rail has to increase funding for rail infrastructure along the Bexhill to London Victoria line. [33127]

Derek Twigg: This is an operational matter for Network Rail, who will be responding directly to the hon. Member.

Road Accidents

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* fatal and *(b)* serious road accidents there were in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and how many in each year involved (i) drunk driving, (ii) a stolen vehicle, (iii) a driver without a valid driving licence, (iv) a foreign national driver and (v) a combination of these factors. [30592]

Dr. Ladyman: The estimates for the number of fatal and serious accidents involving illegal alcohol levels for 2000–04 are in the table. The total number of fatal and serious accidents in GB for 2000–04 is also given in the table.

	Drink drive		*All road accidents*	
	Fatal	*Serious*	*Fatal*	*Serious*
2000	450	1,950	3,108	32,499
2001	470	2,020	3,176	31,588
2002	480	2,050	3,124	30,521
2003	500	1,970	3,247	28,913
2004	[1]530	[1]1,790	2,978	26,748

[1] Provisional data. The sample of fatality data from coroners for 2003 has now been finalised but 2004 estimates are based on a reduced sample of coroners' returns and may be biased. They remain provisional until more complete information for 2004 is available.

The number of fatal accidents where a driver or rider had an illegal alcohol level is estimated from coroners' and procurators' fiscal data which become available a year later than the main road accident data. As a result, the estimates for 2004 are provisional.

Information on stolen vehicles involved in personal injury road accidents is not currently available. However, from 2005, the reporting police officer may note where the fact that a vehicle was stolen, or being driven in the course of a crime influenced the driver or rider's behaviour and contributed to the accident. This will not be available for accidents reported to the police at the police station. Information on drivers without a valid driving licence involved in personal injury road accidents is not collected because of the inability in linking accident data with prosecution data.

Road Traffic (London)

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many traffic lights there were in London in *(a)* 1999–2000 and *(b)* 2004–05. [31884]

Ms Buck: Traffic signals in London are the responsibility of the Mayor and Transport for London (TfL). Before 3 July 2000, traffic signals in London were the responsibility of the Traffic Control Systems Unit, a body which was subsumed into TfL, and the London boroughs.

The total number of Traffic Signal sites[1] in Greater London was *(a)*, on 31 March 2000, 4,236 and *(b)*, on 31 March 2005, 4,978.

For further information please contact:

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[1] A traffic Signal site is defined as a separate junction or pedestrian crossing

Walking

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps his Department has taken to develop a strategy to promote walking since publication of the discussion paper 'On the move: by foot'. [33472]

Derek Twigg: In response to the discussion paper 'On the move: by foot', the Department published 'Walking and cycling: an action plan' on 16 June 2004, which outlines the Government's walking (and cycling) strategy for the next five years. There are a number of actions which are being taken forward in conjunction with interested walking groups. Progress reports of the action plan are regularly published on the walking home page of the Department's website following quarterly meetings with walking stakeholders. A copy of the Action Plan is available in the House Library.

Yellow Bus Schemes

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate his Department has made of the cost of providing a yellow bus scheme *(a)* in England and *(b)* for each region. [32449]

Ms Buck: We have not made any estimate of the cost of providing a yellow bus scheme *(a)* in England and *(b)* for each region. We know from our evaluation of various small-scale yellow and other dedicated school bus schemes that well-designed schemes have the potential to reduce car dependency for journeys to school and the traffic congestion that results from this. However, care needs to be taken to ensure that they are appropriate to local circumstances and do not reduce levels of walking or cycling or undermine the viability of important bus services available to the wider public.

We therefore want to encourage individual local authorities to consider school bus schemes as part of broader local transport planning and to decide whether or not they would be appropriate to their area.

We are currently funding the MyBus school bus scheme in West Yorkshire. The £18.7 million we are providing over three years is expected to fund the capital cost of 150 dedicated buses.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Energy Consumption

Martin Horwood: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission what assessment he has made of the average energy consumption of the House of Commons between midnight and 6.30 am; how much of that figure is accounted for by *(a)* lights, *(b)* computers, *(c)* heating, *(d)* televisions and annunciators and *(e)* photocopiers; if he will estimate the energy consumed for each category in terms of (i) watts and (ii) metric tonnes of carbon emitted; and what the cost was of each category. [32467]

Nick Harvey: Electricity is purchased on a day/night tariff with the night period metered from midnight to 7 am. The average electricity consumption by the House of Commons estate during the night period in 2004–05 was 11,650 kWh, costing on average £600 per night. The metric tonnes equivalent of carbon emissions due to this electricity consumption was 1.363 tonnes. There is no breakdown available of the electricity consumption between lights, computers, annunciators and photocopiers.

Heating is provided by natural gas and the night period is not separately metered. Assuming that 10 per cent. of natural gas consumption occurred during the midnight to 7 am night period, the average gas consumption by the House of Commons during the night period in 2004–05 was 5,090 kWh at a cost of £75.00. The metric tonnes equivalent of carbon emissions due to this natural gas consumption was 0.26 tonnes.

Light Bulbs

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the honourable Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission what percentage of the light bulbs used on the House's estate are energy-efficient light bulbs. [32674]

Nick Harvey: 95 per cent. of fluorescent tubes and 70 per cent. of lamps on the parliamentary estate are energy efficient.

Parliamentary Communications Directorate

Martin Horwood: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission what assessment he has made of the cost effectiveness of the Parliamentary Communications Directorate; and whether the Parliamentary Communications Directorate follows communications and customer service best practice. [32458]

Nick Harvey: The Parliamentary Communications Directorate (PCD) has been subject to external review in the past and is subject to regular audit. There will be a review of the effectiveness of the new Parliamentary Information and Communication Technology Department (PICT), of which PCD will be part, once it has been established on 1 January 2006 and has been operational for a suitable period of time.

PCD aims to provide good quality communications and customer service. PCD, together with the rest of the House of Commons, has achieved Investors in People (IiP) accreditation and more recently was accredited by the Helpdesk Institute (HDI). PCD is also pursuing service management excellence through the adoption of the Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) framework, a government backed framework for organising and managing IT services which is being widely adopted by the private and public sectors both at home and abroad. Customer service training is provided to all customer-facing staff, with plans for this to be updated and re-run in the near future.

Security Barriers

Martin Linton: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission if he will place in the Library the risk assessment conducted prior to the erection of permanent security barriers outside the Palace of Westminster; and if he will make a statement on their effect on road safety, with particular reference to cyclists. [33024]

Nick Harvey: The installation of the security barriers followed full consultation with Westminster city council and Transport for London, who are responsible for road safety for all road users, including cyclists. It is not the Commission's practice to publish papers relating to the security of the Palace.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Antisocial Behaviour

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what measures the Department plans to put in place as part of the Government's plans to tackle antisocial behaviour. [22468]

Mr. Caborn: My Department and its sectors are helping to address antisocial behaviour through involvement in a range of programmes that encourage participation by target groups in positive activities, including sport and the arts. These include the Positive Activities for Young People programme, Sport Action Zones and the Plus Strategy.

In addition, we anticipate that the Licensing Act 2003, which took effect on 24 November, will have an important role in the prevention of crime and disorder and public nuisance through encouraging a more orderly dispersal of customers bringing in new powers for tackling problem premises.

Casinos

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions officials in her Department have had with the Anschutz Entertainment Group regarding plans for a casino at the site of the Millennium Dome. [32492]

Mr. Caborn: Ministers and officials have had a number of meetings with casino operators interested in securing licences for new casinos under the Gambling Act 2005. These include meetings with representatives of the Anschutz Entertainment Group and Kerzner International, its partner in the development of the Millennium Dome site. At no stage have representatives of these or any other companies received anything other than publicly available information.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations she has received since the general election on increasing the number of regional casino licences. [32493]

Mr. Caborn: We have received a number of letters from local authorities and others in support of an increase in the number of regional casinos permitted by the Gambling Act 2005.

Despite these representations, we do not believe the case has been made for an increase, and we are therefore proceeding with implementation on the basis of the one regional casino specified in the Act.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what provisions and regulations govern the size of the non-gambling space in casinos licensed under the Gambling Act 2005; and whether alcohol sales can take place in the non-gambling spaces. [32494]

Mr. Caborn: Section 7(5) of the Gambling Act 2005 requires the Secretary of State to make regulations by reference to which any casino may be classified as a regional, large or small casino. Regulations under this subsection may make provision by reference to the floor area used or designated for a specified purpose. We set out our intentions in this respect in the Government's response to the First Report of the Joint Committee on the draft gambling Bill (Cm 6253). This information was also reproduced in my previous answer to the right hon. Lady of 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 711W.

Alcohol sales will be permitted in the non-gambling spaces, just as they were under the Gaming Act 1968.

Departmental Estate

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport which buildings and sites used by her Department and related agencies *(a)* have ceased to be used in the last year and *(b)* will be closed under plans for relocation. [31770]

Mr. Lammy: The information is as follows:

(a) The Department ceased to use its one-floor holding at Woburn Place in central London in April 2005.

(b) The Department occupies buildings in Blandford Street and Orange Street, both in central London, which it plans to vacate in 2006 and 2007 respectively, as part a project to harmonise its accommodation around its main buildings in Cockspur Street.

The Royal Parks Agency has not ceased to use any buildings in the past year and has no current plans to close or relinquish buildings.

Gambling Act

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the timetable is for the *(a)* implementation of the Gambling Act 2005, *(b)* consultation on and publication of secondary legislation and *(c)* announcement of the gambling licence applications. [32495]

Mr. Caborn: We plan to bring the Gambling Act 2005 fully into force with effect from September 2007.

The first two commencement orders were made at the end of August 2005. These brought into force on 1 October 2005 the provisions of the Act formally creating the Gambling Commission; and giving effect to parliamentary commitments to abolish the 24-hour membership rule in respect of casino and bingo halls, and to increase the number of jackpot machines allowed in a casino to 20.

My Department has been considering the remaining subordinate legislation needed to complete the process of implementation and the time-table for that legislation. We propose to publish details shortly.

We expect the Gambling Commission and licensing authorities to start accepting applications for licences and permits from early 2007.

National Lottery

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much has been awarded from the National Lottery to the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust. [32951]

Mr. Caborn: In total, nine lottery awards worth £3.6 million have been made to the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust. One award worth £5,000 was made under the awards for all scheme. The other eight awards were made by the New Opportunities Fund, which has since merged with the Community Fund to form the Big Lottery Fund.

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what eligibility criteria are used to distribute Lottery monies to projects directed towards facilities for young people. [33148]

Mr. Caborn: The Lottery distributors make their funding decisions independently of Government, and against their own criteria for specific funding programmes. However, they are also obliged to take account of policy and financial directions issued to them by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, when making funding decisions. These directions set out the framework for the wider aims of Lottery funding and specifically require the distributors to take into account the needs of children and young people when making funding decisions. Copies of the policy directions have been deposited in the Libraries of both Houses.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Agency Workers Directive

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with his counterparts in Europe on the implementation of the EU Agency Workers Directive. [29798]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Over the last few months in bilateral discussions with other member states, at ministerial and official level, we have found that many member states still have major problems with the current draft of the Agency Workers Directive and views remain very polarised on a number of issues. As the directive has not yet been agreed it would be inappropriate to discuss implementation at this time.

Business Link

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the national performance targets are for Business Link; and what the performance has been against those targets of each Business Link office in Devon and Cornwall. [32065]

Alun Michael: For this year, there are there national performance targets for Business Link which are:

1. Market penetration: to deliver the service to 36.6 per cent. of all business (measured against the Inter Departmental Business Register).

2. Customer satisfaction: to achieve 90 per cent. of all customers to be satisfied with the service provided by Business Link.

3. Additional target: to have offered a significant level of assistance (defined as "intensive" assistance) to more than 35,000 businesses this year.

Business Link is a national brand delivered locally, and overseen by the Regional Development Agency in each area of England since April 2005. In Devon and Cornwall, Business Link performance is ahead of the regional target for penetration (32.2 per cent. of all businesses on the Inter Departmental Business Register) and for Intensive Assistance. The service is on track to meet the customer satisfaction target.

Dairy Industry

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations were received by the Office of Fair Trading on retail price initiatives in the dairy industry prior to its inquiry into that subject; from whom; what the scope is of its inquiry; and when it is expected to be completed. [32980]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Competition law enforcement is a matter for the Office of Fair Trading (OFT). It can initiate an investigation under the Competition Act 1998 in response to a complaint or on its own initiative. The OFT initiated its investigation into the milk retail prices initiatives, not in response to representations but because it had reasonable grounds to suspect that the initiatives infringed competition law.

The milk processors Robert Wiseman Dairies and Dairy Crest have stated that they are included in the investigation of the retail price initiatives. The investigation includes other parties but these have not been made public.

The timetable for the investigation is a matter for the OFT.

Flexible Working Hours

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made in helping people in South Swindon to achieve flexible working hours; and if he will make a statement. [31657]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government are committed to increasing opportunities for people to work flexibly through promoting the benefits of flexible working and through light-touch, targeted legislation. Business Link and ACAS provide tailored guidance to help business manage requests to work flexibly and ACAS have developed a web-based interactive tool, which includes a free online training module.

The residents of South Swindon, like others, have benefited from the right to request flexible working for parents of children under six and disabled children under 18, introduced in April 2003. This legislation has been a tremendous success, with almost a quarter (22 per cent.) of parents with children under six requesting to work flexibly since the legislation was introduced and around 90 per cent. of requests accepted.

Building on this success, the recently introduced Work and Families Bill will extend the scope of the existing law to include carers of adults, a group who face particular challenges in juggling their caring responsibilities with work. We will be consulting on the detail of exactly which carers will be covered by the legislation in early 2006.

Gas Shortages

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what emergency powers he has to control the export of gas through the interconnector in the event of severe gas shortages this winter. [32320]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* The Energy Act 1976 gives the Secretary of State the power to make orders and give directions regulating or prohibiting the production, supply, acquisition or use of fuels including gas.

Any exercise of these powers would take into account the UK's international obligations and, of course, the requirements of EC law.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what research his Department has conducted, prior to the beginning of November, on the economic impact of commercial gas users reducing demand in the event of gas shortages this winter; [32321]

(2) what research his Department had conducted, prior to the beginning of November, into the ability of commercial gas users to reduce demand in the event of gas shortages this winter. [32370]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* In May 2005 DTI published a report by the independent consultants Global Insight on the potential demand-side response of industrial gas users. This can be found at:

http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/publications/policy/index.shtml

More recently, the DTI has commissioned, with industry support, two short studies to update and expand this work.

Hearing Loss Claims

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many hearing loss claims have been registered by Vendside Ltd. with his Department since 1997; and how many cases have been *(a)* partially and *(b)* fully paid out. [31409]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* Vendside Ltd. have not registered any hearing loss claims with the Department. As at 20 November, the Union of Democratic Mineworkers have registered 10,166 claims in which 8,859 claimants have received damages.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether legal advice was *(a)* sought and *(b)* received by his Department before the decision was taken to allow hearing loss claims in the mining industry to be represented solely by a claims handler. [31410]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* No such decision has been taken. The choice of representative is a matter for each individual claimant.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry by whom the decision to allow claims handlers to represent claimants in common law hearing loss claims was made. [31412]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* Who represents them is entirely a matter for each claimant.

Householders' Contracts (Good and Services)

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what decisions have been made regarding the cooling-off period for contracts between householders and *(a)* unsolicited visits by those offering services or goods and *(b)* solicited visits by those offering services or goods; and if he will make a statement; [31999]

(2) when he expects to announce his proposals following the consultation on doorstep selling and cold calling which closed in November 2004; and if he will make a statement. [32050]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Government's final response to the OFT report on doorstep selling has been delayed for a number of reasons.

There was a substantial number of responses to the consultation, which needed to be considered carefully. In addition, the Government wished to await greater clarity on the impact of the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive (UCPD), which is specifically directed at aggressive and misleading sales practices towards vulnerable consumers. This clarity was not available until early summer 2005. We also wished to take account of the wider context set by the DTI's Consumer Strategy published in July.

The Department held a stakeholder event earlier this month to explain this wider context for decisions on doorstep selling and to debate the pros and cons of the seven options for change originally consulted on. This was attended by key stakeholders from the doorstep selling industry, consumer groups, bodies representing vulnerable consumers, OFT and Trading Standards. In the light of the comments received from stakeholders, Ministers will be considering next steps and intend to publish a final response from the Government as soon as possible.

Industrial Injury Claims

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many common law industrial injury claims relating to the coal industry have been paid out through *(a)* all claims handlers and *(b)* Vendside Ltd. in the last eight years. [31411]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* No common law industrial injury claims have been paid through claims handlers. All common law industrial injury claims settled in the last eight years have been from either solicitors (21,246) or the Union of Democratic Mineworkers (8,758).

Low Skilled Workers

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research his Department has undertaken on the scale of the shortage of low skilled workers in big cities in the UK. [32849]

Alun Michael: The Department of Trade and Industry has published a report on Regional Employment and Skills in the Knowledge Economy by Local Futures (URN 05/1328) which looks at regional differences in both the supply and demand for people at all skill levels. This is available in the House of Commons Library and can be obtained from DTI publications on 0845 015 0010 or from the Vote Office.

The main source of information on skill shortages is the Learning and Skills Council's National Employers Skill Survey that in 2003 surveyed 72,000 employers. The survey is updated every other year and 2005 figures will be available shortly. It highlights skill shortages according to occupation (low skilled workers will typically be in elementary occupations) and while not looking at the city level provides information for each of the RDA regions and for the 27 local LSC areas. Other research in this area is being undertaken at the regional level and an example of this is the 'Northern Way' initiative that looks at the eight city regions in the three Northern RDAs http://thenorthernway.co.uk/docs/2005).

Miners' Compensation

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many requests were made by *(a)* National Union of Miners and *(b)* National Union of Miners (Yorkshire Area) for a separate claims-handling agreement for miners' compensation between 1997 and 2000. [32313]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* The National Union of Mineworkers made three requests for a separate claims handling agreement for miners compensation between 1997 and 2000. No such requests were received from the National Union of Mineworkers (Yorkshire Area).

Rogue Dialling

Mr. Binley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will take steps to protect consumers from the telecommunications fraud known as rogue dialling; and if he will make a statement. [33007]

Alun Michael: Protection has been put in place to deal with the annoying activity of rogue dialling but it is not simple. Since August 2004 the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services (ICSTIS) has operated a prior permission scheme for premium rate diallers. This has been at the least of discouraging rogue dialling and it has greatly reduced the incidence of rogue dialling. The independent regulator for electronic communications, the Office of Communications, is currently consulting on extending this scheme to enable ICSTIS to take action against any rogue dialler irrespective of the telephone number or call charge used. We are increasing the maximum fine for breaching the independent regulator ICSTIS' code of practice from £100,000 to £250,000, in order to deter rogue diallers.

Sectoral Investment

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what sectoral investment opportunities he has identified for United Kingdom businesses in *(a)* Argentina and *(b)* Uruguay; and if he will make a statement. [29774]

Ian Pearson: In both countries there are likely to be investment opportunities across all sectors in Argentina some sectors (mining, agriculture, construction) are growing rapidly, although others are still suffering following the economic crisis in 2002.

There are investment opportunities in Uruguay for British firms in a number of sectors including agriculture, tourism, forestry and energy. In addition, state companies operating in various sectors (electricity, fuels, oil refining, telephones, railroads and ports) are seeking consultants to advise on public-private partnerships (PPP). Plans to construct a new airport and modernise the health sector may give rise to a range of opportunities.

Solar Photovoltaics

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to encourage private sector investment in the UK solar photovoltaics sector. [33283]

Malcolm Wicks: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to my hon. Friend the Member for Birmingham, Selly Oak (Lynne Jones) on 17 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1510W.

John Thurso: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of *(a)* capital grants, *(b)* feed in tariffs and *(c)* other support mechanisms in developing the UK's solar photovoltaics industry. [33284]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is as follows.

(a) The capital grants provided through the Solar PV Programme have contributed to the development of the solar photovoltaics industry in the UK. This includes raising awareness of PV and developing an installer base. The new low carbon buildings programme will continue to fund the installation of solar technologies in household, community and large-scale projects. The new programme will have a budget of £30 million over three years and will start in April 2006 subject to EU State Aids clearance. The microgeneration strategy, to be published April 2006, will look at removing some of the wider barriers currently hindering market development.

(b) and *(c)* We believe for the UK that it would not be right to set a price for exported electricity. To do so would risk distorting the electricity supply market and would be incompatible with the liberalised arrangements for the UK electricity market and the market for renewable electricity provided by the Renewables Obligation. The framework underpinning our competitive energy markets was established to provide market-based solutions to our energy needs. Intervention by the Government to the extent of setting a price for exported electricity would be an unwarranted intervention that could have adverse effects on the confidence and certainty our liberal framework provides for investors. In addition the current Renewables Obligation Review is looking to simplify the way in which small-scale generators can claim Renewable Obligation Certificates.

Traffic Offences

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people convicted of traffic offences were subject to an anti-social behaviour order in 2004. [31456]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is not collected centrally by my Department.

Internet Arms Sales

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the regulation of distance-selling of less lethal weapons via the internet. [28502]

Hazel Blears: I have been asked to reply.

The internet is regulated by the application of existing law, which applies equally online and offline. It is an offence to sell seventeen offensive weapons, in addition to flick knives and gravity knives to a person of any age; to market a knife in a way which suggests it is suitable for combat; and to sell a knife to a person under 16. We are raising this to 18 in the Violent Crime Reduction Bill currently before Parliament.

Tasers and incapacitant sprays using CS or PAVA are prohibited weapons and cannot be sold, purchased or possessed without authority from the Secretary of State. Baton guns are also controlled under firearms laws and, depending on their size, can be prohibited weapons.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Asset Register

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library the asset register for his Office for each year since his Office was established. [32466]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was established following the Machinery of Government changes on 29 May 2002. Officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have, for the sake of clarity and consistency, converted the extremely detailed information on assets held on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's accounting system for the financial years ending 31 March 2003, 2004 and 2005 into the National Asset Register format. Once the information is collated copies will be made available in the Library of the House.

Council Elections

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which local authorities in England have requested a move to whole council elections as outlined in the consultation document vibrant local leadership. [27366]

Mr. Woolas: Pursuant to my answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 190w, the seven district councils are Broadland, Eastbourne, Congleton, Swale, Havant, Bristol and South Cambridgeshire. Broadland has made a formal request under s7(4) of the Local Government Act 1972; the other local authorities are in the process of making formal requests as required by the legislation.

Departmental Websites

Charles Hendry: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will take steps to ensure the Department's websites attain the W3C AAA standard of accessibility for people with visual and other disabilities; and if he will set a target date for this standard to be achieved by. [30969]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister follows the Guidelines for UK Government websites. These indicate that websites should meet Level A of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines, while identifying certain Priority Two and Three Checkpoints as best practice.

Neither these Guidelines, e-Accessibility communications from the European Union nor advice from the RNIB suggest that Government websites should attain and maintain Level AAA.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's current accessibility policy is therefore that its websites should aim to conform to WAIAA rating where HTML is used. Where possible, we also aim to conform to a number of checkpoints from the Level AAA requirement, such as:

contrast between foreground and background colours (P3 Checkpoint 2.2)

use of access-keys (P3 Checkpoint 9.5)

provision of a site map (P3 Checkpoint 13.3)

provision of skip navigation (P3 Checkpoint 13.6)

provision of search facilities (P3 Checkpoint 13.7)

speech-enablement (P3 Checkpoint 14.2)

consistent presentation across all pages (P3 Checkpoint 14.3)

All these checkpoints are met by the main Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's site, www.odpm.gov.uk.

Fire Authorities

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the fire authorities that have introduced charging for non-statutory services in the last two years. [33174]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Section 19 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 provides for the Secretary of State to make an order specifying categories of service for which a Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA) may charge. The first such order (SI 2004/2305) specifies 16 such categories. FRAs do not need any further permission from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to charge under these categories. ODPM do not collate information centrally on which FRAs have decided to charge for a specified category of service.

Housing

Jim Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many right-to-buy sales there were *(a)* in total and *(b)* as a proportion of available stock by (i) each council and (ii) each social landlord in Tyne and Wear in each year since commencement of the scheme; and what the size of the available stock was in each local authority in each year. [32435]

Yvette Cooper: The following table shows council housing stock and council housing right to buy sales as a total and as a proportion of available stock for the five Tyne and Wear local authorities. This excludes any preserved right to buy in Sunderland after the large scale voluntary transfer in 2000–01 as this information is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

LA stock 1 April

	Gateshead	*Newcastle upon Tyne*	*North Tyneside*	*South Tyneside*	*Sunderland*
1980	38,719	50,315	32,270	34,706	51,385
1981	39,308	50,995	32,518	34,748	51,639
1982	39,617	50,152	31,568	33,541	50,669
1983	37,403	48,577	29,725	32,657	48,172
1984	36,703	47,548	29,532	31,412	46,611
1985	36,157	47,037	29,006	30,544	45,872
1986	35,797	46,512	28,744	29,919	52,168
1987	35,128	46,027	28,495	29,336	51,913
1988	34,423	45,434	27,550	28,931	51,064
1989	33,311	44,660	26,576	28,110	50,124
1990	32,324	43,678	25,655	26,994	48,772
1991	31,387	42,201	24,874	26,483	47,077
1992	30,887	41,209	24,486	26,116	45,681
1993	30,465	40,368	24,058	25,619	44,540
1994	29,774	39,894	23,413	25,252	43,379
1995	29,375	39,224	23,018	24,742	42,450
1996	28,880	38,778	22,761	24,484	41,368
1997	28,545	38,196	22,565	24,199	40,579
1998	27,845	37,226	22,110	23,913	39,751
1999	27,446	36,555	21,309	23,501	38,982
2000	26,856	35,748	20,626	23,089	37,869
2001	26,165	35,280	20,151	22,731	0
2002	25,557	34,447	19,219	22,184	0
2003	24,663	33,277	18,524	21,499	0
2004	23,494	32,369	17,408	20,228	0

Source:
Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix

LA right to buy sales

	Gateshead	Newcastle upon Tyne	North Tyneside	South Tyneside	Sunderland
1980–81	0	0	3	93	0
1981–82	491	815	1,101	1,279	982
1982–83	1,608	1,726	1,044	1,083	2,426
1983–84	649	727	687	1,052	1,196
1984–85	380	516	395	618	473
1985–86	270	430	337	402	524
1986–87	293	306	185	427	522
1987–88	472	358	319	256	571
1988–89	797	667	628	754	775
1989–90	998	708	798	738	1,321
1990–91	893	599	603	456	1,345
1991–92	490	338	347	396	951
1992–93	422	293	233	297	661
1993–94	291	236	124	275	560
1994–95	308	332	175	260	819
1995–96	308	255	172	208	746
1996–97	250	221	157	217	538
1997–98	326	267	202	283	642
1998–99	283	207	209	209	546
1999–2000	452	316	345	355	695
2000–01	445	266	338	[1]—	1,178
2001–02	510	569	396	[1]—	LSVT
2002–03	708	323	594	[1]—	LSVT
2003–04	1,043	664	1,030	[1]—	LSVT
2004–05	514	867	723	[1]—	LSVT

[1] South Tyneside did not return data from 2000–01.

Source:

Quarterly returns (P1B) to ODPM from local authorities

LA Right to Buy Sales—Proportion of total stock Newcastle

Percentage

	Gateshead	Newcastle upon Tyne	North Tyneside	South Tyneside	Sunderland
1980–81	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.0
1981–82	1.2	1.6	3.4	3.7	1.9
1982–83	4.1	3.4	3.3	3.2	4.8
1983–84	1.7	1.5	2.3	3.2	2.5
1984–85	1.0	1.1	1.3	2.0	1.0
1985–86	0.7	0.9	1.2	1.3	1.1
1986–87	0.8	0.7	0.6	1.4	1.0
1987–88	1.3	0.8	1.1	0.9	1.1
1988–89	2.3	1.5	2.3	2.6	1.5
1989–90	3.0	1.6	3.0	2.6	2.6
1990–91	2.8	1.4	2.4	1.7	2.8
1991–92	1.6	0.8	1.4	1.5	2.0
1992–93	1.4	0.7	1.0	1.1	1.4
1993–94	1.0	0.6	0.5	1.1	1.3
1994–95	1.0	0.8	0.7	1.0	1.9
1995–96	1.0	0.7	0.7	0.8	1.8
1996–97	0.9	0.6	0.7	0.9	1.3
1997–98	1.1	0.7	0.9	1.2	1.6
1998–99	1.0	0.6	0.9	0.9	1.4
1999–2000	1.6	0.9	1.6	1.5	1.8
2000–01	1.7	0.7	1.6	[1]—	3.1
2001–02	1.9	1.6	2.0	[1]—	LSVT
2002–03	2.8	0.9	3.1	[1]—	LSVT
2003–04	4.2	2.0	5.6	[1]—	LSVT
2004–05	2.2	2.7	4.2	[1]—	LSVT

[1] South Tyneside did not return data from 2000–01.

Sources:

Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix

Quarterly returns (P1B) to ODPM from local authorities

Local Government

Mr. Bone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what would be the length of the period of consultation in regard to changes to the structure of local government in England. [31589]

Mr. Woolas: In undertaking any consultation on local government structures, the Government would have regard to its code of practice on consultation which provides, but for exceptional cases, for a minimum period of 12 weeks. Implementation of any changes would require legislation.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment the Government have made of the *(a)* transitional and *(b)* set-up costs of introducing unitary local government. [31894]

Mr. Woolas: Other than in the case of the local government restructuring proposed in the context of referendums on regional assemblies, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not made any assessment of the transitional and set up costs of introducing unitary local government.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make it his policy to use real data rather than modelling to assess the day visitor indicator element of the formula spending share for local authorities; and if he will make a statement. [24041]

Mr. Woolas: Ministers are currently considering the option to update the day visitor indicator for use in the 2006–07 formula spending shares taking into account the representations received during the recent formula grant distribution consultation.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the organisations that have seconded staff to the Lyons Inquiry into local government finance. [31783]

Mr. Woolas: The parent organisations of the staff of the Lyons Inquiry comprise the following:

Audit Commission

H M Treasury

New Local Government Network

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister

The Inquiry also has an adviser from Shropshire county council, and I understand that it is currently seeking to recruit additional expertise from local government.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many written representations the Lyons inquiry into local government finance has received. [31784]

Mr. Woolas: I understand that the Lyons inquiry has received over 400 written representations.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the likely costs to local authorities in England of council tax revaluation. [31827]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has made no estimate of the likely costs of council tax revaluation to local authorities in England.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many households in London are in each council tax band. [31829]

Mr. Woolas: The number of dwellings in each council tax band in London, as at 31 March 2005, were:

Band	Dwellings (Thousand)
A	108
B	432
C	853
D	812
E	490
F	245
G	199
H	55
Total	3,194

Source:
The data are supplied by the Valuation Office Agency.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the *(a)* Government and *(b)* Valuation Office Agency conducted research or analysis on the (i) possible distribution and (ii) number of gainers and losers from the council tax revaluation in England prior to the public announcement of its postponement. [31833]

Mr. Woolas: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1030W.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list items of expenditure that the valuation tribunal service has incurred on council tax revaluation in *(a)* England and *(b)* Wales. [31836]

Mr. Woolas: The valuation tribunal service has not incurred any expenditure on council tax revaluation in England. The remit of the valuation tribunal service does not extend to Wales.

Local Government Pension Scheme

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will restore the entitlement to the first 12 months pension scheme membership to local government manual workers who began employment before 1991. [31658]

Mr. Woolas: There are no plans to amend the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations in relation to manual workers whose employment started before the 12 months qualifying condition for joining the scheme was removed. It is open to scheme members to purchase added years membership where appropriate.

Mr. Mudie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average percentage contribution by local authority employees to the Local Government Pension Scheme was in each of the last five years; and what the total employee contributions were in each year. [32459]

Mr. Woolas: The employee contribution rate is set by the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 1997. Over the past five years, the rate has been fixed at 6 per cent., with a 5 per cent. contribution rate for those members classed as manual workers prior to March 1998 who can demonstrate continuous membership.

Further information about the total percentage of employee contributions paid into the scheme in each year since 1995–96 can be found at:

http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/stats/data/table3.pdf

Policies (Financial Report)

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 764W, on policies (financial report), if he will place in the Library copies of the costings carried out on the two documents to which the answer refers. [27104]

Jim Fitzpatrick: I refer the hon. Member to HM Treasury's website:

www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/about/information/foi_disclosures/foi_disclosures_index_cfm

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what assessment he has made of the attainability of 2004 public service agreement target number 7; [29890]

(2) what method he will use to measure performance against 2004 public service agreement target number 8, with particular reference to deprived areas; [29937]

(3) what method and which individual indicators he will use to measure overall performance against 2004 public service agreement targets 5 and 6. [29938]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The performance indicators the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister uses to measure progress against all its public service agreement targets are set out in technical notes, which were published at the beginning of 2005. These are available at http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1122982.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister publishes an assessment of progress against these performance indicators in its Annual Report and Autumn Performance reports. The latest assessment published was in the Annual Report for 2004–05 (cmd 6526). The next assessment will be given in the Autumn Performance Report for 2005, due to be published in December 2005.

Smoke Alarms

Paul Rowen: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will issue guidance to fire services on the need for smoke alarms provided to deaf and hard of hearing people to meet the British Standard (BS 5446–3.2005). [31920]

Jim Fitzpatrick: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Hemel Hempstead (Mike Penning) on 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1046W.

Valuation Office Agency

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total cost is of the contract and associated liabilities between the Valuation Office Agency and Cole Layer Trumble. [30280]

Mr. Woolas: Cole Layer Trumble currently assist the Valuation Office Agency with computer modelling and statistical analysis of the AVM. The total spend with Cole Layer Trumble from July 2004 until end October 2005 is £1,868,780. It is estimated any associated liabilities will not exceed £200,000.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much the Valuation Office Agency spent on digital cameras and related electronic equipment in the last five years for which figures are available; and how many cameras were purchased in each year. [30695]

Mr. Woolas: This equipment is used across the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) business. In respect of residential property, it is used for external photographs to help valuation officers arrive at fair and accurate valuations. On very rare occasions, for example where a property is in poor condition and this is not obvious from an external photograph alone, the occupier's permission is sought for internal photographs to be taken.

The Valuation Office Agency has spent £438,749.40 (excluding VAT) on digital camera equipment in the last five years, detailed as follows.

	Number purchased	*Cost (excluding VAT) (£)*
2001–02	150	30,425.90
2002–03	656	202,523.50
2003–04	[1]—	[1]—
2004–05	1,270	196,850.00
2005–06	50	8,950.00

[1] None.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the committees and working groups within the Valuation Office Agency that have been involved in the council tax revaluation in *(a)* Wales and *(b)* England. [30698]

Mr. Woolas: In respect of both England and Wales a large number of committee meetings and working groups were naturally held in the course of business in preparation for the revaluations.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what arrangements are in place for compensating a property owner if Valuation Office Agency inspectors accidentally damage property. [30700]

Mr. Woolas: The Agency would consider a claim for compensation for any direct costs incurred.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what account the Valuation Office Agency takes of the presence of human or animal remains in making a valuation of a domestic property. [30838]

Mr. Woolas: The proximity of, for example, burial ground might affect value, as might any other feature in the locality.

CABINET OFFICE

Central Office of Information

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster for what reasons the Central Office of Information holds framework agreements with companies allowing contracts to be awarded without prior notification in the *Official Journal* of the European Union; and what assessment he has made of the cost-effectiveness of this approach. [31904]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Central Office of Information (COI) sets up framework agreements with companies in a manner fully compliant with the procurement rules of the European Union. The framework agreements are advertised in the *Official Journal* of the European Journal and are refreshed on a regular basis.

Framework agreements are set up because:

COI's staff are expert in the markets in which they operate and are, therefore, best placed to identify and select the best suppliers, removing the need for replication of expertise across government;

they allow COI to ensure that industry best practice, particularly in relation to competitive terms of business, is built into agreements at the earliest possible stage;

they allow purchasers in the public sector to obtain value for money in their purchasing while being assured that their procurement is compliant with UK and EU legislation;

they save time and money for government purchasers by ensuring that the terms and conditions of individual contracts are robust and follow best practice;

although they save time and money for suppliers because they remove the need to undertake a full credentials presentation for each contract separately, they still enable contestability and competition by requiring appropriate suppliers to pitch for each individual contract awarded under the agreements.

Government Services (Online Access)

Martin Horwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what proportion of Government services have been accessible online in each year since 1998. [32778]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Modernising Government White Paper published in March 1999 proposed a target date of 2008 by which all Government services to the citizen and to business should be available online. My right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, announced on 30 March 2000 that the target date had been advanced from 2008 to 2005.

Figures for the proportion of Government services accessible online are not available prior to 2000, but for the years up to and including 2004, they are shown in the table.

	Percentage of services reported accessible online
2000	33
2001	51
2002	63
2003	71
2004	76

At the end of 2004 we also reported that 96 per cent. of services are expected to be online by the March 2006, when the public service agreement target expires.

Race Equality Impact Assessments

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many Race Equality Impact Assessments his Department completed between *(a)* April 2004 and March 2005 and *(b)* April 2005 and November 2005; and how many assessments in each period resulted in a change of policy. [32826]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Cabinet does not legislate in high volumes.

Nevertheless, all management units in the Department are required to assess their functions and policies annually for their impact on the promotion of race equality, to introduce any necessary amendment and to report the results of their assessments to Human Resources. Units allocate a level of high, medium or low impact to each function and policy and those with a high impact are reviewed annually, medium—bi-annually, and low—every three years. Any new functions or policies are also assessed in advance of being put in place.

The majority of the assessments have been of internal departmental functions and policies. However, units would have assessed the general impact on race equality for any recommendations they might make to Departments on service delivery. It would then be the responsibility of those Departments delivering the service to ensure a comprehensive race equality impact assessment being made prior to any recommendation implementation.

Between April 2004 to March 2005, 102 assessments were undertaken of Cabinet Office functions and policies. Of this total 18 were of high category. As a result of these assessments, 17 changes to functions and policies are being developed or implemented. The Cabinet Office will shortly be publishing a revised Race Equality Scheme which will include details of all assessments over the past three years and actions being taken. Copies will be placed in the Library.

Assessments undertaken between April 2005 and March 2006 will be reported to Human Resources in early 2006 and published later next year.

Sir Christopher Meyer

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster who was responsible for vetting Sir Christopher Meyer's recent book and giving the approval for publication; and if he will make a statement. [29403]

Mr. Jim Murphy: I refer my hon. Friend to the response given to him by my right hon. Friend, the Foreign Secretary, on 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 164W.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many convictions for the sale of alcohol to persons who are intoxicated have been obtained in the force area of North Wales police in each of the last three years for which figures are available. [22976]

Paul Goggins: In the North Wales police force area, there have been no convictions in years 2001 to 2003 for the offence of licence holders selling or supplying liquor to a drunken person.

Court statistics for 2005 will be available in autumn 2006.

Alcohol-related Violence

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much his Department has spent to ensure that police officers have the powers and resources needed to deal with alcohol-related violence and disorder in *(a)* West Yorkshire and *(b)* Normanton constituency. [31562]

Paul Goggins: We have put significant extra resources into the police service in England and Wales. Expenditure on policing supported by Government grant or spent centrally on services for the police has risen by over 39 per cent. or £3 billion between 2000–01 and 2005–06. West Yorkshire police has received its fair share of the available resources.

Allocation of resources between activities and across the force area are operational matters for the chief constable.

Streamlining administrative licensing processes by the police under the Licensing Act 2003 should lead to a saving of up to £15 million annually. The Act gives the police further powers to tackle alcohol related disorder, for example, by allowing temporary or permanent reductions in trading hours. Through the Violent Crime Reduction Bill we are also introducing further powers for the police to help them tackle the problems of alcohol related crime or disorder.

We have also recently announced provision of £2.5 million to boost a range of operations to crack down on alcohol-related disorder; the sale of alcohol to under-18s; and the closure of problem premises using existing powers and the tough new powers available to the police in the Licensing Act 2003. Of this, £350,000 will be provided for Trading Standards. Ten basic command units (BCU) across West Yorkshire will receive a share of the fund, including £25,000 for Wakefield BCU.

Asylum Seekers

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which nationality accounted for the highest number of applications for asylum in the last year for which figures are available. [32815]

Mr. McNulty: Information on the top asylum seeking nationalities are available in the annual statistical bulletin Asylum Statistics United Kingdom 2004. Copies of this publication and others relating to general immigration to the UK are available from the Library of the House and from the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate web site at:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Aviation and Maritime Security

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females have been (i) charged with and (ii) convicted of offences under sections (A) 9, (B) 10, (C) 11 and (D) 12 of the Aviation and Maritime Security Act 1990 in each year since 1993. [29297]

Paul Goggins: Statistics on the number of persons charged with a crime are not centrally collected.

There are no records of any convictions reported via the Home Office Court Proceedings database for offences under sections, 9, 10, 11 and 12 of the Aviation and Maritime Security Act 1990 in England and Wales, 1993 to 2004.

Child Pornography

Judy Mallaber: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what further steps he intends to take to ensure that credit card companies take action to prevent the cards issued by them being used to purchase child pornography on the internet; [21385]

(2) what assessment he has made of the steps that have been taken by credit card companies to combat the purchasing of child pornography on the internet. [21386]

Paul Goggins: I set out on 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 316W the various steps which have already been taken by payment card companies in conjunction with Government, law enforcement, and the children's charities to combat the purchase of child abuse images on line.

The Government continues to assess the impact of these initiatives in discussion with a wide range of organisations including payment associations.

With regard to the specific issue of whether an individual who uses a payment card to purchase images of child abuse could have the card involved in the purchase of images removed from them by the issuing card company. I understand that the Department for Constitutional Affairs is considering how changes to Schedule three of the Data Protection Act to enable payment card companies to legitimately hold and process sensitive data concerning an individual and their convictions would work in practice. Any such change would provide card issuers with the ability to remove an individual's card once they have been advised of the commission of an offence.

Correspondence

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letters from the hon. Member for Eastbourne of 28 September 2004, 9 May 2005, 28 June 2005 and 15 August 2005 regarding his constituents Mr. and Mrs. Tanner of Percival Crescent, Eastbourne. [29763]

Andy Burnham: The chief executive of the United Kingdom Passport Service, wrote to the hon. Member on 23 November 2005.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister for Immigration will reply to the letter of 9 August from the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, (acknowledged 11 August 2005, reference B18797/5), Home Office reference E1010147. [32337]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 25 November.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister for Immigration will reply to the letter of 20 September from the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, Home Office reference H1047147, regarding Mr. Tasooji. [32338]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) replied to my right hon. Friend on 25 November.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter of 20 September from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, on F. Scott, his Department's reference 51155584, acknowledgement reference B22357/5. [32464]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) wrote to my right hon. Friend on 25 November.

Criminal Records Bureau

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what requirements there are for further Criminal Records Bureau checks for individuals providing private tuition to young people where the tutor is not a teacher and holds an enhanced disclosure certificate. [30782]

Andy Burnham: The Criminal Records Bureau does not impose any requirement on individuals to obtain a disclosure. The decision whether to obtain a disclosure for a specific eligible position rests solely with the recruiter, bearing in mind any existing legal obligations which may govern their employment sector.

Tutors working for private individuals, such as parents, are not generally eligible for enhanced disclosure because parents are not entitled to ask exempted questions under the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975. An individual cannot at present obtain a disclosure without an exempted question being asked.

However, if tutoring is carried out in a formalised environment, such as a school, the position is likely to be eligible for disclosure by virtue of being in a "regulated position" under the terms of the Criminal Justice and Court Services Act 2000 (CJCSA). Nevertheless the CRB imposes no requirement on such individuals to obtain disclosures, although other guidelines may make the work eligible for checks.

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action is being taken to deal with the backlog in Criminal Records Bureau checks. [26896]

Andy Burnham: There is no backlog of checks in the Criminal Records Bureau (CRB). The Bureau's performance for Standard Disclosures has consistently exceeded the target of 93 per cent. issued within two weeks because the processing of a Standard Disclosure is entirely within the direct control of the CRB.

However, there are checks outstanding in a small number of police forces and this has led to a drop in the performance for Enhanced Disclosures overall and specifically for any application requiring a check by one of those forces.

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment his Department has made of the accuracy of data held by the Criminal Records Bureau; and if he will make a statement. [31294]

Andy Burnham: The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) processes but does not hold information. The CRB accesses a number of sources of information to provide its disclosure service, including criminal record information held on the Police National Computer (PNC).

The police service is responsible for the accuracy of information recorded on the PNC. My Department commissioned some research which showed that conviction data was entirely accurate in the majority of cases. Additionally, a Code of Practice was published in January 2005 which set national targets for the timely entry of conviction data onto the PNC. Performance is monitored by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary.

In addition to the PNC, the CRB accesses information systems operated by other Government Departments. Those Departments are responsible for the accuracy of their respective systems.

Deportation

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the compatibility of his proposed deportation policy with Article 3 of the European Convention on Human Rights. [31171]

Mr. McNulty: As we have made clear on a number of occasions deportations will only take place if the removal is consistent with our international obligations.

Fireworks Offences

Mr. Anthony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many illegal fireworks were seized in *(a)* Norfolk, *(b)* the East of England, *(c)* England and *(d)* England and Wales in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [28021]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I have been asked to reply.

The Department of Trade and Industry does not collect or hold figures on the number of seized illegal fireworks.

Various agencies have powers to seize illegal fireworks: Customs—illegally imported fireworks; Health and Safety Executive—illegally stored fireworks; Trading Standards—fireworks that do not comply with the regulations. However figures for these seizures are not collected centrally. My hon. Friend may wish to contact these agencies.

Identity Cards

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the impact of the proposed identity card scheme on *(a)* money laundering and *(b)* organised crime; and if he will make a statement. [26625]

Andy Burnham: The identity cards programme is working with representatives from law enforcement agencies and Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs to fully map the impact of the proposed identity cards scheme on efforts to defeat money laundering and organised crime. This work has contributed to the development of the identity cards benefits cases, an overview of which was published on 27 June 2005.

False identities and false identity documents are standard 'tools of the trade' for organised criminal organisations. The work done with law enforcement agencies and Her Majesty's Revenue & Customs has confirmed that the identity card scheme can improve the intelligence picture available to the law enforcement agencies by providing fast, reliable access to identity and audit log data on intelligence targets and that greater certainty in establishing the identity of individuals involved in large cash transactions may have an additional deterrent effect in terms of money laundering and assist in investigations.

Mr. Khan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received on the arrangements for identity cardholders to register a change of address; and if he will make a statement. [27479]

Andy Burnham: The Identity Cards Programme Team has received a total of four letters from members of the public which mentioned updating address details on the National Identity Register. These letters were received between December 2004 and October 2005. These letters asked for clarification on the process for updating addresses on the Register and inquired whether there would be a charge for amending their record in this way.

It is intended that updates of addresses will be both easy and secure. There will be a variety of methods to update addresses on the National Identity Register. This could include over the internet, by telephone or in writing but in each case, in order to protect individuals from bogus attempts to change their address details, there would need to be a validation of identity. The Identity Cards Programme is currently investigating the most secure method of conducting such "remotely conducted" transactions, including the use of new methods involving one-time passwords, which would provide much greater assurance than traditional methods.

Illegal Immigrants (HIV)

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of individuals with HIV who have stayed illegally in the UK for longer than 12 months. [32074]

Mr. McNulty: Although it is impossible to determine accurately how many people are in the UK illegally the Home Office has published a report which included an estimate of the size of the illegal migrant population in the UK in 2001. A copy of the RDS On-line report 29/05 Sizing the unauthorised (illegal) migrant population in the United Kingdom in 2001 can be found at:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/notes/june_summaries.html#rdsolr2905.

This estimate does not separately identify those who have stayed illegally in the UK for longer than 12 months, and there is no evidence on which an estimate of the proportion of such people who are HIV positive could be based.

Immigration and Nationality Directorate

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of letters the Immigration and Nationality Directorate received in 2004–05 from the legal representatives of applicants for leave to remain received *(a)* an acknowledgement and *(b)* a response; what the average time for response was; and if he will make a statement. [31408]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate does not keep separate statistics on correspondence received from legal representatives.

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of replies to letters from hon. Members to the immigration and nationality directorate were sent within 20 days of receipt of the letter in the last 12 months for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [30076]

Mr. McNulty: In 2004, 34 per cent. of letters from Members on immigration and nationality (IND)-related matters were answered within 20 days. The year to date figure for 2005 is currently around 50 per cent., though for the last two months (August and September) it has exceeded 70 per cent. This improvement has been made against a backdrop of huge increases in correspondence volumes: 24,700 letters from Members in 2003; 35,800 in 2004; and 30,600 in 2005 up to the end of September (and so likely to exceed 40,000 by December).

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average length of time was in the last 12 months for a reply to be sent to an hon. Member by the immigration and nationality directorate from date of receipt of the letter; and if he will make a statement. [30077]

Mr. McNulty: Our published target is to answer 95 per cent. of letters from Members on immigration and nationality (IND)-related matters within 20 working days. The average time taken in 2004–05 was 32 days.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* (i) letters and (ii) emails were sent and *(b)* phone calls were made by each hon. Member and their staff to (A) the Immigration and Nationality Directorate and (B) the Minister for Immigration in the period 6 May to 31 October, ranked in descending order of total number of representations made; how many received a substantive reply in each case; and if he will make a statement. [30271]

Mr. McNulty: The available information is contained in the table which I have placed in the Library. The total number of telephone calls during this period was 18,963. A breakdown of these calls by individual Member is not available because it is not possible for the call handling equipment to identify from which Member's office a call is being made.

We are constantly striving to improve the service the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) provides to Members. During October I held a series of three meetings with newly-elected Members and those who write most often on IND-related matters. These meetings were intended as an opportunity for Members to tell me how IND needs to improve its communications with them. I shall shortly be writing to all Members setting out how we intend moving forward on the areas for improvement which the meetings identified.

International Arrest Warrants

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether his Department is considering proposals to amend guidelines to the police on international arrest warrants; [31402]

(2) whether his Department is considering proposals to amend legislation on international arrest warrants. [31404]

Andy Burnham: The Government are currently considering a range of issues relating to the issuing of arrest warrants in international cases but has not yet concluded what changes, if any, are required.

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what representations his Department has received from the *(a)* Israeli Government and *(b)* United States Administration concerning amendments to legislation on international arrest warrants; [31403]

(2) what meetings *(a)* he and *(b)* his Department (i) has had since 11 September and (ii) is planning to have with representatives of the Israeli (A) Ministry of Law, (B) State Attorney Office and (C) Foreign Ministry regarding the arrest warrant for General Almog. [31405]

Andy Burnham: I refer my hon. Friend to my previous answer of 24 November 2005. Since the meeting referred to in that answer, Home Office officials have participated in one further meeting, with Israeli officials. The detail of that meeting is confidential. No further meetings are scheduled.

Home Office officials have had no direct contact with the United States Administration concerning amendments to legislation regarding international arrest warrants.

IRIS Project

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will publish the evaluation of the project IRIS operational pilot. [32151]

Mr. McNulty: The evaluation of the Project IRIS operational pilot will be commercially sensitive but I will report the key findings to the House when appropriate.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the timetable is for the rollout of IRIS recognition in UK locations. [32152]

Mr. McNulty: Completion of the IRIS rollout is planned for June 2006.

Leave to Remain

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff at the Immigration and Nationality Office in Sheffield are assigned to processing applications for leave to remain under the provisions of the European Community Association Agreement. [30940]

Mr. McNulty: 39 members of staff at the Immigration and Nationality Office in Sheffield are assigned to processing such applications.

Managed Migration Routes

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which managed migration routes are being reviewed; if he will list countries which are on hold as a result of the review; and when he expects the review to be completed. [28673]

Mr. McNulty: My right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister announced a review of all managed migration routes on 27 April 2004 in his speech to the Confederation of British Industry on migration. No routes from specific countries are on hold as a result of this review. The review culminated in the five year strategy on asylum and immigration "Controlling our Borders: Making Migration Work for Britain" which was published on 7 February 2005. Our consultation on the subsequent document on the proposed points-based system for managed migration, "Selective admission: making migration work for Britain", closed on 7 November 2005 and the Government expects to publish its response in the new year.

Mobile Telephones (Child Safety)

Judy Mallaber: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made with the mobile phone industry towards protecting children from undesirable contact and unwanted contacts online by using blocking and filtering technology, since the written answer of 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 316W. [21734]

Paul Goggins: Further to my answer of 10 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 316W, I am able to report that following on from the self-regulatory code of practice on new forms of content, the UK mobile phone providers have appointed an independent classification body to develop the framework for classification of content available, and to investigate complaints about providers' classification decisions. The task of classification has been taken on by the Independent Mobile Classification Body, and in February 2005 a classification framework against which content providers will self-classify was completed.

Today, mobile devices are increasingly available with enhanced features, including colour screens, picture messaging, video cameras and internet browsers and can be used to access a growing variety of content. In anticipation of these products being widely adopted by consumers, including consumers under the age of 18, the mobile operators are putting in place measures that will allow parents and carers to have access to the information with which they can show their children how to use new mobile devices responsibly and the power to influence the type of content they can access.

For content that is offered on the internet, and not classified in accordance with the independent classification framework, the mobile operators continue to offer parents and carers the opportunity to apply a filter to the mobile operator's internet access service so that the internet content thus accessible is restricted. The filter will be set at a level that is intended to filter out content approximately equivalent to commercial content with a classification of 18.

Passports

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of passport photographs have been rejected as being insufficiently clear by the UK Passport Service since 1 October. [19410]

Andy Burnham: The proportion of photographs being rejected because of the photograph not being sufficiently clear is 2.6 per cent. as proportion of total applications for the period 3 October 2005 to 20 November 2005. The total number of applications that have had photograph rejections for all reasons is 12.7 per cent. in the same period.

Photograph reject rates are however showing a decline as the photo booth industry upgrades their booths and the public understand the new standards.

The UKPS is revising the guidance in the application pack and on its website and continuing to work with both the industry and their Partners such as Post Office Ltd to ensure that inconvenience to customers is kept to a minimum.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what estimate he has made of the costs of the introduction of the high street network of offices for conducting interviews for all first-time adult applicants for passports in *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07; [24472]

(2) what estimate he has made of the costs in *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07 of introducing biometric passports. [24473]

Andy Burnham: The UK Passport Service will begin issuing biometric passports in 2005–06. As stated in the Corporate and Business Plans, the average unit cost for the production of passports will rise from £42.36 in 2005–06 to £57.93 in 2006–07 to cater for a range of improvement initiatives, among which is the introduction of biometrics and the introduction of offices for conducting interviews.

Although a contract for this work has been signed, the UK Passport Service is unable to release detailed costs at this time as it may prejudice our negotiating position for future procurement to incorporate the second biometric.

The UK Passport Service has not yet completed the procurement process for the introduction of the high street network of offices for conducting interviews for all first-time adult applicants for passports. It is therefore unable to release details on costs at this time as it could prejudice the contract negotiations.

Police Reform Act (Schedule 4)

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been *(a)* required not to consume alcohol in a designated public place and *(b)* forced to surrender any alcohol or container for alcohol by (i) community support officers and (ii) police officers under paragraph 5 of schedule 4 to the Police Reform Act 2002 in each of the last four years, broken down by police authority. [29361]

Paul Goggins: Information from the Home Office Court Proceedings database on the number of defendants prosecuted for contravening a community support officers requirement to surrender liquor and not to consumer liquor, by police force area, is shown in the table.

Court statistics for 2005 will be available in autumn 2006. Similar information is not available in respect of police officers.

In addition to the aforementioned, information was collected on alcohol confiscations undertaken during the nationwide 2004 summer Alcohol Misuse Enforcement Campaign (AMEC). The campaign started at the beginning of July 2004 and ended at the end of August 2004 and the results were published in a Lessons Learned document. This showed that in total the police confiscated alcohol from 9,677 people. Two-thirds of these (66 per cent.) confiscations were from alcohol exclusion zones or designated areas, and one-third (34 per cent.) were from youths. During a similar shorter two-week Christmas 2004/new year 2005 AMEC the police confiscated alcohol from 1,560 youths and 1,290 adults in a designated area. The following number of Designated Pubic Places Orders have been introduced: three in 2001; 69 in 2002; 78 in 2003; 92 in 2004; 59 so far in 2005.

Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts for certain offences, by police force area, 1999 to 2004[1]

Offence description	*Principal statute*	*Year*	*Police force area*	*Proceeded against*
Contravening a community support officers' requirement to surrender liquor	Police Reform Act 2002 Sch 4 Para 6 (Confiscation of Alcohol (Young Persons) Act 1997 S.1)	1999	Hampshire	1
			Lancashire	1
			Merseyside	1
			Sussex	1
			Total	4
		2000	Hampshire	1
			Humberside	1
			Lancashire	1
			Wiltshire	1
			Total	4
		2001	Cumbria	1
			Devon and Cornwall	1
			Thames Valley	1
			Gwent	1
			Total	4
		2002	Cleveland	1
			Metropolitan Police	2
			Northumbria	2
			Total	5
		2003	North Yorkshire	1
			Northumbria	1
			Staffordshire	1
			North Wales	1
			Total	4
		2004	Essex	1
			Humberside	3
			Metropolitan Police	1
			Northumbria	3
			Staffordshire	1
			West Midlands	2
			South Wales	1
			Total	12
Contravene a community support officers' requirement not to consume liquor	Police Reform Act 2002 Sch 4 Para 5 (Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001 S.12)	2002	Avon and Somerset	1
			Bedfordshire	3
			Cumbria	1
			Devon and Cornwall	2
			Dorset	1
			Greater Manchester	1
			Humberside	2
			Lancashire	1
			Leicestershire	1

Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts for certain offences, by police force area, 1999 to 2004[1]

Offence description	*Principal statute*	*Year*	*Police force area*	*Proceeded against*
			Metropolitan Police	16
			Northumbria	1
			Sussex	3
			West Mercia	2
			Wiltshire	1
			North Wales	1
			Total	37
		2003	Avon and Somerset	4
			Bedfordshire	13
			Devon and Cornwall	8
			Gloucestershire	1
			Greater Manchester	1
			Lancashire	4
			Metropolitan Police	36
			Norfolk	11
			Northumbria	3
			Staffordshire	3
			Sussex	1
			Thames Valley	15
			West Midlands	3
			West Yorkshire	3
			Wiltshire	1
			Gwent	1
			Total	108
		2004	Avon and Somerset	9
			Bedfordshire	4
			Derbyshire	2
			Devon and Cornwall	6
			Dorset	1
			Gloucestershire	2
			Greater Manchester	4
			Hampshire	1
			Lancashire	2
			Metropolitan Police	19
			Norfolk	3
			Northumbria	5
			Staffordshire	1
			Sussex	7
			Thames Valley	31
			West Mercia	1
			West Midlands	13
			Wiltshire	2
			Gwent	4
			North Wales	2
			South Wales	3
			Total	122

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.

Terrorist Suspects

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made in negotiations with *(a)* Algeria, *(b)* Egypt, *(c)* Tunisia, *(d)* Morocco, *(e)* Libya, *(f)* Pakistan, *(g)* Sri Lanka and *(h)* India, regarding deportation and exclusion powers relating to those suspected of terrorism. [31046]

Mr. McNulty: We have signed Memoranda of Understanding with Jordan and with Libya regulating the provision of assurances in respect of people who are being deported.

We have said that we are in negotiations with the governments of Algeria and the Lebanon. Those negotiations are continuing, and we hope to conclude them shortly.

It would be premature to comment on the state of any other negotiations or to identify the country or countries involved.

The power to exclude relates solely to cases where the person concerned is outside the United Kingdom. It is a unilateral decision, and we have not had any negotiations with other countries regarding the use of this power.

Uzbekistan

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures *(a)* have been and *(b)* will be taken to ensure Uzbek officials banned from travelling to the European Union do not enter the United Kingdom. [30870]

Mr. McNulty: A Statutory Instrument incorporating the recent European Union (EU) Common Position on

Uzbekistan is currently being prepared and will be laid before Parliament without delay. This amending Order will enable all those identified in designated EU and UN instruments as subject to restrictive travel measures to be excluded from the UK. Until travel bans are designated by Order, provision exists in the Immigration Rules for leave to be refused or cancelled on non-conducive grounds.

Details of those senior Uzbek officials subject to restrictive travel measures are being placed on appropriate databases which are available to UK immigration officials at posts overseas and ports of entry.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Expenditure

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much was spent on *(a)* jobseeker's allowance, *(b)* incapacity benefit and *(c)* the administration of each in (i) 1997 and (ii) the most recent year for which information is available; and how many recipients of each benefit there were at 1 January in each year. [31238]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 30 November 2005]:* The information regarding the amount spent on jobseeker's allowance and incapacity benefit is in the table.

Expenditure on incapacity benefit and jobseeker's allowance in Great Britain in 1997–98 and 2004–05

Million

	Nominal terms		*Real terms*	
	1997–98	*2004–05*	*1997–98*	*2004–05*
Contribution-based Jobseeker's Allowance	475	438	576	449
Income-based Jobseeker's Allowance	3,418	1,729	4,144	1,772
Total Jobseeker's Allowance	3,893	2,167	4,720	2,221
Incapacity Benefit—working age	6,744	6,679	8,175	6,846
Severe Disablement Allowance— Working Age	862	783	1,045	802
Income Support for people under 60s, excluding the unemployed—Long Term Sick and Disabled	3,163	4,786	3,834	4,906
Income Support for people under 60s, excluding the unemployed—Short Term Sick	516	421	625	431
Total Working Age incapacity benefits	11,285	12,669	13,679	12,985

Notes:
1. All data is consistent with the 2005 Budget.
2. All figures have been rounded to the nearest million pounds.
3. The DWP Expenditure Tables can be accessed at the following internet address:
http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd4/medium_term.asp

Source:
The Expenditure data has been taken from tables 1, 2, 3, 4 and 7 of the DWP Expenditure Tables.

Information regarding the administration cost of jobseeker's allowance and incapacity benefit is not currently available in the format requested. In accordance with the requirements of Resource Accounting and Budgeting the Department now accounts for its administration and benefit expenditure by Strategic Objective, as set out in its public service agreements (PSA) and by individual Requests for Resources (RfR's), as set out in the Departmental Estimates and Accounts. Information on administrative expenditure by strategic objective is available in the Departmental Report for 2005 (Cm 6539), which is available in the Library.

The available information regarding the number of recipients of jobseeker's allowance and incapacity benefit is in the tables.

Jobseeker's allowance recipients: Great Britain, January and February 1997 and 2005

	1997	*2005*
January	1,747,300	784,800
February	1,684,800	788,600

Note:
Figures are seasonally adjusted.

Source:
Seasonally adjusted count of unemployment-related benefits, Jobcentre Plus computer systems.

Working age incapacity benefit/severe disability allowance beneficiaries: Great Britain, February 1997 and 2005

	Number
1997	1,974,100
2005	1,786,900

Notes:

1. Caseloads are rounded to the nearest 100.

2. February 1997 figures were produced using the 5 per cent. data and have been rated up proportionally for consistency with the WPLS 100 per cent. IB/SDA totals.

3. 'Beneficiaries' figures include all IB and SDA (excluding IB credits only cases).

Source:

DWP Information Directorate, five per cent Sample for 1997 and Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) 100 per cent. data for 2005.

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much has been spent on *(a)* jobseeker's allowance and *(b)* incapacity benefit in (i) West Yorkshire and (ii) Normanton constituency since 2001. [31565]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is in the tables.

Jobseeker's allowance and incapacity benefits expenditure in West Yorkshire and the Normanton parliamentary constituency

£ millions, nominal terms

		Outturn			
		2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*[1]
Total jobseeker's allowance, *of which:*	West Yorkshire	115.261	109.761	101.889	81.844
	Normanton	3.091	2.464	1.941	1.788
Jobseeker's allowance—contribution based	West Yorkshire	18.638	19.119	17.938	15.706
	Normanton	1.009	0.847	0.692	0.541
Jobseeker's allowance—income based	West Yorkshire	96.623	90.642	83.951	66.138
	Normanton	2.082	1.617	1.249	1.247
Total incapacity benefits, *of which:*	West Yorkshire	477.805	481.689	485.254	501.234
	Normanton	16.949	16.530	16.362	17.252
Incapacity benefit—working age	West Yorkshire	263.024	265.096	261.094	263.248
	Normanton	11.546	11.559	11.303	11.473
Severe disablement allowance—working age	West Yorkshire	31.698	28.638	27.463	28.118
	Normanton	1.411	1.291	1.209	1.171
Income support for people under 60, excluding the unemployed—long-term sick and disabled	West Yorkshire	164.071	168.732	177.060	191.211
	Normanton	3.514	3.239	3.370	4.088
Income support for people under 60, excluding the unemployed—short-term sick	West Yorkshire	19.012	19.223	19.637	18.657
	Normanton	0.478	0.441	0.480	0.520

[1] Estimated.

Jobseeker's allowance and incapacity benefits expenditure in West Yorkshire and the Normanton parliamentary constituency

£ millions, real terms (2005–06 prices)

		Outturn			
		2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*[1]
Total jobseeker's allowance, *of which:*	West Yorkshire	128.116	117.964	106.504	83.891
	Normanton	3.436	2.648	2.030	1.832
Jobseeker's allowance—contribution based	West Yorkshire	20.717	20.548	18.750	16.099
	Normanton	1.122	0.910	0.724	0.554
Jobseeker's allowance—income based	West Yorkshire	107.399	97.416	87.754	67.792
	Normanton	2.314	1.738	1.306	1.278
Total working age incapacity benefits, *of which:*	West Yorkshire	531.092	517.688	507.235	513.768
	Normanton	18.839	17.764	17.102	17.683
Incapacity benefit—working age	West Yorkshire	292.358	284.908	272.921	269.830
	Normanton	12.834	12.422	11.815	11.760
Severe disablement allowance—working age	West Yorkshire	35.233	30.778	28.707	28.822
	Normanton	1.568	1.388	1.264	1.200
Income support for people under 60, excluding the unemployed—long-term sick and disabled	West Yorkshire	182.369	181.343	185.081	195.993
	Normanton	3.905	3.481	3.522	4.190
Income support for people under 60, excluding the unemployed—short-term sick	West Yorkshire	21.132	20.659	20.526	19.123
	Normanton	0.532	0.473	0.501	0.533

[1] Estimated.

Notes:

1. Parliamentary constituencies and local authorities are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant postcode directory.
2. West Yorkshire (Metropolitan County) is made up of the following local authorities: Bradford, Calderdale, Kirklees, Leeds and Wakefield.
3. Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance expenditure has been apportioned using DWP Information Directorate, Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study, 100 per cent. Data.
4. Jobseeker's allowance and income support expenditure has been apportioned using DWP Information Directorate Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study, 5 per cent. samples.
5. Income support long-term sick and disabled expenditure is income support paid to claimants who receive a disability premium.
6. Income support short-term sick expenditure is income support paid to claimants who have been sick for less than 365.
7. Figures relate to working age claimants only.
8. Figures for 2004–05 are estimated outturn.
9. Figures are expressed in millions but rounded to the nearest hundred thousand pounds.
10. Real term figures are in 2005–06 prices.
11. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
12. Expenditure data is consistent with the Budget 2005 Report and the Great Britain historical outturn expenditure figures published in the DWP Expenditure Tables.
13. The DWP Expenditure Tables can be accessed at the following internet address: www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd4/medium_term.asp.

Source:

DWP Cross-Cutting Strategy and Analysis Directorate and DWP Information Directorate.

Benefit Payments

David Mundell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Scotland receive a social security benefit. [30588]

Mr. Plaskitt: The most recent available information is in the tables.

All ages client-group benefit claimants in Scotland by statistical client group as at May 2004

	Number
All	1,555,700
Jobseeker's	94,200
Incapacity benefits	325,500
Lone parents	72,100
Carers	58,200
Others on income-related benefits	243,300
Disabled	177,700
Bereaved	17,200
Receiving state pension only	567,500

Source:

DWP Information Directorate, 100 per cent. Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study

All housing benefit (HB) and council tax benefit (CTB) claimants in Scotland by statistical group as at May 2004

	HB	*CTB*
All claimants	446,900	539,700
Those in receipt of passport benefits	325,200	367,600
Not in receipt of passport benefits	121,800	172,100

Notes:

1. The figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.

2. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

3. All ages client group includes claimants of one or more of jobseeker's allowance, income support, incapacity benefit, severe disablement allowance, disability living allowance, carer's allowance, pension credit, bereavement benefit or widow's benefit, attendance allowance and state pension.

4. "Passport benefits" are income support, income-based jobseekers allowance, and pension credit (guaranteed credit).

5. Housing benefit figures exclude any extended payment cases.

6. Council tax benefit totals exclude any second adult rebate cases.

7. Overlaps exist between housing benefit and council tax benefit and all ages client group.

8. HB/CTB figures have been estimated for non-responding local authorities.

Source:

Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System, Quarterly 100 per cent. sample, taken in May 2004

Child Support Agency

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what progress has been made on the migration of existing cases with the Child Support Agency to the new maintenance system; and if he will make a statement; [19343]

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on progress being made towards transferring Child Support Agency cases on to the new system. [19505]

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he expects all Child Support Agency cases to be transferred to the new maintenance scheme. [20557]

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he estimates that all the Child Support Agency cases on the old system of maintenance calculation will have transferred to the new system of maintenance calculation; and if he will make a statement. [21584]

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when all Child Support Agency cases will be transferred to the new maintenance scheme. [27897]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Child Support Agency's Chief Executive, Stephen Geraghty, is currently undertaking a root and branch review of the agency. He will report to Ministers and we will make announcements shortly.

Mark Fisher: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions by what date all those paying child support will be on the new formula. [23097]

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many children in the Kettering constituency have been supported by parental payments made through the Child Support Agency in each year since 1997. [23202]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available at constituency level.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many uncleared Child Support Agency cases are awaiting processing in West Lancashire. [27833]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available at constituency level.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the proportion of time staff at the Child Support Agency spent assessing levels of maintenance compared to enforcement and compliance activity in *(a)* 1988 and *(b)* the latest period for which figures are available. [30000]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty to Mr. Laws, dated 30 November 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what estimate he has made of the proportion of time staff at the Child Support Agency spent assessing levels of maintenance compared to enforcement and compliance activity in *(a)* 1988 and *(b)* the latest period for which figures are available.

The Agency does not collect information concerning the amount of time spent on assessing levels of maintenance compared with time spent on enforcement and compliance activities.

However, the Agency does collect information on the number of staff working on assessing levels of maintenance compared with enforcement & compliance activities. In October 2005, of the staff

working in these areas, 56% were involved in activities that contributed to assessing levels of maintenance, and 44% in activities involving enforcement and compliance.

A comparison cannot be made back to 1988, as the Agency was not in existence at that time.

I hope you find this information useful.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the reasons are for the extension of the contract with EDS until 2010. [30022]

Mr. Timms: The realigned contract between EDS and the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) consolidates the contractual arrangements with EDS which the Department inherited from the Department of Social Security and Employment Service of the Department for Education and Employment, with a single end date of 2010.

The realigned contract will radically simplify both parties' administration costs and deliver efficiencies and cost savings. On average, over the next five years, the Department will be spending around £520 million a year on services delivered by EDS, compared to more than £700 million a year spent since the DWP was created. EDS prices will be regularly benchmarked so that the Department continues to receive competitive rates and value for money.

The contract also allows for the Department's entire IT infrastructure to be upgraded and will provide access to modernised IT which is easier to maintain and update than bespoke services.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many cases of *(a)* harassment, *(b)* bullying and *(c)* discrimination have been reported to the Child Support Agency in each of the last five years. [30027]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty, dated 30 November 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many cases of *(a)* harassment *(b)* bullying and *(c)* discrimination have been reported to the Child Support Agency in each of the last five years.

The numbers of harassment, bullying and discrimination cases formally reported to the Agency in the last five years are as follows:

	Number
2000–01	34
2001–02	49
2002–03	32
2003–04	44
2004–05	22

The nature of the complaints does not allow separation of the data into the constituent elements of harassment, bullying and discrimination.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many staff working for the Child Support Agency in each year since 2001 have been working for the agency for *(a)* more than five years, *(b)* more than two years, *(c)* more than a year and *(d)* less than a year. [30029]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty, dated 30 November 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many staff working for the Child Support Agency in each year since 2001 have been working for the Agency for *(a)* more than five years *(b)* more than two years *(c)* more than a year and *(d)* less than a year.

The table below provides the figures requested:

	Less than 1 year	*More than 1 year*	*More than 2 years*	*More than 5 years*
April 2000-March 2001	1,342	7,845	6,753	4,742
April 2001-March 2002	1,665	7,806	6,747	4,600
April 2002-March 2003	1,335	8,952	7,408	4,919
April 2003-March 2004	967	9,248	8,154	5,250
April 2004-March 2005	275	9,475	8,789	5,839

Note:
Columns 4 and 5 are subsets of column 3 in all years

I hope you find this response helpful.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what factors he took into account when setting the case compliance target for the Child Support Agency new scheme for 2004–05 and 2005–06; [30594]

(2) what factors he took into account when setting the accuracy target for the Child Support Agency new scheme for 2004–05 and 2005–06. [30595]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Child Support Agency's targets for 2004–05 were set in the light of available information about performance during the first year of the new scheme. For 2005–06 the previous year's targets were rolled forward pending the arrival of the agency's new chief executive and his conduct of a root and branch review of the delivery of the child support service.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in the Gravesend constituency have received the correct level of payments from the Child Support Agency since its reorganisation in 2003; and what proportion of eligible Gravesend residents this represents. [19806]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available at constituency level.

Departmental Targets

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions why a baseline year in the future has been used for the purposes of measuring performance against 2004 public service agreement target 10. [30278]

Mr. Plaskitt: The PSA 10 target we are currently working towards was set in SR2002. As 2005–06 marks the end of the existing target cycle, we have taken the opportunity to develop and improve the measurement system used to estimate fraud and error in income support and jobseeker's allowance. This has led to a methodology for estimating fraud and error significantly different from that used before and it was therefore appropriate to use a new baseline figure for 2005–06, which will be measured using this new methodology. This was announced in SR2004.

This has been done in consultation with the National Audit Office and in such a way as to estimate the impact that the changes will have on the measure.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what data source he will use for the purposes of measuring performance against 2004 public service agreement target 6. [30287]

Mr. Timms: DWP National Statistics from the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) will be used to measure PSA target 6.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the data required to measure 2004 public service agreement target 7 are published. [30293]

Mr. Timms: The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) is on track to meet this public service agreement (PSA) target. PSA target 7 consists of two separate measures: the number of individuals regularly receiving a pension forecast and the number of successful pension traces undertaken. Further details of how the target is measured and reported are provided in DWP's SR2004 PSA technical note.

Data on both measures will be reported in the 2005 DWP autumn performance report due to be published in December 2005. Subsequent progress reports will also be published in the spring departmental reports and the Pension Service annual reports and accounts. These reports are available to members of the public after they have been presented to the House.

We are committed to ensuring that the data used in monitoring and reporting on our PSA targets is robust and reliable and this target together with its measurement and reporting have all been agreed with Her Majesty's Treasury.

Departmental Websites

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what websites come under his Department's responsibility; and what the *(a)* cost and *(b)* number of visitors to those sites was in the last year for which figures are available. [16024]

Mr. Timms: The following table provides a list of departmental sites. Costs have been provided where possible. The table also includes number of visitors to those sites in the financial year 2004–05.

Notes:

1. Production, management and maintenance of DWP websites are carried out by the Department's in-house e-communications team. It is not possible to quantify internal costs for each site but contracted and quantifiable costs have been included where possible.
2. Departmental sites are hosted by our IT contractors. In most cases it is not possible to separate these costs from contracted costs.
3. The complex interactive nature of the services that Jobcentre Plus and Worktrain websites provide does allow for web hosting and other costs to be accounted separately. These have been included in the table.

DWP website and main agency sites: costs and numbers of visitors

		2004–05	
Site	*Address*	*Costs (£)*	*Number of visitors (visitor sessions)*
DWP	www.dwp.gov.uk	101,467	2,562,156
Jobcentre Plus	www.jobcentreplus.gov.uk	8,639,571	31,317,249
The Pension Service	www.thepensionservice.gov.uk	—	2,093,739
Child Support Agency	www.csa.gov.uk	—	1,253,519
Direct gov Disability Franchise	www.direct.gov.uk/disability www.directgov.uk/caringforsomeone	750,000	769,486
Other DWP websites: costs and numbers of visitors			
Worktrain	www.worktrain.gov.uk	2,241,918	2,733,351
European Social Fund	www.esf.gov.uk	28,500	392,038
New Deal	www.newdeal.gov.uk	—	902,476
Age Positive	www.agepositive.gov.uk	—	1,137,532
Employment Zones	www.employmentzones.gov.uk	—	155,889
Disability	www.disability.gov.uk	—	981,470
Targeting Benefit Fraud	www.targetingbenefitfraud.gov.uk	—	198,623

Disability Discrimination Act

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what publicity and advice his Department is making available to small businesses in the 2005–06 financial year on compliance with their service provider obligations under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. [23053]

Mrs. McGuire: Between December 2005 and May 2006 the Department will carry out the next phase of its on-going publicity campaign, aimed at informing small businesses of their obligations under the DDA.

The campaign will focus in turn on each region of the UK. It will be based on partnership working with both national trade bodies, and national and regional business organisations who cover small businesses, and

will aim to remind them of the need to consider making the 'reasonable adjustments' appropriate to their business, both as service providers and as employers.

This activity will be supported with regional press and radio, and national on-line, advertising to alert small businesses to the need for action and to promote the campaign website where they will find practical information and guidance. The website is currently in development and will go live on 1 December.

Habitual Residence Test

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will revise the habitual residence test to take into account the length of time claimants paid tax in the UK before moving abroad. [30711]

Mr. Plaskitt: The habitual residence test is working well preventing access to income-related benefits, such as income-based jobseeker's allowance and income support, ensuring that they are only paid to people with reasonable ties to the United Kingdom and who intend to settle here. Someone, with a right to reside in the UK, will be more likely to pass the habitual residence test if they have previously lived and worked in the UK and have returned to resume their residence here.

Someone who has paid sufficient national insurance contributions to satisfy the qualifying conditions for contributory benefits will not be subject to the habitual residence test.

Health and Safety Executive (Training Providers)

Ms Angela C. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* improvement and *(b)* prohibition notices the Health and Safety Executive has issued in the last five years to (i) employers and (ii) learning providers, regarding the supervision of Learning and Skills Council learners and participants on the new deal scheme. [28902]

Mrs. McGuire: I regret this information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. HSE's data recording systems do not record whether the recipient of an improvement and prohibition notice was an employer or learning provider under a Learning and Skills Council or new deal scheme.

Ms Angela C. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many inspections the Health and Safety Executive has conducted in the last five years of the arrangements made by training providers for the health and safety of learners and new deal participants contracted to *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the Learning and Skills Council; and what other means are being used by the Government to verify the effectiveness of these health and safety arrangements. [28903]

Mrs. McGuire: I regret that information on how many HSE inspections involve training providers under Learning and Skills Council or new deal schemes could be provided only at disproportionate cost. HSE's data recording systems do not require inspectors to state whether an employer whose premises they have inspected is a provider under these schemes.

Since 1 April 2005 the Learning and Skills Council has been engaged in a successful partnership arrangement with HSE, the aim of helping the Council meet its targets for reducing injuries and ill-health among learners. The work programme will examine, among other things, how learners are supervised and the competence of those assessing work experience providers.

Housing Benefit

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the standard weekly rate of earnings disregard for housing benefit is; how often this has been uprated since its introduction; and what the earnings disregard would be if the initial rate of the disregard were uprated in line with inflation from the year in which it was introduced; [28782]

(2) what representations he has received regarding an uprating of the earnings disregard for housing benefit for single parents and disabled people; and if he will make a statement. [28783]

Mr. Plaskitt: We have not had any representations about issues relating to earnings disregards in housing benefit for single parents or the disabled.

Details of the information requested about earnings disregards in housing benefit are in the table.

Housing benefit earnings disregards at introduction, currently and uprated by inflation since introduction

£

	Year introduced	*Weekly rate when introduced*	*Current weekly rate*	*Weekly rate if uprated with inflation*[1]
Single Person	1988	5.00	5.00	8.35
Couple	1988	10.00	10.00	16.75
Higher Rate[2]	1988	15.00	[2]20.00	25.10
Lone Parents[3]	1990	25.00	25.00	38.00

[1] In the final column the earnings disregards have been uprated using the retail price index (RPI) minus housing costs in the preceding September. Figures are rounded to the nearest 5p.
[2] The higher rate of disregard, which applies to carers, people with disabilities, part-time fire-fighters, lifeboat-men, auxiliary coastguards, and members of any territorial or reserve force, was increased from £15 to £20 in 2001.
[3] The weekly rate for lone parents has not increased since it was introduced in 1990. However, lone parents were entitled to the higher rate of £15 before 1990.
Note:
The standard disregard for singles and couples has not been increased since being introduced in 1988.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to simplify the housing benefit non-dependent deduction regime. [29996]

Mr. Plaskitt: We have no current plans to reform housing benefit deductions for non-dependants.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will take steps to improve the *(a)* transparency and *(b)* consistency of the method used to determine the local reference rent restriction on housing benefit for tenants in the private rented sector. [29997]

Mr. Plaskitt: The local reference rent is determined by independent rent officers, who use evidence of the rents that are actually charged in the private rented sector. The rent officer uses only information on rents paid by tenants not in receipt of housing benefit, to determine

the local reference rent for each locality. The determination is based on the mid-point between the highest and lowest rents, which are not exceptionally high or exceptionally low, for the appropriate sizes of property within the locality. This methodology is used consistently by all rent officers.

An individual can ask for a pre-tenancy determination, through their local authority, to find out what the local reference rent would be prior to taking up a tenancy.

We have no immediate plans to change the way local reference rents are determined or applied.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the difference between the average amount of housing benefit awarded and the average costs of rent in *(a)* Huddersfield and *(b)* the UK. [30831]

Mr. Plaskitt: Information is not available for the UK or by parliamentary constituency. Information for Great Britain and Kirklees metropolitan council is in the table.

Weekly average housing benefit awarded, average eligible rent[1] and average contractual rent, by tenancy

	Great Britain	*Kirklees MBC*
Social sector		
Average HB awarded	58.70	50.11
Average eligible rent	62.87	53.15
Private rented sector		
Average HB awarded	81.74	56.06
Average contractual rent	108.07	80.70

[1] For tenants in the social rented sector it is assumed that the eligible rent (the maximum amount of rent eligible for housing benefit) is equal to contractual rent because the maximum housing benefit entitlement for these tenants is typically equal to their rent. The amount of HB awarded accounts for non dependant deductions and income brought to account so on average the amount of HB awarded will be less than the costs of rent.

Sources:

Housing Benefit Management Information System Quarterly 100 per cent.case load stock-count May 2005, Private Rented Sector contractual rent figures are from Rent Officer data May 2005 and apply to deregulated cases only.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what guidance his Department issues to local authorities concerning war pensions when assessing eligibility for housing benefit. [29682]

Mr. Plaskitt: In recognition of the special nature of war disablement and war widow's and war widower's pensions, there is a statutory £10 per week disregard of these payments.

In addition, there is a total disregard of the whole of the supplementary pension awarded to "pre-1973" war widows (widows whose late husband's military service was completed before 31 March 1973 and who are not entitled to an attributable widow's pension from the Ministry of Defence).

There is also a full disregard of any mobility supplement and payment of war disablement pension based on a need for attendance.

For housing benefit and council tax benefit purposes, local authorities; who administer these benefits, have discretionary powers to operate a local scheme to disregard up to the full amount of a war disablement pension and war widow's/widower's pension not already subject to a statutory disregard. It is for each local authority to decide how much, if anything, it disregards.

From April 2004, local authorities operating a discretionary local scheme will receive a 0.2 per cent. addition to their annual subsidy, capped at 75 per cent. of the total benefit cost to the LA of the local scheme.

The rationale behind this change to the subsidy rules on discretionary local schemes is to provide recognition through the subsidy system of the existence of such schemes in local authorities. It does not relate to the extent of the disregard that the local authority applies, which remains a matter for individual local authorities.

Incapacity Benefit

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people are claiming incapacity benefit in each of the Lancashire constituencies. [30622]

Mrs. McGuire: The most recent available information is in the table.

Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance claimants in the Lancashire parliamentary constituencies; as at May 2005

	Number
Blackburn	7,600
Blackpool North and Fleetwood	6,600
Blackpool South	8,200
Burnley	6,800
Chorley	4,900
Fylde	4,200
Hyndburn	6,400
Lancaster and Wyre	3,900
Morecambe and Lunesdale	5,300
Pendle	5,700
Preston	6,800
Ribble Valley	3,400
Rossendale and Darwen	5,800
South Ribble	3,800
West Lancashire	5,100

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. 'Claimant' figures include all incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disability allowance (including IB credits only cases).

Source:

DWP Information Directorate, Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data.

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what *(a)* incentives and *(b)* support he is providing to encourage claimants of incapacity benefit back into work. [30623]

Margaret Hodge: Participants on our Pathways to Work pilots receive information and support on financial, employment and health issues, delivered by skilled personal advisers and health professionals, and can also receive help to return to work through the New Deal for Disabled People programme. People starting work through the pilots receive a return to work credit of £40 for up to 52 weeks if their wage is below £15,000 per annum.

The Pathways to Work pilots have already been successful in helping more than 17,000 people into work and early evaluation has shown an increase of eight percentage points in people leaving the incapacity benefit register within six months.

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have been found guilty of fraudulently claiming incapacity benefit in *(a)* Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* North East and *(d)* the United Kingdom in each year since 1997. [31706]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is not available.

Income Support

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions *how many and what proportion of* income support recipients were disabled in *(a)* May 1997 and *(b)* May 2005; and if he will make a statement. [25258]

Mr. Plaskitt: There is no single legal definition of disability. However, a disability premium is payable to entitled income support claimants, this information is provided in the following table.

Income support claimants with a disability premium: Great Britain

	All income support claimants	*Income support claimants with a disability premium*	*Proportion (percentage)*
May 1997	2,287,600	845,100	36.9
May 2005	2,140,500	1,115,700	52.1

Notes:

1. Caseloads are rounded to the nearest 100.
2. Percentages are given to one decimal place.
3. For comparison purposes, the 1997 figure excludes pensioners. Pensioners have not been able to claim income support since October 2003.
4. May 1997 figures have been derived by applying 5 per cent. proportions to 100 per cent. WPLS totals.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS)

IT Projects

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many IT projects which cost over £1 million and were introduced since 1997 are in use in his Department. [26615]

Mr. Timms: Since its creation in June 2001 the Department for Work and Pensions has delivered a number of projects that involve IT and cost in excess of £1 million. The following lists those mission critical projects and programmes with a substantial IT content which have been delivered since June 2001.

Corporate Intranet

Customer Management System Phase 1

Digital Office Infrastructure

Managing Core Systems Estate

Modernising the Employment Service

Multi Function Server Replacement

Payment Modernisation Programme

Pensions Credit

Pensions Forecasting

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many of the IT projects costing over £1 million in use in his Department and introduced since 1997 have been scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee; and if he will list them. [26620]

Mr. Timms: Since the creation of the Department for Work and Pensions in June 2001, the only IT project that has been the subject of a Public Accounts Committee scrutiny and report is the Benefit Payment Card project. The report was published on 12 November 2001.

Mental Health (Employment)

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he is taking to tackle discrimination against people with mental health problems who are seeking work. [22067]

Mrs. McGuire: Many people with mental health conditions will be covered by the provisions in Part 2 of the Disability Discrimination Act which provide comprehensive protection against disability discrimination in recruitment and employment. These require an employer not to discriminate against disabled people for a reason related to their disability, but also to consider reasonable adjustments to job application or selection processes, and to premises, practices or procedures, if these would otherwise put a disabled person at a substantial disadvantage.

In addition, from 5 December 2005, under provisions in the Disability Discrimination Act 2005, the requirement that a mental illness must be "clinically well-recognised" before it can be regarded as an impairment under the DDA 1995 will be ended, making it easier for people with mental health illnesses to enforce their rights.

Around 40 per cent. of all people making a claim for incapacity benefits say that mental health is their main health barrier. Consequently, Pathways advisers have received specialist training in supporting customers with mental health conditions and our Condition Management programmes have a particular emphasis upon advising people on how to manage their condition in a work context.

New Deal (Accidents)

Ms Angela C. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many accidents have been recorded as occurring to new deal participants funded by his Department in each year since the new deal began, broken down by *(a)* fatal, *(b)* major and *(c)* those requiring over three days' absence. [28899]

Mrs. McGuire: I regret this information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Reports sent to HSE under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and

Dangerous Occurrences Regulations are not required to state whether an injured party was receiving training or experience under new deal schemes.

Obesity

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the impact of obesity on the disability pensions budget in the next 10 years. [28241]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is not available from which to make such an estimate.

Poverty

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners were living in *poverty in West Lancashire in each of the last 20 years* for which figures are available. [27915]

Mr. Timms: The seventh annual Opportunity for all report, published recently, sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and presents information on the indicators used to measure progress.

Information on the number of pensioners in low income is not available below regional level. The following table gives estimates for the number of pensioners in relative low income and absolute low income in the North West.

Number of pensioners living in households with incomes below 60 per cent. of GB median income in the North West and Merseyside (in millions) based on three year rolling averages (relative low income)

	Before housing costs	*After housing costs*
1994–95 to 1996–97	0.26	0.31
1995–96 to 1997–98	0.27	0.32
1996–97 to 1998–99	0.29	0.33
1997–98 to 1999–00	0.29	0.32
1998–99 to 2000–01	0.28	0.30
1999–2000 to 2001–02	0.27	0.28
2000–01 to 2002–03	0.28	0.27
2001–02 to 2003–04	0.28	0.26

Number of pensioners living in households with incomes below 60 per cent. of 1996–97 GB median income held constant in real terms in the North West (in millions) based on three year rolling averages (absolute low income)

	Before housing costs	*After housing costs*
1994–95 to 1996–97	0.30	0.35
1995–96 to 1997–98	0.28	0.33
1996–97 to 1998–99	0.27	0.31
1997–98 to 1999–00	0.26	0.27
1998–99 to 2000–01	0.23	0.22
1999–2000 to 2001–02	0.20	0.17
2000–01 to 2002–03	0.18	0.14
2001–02 to 2003–04	0.16	0.12

Notes:

1. Figures are provided using a three-year rolled average, as single-year estimates do not provide a robust guide to year on year changes. Hence, figures are not consistent with previously published single-year estimates and there may be differences in changes over time. Due to this, the absolute and relative figures in *1996–97 to 1998–99 will not necessarily match. In circumstances* such as a change in trend, rolled-averages will show less variation than single year estimates.
2. The estimates use the same methodology as the Department for Work and Pensions publication 'Households Below Average Income' (HBAI). Income is net of income tax and council tax, and adjusted for household size and composition.
3. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 10,000.

Source:
Family Resources Survey (FRS)

Railways (Health and Safety)

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the *(a)* technical and financial contracts, *(b)* technical consultants used on a call-off basis and *(c)* financial consultants used on a call-off basis by (i) the Health and Safety Commission, (ii) the Health and Safety Executive relating to railway matters since 1 November 2003; what the nature of the assignment for each consultant was; and what the value of work done by each consultant was. [25701]

Mrs. McGuire: In addition to all the rail-related work commissioned by the Health and Safety Commission's (HSC) Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and undertaken by HSE's own internal Health and Safety Laboratory, since 1 November 2003, HSE has engaged the following external technical and financial consultants:

Name of consultant	*Nature of the assignment*	*Value of the work (£000)*
University of Newcastle	Comparison of the Hatfield and alternative UK rails using models to assess the effect of residual stress on crack growth	55,000
Bombardier	Storage of carriages at Adtranz, Crewe—Hatfield derailment	315
NRPB	Survey into the radiological impact of the normal transport of radioactive material by rail	22
Deloitte and Touche[1]	Evaluation of HSE's Control of Major Accident Hazards (COMAH) Gas, Offshore and Rail charging regimes[1]	[1]214
University College London	Analytical work in support of the HSC Working Group to examine risk to rail users from road vehicles obstructing the railways	7

[1] The rail element was a component of a larger HSE study.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment the Health and Safety Executive has made of the health and safety implications of recent rail incidents. [26071]

Derek Twigg: I have been asked to reply.

The Health and Safety Executive, the Government's regulator for rail safety, makes an assessment of all safety-related incidents to determine whether to take enforcement action and/or whether there are lessons to be learnt.

Smoking

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what research his Department has evaluated on the health and safety effects of environmental tobacco smoke on workers; what assessment he has made of the applicability of the guilty knowledge test under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974; and if he will make a statement. [29753]

Mrs. McGuire: The Health and Safety Commission reached its view on the health and safety effects of second-hand smoke in the workplace by taking into account the report of the Department of Health's Scientific Committee on Tobacco and Health (SCOTH). In November 2004, SCOTH's updated report confirmed that second-hand smoke represents a substantial public health hazard.

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974 does not provide specifically for a guilty knowledge test. While it does not ban smoking at work, it requires employers to have in place policies that manage and reduce the risks to their employees1 health to as low a level as reasonably practicable. Responsibility for deciding what this level should be rests with the employer.

PRIME MINISTER

Crown Jewels

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Prime Minister which of the *(a)* crowns and *(b)* tiaras worn by George V and Queen Mary at the Delhi Durbar in 1911 are in public ownership; and if he will make a statement. [29819]

The Prime Minister: The Imperial Crown of India worn by His Majesty King George V at the Delhi Durbar has since that occasion been on permanent public display as part of the Crown Jewels in the Jewel House of the Tower of London.

Festivals

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Prime Minister what measures his Office took to celebrate and promote the events of *(a)* Ramadan, *(b)* Diwali and *(c)* Chinese New Year in 2005. [31164]

The Prime Minister: My Office values and respects the diversity of its employees. Should they wish to do so, staff are supported in their desire to celebrate their traditions, including with colleagues within the Department. I also send out messages of goodwill to various communities on the occasion of their celebrations, copies of which are available on the Number 10 website.

First World War Veteran (State Funeral)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Prime Minister if he will consider recommending the granting of a state funeral to the last person to die who served in the First World War; and if he will make a statement. [32294]

The Prime Minister: My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Minister for Veterans) (Mr. Touhig), is currently considering an appropriate way to mark the service and sacrifices of those who served in the First World War, and an announcement will be made in due course.

Freedom of Information

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Prime Minister how many Freedom of Information applications his Office has received; how many have taken more than 20 days to process; and how many of these gave rise to complaints about the time taken. [31214]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my Office forms part of the Cabinet Office. I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him on 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 50–51W by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office (Jim Murphy).

Iraq

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Prime Minister when he plans to publish the paper he referred to in evidence to the Liaison Committee on 8 February setting out the way forward for the Iraqiisation of security (HC 318-i); and if he will make a statement. [28399]

The Prime Minister: The paper referred to during the evidence session was a United States report, produced by a team led by General Luck, a retired US General. It was an audit of the coalition's campaign plan in Iraq, in particular the training and development of the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF). During the evidence session with the Liaison Committee, I said that I hoped the paper would be published, but noted that it was still being considered by the US Government. Following this, the US Government decided not to publish this report. As this was a US report, this was a matter for the US Government to decide.

Labour Party Funds

Mike Penning: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list those consultants which have been in receipt of government funds that have donated funds to the Labour Party; and what the sums involved were in each case. [32368]

The Prime Minister: Information on party political donations is not held by the Government.

Race Equality Impact Assessments

Keith Vaz: To ask the Prime Minister how many Race Equality Impact Assessments his Office completed between *(a)* April 2004 and March 2005 and *(b)* April 2005 and November 2005; and how many assessments in each period resulted in a change of policy. [32833]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my office forms part of the Cabinet Office. I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to him by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Murphy) today.

Sick Leave

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Prime Minister how many of his Offices' employees who are within one year of the official retirement age are on extended sick leave. [32595]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my Office forms part of the Cabinet Office. I have therefore asked my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Murphy) to reply. A copy of the reply will be placed in the Library of the House.

Special Advisers

Lynne Jones: To ask the Prime Minister if he will make it Government policy for special advisers to give evidence to parliamentary committees if asked. [31505]

The Prime Minister: As I made clear in my evidence to the Liaison Committee on 22 November, decisions on officials, including special advisers, giving evidence to Select Committees are taken on a case by case basis in line with the guidance in "Departmental Evidence and Response to Select Committees". The guidance makes clear the presumption that Committees requests on attendance of named officials will be agreed to, but that the final decision on who is best able to represent the Minister rests with the Minister concerned. It remains the right of a Minister to suggest an alternative civil servant to that named by the Committee if he or she feels that this person is better placed to represent the Minister.

Terrorism Legislation

Grant Shapps: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1662W, on terrorism legislation, what font size was assumed in making the calculation. [32584]

The Prime Minister: As I made clear in my previous answer, this is a publicly available document (ISBN: 0760064903).

NORTHERN IRELAND

Arson Attacks

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many arson attacks there were on schools in each education board in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [31975]

Angela E. Smith: The Education and Library Boards have advised that the number of arson attacks on controlled and maintained schools in the last five years are as follows:

Number

	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*[1]
Belfast	5	7	4	2	2
Western	2	1	1	4	3
North Eastern	2	2	2	1	3
South Eastern	[2]—	5	8	6	0
Southern	5	5	1	1	3
Totals	14	20	16	14	11

[1] To date.
[2] Not readily available.

The Boards do not hold information on arson attacks on voluntary grammar and grant maintained integrated schools.

Carers

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the number of people in Northern Ireland providing unpaid care to people aged 65 years and over. [28851]

Angela E. Smith: The 2001 census showed that 185,066 people in Northern Ireland (11 per cent. of the population) were providing unpaid care. The census did not collect the age of people for whom the care was being provided.

CFCs

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many tonnes of chlorofluorocarbons have been converted into inert substances in Northern Ireland in each year from 2003. [31991]

Angela E. Smith: Until February 2004, individual district councils made their own contractual arrangements to recycle fridges and freezers to ensure that the ozone-depleting substances were recovered. Councils hold their own data for the tonnage of chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) recovered until that point.

Since February 2004, the Department of the Environment has funded the recovery of fridges and freezers through two sequential contracts. Between 1 February 2004 and 31 October 2005, the contractor responsible for processing fridges and freezers on behalf of the Department recycled a total of 113,298 units, with a total approximated processed weight of 4,673.8 tonnes, which equates to a total weight of CFCs recovered of 13.8 tonnes.

Economy

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what he has done to promote the long-term economy of Northern Ireland. [32236]

Mr. Hanson: The Government and their social partners have produced an Economic Vision for Northern Ireland. Our clear objective is to make sure that Northern Ireland has the innovation, enterprise, skills and infrastructure to become one of the most competitive and productive UK and international regions. Key to economic success is to develop and grow the private sector to make it more in proportion to a reformed public sector characterised by quality of delivery, efficiency and fitness for purpose.

The Department of Finance and Personnel is now in the process of developing a Regional Economic Strategy which will set out the policy framework for delivering the Economic Vision.

Fireworks

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were injured by fireworks in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement on the running of a safety advertising campaign for 2005. [21249]

Mr. Woodward: Information on the number of patients reporting to A and E departments and minor injuries units with injuries from fireworks, since 2000,

over a four to five week period covering the end of October and start of November (Halloween) is detailed as follows.

	Total firework injuries
2000	100
2001	136
2002	38
2003	45
2004	55

The Northern Ireland Office, in partnership with RoSPA, the Northern Ireland Home Accident Council and statutory bodies such as the Fire and Rescue Service, the Ambulance Service and the PSNI, has supported the promotion of firework safety publicity material for a number of years. The safety campaign for 2005 involved less publicity than previously, in particular there was no intensive advertising campaign. This was because there are effective controls on the sale and use of fireworks in NI and the significantly reduced accident statistics of recent years demonstrate that the message has got across to the public. An intensive advertising campaign was therefore not considered necessary.

Freelance Musicians

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the implications for the Ulster Orchestra of the Inland Revenue's policy that freelance musicians and singers engaged since 1998 are liable for Class 1 National Insurance contributions. [30340]

Mr. Hanson: The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland are monitoring discussions currently taking place between the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, the Arts Council of England, the Association of British Orchestras and the Musicians Union about the National Insurance liability on musicians' earnings. These discussions are still ongoing.

Human Rights Commission

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what allowance is provided to each member of the Human Rights Commission; and what additional expenses each is eligible for. [32095]

Mr. Hanson: The Chief Commissioner of the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission receives an annual salary of £60,000. This is a full-time post. Commissioners are appointed to serve for one day per week for which an allowance is paid of £10,000 per year.

Commissioners are also eligible for additional travel and subsistence expenses when carrying out Commission business.

Income Support

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females aged (i) 16 to 24, (ii) 25 to 30, (iii) 30 to 39 and (iv) 40 years and over were on income support in each district in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [33084]

Mr. Hanson: The information requested is as follows.

Income support breakdown

	Age							
	16–24		*25–29*		*30–39*		*40 plus*	
District council	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
Antrim								
February 2001	66	236	77	158	216	345	951	1,415
February 2002	66	238	79	157	212	329	1,015	1,461
February 2003	58	197	69	146	230	346	1,044	1,479
February 2004	55	196	68	156	212	353	488	489
February 2005	51	183	67	155	202	311	503	530
Ards								
February 2001	92	265	81	207	240	389	1,360	2,309
February 2002	103	234	79	209	245	376	1,447	2,375
February 2003	104	252	70	192	239	387	1,506	2,406
February 2004	86	252	74	158	235	355	662	584
February 2005	72	238	79	174	234	360	634	591
Armagh								
February 2001	99	231	98	165	273	373	1,407	2,019
February 2002	114	232	101	175	284	388	1,429	2,063
February 2003	111	228	102	167	276	399	1,491	2,114
February 2004	102	232	110	165	287	409	693	568
February 2005	78	227	97	162	281	392	709	572
Ballymena								
February 2001	95	279	95	212	232	449	1,081	1,952
February 2002	113	280	102	179	254	456	1,158	2,012
February 2003	99	277	89	173	271	450	1,223	2,041
February 2004	106	272	92	187	277	431	499	[illegible]
February 2005	91	252	72	194	260	432	528	[illegible]6

Income support breakdown

	Age							
	16–24		*25–29*		*30–39*		*40 plus*	
District council	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
Ballymoney								
February 2001	53	105	42	76	154	195	732	1,055
February 2002	49	122	39	66	153	205	791	1,091
February 2003	48	116	49	68	169	208	860	1,117
February 2004	51	115	49	70	156	206	365	350
February 2005	54	112	44	71	143	208	373	356
Banbridge								
February 2001	66	146	54	86	140	232	846	1,414
February 2002	63	151	50	78	153	228	889	1,464
February 2003	60	152	49	78	171	225	929	1,511
February 2004	48	143	59	82	174	229	422	405
February 2005	62	133	49	90	153	219	407	429
Belfast								
February 2001	1,008	2,544	936	2,089	2,800	5,258	10,565	15,819
February 2002	1,098	2,451	949	2,023	2,884	4,990	10,936	16,209
February 2003	1,031	2,425	966	1,855	2,945	4,651	11,424	16,350
February 2004	1,049	2,495	942	1,748	2,868	4,460	6,105	6,484
February 2005	1,085	2,396	958	1,757	2,653	4,214	6,148	6,662
Carrickfergus								
February 2001	55	151	49	123	130	261	542	1,036
February 2002	51	141	37	118	134	260	601	1,067
February 2003	47	165	45	117	143	257	656	1,047
February 2004	42	153	42	132	147	249	296	331
February 2005	56	148	45	130	125	262	311	346
Castlereagh								
February 2001	59	200	52	166	205	413	920	1,821
February 2002	61	203	61	135	213	428	973	1,863
February 2003	45	184	75	142	245	407	1,049	1,896
February 2004	51	177	67	153	223	363	465	510
February 2005	70	165	59	144	228	356	477	557
Coleraine								
February 2001	88	282	73	216	248	480	1,407	2,082
February 2002	100	265	74	212	274	468	1,484	2,160
February 2003	86	262	78	178	266	479	1,536	2,181
February 2004	87	277	81	189	258	457	674	666
February 2005	87	281	66	176	251	417	661	673
Cookstown								
February 2001	98	187	103	125	272	299	1,296	1,437
February 2002	98	200	96	115	261	284	1,322	1,479
February 2003	88	168	82	123	269	277	1,360	1,500
February 2004	94	161	74	120	239	294	630	495
February 2005	85	162	69	114	244	273	607	505
Craigavon								
February 2001	137	421	151	314	498	707	2,350	3,250
February 2002	130	427	142	292	519	720	2,430	3,318
February2003	122	429	135	295	540	718	2,559	3,388
February 2004	140	430	127	284	517	687	1,195	1,143
February 2005	163	440	128	286	494	684	1,250	1,164
Derry								
February 2001	430	1,080	405	905	1,162	1,953	4,115	4,966
February 2002	433	1,074	392	900	1,207	1,973	4,370	5,201
February 2003	452	1,088	413	888	1,246	2,015	4,630	5,382
February 2004	425	1,074	402	836	1,228	1,987	2,608	2,649
February 2005	413	1,034	425	849	1,172	1,909	2,681	2,737
Down								
February 2001	146	328	108	249	341	494	1,451	2,122
February 2002	154	348	109	231	347	505	1,562	2,169
February 2003	121	329	119	204	351	506	1,642	2,230
February 2004	128	295	113	220	346	468	783	679
February 2005	119	293	120	223	330	457	797	676

Income support breakdown

	Age							
	16–24		*25–29*		*30–39*		*40 plus*	
District council	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
Dungannon								
February 2001	112	295	124	218	387	427	2,014	2,256
February 2002	101	269	126	240	402	470	2,102	2,302
February 2003	106	261	110	224	381	474	2,145	2,303
February 2004	111	246	104	210	358	476	964	718
February 2005	135	225	100	195	330	476	968	731
Fermanagh								
February 2001	112	262	106	190	304	388	2,060	2,590
February 2002	128	249	102	190	318	419	2,127	2,641
February 2003	125	239	99	177	322	421	2,183	2,704
February 2004	115	248	111	179	307	412	766	722
February 2005	106	222	116	173	298	436	793	733
Larne								
February 2001	65	120	42	120	130	206	661	957
February 2002	46	130	47	97	138	227	708	1,010
February 2003	50	116	36	81	137	229	728	1,019
February 2004	52	126	41	109	137	217	320	299
February 2005	50	114	37	107	149	216	351	312
Limavady								
February 2001	85	202	73	151	215	250	1,008	1,138
February 2002	79	201	68	176	244	281	1,045	1,161
February 2003	79	190	83	150	242	276	1,085	1,181
February 2004	62	198	77	158	248	279	571	379
February 2005	59	180	67	140	242	300	551	385
Lisburn								
February 2001	209	667	185	527	535	1,222	2,122	3,515
February 2002	217	652	180	531	558	1,194	2,226	3,601
February 2003	187	623	176	495	541	1,147	2,336	3,638
February 2004	209	573	164	481	550	1,105	1,225	1,458
February 2005	190	546	173	471	520	1,030	1,218	1,479
Magherafelt								
February 2001	50	141	50	113	194	281	1,315	1,507
February 2002	64	145	49	111	188	275	1,345	1,543
February 2003	46	134	54	108	188	273	1,354	1,589
February 2004	50	143	57	95	169	288	509	422
February 2005	49	128	46	95	167	286	496	439
Moyle								
February 2001	31	101	30	73	90	165	513	719
February 2002	32	104	34	70	89	163	554	737
February 2003	29	108	25	53	90	183	585	731
February 2004	30	103	27	47	105	168	244	227
February 2005	23	99	28	50	104	158	251	234
Newry and Mourne								
February 2001	225	537	269	444	690	938	3,528	3,915
February 2002	245	529	225	426	748	999	3,672	4,007
February 2003	234	508	232	452	780	997	3,839	4,116
February 2004	240	519	221	433	746	990	1,779	1,454
February 2005	218	469	232	446	701	970	1,768	1,493
Newtownabbey								
February 2001	98	385	85	290	296	635	1,519	2,566
February 2002	120	363	88	297	314	616	1,558	2,649
February 2003	97	358	102	269	299	609	1,627	2,695
February 2004	107	344	101	256	285	592	785	841
February 2005	124	319	84	258	290	589	773	857
North Down								
February 2001	82	237	72	175	195	381	1,046	2,170
February 2002	84	232	74	175	188	374	1,048	2,175
February 2003	72	201	67	162	198	370	1,131	2,204
February 2004	68	211	75	152	216	365	473	565
February 2005	60	197	57	160	214	357	479	577

Income support breakdown

	Age							
	16–24		25–29		30–39		40 plus	
District council	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
Omagh								
February 2001	148	271	111	202	354	394	1,642	1,991
February 2002	138	279	106	201	360	417	1,729	2,026
February 2003	107	249	110	194	339	417	1,826	2,069
February 2004	141	252	114	184	312	448	881	684
February 2005	125	252	108	198	326	425	920	703
Strabane								
February 2001	129	319	145	219	318	501	1,807	1,911
February 2002	129	310	139	238	331	514	1,843	1,954
February 2003	118	271	133	247	366	501	1,891	2,027
February 2004	110	259	130	259	355	492	852	720
February 2005	102	259	129	249	350	530	853	738

In October 2003 pension credit replaced the minimum income guarantee element of income support. Claimants aged 60 and over transferred to pension credit. The figures from February 2004 show a reduction in the 40 plus age group.

Invest Northern Ireland

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the change has been in *(a)* salary, *(b)* expenses and *(c)* pension contributions of the top five earning employees of Invest Northern Ireland in the past three years. [31490]

Mr. Hanson: The top earning five employees in Invest Northern Ireland are the chief executive and the four managing directors. The changes in their salaries, pension contributions and expenses over the last three years are set out as follows.

Salary increases and bonus payments reflect the 2003 and 2004 pay settlements. Figures quoted are for the last three complete financial years, viz. 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05

Managing directors (MD's) are paid on the NICS Grade 3 (Deputy Secretary) Scale. MD's are appointed on the minimum of the salary scale and annual increases and bonus payments mirror exactly the settlement for the NI Senior Civil Service. They are members of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme (NI) and employer's percentage contributions are fixed by the Department of Finance and Personnel.

All expenses in Invest NI are paid at the rates applicable in the NICS.

Chief executive

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Percentage change	—	2.25	2.00
Bonus (£)	—	11,700	11,963
Pension (Percentage)	19.5	19.5	19.5
Expenses (£)	3,876.29	4,922.32	6,410.99

Managing directors

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Percentage change	—	5.00	3.25
Bonus (£)	—	3,000	4,500
Pension (Percentage)	19.5	19.5	16.0
Expenses (£)	3,275.04	6,171.98	3,291.97

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Percentage change	—	5.00	3.25
Bonus (£)	—	3,000	4,500
Pension (Percentage)	19.5	19.5	16.0
Expenses (£)	1,697.5	2,413.22	1,758.87

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Percentage change	—	9.00	4.75
Bonus (£)	3,000	6,000	4,500
Pension (Percentage)	19.5	19.5	18.0
Expenses (£)	4,211.73	2,380.39	5,378.85

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Percentage change	—	2.50	3.25
Bonus (£)	0	0	0
Pension (Percentage)	19.5	19.5	18.0
Expenses (£)	115	Nil	—

Note:
Left 31 October 2004.

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Percentage change	—	—	—
Bonus (£)	—	—	2,500
Pension (Percentage)	—	—	16
Expenses (£)	—	—	Nil

Note:
Appointed 1 April 2004.

Inward Investment

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of what steps should be taken to attract foreign direct investment to Northern Ireland. [32121]

Mr. Hanson: Invest NI's marketing and sales resources are focused on those sectors and geographical markets most likely to generate projects to match the Northern Ireland business proposition and contribute to the development of an innovation-based economy.

The assessment that I have made of these steps is actual performance against agreed targets. To date Invest Northern Ireland has met all these targets. In fact, last year was Invest NI's most successful year for securing new Foreign Direct Investment.

Parking Charges

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how many vehicles in pay and display car parks under the control of the Department for Regional Development in Northern Ireland an additional charge was made as a result of *(a)* non-payment and *(b)* under-payment of the appropriate parking charge in 2004. [32521]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Road Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin to Mr. Gregory Campbell, dated 30 November 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding how many vehicles in pay and display car parks under the control of the Department for Regional Development in Northern Ireland an additional charge was made as a result of either *(a)* non-payment and *(b)* under-payment of the appropriate parking charge in 2004.

I have been asked to reply as these issues fall within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

I should explain that in Roads Service's pay and display car parks, a fee is levied based on the length of time that the driver intends to park. If a vehicle fails to display evidence that a fee has been paid, an imposed Alternative Charge (£25) ticket is issued. However, if a fee has been paid, but is insufficient for the length of stay, an imposed Excess Charge (£20) ticket is issued.

I can advise that during 2004, Roads service issued 15,661 Alternative Charge tickets, and 5,470 Excess Charge tickets.

I hope this information is helpful.

Police

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many police recruits in Northern Ireland have dropped out of training in each of the last 10 years. [13937]

Mr. Woodward: I am advised that the number of police recruits that have dropped out of training in the last 10 years is as follows:

	Number
1995	2
1996	1
1997	2
1998	0
1999	1
2000	0
2001	1
2002	8
2003	14
2004	17
2005 (as at 25 July 2005)	10
Total	56

I am also advised that the numbers undergoing training has expanded considerably under the Police Service of Northern Ireland, and that these statistics must be seen in that context.

Primary Schools

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* controlled and *(b)* maintained primary schools in Northern Ireland have closed in each of the last five years. [32129]

Angela E. Smith: There have been 12 controlled primary school closures and five maintained primary school closures in the past five years:

	Controlled primary schools	*Maintained primary schools*
2000–01	3	1
2001–02	2	—
2002–03	2	2
2003–04	2	1
2004–05	2	1

In addition, 20 controlled primary schools have been amalgamated into nine new schools and 12 maintained primary schools have amalgamated into five new schools.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* controlled and *(b)* maintained primary schools in Northern Ireland are scheduled to close in each of the next three years. [32131]

Angela E. Smith: Approval has been given for three controlled primary school closures:

2005–06—2 schools

2006–07—1 school.

The Department has also approved the following amalgamations:

2007–08—6 maintained primary schools into 2 new schools

2008–09—4 maintained primary schools into 2 new schools and 11 controlled primary schools into 4 new schools.

Pupil Expulsions

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on what criteria decisions are taken to *(a)* suspend and *(b)* expel a pupil in a (i) controlled and (ii) maintained school in Northern Ireland. [32133]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Education has not issued criteria to be used in the decision to suspend or expel a pupil from any school in Northern Ireland.

All schools are required by law to have a discipline policy, which sets out sanctions, including suspension or expulsion, which the school will impose for breaches of school discipline. It is for individual schools to draw up their own discipline policy, including the criteria they will use in decisions to suspend or expel a pupil from school.

Recycling

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many recycling points there are in

each local authority in Northern Ireland; and how many there were in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [31972]

Angela E. Smith: EHS is not in a position to provide these details prior to 2005. Currently however there are 87 recycling points in Northern Ireland and the details for each district council area are set out in the following table.

District council	*Number of CA sites*
South Western Management Partnership (SWAMP)	
Armagh City and District Council	4
Banbridge Borough Council	3
Cookstown District Council	2
Craigavon Borough Council	2
Dungannon and South Tyrone Borough Council	6
Fermanagh District Council	4
Newry and Mourne District Council	7
Omagh District Council	4
Total SWAMP	32
Eastern Waste Management Group (arc21)	
Antrim	3
Ards	7
Ballymena	1
Belfast	9
Carrickfergus	1
Down	2
Larne	1
Lisburn	2
Newtownabbey	1
North Down	2
Total arc21	29
North West Region Waste Management Group (NWRWMG)	
Ballymoney Borough Council	2
Coleraine Borough Council	6
Deny City Council	5
Limavady Borough Council	3
Magherafelt District Council	4
Moyle District Council	1
Strabane District Council	5
Total NWRWMG	26

School Crossing Patrols

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the schools in Northern Ireland that have school crossing patrols; and how many school crossing patrol staff each has. [33083]

Angela E. Smith: The number of school crossing patrols at individual schools in Northern Ireland is linked to safety considerations associated with road layout and the volume of traffic. Details have been placed in the Library.

Secondary Schools

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* controlled and *(b)* maintained secondary schools in Northern Ireland have closed in each of the last five years. [32130]

Angela E. Smith: There has been one controlled post-primary school closure (in 2002–03) and no maintained post-primary school closures in the past five years.

In addition, eight controlled post-primary schools have amalgamated into four schools and five maintained post-primary schools have amalgamated into two schools.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* controlled and *(b)* maintained secondary schools in Northern Ireland are scheduled to close in each of the next three years. [32132]

Angela E. Smith: One controlled post-primary school is scheduled to close with effect from 31 August 2006.

The Department has also received a development proposal for the amalgamation of two maintained schools, St. Malachy's High School, Antrim and St. Olcan's High School, Randalstown.

Speed Limits

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to introduce 20 miles per hour speed limits near schools in the Province; and if he will make a statement. [32103]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Lady in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin to Mrs. Iris Robinson, dated 30 November 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding what plans he has to introduce automatic 20 miles per hour speed limits at all schools in the Province.

I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

I can confirm that we have no current plans to introduce mandatory 20mph speed limits outside all schools in Northern Ireland.

Local speed limits are not considered effective when they are applied to meet conditions arising only for short periods of the day, since the restriction will be unnecessary for most of the time and may consequently not be respected when it is needed. In such circumstances specific signing and engineering measures are likely to be more effective. This is the case at schools. It is for this reason that Roads Service considers that the universal application of mandatory 20mph speed limits at all schools would not be appropriate.

We do, however, take safety at schools very seriously. Roads Service is currently rolling out a programme of safety enhancements to control driver behaviour and to manage traffic speed in the vicinity of schools, through the installation of signs, road markings and physical engineering features as part of the Department's Safer Routes to Schools Initiative (SRS).

This initiative aims to encourage parents, children and teachers to use sustainable methods of transport for their journey to and from school. The SRS programme also aims to improve the safety and health of pupils by reducing the impact of traffic around school facilities and encouraging greater physical activity among students.

This financial year there are currently 46 schools across Northern Ireland receiving SRS safety measures. It is Roads Service's objective to assist a minimum of 40 schools annually thereafter, subject to the availability of resources.

The former Minister for Regional Development, John Spellar MP, agreed in November 2004, that Roads Service should lead a review of speed management policy within Northern Ireland. This is being undertaken in co-operation with our partners in PSNI and DOE Road Safety Branch, and is mirroring a similar review being undertaken by the Department for Transport in Great Britain.

Although this is very much work in progress, further speed management issues around schools are being actively considered and I would be happy to update you when this work concludes.

I hope this information is helpful.

Teachers

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school teachers in Northern Ireland have taken early retirement in each of the last five years. [32128]

Angela E. Smith: The number of teachers in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools who have taken early retirement in each of the last five years is listed in the following table.

Number

	Primary schools	*Secondary schools*
2001–02	224	265
2002–03	236	297
2003–04	217	275
2004–05	207	271
2005–06	340	319
Total	1224	1427

Terrorist Victims

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding has been made available since 2002 to support victims of terrorist violence in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement on his plans for such funding. [22996]

Angela E. Smith: Funding to support the victims of violence arising from the Troubles comes from a very wide variety of sources and the information requested by the hon. Gentleman is not readily available. However, from April 1998 to 31 March 2005 some £31 million was made available to groups and organisations whose work benefits victims. In addition my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, recently announced extra Government funding of up to £1.5 million for the Northern Ireland Memorial Fund.

With regard to the future the Interim Victims Commissioner for Northern Ireland, Mrs. Bertha McDougall, will be looking at how well the current funding arrangements in relation to services and grants paid to victims and survivors groups and individual victims and survivors are addressing need. We will consider the way ahead on these funding issues following Mrs. McDougall's report which we expect to be completed by the end of 2006.

Truancy

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the truancy levels were for each education and library board in Northern Ireland in the last year for which figures are available. [32227]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Education does not collect the requested information. However, information on referrals of pupils to the Education Welfare Service is collected from each of the Education and Library Boards on an annual basis. Referrals can be for a variety of reasons, including truancy.

The following table shows the percentage of pupils referred to the Education Welfare Service in each Education and Library Board in Northern Ireland in 2003–04.

2003–04

Board Area	*Percentage of pupils referred*
Belfast	3.97
Western	2.42
North Eastern	2.34
South Eastern	2.68
Southern	2.37

Video Conferencing Units

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many video conferencing units are installed in *(a)* the Department and *(b)* each agency of the Department; what percentage of offices have these facilities in each case; and what plans there are to increase the number of such facilities. [18410]

Mr. Woodward: The following information refers to the Northern Ireland Office. It does not include figures for the 11 departments of the Northern Ireland Administration.

Northern Ireland Office core

Three video conferencing units in Belfast (shared facilities available for use by all offices).

Two video conferencing units in London (shared facilities available for use by all offices).

One video conferencing unit in British Embassy, Dublin

Agencies

35 video conferencing units in NIPS (all offices have access to facilities)

There are plans to add facilities for the Youth Justice Agency and Forensic Science.

Warm Homes Scheme

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what the average cost was of insulation measures fitted to date in each parliamentary constituency as part of the Warm Homes Scheme in Northern Ireland; [33070]

(2) what the average cost per heating system fitted to date has been in each parliamentary constituency as part of the Warm Homes Scheme in Northern Ireland. [33079]

Mr. Hanson: The information requested is not readily available on a parliamentary constituency basis and could be provided only at disproportionate costs. The overall average figures for Northern Ireland are as follows:

£

	Average cost	
Financial year	*Per heating system*	*Per insulation*
2001–02[1]	2,628.48	349.92
2002–03	2,826.06	347.31
2003–04	2,991.95	377.33
2004–05	3,385.05	458.59
2005–06[2]	3,675.85	483.67

[1] July to 31 March.
[2] To date.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many homes had heating systems fitted as part of the Warm Homes Scheme in each year since 2001 in Northern Ireland, broken down by Parliamentary constituency. [33076]

Mr. Hanson: The information requested is as follows:

Number of households in receipt of heating systems[1]

Constituency	Financial year 2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06
Belfast East	42	91	92	138	76
Belfast North	85	132	150	172	117
Belfast South	12	58	79	89	45
Belfast West	92	121	126	195	128
East Antrim	18	96	88	98	88
East Londonderry	14	124	55	129	98
Fermanagh/South Tyrone	81	188	137	186	219
Foyle	24	121	69	178	103
Lagan Valley	22	79	110	79	87
Mid-Ulster	69	125	93	196	180
Newry and Armagh	29	121	146	351	195
North Antrim	38	98	64	101	119
North Down	27	77	76	78	96
South Antrim	17	47	71	123	124
South Down	66	161	179	204	154
Strangford	21	59	110	82	65
Upper Bann	105	92	112	226	144
West Tyrone	49	132	122	153	128

[1] This includes those households which received both heating and insulation measures.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many homes are waiting for *(a)* a heating system and *(b)* insulation measures to be fitted in each parliamentary constituency in Northern Ireland as part of the Warm Homes Scheme. [33077]

Mr. Hanson: The information requested is not readily available on a parliamentary constituency basis and could only be provided at disproportionate costs. The total waiting list for Northern Ireland is as follows:

	Numbers awaiting heating measures	
Number awaiting insulation measures	*New systems*	*Repairs/upgrades*
1,608	93	1,340

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many homes in Northern Ireland had insulation measures fitted as part of the Warm Homes Scheme in each year since 2001, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [33078]

Mr. Hanson: The information requested is as follows:

Number of households in receipt of insulation measures[1]

Constituency	Financial year 2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06
Belfast East	235	260	198	326	218
Belfast North	256	418	352	465	265
Belfast South	103	189	174	200	198
Belfast West	436	538	353	360	367
East Antrim	182	258	211	256	168
East Londonderry	144	299	224	280	237
Fermanagh/South Tyrone	214	419	306	305	344
Foyle	207	332	302	461	478
Lagan Valley	92	286	232	226	259
Mid-Ulster	219	441	321	461	396
Newry and Armagh	157	476	428	623	483
North Antrim	179	274	284	335	219
North Down	141	252	144	286	294
South Antrim	203	245	207	332	225
South Down	145	656	573	428	382
Strangford	131	268	204	315	184
Upper Bann	324	479	475	520	319
West Tyrone	161	328	332	451	289

[1] These columns include those households which received both heating and insulation measures.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Data Protection

John Hemming: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidance she has given the courts on the size of awards for compensation for breaches of the Data Protection Act 1998. [30684]

Ms Harman: The size of any award for compensation payable for damage arising from any failure to comply with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998 is a matter for assessment by the courts, taking into account all the relevant circumstances in individual cases.

Departmental Websites

Charles Hendry: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will take steps to ensure the Department's websites attain the W3C AAA standard of accessibility for people with visual and other disabilities; and if she will set a target date for this standard to be achieved by. [30970]

Ms Harman: My Department follows Government guidelines for UK Government websites. The guidelines currently require websites to meet Level A of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. They also identify a significant number of the Priority Two (AA) and Priority Three (AAA) checkpoints as best practice which Departments should aim to follow. Of the Priority Three checkpoints my Department is working to ensure that the following checkpoints in particular are adhered to by all DCA websites:

ensuring that there is sufficient contrast between foreground and background colours (P3 Checkpoint 2.2);

use of access-keys (P3 Checkpoint 9.5); the provision of a site map (P3 Checkpoint 13.3);

the provision of skip navigation (P3 Checkpoint 13.6); the provision of search facilities (P3 Checkpoint 13.7);

the speech-enablement of your website (P3 Checkpoint 14.2);

use of consistent presentation across all pages (P3 Checkpoint 14.3).

Human Rights Act

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidance she has issued on whether privately-run *(a)* healthcare facilities, *(b)* prisons, *(c)* care homes and *(d)* schools are covered by section 6 of the Human Rights Act 1998. [31641]

Ms Harman: Following the recommendation of the Joint Committee on Human Rights in its Seventh Report of Session 2003–04, the Government issued guidance to local authorities on the use of contractual conditions to ensure that services delivered on behalf of the local authority are provided in a way that takes account of the Human Rights Act 1998.

Legal Aid

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many *(a)* women and *(b)* men received legal aid in respect of care and custody proceedings in each of the last three years for which information is available. [31020]

Bridget Prentice: I will reply to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Substantive answer from Bridget Prentice to Andrew Turner:

The total number of certificates issued in care and custody proceedings, broken by down by gender in 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05 is given as follows.

	Female	*Male*	*Not recorded*
2002–03	45,050	36,427	2,120
2003–04	44,335	35,399	2,159
2004–05	43,413	34,580	2,510

These figures are inclusive certificates granted to both children and adults.

Life Sentences

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many people who pleaded guilty to murder and received life sentences are appealing against the sentence. [32472]

Ms Harman: Information on people who pleaded guilty to murder and received life sentences now appealing against the sentence is not held centrally and could be produced only at disproportion cost.

Marked Registers

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list the constituencies which have *(a)* all and *(b)* part of their marked registers from the 2005 general election missing; and if she will make a statement. [32655]

Ms Harman: The information is as follows:

(a) The only constituency in England and Wales where all of the marked register for the May 2005 general election appear to be missing is Woking.

(b) The Government are aware that reports have been made about missing pages from the marked registers of the following May 2005 general election constituencies:

National Security Appeals Panel

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many public hearings the National Security Appeals Panel has held since inception. [31366]

Ms Harman: The National Security Appeals Panel has heard three cases in public since its inception. A fourth case was heard in private but was retrospectively made public at the hearing stage.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps the National Security Appeals Panel has taken to publicise its functions. [31367]

Ms Harman: Since April 2005 the Information Tribunal website has included a section for the National Security Appeals Panel which includes copies of previous judgments, regulations and legislation.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the *(a)* staffing level and *(b)* cost of the National Security Appeals Panel has been in each calendar year since inception. [31368]

Ms Harman: The National Security Appeals Panel is included in the budget for the information tribunal and is not separately identified. Between inception and 2004 secretariat functions to the information tribunal were provided as part of the responsibilities of one member of staff in the information rights division. Staffing levels were increased in preparation for the coming into force of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. The information tribunal currently has three full time members of staff who are all based in Leicester.

The costs incurred by sittings of the National Security Appeals Panel can be broken down for each year as follows:

	£
2000–01	0
2001–02	2411.87
2002–03	3617.77
2003–04	3074.48
2004–05	4094.69
2005–06	9807.17

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many cases have been decided by the National Security Appeals Panel in each calendar year since its inception under *(a)* section 28 of the Data Protection Act 1998 and *(b)* section 60 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000; and if she will list the parties to each case in which all proceedings are complete. [31369]

Ms Harman: Under section 28 of the Data Protection Act 1998 there have been five cases in which all proceedings are complete. For each year the number of decisions and the parties in the cases are as follows:

2001—One case:

Norman Baker *v.* Secretary of State for the Home Department

2002—One case:

Mohammed El Fayed *v.* Secretary of State for the Home Department and Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

2003—Three cases:

Phillip Hilton *v.* Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs.

Tony Gosling *v.* Secretary Of State for the Home Department

Peter Hitchens *v.* Secretary Of State for the Home Department

No decisions have yet been made by the panel under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the judgements have been published in each case decided by the National Security Appeals Panel in each calendar year since its inception under *(a)* section 28 of the Data Protection Act 1998 and *(b)* section 60 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000. [31398]

Ms Harman: The five cases decided by the panel under the Data Protection Act 1998 where all proceedings are complete are published on the National Security Appeals Panel section of the information tribunal website.

There have been no decisions under section 60 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Ethiopia

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the situation in Ethiopia. [32078]

Ian Pearson: We remain concerned about the internal situation in Ethiopia. The tragic events in Addis Ababa and other towns at the beginning of November, which resulted in deaths and injuries, have further deepened the political and social divisions in the community, as well as damaging Ethiopia's international reputation. The people of Ethiopia need reassurance of a peaceful, just and democratic future. To this end, in our capacity as presidency of the EU, we have called on the Ethiopian Government and opposition parties to undertake a series of measures aimed at ensuring a return to peaceful dialogue, and restoring confidence in the democracy building process.

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Ethiopian Government on the imprisonment of opposition politicians. [32079]

Ian Pearson: My noble Friend, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa (Lord Triesman of Tottenham) summoned the Ethiopian Chargé d'Affaires on 1 November to register our concerns about the situation in Ethiopia, including the issue of detainees. On 6 November, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development also raised the issue when he spoke to Prime Minister Meles. Also on 6 November, in our capacity as EU presidency, we issued a statement on the situation in Ethiopia, which included reference to our concerns regarding detainees. Our ambassador in Ethiopia has also raised our concerns with Prime Minister Meles, the Ethiopian Foreign Minister and other Government Ministers.

We continue to call for the immediate release of all political detainees, for those individuals not charged under due process to be released immediately, and for access to those detained for their families, legal counsel and representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross or other appropriate representatives of the international community.

Gaza-Egyptian Border

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of progress in opening the Gaza-Egyptian border following disengagement. [32738]

Dr. Howells: The Gaza-Egypt border opened on 25 November. This is a significant step forward for the Palestinians. My right hon. Friend, the Foreign Secretary, made a statement on the day of the opening:

"Today is a day of great significance in the long search for peace in the Middle East. The deployment of General Pietro Pistolese and his team at Rafah will allow the border between Gaza and Egypt to be re-opened following Israel's withdrawal. This is the first time that the Palestinians have had control over one of their own borders. The re-opening of this border will have a real impact on the lives of Gazans: it will improve the economic prospects of the Palestinian people and allow them greater freedom of movement.

This EU mission demonstrates the importance the international community places on securing peace in the Middle East. I pay tribute to Jim Wolfensohn's remarkable work in helping the parties build on Israel's courageous disengagement. The efforts of Condoleezza Rice and Javier Solana in securing the deal have also been invaluable. EU Member States and the European Commission have worked rapidly to set up the mission. Egypt has offered vital support. I want to assure General Pistolese and his team of our continued support as they undertake this important EU contribution to a sustainable peace. The EU will continue to work in support of the other aspects of the agreement on movement and access and of Jim Wolfensohn's efforts."

Iran

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Iran following its threat not to continue with the construction of the Iran to India gas pipeline as a result of India's recent vote at the International Atomic Energy Agency. [32267]

Dr. Howells: According to media reports, both Indian and Iranian officials have reiterated their commitment to existing agreements on this pipeline, and a routine meeting of the India/Iran working group on the project was held in late October. We have not made representations to the Iranian Government.

Iraq

Mr. Jim C[illegible]ngham: To ask the Secretary of State for Forei[illegible]mmonwealth Affairs how many of the deta[illegible]by multinational forces in Iraq are women; [illegible]ill make a statement. [32736]

Dr. Ho[illegible] There are no women currently in British military detention in Iraq. The United States Government have told us that they currently have approximately 11 females in detention in Iraq. The number varies with new detentions and the continuous process of review and release.

Middle East

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the role of economic initiatives in aiding the development of the roadmap for peace in the Middle East. [32739]

Dr. Howells: The UK fully supports the efforts of Quartet Special Envoy James Wolfensohn to ensure that maximum benefit is derived from Israel's withdrawal from Gaza and part of the West Bank. This should promote growing confidence and trust between the parties and should pave the way for renewed implementation of the Roadmap.

A series of UK-led events will take place in December. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer (Gordon Brown), will host G7 Finance Ministers and European Finance Ministers meetings to discuss how donors can best support the work of James Wolfensohn. The UK will also host an investors' conference to discuss the role the private sector can play in reviving the Palestinian economy. In a separate event, key donors to the Palestinians will meet on 13 and 14 December to give their input to the Palestinian Three-Year Development Plan, to put the Palestinian economy on a sound footing and to pave the way for a Pledging Conference in the spring.

Nuclear Proliferation

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what research he has commissioned on the effect of the UK's nuclear weapons status on nuclear proliferation. [32345]

Dr. Howells: The UK Government have not commissioned research into this specific area.

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking *(a)* bilaterally and *(b)* multilaterally to ensure that progress is made on international agreement on non-proliferation. [32347]

Dr. Howells: We are disappointed that, it was not possible this year to reach a substantive outcome at the Non-Proliferation Treaty Review Conference or to include non-proliferation language at the UN World Summit. We remain committed to achieving progress and to revitalising the global disarmament and non-proliferation machinery. Multilaterally, we continue to take an active role in the Conference on Disarmament, the International Atomic Energy Agency, the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty Organisation and the Nuclear Suppliers' Group, as well as participating in the Proliferation Security Initiative. We were co-sponsors of United Nations Security Council Resolution 1540 and continue to further the aims of that resolution. During our presidency of the EU we have worked to implement the EU's Weapons of Mass Destruction (WMD) Strategy.

The UK has been working in smaller groups, for example as one of the EU3 in negotiations aimed at persuading Iran to forgo certain nuclear activities in light of its non-compliance with international obligations. We are closely involved with the US in closing down the AQ Khan network and continue to support Libya's dismantlement of its WMD programme. As a member of the G8 we have committed $750 million over a period of 10 years to the Global Partnership which seeks to address the threat posed by the Cold War legacy of WMD related materials. Counter-proliferation is on the agenda of numerous bilateral exchanges with a wide range of countries.

Shared Representation

Chris Huhne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in which countries the UK has shared representation; and what assessment he has made of the further potential for sharing representation. [32478]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Wherever appropriate, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office shares office premises overseas with EU partners and, occasionally, with others. We are alert to opportunities to do so. We are already co-located with the following partners:

Germany—Almaty, Ashgabat, Dar es Salaam, Pyongyang, Quito, Reykjavik

France—Almaty, Ashgabat

Italy—Minsk

The Netherlands—Dar es Salaam, Chisinau

European Commission—Dar es Salaam.

Syria

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment the Government have made of compliance by Syria with United Nations Security Council Resolutions *(a)* 1559 and *(b)* 1595. [32737]

Dr. Howells: Syria completed the withdrawal of its troops from Lebanon on 26 April 2005, in compliance with United Nations Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1559. A United Nations (UN) verification team concluded that there are no Syrian military forces and is no visible or significant Syrian intelligence presence or activity in Lebanon, although the possibility remains of an ongoing influence of Syrian intelligence in Lebanon.

We are concerned by the reference in Special Envoy Larsen's report on 25 October 2005 of the illegal transfer of arms and people across the Syrian-Lebanese border. We urge Syria to refrain from interfering in Lebanese affairs and to work with Lebanon to ensure the full implementation of UNSCR 1559.

Syria's lack of substantive co-operation has hindered the UN International Independent Investigation Commission mandated by UNSCR 1595. As a result, the UN Security Council unanimously adopted UNSCR 1636, which requires Syria to improve its co-operation and allows for sanctions against those individuals accused by the ongoing investigation. We note the UN announcement on 25 November that agreement has been reached between Mr. Mehlis and the Syrian Government over the venue for the questioning of five Syrian interviewees. UNSCR 1636 requests Mr. Mehlis to report on progress to the UN Security Council by 15 December 2005.

Torture

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact of the use in England and Wales of intelligence obtained by torture upon *(a)* the United Kingdom's international standing and reputation and *(b)* the effectiveness of British foreign policy. [29109]

Mr. Straw: The Government, including the intelligence and security agencies, never uses torture for any purposes, including to obtain information. Nor would we instigate others to do so. Where we are helping other countries to develop their own counter-terrorism capability, we ensure that our training or other assistance promotes human rights compliance. Our rejection of the use of torture is well known by our liaison partners.

I am unaware of any adverse impact on the UK's international standing and reputation and the success of British foreign policy from this approach.

Uganda

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the international community regarding the implications of the issuing of warrants by the International Criminal Court for the arrest of the leaders of the Lords Resistance Army of Uganda. [33102]

Ian Pearson: We work closely with other members of the international community regarding the long-running conflict on Northern Uganda. Our dialogue includes discussion of the recent historic step by the International Criminal Court (ICC) to issue its first arrest warrants for five Lord's Resistance Army commanders. The UK is a strong supporter of the work of the ICC and together with our EU partners, we have called on all those involved to work to facilitate the arrest of the individuals subject to the warrants.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact of the issuing of warrants against leaders of the Lord's Resistance Army by the International Criminal Court on the policy of amnesty previously advanced by the Ugandan authorities. [33103]

Ian Pearson: The recent historic decision by the International Criminal Court (ICC) to issue its first arrest warrants for five Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) commanders is an important step towards ending impunity for the most horrific crimes committed in this brutal conflict. We are pressing governments in the region to take action against those subject to arrest warrants.

The Government of Uganda has assured us that their amnesty policy remains in place for all those LRA members not subject to ICC arrest warrants. There are various programmes in northern Uganda actively encouraging these LRA members to take advantage of the amnesty and rehabilitation and reintegration programmes.

United States (Prince of Wales's Visit)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) if he will place in the Library the guest list for the cocktail party held as part of the official visit of HRH the Prince of Wales at the New York museum of Modern Art; [31868]

(2) if he will place in the Library the guest list for the party hosted by the British ambassador at his residence in Washington DC, held as part of the official visit of HRH the Prince of Wales to the United States of America. [31869]

Mr. Douglas Alexander *[holding answers 28 November 2005]:* A copy of the guest lists will be placed in the Library of the House.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 1 December 2005

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Avian Influenza

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her written statement of 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 48WS, on avian influenza (epidemiology report), what species or sub-species the mesias from the quarantine facility in Essex were from; and whether that species or sub-species is indigenous to Taiwan. [30748]

Mr. Bradshaw: The species of mesia was "Leiothrix argentauris." This species is indigenous to Taiwan.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the pooling of samples of different species and different origins delayed the determination of the source of the H5N1 avian flu virus detected from samples taken from dead birds in the quarantine facility in Essex. [30749]

Mr. Bradshaw: The pooling of samples for virus isolation does not cause any delays.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the reasons for the presence of H5N1 infection in mesia birds from two cages separated by five other cages and for the absence of infection in the birds of other species in the intervening cages. [30973]

Mr. Bradshaw: The two cages housing the mesias were not separated by five other cages.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many Surinam caiques were sampled by her Department's staff from the quarantine facility in Essex in which the avian influenza virus H5N1 was isolated. [31065]

Mr. Bradshaw: One caique from Surinam was examined for the presence of avian influenza virus, including the H5N1 strain. No virus was detected.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what assessment she made of the merits of requiring all sales of birds to be recorded before introducing the ban on sales at bird fairs; [31861]

(2) for what reasons she has prohibited the sale of birds at bird fairs. [31859]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* Following a veterinary risk assessment and discussions with stakeholders, a precautionary approach to gatherings which involve the sale of birds was taken as these increase the risk of dissemination of infection and present a high risk. This is because when ownership changes hands, birds will be spread over a wider area in comparison to gatherings where birds are merely exhibited and returned to the premises of origin. Therefore sales from exhibitions, shows, fairs or other gatherings are not allowed. Recording sales would not help to prevent the spread of avian influenza in the event of a disease outbreak.

We are able to licence gatherings if following a veterinary risk assessment, they can be classified as presenting a low risk of transmission of avian influenza.

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the dates on which inspectors visited the bird quarantine centre in Fambridge, Essex during *(a)* each of the last three years and *(b)* the quarantine period of the mesias which died in quarantine. [32875]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* The information is as follows.

(a) The premises were inspected by SVS as part of the annual licensing process in November 2002, December 2003, and on 20 December 2004. In addition the premises would have been visited by an LVI at least three times during all quarantine periods at the premises.

(b) An LVI visited the premises on 18 September, 29 September and 20 October. In addition a pre-quarantine visit was undertaken on 7 September 2005.

Chlorofluorocarbons

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how much chlorofluorocarbon has been *(a)* recovered and *(b)* released into the environment from (i) refrigerators and (ii) other sources in the UK in each year since 1997; [30996]

(2) what data the Environment Agency collects on *(a)* chlorofluorocarbons (CFCs) recovery levels and *(b)* the quality of CFCs released; [31003]

(3) what the average chlorofluorocarbon recovery levels were in each year since 2000. [31002]

Mr. Bradshaw: The following information is available relating to recovery of chlorofluorocarbons (CFC) from all equipment:

387 tonnes in 2002

494 tonnes in 2003

427 tonnes in 2004.

It is not possible to calculate how much CFC has been lost in the UK since 1997, or the quality of any CFCs released, as the quantity of CFCs in use in various applications over this period is not known.

The average quantity of controlled substances recovered from the refrigerant and blowing agent that was subsequently destroyed in England and Wales for 2003 was approximately 236g per fridge. It is not possible to state what percentage of potential CFC available for recovery that the destroyed amount represents. One of the reasons for this is CFC loss during a product's service life and further loss that may occur in storage and transit.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many recycling operations are recovering chlorofluorocarbons. [30997]

Mr. Bradshaw: A number of facilities hold waste management licences for the treatment of waste refrigerators. Not all licensed facilities will be operational. Typically, there are a dozen specialist facilities recovering CFCs from domestic refrigerators.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many investigations the Environment Agency is carrying out into the *(a)* mishandling and *(b)* failure to recover chlorofluorocarbons. [31001]

Mr. Bradshaw: Licensed fridge treatment sites are regularly inspected by the Environment Agency. Operators of licensed facilities that do not comply with their licence conditions face enforcement action in line with the Environment Agency's Enforcement and Prosecution Policy. Over the past two years, the Environment Agency has successfully prosecuted several site operators. One prosecution in July 2004, resulted in a four-month prison sentence, others have resulted in substantial fines. The Environment Agency does not comment on investigations that are currently on-going.

Cuckmere Valley

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much has been spent to date by the Environment Agency on its plans to alter the nature of the Cuckmere Valley; what the budget is for the preparatory stage of this project; and if she will make a statement. [33697]

Mr. Morley: I understand the Environment Agency has spent £394,000 out of a budget for preparatory work of £444,000. These figures include an allowance for agency internal staff costs.

The preparatory stage should be completed in April 2006 after which the Regional Flood Defence Committee will consider the appropriate way forward for future flood risk management. The agency will then undertake wider consultation on options with the intention of reaching agreement for the future management of the estuary, identifying necessary future works and possible funding routes to implement these.

Existing flood defences are reaching the end of their life and are increasingly ineffective against sea level rise. The Environment Agency spends between £30,000 and £50,000 per annum maintaining the defences in this area and ensuring that the river can adequately discharge into the sea.

Flood Prevention

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will visit Shrewsbury to discuss the need for further flood prevention measures. [30993]

Mr. Morley: I am always keen to see how Government policy and funding can contribute constructively to effective flood risk management in practice. I visited Shrewsbury in 2000 with the Prime Minister and on other occasions. I am interested in the flood risk problems there and in finding solutions to them as far as possible.

I understand the Environment Agency recently invested £3.5 million as part of an overall £6 million flood risk management improvement project in Shrewsbury, is considering carefully the case for further investment which is however problematic in some areas, and has explained the position to people affected by flood risk.

The agency has distributed its draft fluvial severn strategy to a broad range of consultees, including Members of Parliament for the affected areas, for comment prior to finalisation in 2006. This considers a number of options for all flood prone areas along the River Severn and, together with the agency's River Severn catchment flood management plan, will provide the agency with a framework for the management of flood risk. Given all avenues either have been or are being explored and the limited scope for further works in the immediate future, I see little point in raising people's hopes by another Ministerial visit at this time.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to prevent flooding in the Underdale area of Shrewsbury. [30825]

Mr. Morley: Following completion of the Environment Agency's £3.5 million Frankwell flood alleviation scheme, the scope for further flood risk improvement works in Shrewsbury in the immediate future is limited by benefit cost issues and the relative priority of these works against the need for investment in other locations.

I understand the agency assessed Underdale Road for inclusion in trials of "temporary" defences (that is flood defences which would remain permanently at hand, to be raised temporarily during periods of heightened flood risk). However the benefits from such works proved insufficient in relation to justification of costs in the region of £460,000.

The agency's draft fluvial severn strategy considers a number of options for all flood prone areas along the River Severn and, together with the agency's River Severn catchment flood management plan, will provide the agency with a framework for the management of flood risk in the longer term.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Mr. Binley: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will produce an annual report on greenhouse gas emissions and present it to Parliament. [33176]

Mr. Morley: If passed, the Private Member's Bill entitled Climate Change and Sustainable Energy would require such a report to be made to Parliament by the Prime Minister.

The Bill successfully received its Second Reading on 11 November and has been sent to Standing Committee. During that debate, the Minister for Energy indicated that the Government would support the relevant clause

subject to it being amended to the effect that producing such a report would be the responsibility of the Secretary of State.

DEFRA produces an annual inventory of the UK's greenhouse gas emissions and various other reports to comply with our international obligations both to the EU and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC).

Mr. Binley: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will introduce legislation creating legally-binding targets for the reduction of greenhouse gas emissions. [33179]

Mr. Morley: The UK already has a legally binding target to reduce its greenhouse gas emissions by 12.5 per cent. during the 2008–12 period under the Kyoto protocol.

Mobile Phones/Printer Cartridges

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research has been conducted *(a)* by and *(b)* for her Department relating to the recycling and reuse of (i) mobile phones and (ii) printer cartridges. [27889]

Mr. Bradshaw: No research has been conducted by or for the Department relating specifically to the recycling and reuse of mobile phones or printer cartridges.

Quad Bikers

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what complaints her Department has received on the inappropriate and illegal use of walking trails by quad bikers. [33194]

Jim Knight: I am not aware of any specific complaints about the inappropriate and illegal use of walking trails by quad bikers.

However, we have received a significant number of representations regarding the illegal use of other motorised vehicles on rights of way and off road land.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action her Department has taken to enforce laws regarding proper trail and land use by quad bikers. [33195]

Jim Knight: We have received a significant number of representations regarding the antisocial and illegal off-road use of motorised vehicles.

There already exists a range of statutory powers that, when used as part of a co-ordinated strategy, can prove effective in dealing with the inappropriate use of motor vehicles off-road. The Government will shortly be issuing guidance to help the police and local authorities tackle motor vehicle misuse. The guidance will set out the range of powers already available and will draw on existing best practice examples of police and local authorities working in successful partnerships.

Copies of this guidance will be placed in the Library of the House.

Refrigerators

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what target her Department has set for the amount of chlorofluorocarbons that should be recovered from refrigerators in each year; [30995]

(2) how many refrigerators were recovered with their reservoir of chlorofluorocarbons gas *(a)* empty and *(b)* intact in each of the last 10 years. [30994]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government do not set a target for the amount of CFG that should be recovered from refrigerators in each year because it is not possible to know in advance how many refrigerators will be presented for treatment, the proportion that contained CFCs when manufactured, or the proportion of CFCs that will have been lost in use, storage or transit.

The recovery facilities do not record whether or not each fridge presented for treatment has a full charge of CFG in its coolant circuit. This is because the operator of the facility will not always know how much CFG an individual fridge contained when it was manufactured, and CFG recovery is measured over a large batch of units and it is not practical to record recovery on a fridge by fridge basis.

Sustainable Development

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress has been made under the UK's presidency in relation to the sustainable development agenda. [30270]

Mr. Morley: Defra is seeking to promote sustainable development through the full range of its business by ensuring that all its dossiers fully address environmental, economic and social impacts. Our approach is underpinned by the need to make progress on Better Regulation. The European Commission's proposal for a Review of the EU Sustainable Development Strategy—a UK priority—will not be published until mid-December but we will be supporting the forthcoming Austrian Presidency to achieve their aim of completing the review by June 2006.

Timber

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps are being taken to reduce the amount of illegal timber entering the United Kingdom. [33942]

Mr. Morley: The UK is taking a range of steps to reduce the amount of illegal timber entering the United Kingdom.

The European Commission published its Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan in May 2003. This describes a package of measures to tackle illegal logging, including proposals that the EU enters into partnership agreements with timber producing countries to establish a licensing system designed to identify products and license them for export to the EU.

The UK is delighted that the proposal for a licensing system received political agreement at the EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 24 October 2005, under the UK's Presidency of the European Union. This will be adopted in December 2005. The UK, with other EU partners, is already discussing possible agreements with timber producing countries, including Ghana and Malaysia. It is hoped that these agreements will be finalised soon. This will mean that the amount of illegal timber entering the United Kingdom from these countries will reduce.

The FLEGT Action Plan also proposes that the Commission look at other options to tackle illegal logging, including using Government procurement and introducing legislation to prevent the importation of illegally logged timber at a member state or EU level. Government awaits the European Commission's report, which will allow us to take this work forward, including the options for action at the UK level.

Veterinary Laboratories Agency

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many diagnoses made by the Veterinary Laboratories Agency in Weybridge were found to be incorrect in *(a)* each of the last three years and *(b)* this year to date; and what these figures represent as a percentage of overall diagnoses. [31857]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* Diagnoses are a matter of veterinary judgment, usually made on the basis of a combination of clinical signs and test results. In some cases post mortem finding are also available. The following figures give the total number of tests completed and the number of complaints recorded that relate to test results. Some errors in test results are detected by the VLA ISO17025 UKAS quality system after reporting (eg during audit). These are notified to customers but do not necessarily result in a complaint. Estimates of these are also provided.

	Number of tests reported	*Number of complaints received regarding test results*	*Number of incorrect test results notified to customers*	*Incorrect test results as percentage of total*
April 2002-March 2003	3,359,922	4	<25	<0.001
April 2003-March 2004	2,672,385	4	<25	<0.001
April 2004-March 2005	2,910,318	4	<25	<0.001
April 2005-October 2005	1,102,816	4	<25	<0.002

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many diagnoses made by the Veterinary Laboratories Agency in Weybridge were contested in *(a)* each of the last three years and *(b)* this year to date; and what these figures represent as a percentage of overall diagnoses. [31858]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* Diagnoses are a matter of veterinary judgment, usually made on the basis of a combination of clinical signs and test results. In some cases post mortem finding are also available. The following figures give the total number of tests completed and the number of complaints recorded that relate to test results. Instances when customers contact the VLA to discuss a test result or diagnosis but make no complaint are not recorded in a manor that permits analysis. In some of these cases it may be that customers are questioning a result or diagnosis but are content with the explanation given and make no complaint.

	Number of tests reported by VLA	*Number of complaints received regarding test results*	*Complaints as a percentage of tests reported*
April 2002-March 2003	3,359,922	4	0.0001
April 2003-March 2004	2,672,385	4	0.0001
April 2004-March 2005	2,910,318	4	0.0001
April 2005-October 2005	1,102,816	4	0.0004

TRANSPORT

Correspondence

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Brent, East dated 22 March on behalf of Ms Christine Hilder and Mr. Carl Ernsting. [33857]

Ms Buck: The Department had no trace of receiving the letter from the hon. Member for Brent, East dated 22 March at the time but a copy was obtained from her office on 30 November. The subject matter is one for which Ministers at HM Treasury have responsibility and they will be replying to the hon. Member as soon as possible.

Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will amend regulations to prevent the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency from providing names and addresses of vehicle owners to private companies and individuals. [33695]

Dr. Ladyman: I will be making a written statement on Friday 2 December.

Integrated Kent Franchise

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to announce a decision on the Integrated Kent Franchise. [33462]

Derek Twigg: I refer the hon. Member to the written statement made to the House by my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State on 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 33–34WS, advising that the Integrated Kent Franchise Agreement had been signed by GoVia, who are now contracted to run the franchise from 1 April next year.

M5 Traffic Flows

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will conduct a full evaluation of traffic flows at Junction 12 on the M5, including *(a)* queuing on the slip road and *(b)* related use of the B4008. [33150]

Dr. Ladyman [*holding answer 30 November 2005*]: A study of the operation of Junction 12 on the M5 is due to be completed by May 2006. The study will incorporate a survey to evaluate traffic flows at the junction, including use of the B4008. This initial survey is programmed for completion during January 2006.

Railways

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the costs of maintenance on the rail network have been in each winter since 1999–2000, broken down by region. [32646]

Derek Twigg: Network Rail is responsible for the operation and maintenance of the rail network. Network Rail will respond directly to the hon. Member.

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what subsidy the Government have given to the railway industry in each year since 1997. [34154]

Derek Twigg: Details of historic Government support to the rail industry are set out in table 6.2a of the latest edition of National Rail Trends, copies of which are in the Library of the House.

TREASURY

Bio-fuels

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on his policy on duty rates on fuel from pure vegetable oil in relation to duty rates on conventional fuels. [33791]

John Healey: A reduced rate of duty for biodiesel was introduced in July 2002 in recognition of its environmental benefits and its higher production costs than conventional diesel. Fuel produced from vegetable oil is eligible for this lower rate (currently 27.10 pence per litre) if it meets the legal definition of biodiesel for tax purposes set out in section 2AA of the Hydrocarbon Oil Duties Act 1979.

Child Trust Fund

Mr. Davey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what research his Department has carried out into the income levels of eligible families who have opened child trust fund accounts relative to eligible families who have not. [33612]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Parents have up to a year from the issue of the Child Trust voucher in which to open an account for their child and this period has yet to expire for the first vouchers issued. The income level of eligible families who do not open accounts is something that the Government will want to look at alongside other research. This includes qualitative research with parents in lower income households to make sure that the materials sent to parents are likely to appeal to the target audience.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many child trust fund accounts have been opened in England, broken down by ethnicity of the child. [33613]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This information is not available. Information on the global number of Child Trust Fund accounts opened is available at:

http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/child_trust_funds/child-trust-funds.htm

Mr. Davey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many child trust fund accounts have been opened since the programme began, broken down by region. [33614]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: This information could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

The latest quarterly Child Trust Fund statistics were published on 30 November 2005 at:

http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/child_trust_funds/child-trust-funds.htm

Jim Sheridan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many households in Paisley and Renfrewshire North have opened child trust fund accounts. [34308]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Child trust fund information at constituency level would be available only at disproportionate cost. UK-wide information on the number of child trust fund vouchers issued and the number of accounts opened are published on the HMRC website at http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/child_trust_funds/child-trust-funds.htm. Data showing activity to 20 November was published on the 30 November 2005.

Corporation Tax (Lancashire)

Mr. Evans: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much corporation tax was raised from businesses in Lancashire in each year since 1997. [34068]

Dawn Primarolo: The information is not available to estimate the amount of corporation tax raised from businesses in Lancashire in each year since 1997.

Endowment Mortgages

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on endowment mortgage complaints that are upheld by the Financial Ombudsman Service and rejected by insurance companies. [33672]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: For the last full financial year (ending 31 March 2005), the Financial Ombudsman Service received 69,737 mortgage endowment complaints. In the same period, the ombudsman service resolved 48,018 of these cases, of which 47.3 per cent. were upheld (either wholly or in part) in the consumer's favour.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many complaints about endowment mortgages were made to the Financial Ombudsman Service in each of the last five years; and how many were upheld. [33673]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Financial Ombudsman Service brought together eight separate dispute resolution schemes covering the financial services sector and

assumed its powers under the Financial Services and Markets Act 2000 on 1 December 2001. The following table shows the number of mortgage endowment cases received by the ombudsman service in each full financial year since year ending 31 March 2001 and shows the percentage breakdown of resolved cases upheld (either wholly or in part) in the consumers favour.

Year ending	*Mortgage endowment complaints received*	*Percentage of resolved cases upheld*
2004–05	69,737	47.3
2003–04	51,917	32.5
2002–03	13,750	45.8
2001–02	14,595	n/a
2000–01	9,067	n/a

n/a = Not available.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many complaints about endowment mortgages were upheld by the Financial Ombudsman Service but were then rejected by the insurance company in each of the last five years. [33762]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Once an ombudsman has made a final decision it is binding on the firm, if the consumer accepts it. Where a final decision has been issued and a firm has failed to comply with an award made by an ombudsman, the ombudsman's decision is then enforceable in court. No records are available on the number of enforcement actions of this nature that are taken.

EU Accounts

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the recent auditing of the EU accounts. [33426]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: As always, we are studying the European Court of Auditors Report on the 2004 EC Budget carefully as we attach a great deal of importance to financial management. It is disappointing that, for the eleventh year in succession, the European Court of Auditors has been unable to give a positive statement of assurance on the EC Budget for 2004. It is encouraging, however, that there have been noticeable improvements since 2003 with pre-accession expenditure once again being cleared, as it was in 2002, and, for the first time, certain areas of agricultural expenditure also gaining clearance. This has meant that around 35 percent. of EC Budget expenditure was cleared in 2004 compared with only 6 percent. in 2003. The council, led by the UK presidency, has for the first time taken action, agreeing conclusions on 8 November 2005 that will contribute to bringing about a step change in financial management and control.

Illegal Drugs

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in how many deaths in Sandwell illegal drugs were the primary cause in each year since 1997. [33281]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. John Spellar, dated 1 December 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking in how many deaths in Sandwell, illegal drugs were the primary cause in each year since 1997. (33281)

Figures readily available from death certification relate to deaths due to drug poisoning, not the total number that were attributable to drug use. These figures are produced from a special database which contains deaths where the underlying cause was drug poisoning. Deaths that may be caused indirectly by drug use, for example HIV infection or road traffic accidents, are not included. Death registration data are not the best source of information on these "indirect" deaths, because information on the role of drug use in the death may not be provided on the death certificate.

The most recent year for which figures are available is 2003. There were 12 deaths certified as due to drug poisoning[1] and involving drugs controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act to residents of Sandwell[2] in the seven years 1997 to 2003.3 A further breakdown by year is not possible because of the small numbers of deaths involved.

[1] Defined using the following codes from the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision for 2001–2003: F11-F16, F18-F19, X40-X44, X60-X64, Y10-Y14, X85 and the following codes from the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision for 1997–2000: 292, 304, 305.2–305.9, E850-E858, E950.0-E950.5, E962.0 and E980.0-E980.5.

[2] Usual residents of Sandwell.

[3] Data are for deaths occurring in each calendar year.

Low-income Families

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to encourage saving among families on low incomes. [33715]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: In addition to tax-relief on savings offered to all adults, the Government are using the Saving Gateway to explore how matching can encourage families on lower incomes to start saving. As announced in Budget 2005, the second Saving Gateway is now up and running and accounts will run for 18 months. Evidence gathered through this pilot will be used to inform the development of matching as a central pillar in the Government's strategy for promoting saving and asset-ownership.

Additionally, the Government have introduced the child trust fund, a groundbreaking initiative designed to strengthen the saving habit of future generations. Every child born on or after 1 September 2002 receives a £250 voucher from the Government to invest in a long-term savings and investment account with families on lower incomes receiving £500. Family and friends can add up to £1,200 a year to each account and there is no tax for them to pay on any interest or gains made on this money.

Milton Keynes Development

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much his Department has spent since 1975 on land purchase and infrastructure to enable the development of Milton Keynes; and what payments have been returned to his Department through *(a)* the Milton Keynes Development Corporation, *(b)* the Commission for New Towns and *(c)* English Partnerships in that period. [28193]

Yvette Cooper: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested will take some time to collate, I will write to my hon. Friend in due course and a copy will be published in the Official Report.

National Insurance (Freelance Musicians)

Lynne Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he consulted *(a)* the Musicians' Union, *(b)* the Association of British Orchestras, *(c)* individual major orchestras, *(d)* the Arts Council for (i) England, (ii) Scotland, (iii) Wales and (iv) Northern Ireland and *(e)* Ministers in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport on requirements for freelance self-employed musicians and the orchestras and ensembles that engage them to pay Class 1 national insurance contributions. [33623]

Dawn Primarolo: The changes were introduced on 17 July 1998 following a press release by the Social Security Minister, John Denham on 15 July 1998. At the time responsibility for national insurance liability for entertainers which included actors, singers or musicians fell to the Department for Work and Pensions, or as it was known then the Department of Social Security. The Department of Social Security consulted interested parties before the changes were introduced.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when *(a)* the Musicians' Union, *(b)* the Association of British Orchestras, *(c)* individual major orchestras and *(d)* the Arts Council for (i) England, (ii) Scotland, (iii) Wales and (iv) Northern Ireland were informed of requirements for freelance self-employed musicians and the orchestras and ensembles that engage them to pay Class 1 national insurance contributions. [33624]

Dawn Primarolo: The Department of Social Security, which was then responsible for policy on national insurance contributions issued a press release on 15 July 1998 to announce the revised national insurance arrangements for actors and musicians and changes to legislation from the 17 July 1998.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps were taken between 1988 and 2004 to recover extra revenues from orchestras and ensembles resulting from the 1998 requirements for freelance self-employed musicians and the orchestras and ensembles that engage them to pay Class 1 national insurance contributions. [33625]

Dawn Primarolo: When the regulations were introduced in 1998, employers (including orchestras) engaging entertainers covered by the regulations were expected to comply voluntarily with their obligation to pay Class 1 national insurance contributions.

HMRC ensures employers' operation of their statutory obligations through its employer compliance programme. Employers are selected for visits on the basis of risk profiling. The potential widespread failure of orchestras to deduct Class 1 national insurance contributions did not become evident until 2004, when HMRC undertook customer support activity in the orchestra sector.

Nigeria

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much he expects the Government to be paid by Nigeria under the debt settlement agreed at the Paris Club in October; and what proportion this represents of 2006 UK overseas development assistance to Nigeria, excluding debt cancellation. [34179]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: On 20 October 2005, the Paris Club of official creditors agreed with Nigeria to write off approximately $18 billion, or 60 per cent., of Nigeria's debt to those creditors. Nigeria will use part of its oil windfall to pay the remaining $12.4 billion of debts to creditors. As a result of this deal, at least $1 billion a year will be freed in Nigeria, which the authorities intend to use for poverty reduction including employing an extra 120,000 teachers and putting 3.5 million children into school.

As part of the deal, the UK will cancel approximately £2.8 billion and receive payments of £1.66 billion. As the debts owed to the UK are denominated in a mix of currencies, these numbers may shift with exchange rates. DFID is supporting Nigeria by scaling up its assistance from £70 million in 2005–06 to £100 million in 2007–08 and encouraging the international community to increase its support to the country.

Pensioners

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps the Government are taking to reduce the tax burden on old-age pensioners. [33713]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Around half of pensioners pay no income tax.

For those pensioners who do pay tax, individuals over 65 benefit from the more generous age-related personal allowances up to an income of £19,500. In 2005–06, these allowances are £7,090 for those aged 65 to 74 and £7,220 for those aged 75 and over.

These allowances mean that no pensioner aged 65 or over will be required to pay tax on income of less than £136 a week in 2005–06.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will answer questions 9840 and 13874 on tax credits from the hon. Member for Yeovil due for reply before the summer recess. [33940]

Dawn Primarolo: I have done so.

Terrorism

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the bank accounts which have been frozen since 11 September 2001 on the grounds of terrorist associations. [33651]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Since 11 September 2001, 58 accounts have been frozen in respect of individuals and entities suspected of involvement in terrorism. The aggregate value of accounts frozen is just under £400,000.

A consolidated list of individuals and entities subject to UK financial sanctions is available from the Bank of England website at:

http://www.bankofengland.co.uk/publications/financialsanctions/current/index.htm

Freezing action also prevents the flow of funds to listed individuals and entities asset freezing is part of the Government's overall strategy to create a hostile environment for terrorism and safeguard financial systems. A value cannot easily be put on those wider effects.

VAT

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what proportion of average household expenditure is *(a)* taxable at the standard rate of VAT, *(b)* taxable at the reduced rate of VAT, *(c)* taxable at the zero rate of VAT and *(d)* exempt from VAT; and what the equivalent figure was in (i) 2001, (ii) 2002, (iii) 2003 and (iv) 2004; [33647]

(2) what changes in the rate of value added tax have been introduced in each year since 1 January 1995; and what the rate of value added tax was in each year. [33648]

Dawn Primarolo: Estimates of the proportions of household expenditure on goods and services subject to different VAT rates are available up to 2003. These estimates and changes in VAT rates and principal goods and services covered by different rates are published by HM Revenue and Customs in the VAT Factsheet which can be found at www.uktradeinfo.co.uk

Vehicle Excise Duty

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will widen the vehicle excise duty bands to encourage use of more efficient vehicles. [33662]

John Healey: The Chancellor considers relevant economic, social and environmental factors when deciding taxation policy. Any changes will be announced in the context of the Budget.

WALES

Departmental Entertainment

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what expenditure was incurred by the Wales Office on entertaining in each year since 2002–03. [31921]

Mr. Hain: The expenses incurred by the Wales Office on entertainment for the following years were:

	£
2002–03	6,313
2003–04	4,804
2004–05	4,785

Figures for financial year 2005–06 will be available in April 2006.

Departmental Estate

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what *(a)* land and *(b)* property his Department (i) owns and (ii) rents in each constituency; and if he will make a statement. [33256]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office owns the land and property at Gwydyr House, Whitehall in London—constituency Westminster. The Department also leases office space at Discovery House, Scott Harbour in Cardiff Bay—constituency Cardiff South and Penarth.

Departmental Expenditure

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much his Department and its agencies have spent on *(a)* the design and production of new logos and *(b)* employing external (i) public relations and (ii) graphic design agencies in each year since 2000, broken down by project. [33203]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office was established on 1 July 1999. The only expenditure during the financial year 2000–01 was when the Department spent *(a)* £2,728 on designing of the Wales Office Logo; *(b)* (i) Nil; and *(b)* (ii) £13,566 on developing its website.

Departmental Research

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what research projects commissioned by his Department are being undertaken; and what the publication arrangements are in each case. [32988]

Mr. Hain: None.

Homelessness (Cardiff)

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many individuals in Cardiff were homeless in each year since 1995; and if he will make a statement. [33769]

Mr. Hain: Information is not available in the form requested. The number of unintentionally homeless households in each year was:

	Number
1995	533
1996	318
1997	292
1998	586
1999	350
2000	356
2001	679
2002	925
2003	832
2004	834

Source:
WHO12 returns, Welsh Assembly Government

Extra priority needs categories were added in 2001, resulting in an increase in the figures from that year.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Magazine Distribution

10. **Mr. Hollobone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the recent Office of Fair Trading report on magazine distribution arrangements. [33384]

Mr. Sutcliffe: In response to a request from parties in the industry, the Office of Fair Trading is in the process of providing an opinion on the compatibility with

competition law of distribution agreements for newspapers and magazines. A provisional opinion was published in May 2005. A final opinion is likely to issue in the early part of 2006.

Energy Prices

11. **Ben Chapman:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the effect of energy prices on high energy users. [33385]

Alan Johnson: The high spot prices for gas in the past weeks have meant very tough times for high energy users such as the chemicals industry, paper and steel. Some have responded by curtailing production or switching to alternative fuels.

Prices for small and medium-sized businesses, and domestic consumers, despite increases over the past year, are still some of the most competitive in Europe.

Science Cities Initiative

12. **Jim Cousins:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what funding he proposes to allocate from the science budget for the Government's science cities initiative. [33386]

Barry Gardiner: There are no plans to allocate dedicated funding for science cities from the science budget. However, existing funding streams for science and innovation can potentially support science cities, including the Higher Education Innovation Fund, worth £100 million per annum, supporting universities' collaboration with business; and the Science Research Infrastructure Fund, which provides capital funding of £500 million per annum to renew university infrastructure. These funding streams already require universities to develop their implementation strategies in light of regional priorities. In addition, the Regional Development Agencies, who lead on the development of science cities, have their own science and innovation funding programmes, from which science cities can be supported. The Government will continue to work with the RDAs to consider how local, regional and national policies can best work together to support science cities.

WTO Meeting

13. **Ann McKechin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on negotiations with the USA in preparation for the World Trade Organisation ministerial conference in Hong Kong. [33387]

Ian Pearson: The Government are in regular contact with the United States at all levels, official and ministerial, on a range of trade issues, including prospects for progress at the forthcoming ministerial conference in Hong Kong.

18. **Tony Lloyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the EU negotiating position for the forthcoming World Trade Organisation ministerial conference in Hong Kong. [33392]

Ian Pearson: The European Union will adopt a constructive and active approach to the negotiations at the forthcoming WTO ministerial conference in Hong Kong.

The parameters of the EU's negotiating position are laid out in a succession of council conclusions.

Commission for Equality and Human Rights

16. **Lynne Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the creation of the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights. [33390]

Meg Munn: The Commission for Equality and Human Rights will be established through the Equality Bill, which is currently making good progress through Parliament. Work is under way looking at the practical issues before the Commission opens its doors in October 2007

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the staffing implications of the establishment of the new Commission for Equality and Human Rights. [33388]

Meg Munn: The staffing arrangements of the Commission will be clarified as the organisational structure is developed. This detailed work will start shortly and will be developed in close consultation with key stakeholders, including the existing Commissions and their staff.

Unscrupulous Lenders

Mr. Love: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action he is taking to protect vulnerable people from unscrupulous lenders. [33389]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Glasgow North West earlier today.

SMEs (Insurance)

17. **Mr. Dodds:** To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the impact of the level of insurance premiums on small and medium-sized businesses. [33391]

Barry Gardiner: I have not made a recent assessment. In Northern Ireland, the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment's last assessment of insurance costs for firms there showed a 16.1 per cent. fall in the cost of premiums in 2004.

Cyber-Security

Mark Pritchard: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to provide incentives for the private sector to improve its cyber security. [33376]

Barry Gardiner: None. This is an essential aspect of doing business in the information age and there is no case for offering incentives.

Fireworks

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he *(a)* has taken and *(b)* plans to take to heighten public awareness of (i) the dangers of fireworks and (ii) the effects of fireworks on animals; and if he will make a statement. [33546]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Department produces a number of resources for stakeholders and intermediaries to use in raising awareness of the dangers of fireworks; a safety toolkit for fire brigades, trading standards and safety practitioners, educational resources for teachers and safety leaflets for the general public, for retailers and for the organisers of public displays. The Department has also worked with The Blue Cross (a pet charity) to publish a leaflet giving advice on reducing the effects of fireworks on animals. In the run-up to 5 November, these resources were supported by a PR campaign, which secured coverage in the press, radio and broadcast media. DTI TV fillers were also given airtime by all the main broadcasters. We will review this publicity activity in the light of the fireworks injury statistics in order to plan future fireworks awareness activity.

Illegal Logging

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures are being taken to reduce the importing of illegally logged wood. [32754]

Mr. Morley: I have been asked to reply.

The UK is working to reduce the importation of illegally logged wood through domestic, EU and international action. This action includes, at the domestic level, implementing a progressive timber procurement policy where central Government seeks to procure timber and timber products that are legal and sustainable. This is having an impact on the wider UK timber market.

At the EU level, the UK was delighted that the EU Forestry Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) dossier received political agreement at the EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 24 October 2005, under the UK's presidency of the European Union. This will allow the EU to enter into agreements with developing countries that export timber. These agreements will provide assistance to tackle illegal logging and back this assistance with a licensing scheme where the EU commits to only import timber licensed as being legal from those countries.

At the international level, the UK, with other EU partners, is in discussion with a range of timber producing countries, including the Russian Federation, Ghana and Malaysia about action they could take to tackle illegal logging. The UK is also working with other major timber consuming countries. This included getting G8 countries to commit to a range of actions to tackle illegal logging at the G8 Environment and Development ministerial on 17–18 March 2005, part of the UK's G8 presidency.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he plans to introduce legislation to prevent the importing into the United Kingdom of wood illegally logged elsewhere. [32755]

Mr. Morley: I have been asked to reply.

The European Commission published its Forest Law Enforcement Governance and Trade (FLEGT) Action Plan in May 2003. This describes a package of measures to tackle illegal logging, including proposals that the EU enters into partnership agreements with timber producing countries to establish a licensing system designed to identify products and license them for export to the EU.

The UK is delighted that the proposal for a licensing system received political agreement at the EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 24 October 2005, under the UK's presidency of the European Union. Government believes that as a first step to address illegal logging, it is necessary to build consensus with producing countries and make sure that we do not discriminate against legitimate trade. The EU FLEGT licensing scheme, with its innovative approach of bilateral trade agreements and development assistance for improving forest governance, will achieve this in the first instance.

The FLEGT Action Plan also proposes that the Commission look at other options to tackle illegal logging, including using Government procurement and introducing legislation to prevent the importation of illegally logged timber at a Member State or EU level. Government awaits this European Commission's report, which will allow us to take this work forward, including the options for action at the UK level.

Independent Schools

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the recent Office of Fair Trading report on independent schools. [33374]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Office of Fair Trading is the United Kingdom's independent competition regulator. It has a duty to investigate and address anti-competitive conduct and enforce competition law. It has investigated the exchange of information between independent schools about the fees they charge. Its provisional findings are that 50 schools have breached Chapter One of the Competition Act which prohibits anti-competitive agreements. This is a matter for the Office if Fair Trading. The Government have no substantive role in individual cases.

Ministerial Travel

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been spent in each year from 1 May 1997 on ministerial travel, broken down by *(a)* provision and running costs of vehicular transport, *(b)* first class travel by rail, *(c)* standard class travel by rail, *(d)* first class travel by air, *(e)* club or equivalent class travel by air and *(f)* economy class travel by air. [27796]

Alan Johnson: All ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the 'Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers', copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

My hon. Friend and Parliamentary Secretary at the Cabinet Office has asked Roy Burke, chief executive of the Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA) to write to the hon. Member with details of the costs of ministerial vehicles provided to Departments in 2004–05. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

For information for the financial years 2000–01 to 2003–04 I refer the hon. Member to the letters from the chief executive of the GCDA to the hon. Member for Buckingham (John Bercow) dated 10 January 2005 and to the then hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs dated 13 September 2003. Copies of these letters are available in the Libraries of the House.

A breakdown of costs of domestic ministerial travel by rail, air and car, except for vehicles provided by the GCDA, is available for April 2004 to March 2005 and includes the cost of private office staff travelling with the Minister.

	£
Rail	37,000
Air	12,000
Car	2,000

In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. These report information for the financial years 1995–96 to 2004–05. Information for 2005–06 will be published as soon as it is ready after the end of the current financial year.

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Legislation Implementation

22. **Mr. Fraser:** To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what measures will be taken to ensure small businesses have the necessary information and time to adapt to provisions in the Equality Bill and the equality provisions of the Work and Families Bill. [33396]

Meg Munn: Government will provide high quality guidance and information on relevant provisions in both Bills, including on the introduction of the CEHR, provisions protecting against discrimination on grounds of religion, belief and sexual orientation, and new work and families measures. Small business will be involved in any further consultation, including on additional paternity leave and pay.

Women's Pensions

23. **Dr. Starkey:** To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what recent discussions she has had with the Department for Work and Pensions on women's pensions. [33397]

Meg Munn: I had a constructive meeting with the Department for Work and Pensions and am pleased that fair outcomes for women is one of their principles for reform.

Now that the Pensions Commission have reported, we will build on our previous discussions to tackle pension inequalities.

Women Entrepreneurs

24. **Dr. Blackman-Woods:** To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what steps the Government is taking to encourage women to start their own businesses. [33398]

Meg Munn: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for North West Norfolk some moments ago.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what measures the Government has in place to encourage more women entrepreneurs. [33395]

Meg Munn: Giving more women the option of starting a business provides clear economic and social benefits. The Government are working closely with the Women's Enterprise Panel and all nine Regional Development Agencies to improve business support services to female entrepreneurs. Our strong commitment to and strategy for encouraging women's enterprise is clearly stated in 'Promoting Female Entrepreneurship'.

Pregnancy Discrimination

25. **Mr. Burstow:** To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what steps the Government are taking to tackle pregnancy discrimination in the workplace. [33399]

Meg Munn: Employers who discriminate against women because of their pregnancy or maternity leave are breaking the law and damaging their own businesses. In October this year we amended the Sex Discrimination Act so that it is clear to all that treating women in this way is sex discrimination. measures in the work and families package will offer further practical steps to addressing pregnancy discrimination.

Gender Pay Gap

26. **Ann McKechin:** To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what steps the Government are taking to reduce the gender pay gap in the small and medium-sized business sector. [33400]

Meg Munn: Action to date includes sponsoring the Equal Opportunities Commission to design an equal pay review kit specially for SMEs. We will build on this progress once Women and Work Commission report, and I am pleased that a Commissioner was brought in for her particular expertise on SMEs.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Andrew Cunningham (Statement)

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether Mr. Andrew Cunningham's statement at a recent conference on the drinks industry, the liberalisation of licensing laws and the "nanny state" reflects Government policy. [33463]

James Purnell: Mr Cunningham's statement as reported in the media was part of a presentation given by him on licensing reform on behalf of the Department to a regional conference, hosted by the British Institute of Innkeeping for its members, at Cheltenham Racecourse on 29 October 2002. Mr Cunningham's comments then about the reform of licensing law were

an explanation of current Government policy. His comments about "nanny staters" were not a statement of policy. They were a personal observation made in response to a debate within the industry about, in particular, the merits of transferring the control of alcohol licensing from the licensing justices to local authorities. Mr Cunningham made the observation that if the industry allowed such an issue to divide them or to dilute their support for licensing reform, then opponents of reform could be expected to exploit that division. In referring generally to opponents of reform, Mr. Cunningham had used the expression "nanny staters" in his speaking notes which were subsequently handed to representatives of the trade press attending and he subsequently apologised for this use of injudicious language. Mr Cunningham did not refer to any Members of Parliament or any other individuals during the course of the conference.

Drinking Age

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment the Government have made of the potential impact on crime and disorder of reducing the legal drinking age to 16 years. [32497]

James Purnell: The licensing White Paper, "Time for Reform" set out the reasons for the Government's view that the legal age for purchasing and drinking alcohol should not be lowered. This included the danger of too early an exposure to alcohol in unsupervised circumstances.

Licensing

James Brokenshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what factors will be examined by her Department when assessing the impact of the Licensing Act 2003 on the 10 named scrutiny local authority areas; and when she expects to publish the results. [32386]

James Purnell *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* The Scrutiny Council initiative is one strand of the Government's wider monitoring and evaluation programme to measure the impact of the Licensing Act 2003 against the four licensing objectives:

prevention of crime and disorder;

prevention of public nuisance;

public safety; and

protection of children from harm.

The initiative will be active for about six months and will deliver real time indicators of how the new regime is operating. It will also provide evidence to support the initial review of the statutory Guidance, due by the end of February 2006, and full Guidance review due around autumn 2006.

The following local authorities have been invited to become Scrutiny Councils:

Birmingham City Council

Blackpool Borough Council

Brighton and Hove City Council

Bristol City Council

Cardiff County Council

Havering London Borough Council

Manchester City Council

Newcastle Upon Tyne City Council

Nottingham City Council

Taunton Deane District Council

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what advice the Government have given to *(a)* local authorities and *(b)* the police on planning enforcement for licensed premises opening at times permitted by their licensing consent when their planning consent does not permit them to open. [32482]

James Purnell: Guidance issued to licensing authorities under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003, which was also circulated to every Chief Constable of police, includes advice on the integration of planning and licensing regimes. It emphasises that applications for premises licences should normally be made by businesses with planning consent; should not be a re-run of the planning application; and should not cut across decisions taken by the local authority planning committee or following appeals against decisions taken by that committee. The Guidance also notes that the giving of a temporary event notice does not relieve the premises users from any requirements under planning law for appropriate planning permission where it is required. The enforcement of planning law is a matter for individual local authorities.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport on what dates since July 2003 her Department's Licensing Advisory Group has met; at which of these meetings the establishment of a central database of personal licence holders was discussed; and if she will make a statement. [28393]

James Purnell: The Licensing Advisory Group has met on approximately a monthly basis since July 2003. Issues around the Licensing Act 2003 and its implementation have been fully discussed during these meetings and did include the issue of the establishment of a central database of personal licence holders. However, these meetings are held under the Chatham House rule with no formal agenda or minutes taken of the discussions by the Group so it is not possible to be specific about when this particular issue was discussed.

In 2004 the Group met on 15 January, 18 February, 15 April, 16 June, 13 July, 17 August, 15 September, 26 October, 25 November and 15 December. In 2005 it met on 19 January, 16 February, 15 March, 19 April, 16 May, 22 June, 27 July, 24 August, 28 September and 22 November.

The establishment of a central licensing register is a matter which continues to be considered and discussed between the Government and representatives of the licensing authorities.

National Sports Foundation

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when the Government expects to announce the *(a)* size, *(b)* location, *(c)* names of senior management, *(d)* budget and *(e)* operating procedures for the National Sports Foundation announced in the 2005 budget. [33430]

Mr. Caborn: The Government, along with Sport England and the national governing bodies for football, cricket, tennis, rugby union and rugby league, are continuing to discuss and examine options on how most effectively to deliver the National Sports Foundation. A further announcement will be made shortly.

Physical Education

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what definition she uses of high quality physical education and school sport as required by 2004 public service agreement target number one. [29202]

Mr. Caborn: The document "High Quality PE and Sport for Young People" (DfES/DCMS, March 2004) provides a detailed description of the outcomes of high quality physical education and school sport For the purposes of the joint DCMS/DfES PE and school sport public service agreement target, high quality PE and school sport produces young people with the skills, understanding, desire and commitment to continue to improve and achieve in a range of PE, sport and health-enhancing physical activities, in line with their abilities.

A further document, "Do you have high quality PE and sport in your school?" (DfES/DCMS, January 2005), helps teachers to use the pupil outcomes of high quality to carry out self-evaluation of the quality of PE and sport they provide. Copies of these documents have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether she uses *(a)* averages over several years and *(b)* a straight comparison between two specific years for the purposes of measuring performance against 2004 public service agreement target 4. [30290]

James Purnell: The public service agreement target 4 performance measurement will focus on the change from one year to the next. In addition a cumulative average is used for evaluation purposes. In each case, the comparison is with the performance of the service sector as a whole.

Regional Casinos

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the impact of regional casinos on problem gambling. [33607]

Mr. Caborn: The Government have taken a cautious approach to the development of new casinos, so that their impact in terms of problem gambling can be properly assessed. That is why the Gambling Act 2005 allows for the establishment of only one regional casino, eight large and eight small casinos. We will ask the Gambling Commission to advise on whether the introduction of these new types of casino has led to an increase in problem gambling no earlier than three years after the award of the first casino premises licence.

Television Licences

Anne Moffat: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many households in East Lothian are exempt from requiring a television licence under the exemption scheme for people over the age of 75 years. [34005]

James Purnell: People aged 75 or over are not exempt from the television licensing requirements but are entitled to a free licence. TV Licensing, who administer the concession as agents for the BBC, are not able to provide geographical breakdowns of the number of free licences issued. However, the number of households with at least one person aged 75 or over claiming the winter fuel payment in the East Lothian constituency in 2004–05 was 4,745, according to Department for Work and Pensions records.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the rules of engagement of the latest NATO deployment into Southern Afghanistan. [32475]

Mr. Ingram: It has been the practice of successive Governments not to comment in detail on the Rules of Engagement under which our armed forces operate.

Army Vehicle Repairs

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Army Base Repair Organisation Bovington site contract servicing of individual sections of a vehicle will be carried out off-site by other contractors. [33582]

Mr. Ingram: Wherever appropriate and cost effective, ABRO Bovington will undertake servicing of all major sections of vehicles. There may however, be times where it is necessary to carry out work through off-site contractors, particularly if capability or capacity is being created or upgraded to deliver new tasks.

Some specialist tasks, notably on sub-assemblies will continue to be carried out using specialist off-site contractors.

Astute-class Submarines

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) when he expects to confirm the total number of Astute-class submarines to be built; [32171]

(2) when he will decide the final total of *(a)* Type 45 destroyers and *(b)* Astute-class submarines to be constructed. [33053]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 30 November 2005]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 20 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1760W.

Orders for the procurement of future Astute boats are being considered and announcements will be made at the appropriate time.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the additional capabilities originally intended for the second tranche of Astute-class submarines which have been brought forward into the first tranche; and what the reasons were for this change. [33049]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 30 November 2005]:* We are currently considering a number of possible technology enhancements for later Astute-class submarines, which it may be possible to fit into the earlier Astute-class submarines, but no decisions on this have been taken.

Departmental Assets

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the 10 most valuable *(a)* movable and *(b)* immovable assets owned by his Department. [27380]

Mr. Ingram: The 10 most valuable movable and immovable tangible fixed assets owned by the Department, based on the current net book values (NBV) recorded in our asset registers, are as follows:

£ million

Movable assets	*NBV*
HMS Albion	196.5
HMS Bulwark	210.4
HMS Talent	179.4
HMS Torbay	180.3
HMS Trenchant	207.0
HMS Triumph	209.3
HMS Vanguard	433.9
HMS Vengeance	581.5
HMS Victorious	473.1
HMS Vigilant	525.0

£ million

Immovable assets	*NBV*
Chelsea Barracks, London (Land)	[1]—
Hyde Park Barracks, London (Land)	70.0
Joint Services Command and Staff College, Watchfield	73.7
MOD Main Building (Land)	62.5
MOD Main Building, London	229.4
RAF Northholt (Land)	193.0
RAF Uxbridge Camp (Land)	195.5
Salisbury Training Area	93.0
Sandhurst Station and Barossa Common Playing Field (Land)	60.0
Wellington Barracks, London (Land)	65.0

[1] Figure withheld for reasons of commercial sensitivity as site is about to be marketed.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library copies of his Department's monthly financial submissions to the Treasury's general expenditure monitoring system for *(a)* financial years (i) 2002–03, (ii) 2003–04 and (iii) 2004–05 and *(b)* the first six months of 2005–06. [24609]

Mr. Ingram: Copies of the General Expenditure Monitoring Systems (GEMS) returns for 2002–03 and 2003–04 are available in the Library of the House. I will place a copy of the GEMS return for 2004–05 and the first six months of 2005–06 in the Library. The data on this return is broken down by requests for resources and includes resources within departmental expenditure limits, within annually managed expenditure and outside departmental expenditure limits.

Departmental Finance

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library copies of the monthly forecasts of payment and receipts provided by his Department to the Treasury under its cash management scheme for *(a)* financial years 2002–03 to 2004–05 and *(b)* the first six months of 2005–06. [32706]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 28 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 963W to the hon. Member for Mid-Norfolk (Mr. Simpson). Copies of the forecasts for February 2005 to October 2005 will be placed in the Library of the House shortly.

Departmental Staff

Helen Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* existing and *(b)* former Ministry of Defence (i) Ministers and (ii) officials have taken up offers of employment with companies involved in the arms trade in the last (A) 10, (B) five and (C) two years. [32355]

Mr. Ingram: Defence Ministers, members of the armed forces and the Ministry of Defence officials, like other Crown servants, are required to comply with rules on the acceptance of outside business appointments if they wish to take up other employment—whether in the defence industry or elsewhere—within two years of their retirement or resignation. It is not possible to determine whether those personnel that have joined companies in the defence industry have taken up specific employment in the arms trade.

Information on the number of former Defence Ministers and senior MOD personnel who have taken up appointments with outside companies after leaving office is contained in Annual Reports that have been produced since 1996 by The Prime Minister's Advisory Committee on Business Appointments. Copies of these reports are available in the Library of the House.

Dundalk Bombing

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information has been requested from him by the Irish authorities in relation to the Dundalk bombing of 1975. [32264]

Mr. Ingram: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence has received no direct request. The Northern Ireland Secretary was asked by the Irish authorities to provide relevant material held by HMG on the Dundalk bombing of 1975 and, in fulfilling this request, he consulted my right hon. Friend.

European Rapid Reaction Force

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what role he expects British forces to play in delivering combat logistics for the European rapid reaction force. [32709]

John Reid: There is no European rapid reaction force. Member states make national forces available for particular EU-led operations voluntarily and on a case-by-case basis.

The EU Battlegroups initiative is delivering national and multinational units for very rapid reaction operations. Each Battlegroup is self-sufficient in support elements, including in combat logistics.

Fixed-wing Aircraft

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) which fixed-wing aircraft types will be available for service at sea in *(a)* 2012, *(b)* 2013 and *(c)* 2014 on present plans; [32613]

(2) if he will list the aircraft carriers which will be available to the fleet in *(a)* 2012, *(b)* 2013, *(c)* 2014, *(d)* 2015 and *(e)* 2016 on present plans. [32612]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 30 November 2005]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1088W.

Gibraltar

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on industrial relations with the Gibraltar Services Police. [32697]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* Industrial relations with the Gibraltar Services Police are underpinned by a constructive and co-operative relationship between the Gibraltar Service Police Staff Association (GSPSA) and the Gibraltar Command. Work and dialogue continue with a view to strengthening the relationship. However, there are some difficulties arising from an on-going legal action brought against the command by the GSPSA concerning a disputed backdated pay claim; the case is currently subject to action in the United Kingdom.

Iraq

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) pursuant to the answer of 11 November, *Official Report*, columns 854–56W, on Iraq, whether British officials have issued an apology to the Iraqi authorities with regard to any aspect of the events of 19 and 20 September in Basra; [29629]

(2) pursuant to the answer of 11 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 854–56W, on Iraq, what information he has received concerning the two alleged deaths in custody at the Jameat prison in Basra, with particular reference to *(a)* the identities, *(b)* circumstances involved and *(c)* dates of death of the victims; [29630]

(3) pursuant to the answer of 11 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 854–56W, on Iraq, what the response has been from the Iraqi authorities to UK representations regarding alleged human rights abuses at the Jameat Prison. [29631]

Mr. Ingram: No apologies have been given to the Iraqi authorities by officials in the Department with regard to any aspect of the events of 19 September. Some progress has been made in reforming elements of the Basra police which are implicated in alleged human rights abuses. Discussions are continuing. I am aware of two reported deaths of individuals in Iraqi custody in Basra. One occurred in April this year and the other in September. These are being pursued with the Iraqi authorities but it will be for them to decide which details are appropriate for public release when they have completed their investigations.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total cost has been to date of compensation paid by his Department to Iraqi citizens since 2003. [33817]

Mr. Ingram: The total cost of compensation paid to date by the Ministry of Defence to Iraqi citizens since 2003 is £975,351, in respect of some 626 claims. The majority of these relate to property damage.

Joint Combat Aircraft

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reasons the joint combat aircraft was initially intended to be capable of operating from Invincible-class aircraft carriers; and why this requirement has now been dropped. [33050]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 30 November 2005]:* The joint combat aircraft (JCA) was originally conceived in 1996 (as the future carrier borne aircraft) with a view to replacing the Harriers on the Invincible-class carriers. Following the strategic defence review in 1998, when the decision was made to build two large replacement carriers, it was decided to design and develop the JCA to operate from the new platforms.

Kenya

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent discussions he has had with his Kenyan counterpart on the renewal of the agreement with Kenya and the UK allowing British soldiers access to local training fields in Nanyuki and Isiolo; and if he will make a statement. [31029]

Mr. Ingram: Since my last discussion with the hon. Mirugi Kariuki MP, Assistant Minister for Provincial Administration and Internal Security, in February, detailed negotiations about adjusting the restrictions currently placed on where the British Army can conduct its training have been led by the British high commissioner in Nairobi. In the meantime, the Memorandum of Understanding between the Governments of Kenya and the United Kingdom which expired in December 2004 has been extended.

Mutual Defence Agreement

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what definition he uses of the special nuclear materials referred to in the 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement. [32680]

John Reid: The definition of special nuclear material referred to in the 1958 Mutual Defence Agreement is that recognised by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and is as detailed in article 1 of the IAEA's 1959 co-operation agreement with the United States of America.

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he will publish a Public Service Agreement delivery plan for 2004 Public Service Agreement target number 2. [29939]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1589W, by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary (Mr. Straw).

Royal Navy (Shore Establishments)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list each of the Royal Navy's operational shore establishments in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* England, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Northern Ireland including training establishments and dockyards; how many (i) civilian employees and (ii) service personnel worked at each in (A) 1997, (B) 1990, (C) 1985 and (D) the last year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [32502]

Mr. Ingram: The Royal Navy Estate comprises of the following operational shore establishments, training establishments and dockyards:

	Location	*Type of establishment*
Scotland		
Forward Operating Base Prestwick	Prestwick	Operational
RM Condor	Arbroath	Operational
HMNB Clyde	Failane	Operational
HMS Caledonia	Rosyth	Operational
England		
RM Norton Manor Camp	Taunton	Operational
RM Royal Citadel	Plymouth	Operational
RM Turnchapel	Plymouth	Operational
RM Bickleigh Barracks	Plymouth	Operational
RM Chivenor	Barnstaple	Operational
RM Stonehouse	Plymouth	Operational
RM Poole	Poole	Operational
HMNB Portsmouth	Portsmouth	Operational
HMNB Devonport	Plymouth	Operational
RNAS Culdrose	Helston	Operational
RNAS Yeovilton	Yeovilton	Operational
Britannia Royal Naval College	Dartmouth	Training
HMS Collingwood	Fareham	Training
HMS Sultan	Gosport	Training
HMS Raleigh	Torpoint	Training
CTCRM Lympstone	Lympstone	Training
HMS Excellent	Portsmouth	Training
Hazebrouck Barracks	Arborfield	Training
Prince Philip Barracks	Bordon	Training
Institute of Naval Medicine	Gosport	Miscellaneous
Wales	Nil	
Northern Ireland	Nil	

This list does not include Royal Naval Reserve and Royal Marine Reserve establishments or training areas.

Information on civilian and naval personnel at individual Royal Navy and Royal Marine facilities is not held centrally, as different organisations and agencies may also have responsibility at the same location. This information could, therefore, be provided only at disproportionate costs. DASA publish a regular report detailing UK regular forces distribution across the UK. A copy of the current report (TSP10) is available in the Library of the House.

Submarines

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on progress with introducing the communications electronic support measures system aboard Trafalgar-class nuclear-attack submarines. [32682]

John Reid: Two Trafalgar class submarines have been fitted with Eddystone, the Royal Navy's latest communications electronic support measures system. A further two are currently being fitted.

Unarmoured Road Vehicles

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his Department's policy is on the use of un-armoured road vehicles in the transportation of HM Forces personnel in *(a)* Iraq, *(b)* Northern Ireland and *(c)* Afghanistan; and if the policy changed in each case. [32470]

Mr. Ingram: Both armoured and non-armoured vehicles are available for use in Iraq, Northern Ireland and Afghanistan. The choice of vehicle for a particular task on an operation will depend on the Commander's assessment of the current threat level and nature of the task. This policy has not changed since 2000.

Warships

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the running costs for each of the classes of vessel in service with the Royal Navy were in the last year for which figures are available; what the costs were in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [32501]

Mr. Ingram: We do not manage costs on the basis of individual types of ships and the information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Business Rates Revaluation (Gravesham)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the impact of business rates revaluation on businesses in Gravesham; and if he will make a statement. [33635]

Mr. Woolas: The assessment of the impact of revaluation on businesses in England was integral to the setting of the non-domestic rating multiplier for 2005–06 and the transitional arrangements. This assessment was done at a higher level than that of individual businesses.

Correspondence

Clare Short: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, dated 30 September, on behalf of Trevor Errington, Leader of the chief engineers and planning officers group support team. [33101]

Mr. David Miliband: I replied to my right hon. Friend on 27 November 2005.

Council Elections

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister from which *(a)* organisations and *(b)* individuals he has received representations (i) opposing and (ii) supporting a move to whole council elections for local authorities as outlined in the consultation document vibrant local leadership. [27365]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has received nine representations in support of a move to whole council elections—one county council, six parish councils and one member of the public plus the elected mayor of Bedford borough council. Of the other respondents to the vibrant local leadership document who mentioned a change in election cycles, two parish councils were ambivalent, as was one borough council and one borough council opposed the move.

Pursuant to my answer of 30 November 2005, seven local authorities are in the process of or have formally requested a change to whole council elections and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is now aware of two more local authorities that are considering changing their cycle: Waveney and Wokingham.

Firefighters (Life Insurance)

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent representations he has received regarding the availability of life insurance for firefighters; and whether all firefighters are covered by insurance in all of their duties. [32870]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has received a number of letters from Members of this House on personal insurance for firefighters in addition to the nine previous questions tabled in this and earlier parliamentary sessions. In addition, the Office of the deputy Prime Minister has received correspondence from Fire and Rescue Authorities and the Fire Brigades Union.

Government do not provide insurance cover for firefighters. Any personal insurance is a matter of personal choice and should be seen in the context of the compensation scheme for firefighters. Firefighter pay, pension and injury arrangements reflect the nature of the job and the risks that may be incurred.

Housing

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the evidence from his officials to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister: Housing, Planning, Local Government and the Regions Committee on 17 October, if he will place in the Library the performance data for the last five years which his Department has collected in relation to monitoring local authorities' delivery of empty homes strategies; and if he will make a statement. [27463]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 15 November 2005]:* The information requested has been made available in the Library of the House.

The information relates to best value performance indicator 64 which measures the number of private sector dwellings that are returned to occupation or demolished each year as a direct result of action by the local authority. The information made available in the Library of the House relates to local authority returns for best value performance indicator 64 for 2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04.

The data provided in column 1 of the table (2001–02) is a percentage of private sector dwellings vacant for more than six months where the local authority has intervened leading to reoccupation or demolition.

The data reflected in the remaining two columns (2002–03 and 2003–04) is the number of private sector vacant dwellings returned to occupation, or demolished in those years following intervention from local authorities.

The difference in the way the data for this performance indicator is presented, reflects a change in the best value performance indicator (BVPI) itself and the how it is defined.

Data for best value performance indicator 64 is not available before 2001–02 and none of the other performance indicators, relating to housing before 2001–02, are comparable with best value performance indicator 64.

Local Government Finance

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether his Department has made a written submission to the Lyons Inquiry on local government finance. [31786]

Mr. Woolas: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2431W.

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much additional funding will be allocated in 2005–06 to each council to cover costs of *(a)* licensing, *(b)* asylum-seekers, *(c)* pensions and *(d)* disposal of electrical equipment; and what formula is used to calculate these figures. [32067]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Government are working with the Local Government Association to consider the extent to which the areas referred to in the question create pressures on local authorities, and the steps which can be taken to address those pressures. The Government are committed to ensuring that local authorities can continue to deliver effective services without imposing excessive increases in council tax.

Primary Care Trusts

David Howarth: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance his Department has given to local authorities on the action to be taken when a primary care trust fails to pay *(a)* sums it owes to a social services authority under an agreement under section 31 of the Health Act 1999 and *(b)* its business rates; and if he will make a statement. [33467]

Mr. Woolas: The information is as follows:

(a) None.

(b) None

Supporting People Programme

Mr. Bone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the funding level for the supporting people programme in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wellingborough local authority and *(c)* East Northamptonshire local authority was in each of the last three years; and what funding is planned for 2005–06 in each case. [33602]

Mr. Woolas: The supporting people programme funding is only allocated to top tier authorities. The following table which indicates the level of funding for the supporting people programme in England and Northamptonshire, covers Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire, since 2002–03. This also includes funding for 2005–06.

Supporting people grant

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*	*Total*
England					
SP Admin	40,226,752	48,021,253	48,064,043	40,000,000	176,312,048
SP Programme	—	1,816,704,562	1,807,011,255	1,714,906,962	5,338,622,779
Yearly total	40,226,752	1,864,725,815	1,855,075,298	1,754,906,962	5,514,934,827
Northamptonshire					
SP Admin	416,114	509,544	494,227	425,178	1,845,063
SP Programme	—	15,057,832	15,421,106	14,578,905	45,057,843
Yearly total	416,114	15,567,376	15,915,333	15,004,083	46,902,906

Wirral, South (Funding)

Ben Chapman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what funding streams are available to tackle areas of deprivation in Wirral South. [32723]

Mr. Woolas: European Objective One funding is available for the whole of the Merseyside region. Within this there is an allocation of resources aimed at tackling issues of deprivation in specific areas due to their classification as among the most deprived parts of Merseyside. Three of these areas fall within Wirral South. Single Regeneration Funding is available to support Wirral South businesses. The Local Authority and its partners also target mainstream funding to support areas of deprivation in Wirral South.

Ben Chapman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what programmes the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund has funded in Wirral South. [32724]

Mr. Woolas: The purpose of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund is to provide support to local authorities in England's most deprived districts, to enable them, in collaboration with their Local Strategic Partnerships, to improve services in their most deprived areas. The neighbourhood renewal programme agreed by the Wirral Council Strategic Partnership provides support to the most deprived wards of the area, all of which are among the 3 per cent. most deprived wards in England. Wirral, South constituency therefore does not directly receive any Neighbourhood Renewal Fund support.

CABINET OFFICE

Departmental Estate

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what *(a)* land and *(b)* property his Department (i) owns and (ii) rents in each constituency; and if he will make a statement. [33253]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Information on the land and property which the Cabinet Office owns and rents is shown in the following table.

Constituency/land and property	*Freehold/lease*
Cities of London and Westminster	
10–12 Downing Street London SW1 A 2AA	Freehold
70 Whitehall London SW1 A 2AS	Freehold
36 Whitehall London SW1 A 2AY	Freehold
Admiralty House London SW1 A 2DY	Freehold
22/26 Whitehall London SW1 A 2EG	Freehold
Admiralty Arch London 2WH	Freehold
Civil Service Club London SW1 A 2HJ	Freehold
53 Parliament Street London SW1 A 2NG	Freehold
1 Horse Guards Road London SW1 A 2HQ	[1]Lease
9 Whitehall London SW1 A 2DD	Lease
11 Belgrave Road London SW1V1RB	[1]Lease
2 Little Smith Street London SW1P3DH	Lease
35 Great Smith Street London SW1P3BQ	Lease
Stockley House London SW1V1LQ	Lease
7 St James Square London SW1Y4JH	Lease
67 Tufton Street London SW1P3QS	Lease
10 Great George Street London SW1P3AE	Lease
Vale of York	
The Hawkhills Easingwold York YO61 3EG	Freehold
North West Hampshire	
Hannington Aerial Mast Kingsclere Hampshire	Freehold
Basingstoke	
Grosvenor House Basingview Basingstoke RG21 4HG	[1]Lease
Norwich South	
St Clements House 2–16 Colgate Norwich NR31BQ	Lease
Warrington North	
Birchwood Park Warrington WA5 6AE	[1]Lease
Windsor	
Sunningdale Park Larch Avenue Ascot SL5 OQE	[2]PPP/PFI

[1] The Cabinet Office occupies some space in these buildings which are the primary responsibility of other Government Departments.
[2] The Sunningdale Park site is subject to a Public Private Partnership/Private Finance Initiative contract and the Cabinet Office purchases fully serviced office space there but there is no rental charge.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Direct Budgetary Support

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much EU aid money has been granted for direct budgetary support in each year since 1999, broken down by country recipient. [32444]

Hilary Benn: The European Commission has provided the following details of aid money committed since 1999 to budgetary support including general budget support, assistance directed at specific sectors, and budgetary assistance to mitigate the impact of export earnings shortfalls.

EC general budget support plus sector budget support by recipient country

€ million

	1999	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
ACP	276.93	552.61	386.96	565.55	845.14	551.90
Benin	—	18.80	—	—	80.00	—
Burkina Faso	39.20	23.50	—	125.00	—	—
Burundi	—	—	—	22.60	—	43.60
Cameroon	—	19.51	—	—	—	—
Cape Verde	—	15.00	12.10	—	—	5.80
CAR	6.50	22.00	—	4.40	—	—
Chad	9.20	27.10	10.00	—	50.00	—
Cote d'Ivoire	—	—	12.77	40.00	—	—
Djibouti	—	10.00	—	—	—	—
DRC	—	—	—	5.50	106.00	—
Ethiopia	—	—	25.65	44.05	—	95.00
Gabon	—	—	4.90	—	—	—
Gambia	—	9.20	4.26	—	—	—
Guinea	—	—	11.04	—	—	—
Guinea-Bissau	—	17.20	—	—	—	—
Ghana	10.57	—	76.22	—	5.00	62.00
Guyana	5.40	0.80	—	—	—	23.30
Jamaica	9.00	—	21.70	30.00	—	25.00
Kenya	—	35.00	—	—	—	125.00
Lesotho	—	—	18.50	—	—	—
Madagascar	—	6.80	—	70.00	—	35.00
Malawi	52.09	—	—	—	—	—
Mali	37.00	—	31.76	—	132.92	—
Mauritania	—	—	18.29	—	—	—
Mauritius	—	—	—	—	29.80	—
Mozambique	—	79.20	—	168.00	16.40	—
Namibia	—	—	—	—	21.00	—
New Caledonia	—	—	—	—	—	21.50
Niger	—	37.94	3.16	20.00	90.00	—
PNG	—	10.40	—	—	—	—
Rwanda	24.57	60.82	—	—	55.10	—
Sierra Leone	—	34.75	—	—	—	—
Sao Tome	—	2.80	—	—	—	—
Senegal	39.10	—	—	—	—	53.00
South Africa	—	47.08	58.90	35.00	27.92	61.00
Tanzania	—	—	76.13	—	114.00	—
Uganda	44.30	74.71	—	—	—	—
Vanuatu	—	—	1.60	—	—	1.70
Zambia	—	—	—	—	117.00	—
Asia	—	0.00	0.00	70.00	0.00	20.00
Bangladesh	—	—	—	—	—	—
Cambodia	—	—	—	20.00	—	—
Pakistan	—	—	—	50.00	—	—
Vietnam	—	—	—	—	—	20.00
Latin America	—	0.00	0.00	0.00	28.16	90.00
Bolivia	—	—	—	—	—	22.50
Honduras	—	—	—	—	—	34.00
Nicaragua	—	—	—	—	28.16	33.50
MEDA	—	142.00	200.00	178.00	299.00	254.00
Egypt	—	—	—	—	40.00	80.00
Jordan	—	—	—	60.00	35.00	30.00
Morocco	—	102.00	120.00	—	96.00	79.00
Palestine	—	—	—	98.00	80.00	65.00
Tunisia	—	40.00	80.00	20.00	48.00	—
Food security	—	51.25	80.02	102.00	20.50	43.40
Armenia	—	10.00	10.00	20.30	—	—
Azerbaijan	—	—	—	20.30	—	—
Bolivia	—	—	—	—	—	10.00
Eritrea	—	—	15.02	—	—	—
Ethiopia	—	—	—	25.00	—	—

EC general budget support plus sector budget support by recipient country

€ million

	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Georgia	—	—	25.00	—	—	—
Honduras	—	—	8.00	—	—	8.00
Kyrgyzstan	—	10.00	10.00	20.00	—	—
Madagascar	—	—	—	—	3.00	5.40
Moldova	—	5.50	—	10.40	—	10.00
Montenegro	—	11.00	—	—	—	—
Mozambique	—	—	—	—	6.50	3.50
Nicaragua	—	—	—	—	3.00	6.50
Niger	—	4.75	—	6.00	—	—
Peru	—	10.00	—	—	—	—
Tajikistan	—	—	—	—	8.00	—
Yemen	—	—	12.00	—	—	—
Total GBS plus SBS	[1]—	745.86	666.98	914.55	1,192.80	959.30

[1] Not available

Source:

Data provided by the European Commission.

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much money the UK has granted to multi-lateral institutions for direct budgetary support in each year since 1999. [32850]

Hilary Benn: The UK does not earmark its contributions to multilateral institutions for the purpose of direct budgetary support. However, our general contributions to the European Commission, the World Bank and regional development banks are used, among other things, to finance policy based lending where resources are transferred directly to the developing country's budget. This quick-disbursing assistance is used to support policy reforms and institutional changes, either at the macro-level or in a sector or sub-sector. It helps countries implement their poverty reduction strategies and promote economic growth.

HIV/AIDS

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the Government has taken during its G8 and EU presidencies to tackle HIV and AIDS in developing countries. [32985]

Mr. Thomas: As president of the G8 and the EU, the UK is showing leadership in the global fight against AIDS through a strong commitment to prevention and treatment.

Gleneagles secured an important agreement

"to develop and implement a package for HIV prevention, treatment and care, with the aim of as close as possible to universal access to treatment for all those who need it by 2010"

The universal access commitment was also agreed at the Millennium Summit in September. The UK convened a follow-up meeting, bringing together officials from the G8, developing countries, civil society, together with the Joint United Nations Programme for AIDS (UNAIDS), the World Health Organisation (WHO), the World Bank and UNICEF to start mapping out how to deliver against the commitment.

The UNAIDS have now set up a Global Steering Committee (GSC), co-chaired by the UK and UNAIDS. The GSC will meet for the first time in Washington DC on 9–10 January 2006 and is expected to report to the High level UN General Assembly Special Session in mid 2006.

The UK also hosted the third and final Replenishment Conference for the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria on 5 and 6 September. The UN Secretary General, Kofi Annan, chaired the Conference. My right hon. Friend, Hilary Benn was able to confirm the UK's earlier announcement of a doubling of our support for the Global Fund in 2006 and 2007 to £100 million in each of these two years. The UK's pledge amounted to 10 per cent. of the US$3.7 billion pledged to the Global Fund for the two-year period by international donors, far exceeding our 'fair share'. The amount pledged by 29 donors represents more than half of the Global Fund's total resource needs for the two-year period.

The conference included a session on the global architecture within which the Global Fund operates. These discussions built on the 'Three Ones' principles and the UK co-hosted 'Making the Money Work' meeting, which had established a Global Task Team (GTT) to improve AIDS co-ordination among multilateral and international donors. As a result of the GTT, the UK expects fundamental improvements in how the UN and international donors such as the Global Fund work together to support countries develop and lead effective responses to AIDS. To support this work, the UK doubled our contributions to the UNAIDS for the next two years.

EU Ministers, meeting in London on 30 November under the UK presidency, also confirmed their commitment to increased prevention by issuing a statement on a vision for an AIDS free generation, the first pan-European pledge of its kind. The statement backs efforts to give people around the world better access to condoms and effective information. It advocates a comprehensive and evidenced based approach to HIV prevention including sexual and reproductive health information and services, harm reduction programmes for injecting drug users and reliable access to sexual and reproductive health commodities.

Iraq

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many consultants his Department employs in Iraq; and how much each was paid in the last year for which figures are available. [32662]

Hilary Benn: DFID primarily employs consultants through contracts with consultancy companies. The following table therefore lists the number of consultants DFID currently employs in Iraq under each consultancy programme, and how much DFID has paid each for consultancy programme over the last 12 months, where this number exceeds £100,000. The amount paid includes not only consultants' fees, but also travel costs and expenses, and project management support from the UK and from locally-engaged staff.

Programme	*Consultancy company and number of consultants*	*Amount paid over the last 12 months (£)*
Political Participation Fund	British Council—2 full-time international consultants	1,084,588
Emergency Public Administration	Adam Smith International Ltd.—5 full-time international consultants	4,171,325
Economic Reform (phase one)	Maxwell Stamp plc—6 full-time international consultants	3,208,096
Support to the Centre of Government	Adam Smith International Ltd.—4 full-time international consultants	[1]—
Economic Reform (phase two)	Adam Smith International Ltd.—3 full-time international consultants	[1]—
Southern Iraq Employment and Services Programme	Crown Agents—2 full-time international consultants	309,613
Governorates Capacity Building Programme	Enterplan Ltd.—6 full-time international consultants	2,134,163
Technical Advisory Team	Crown Agents—4 full-time international consultants	848,199
Iraq Infrastructure and Services Programme	Enterplan Ltd. ,PA Consulting Group, Crown Agents—10 full-time international consultants	1,276,929

[1] Project started August 2005. No invoices yet cleared

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which reconstruction projects have been *(a)* approved and *(b)* completed since the end of the Iraq war; and what the cost of each project was. [32663]

Hilary Benn: Since the end of the conflict, DFID has approved the following reconstruction programmes in Iraq:

Programme	*Approved commitment or actual spend if completed (£)*	*Ongoing/completed*
Governorate Teams South	[1]3,623,271	Completed
Media project in south	6,734,860	Ongoing
Emergency Infrastructure Programme	[1]19,650, 566	Completed
Technical Advisory Team	7,400,000	Ongoing
Southern Iraq Employment and Services Programme	[1]17,634,811	Completed
Governorates Capacity Building Programme	20,500,000	Ongoing
Iraq Infrastructure and Services Programme	40,000,000	Ongoing
Media Training Programme	1,156,096	Completed
Emergency Public Administration Programme	[1]4,427,288	Completed
Training in the Justice Sector	2,286,422	Ongoing
Political Participation Fund	6,250,000	Ongoing
Civil Society Fund	5,000,000	Ongoing
Support for Macroeconomic Reform	[1]3,622,051	Completed
Support to Iraqi Electoral Commission for Iraq	[1]170, 394	Completed
Support to Iraqi Ministry of Planning and Development Cooperation	1,116,000	Ongoing
Support to Centre of Government	13,260,000	Ongoing
Supporting Economic Reform Phase Two	13,000,000	Ongoing

[1] Spent

More information on DFID programmes in Iraq can be found at:

www.dfid.gov.uk/countries/asia/iraq.asp

In addition, the Global Conflict Prevention Pool (GCPP), funded jointly by DFID, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, and the Ministry of Defence, has approved £43.6 million for reconstruction projects since the end of the conflict. I shall arrange for the document entitled 'Iraq Global Conflict Prevention Pool Projects, 2003–05' to be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Montserrat

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the development of the private sector on the island of Montserrat; and if he will list private foreign investments initiated in the last three years. [33674]

Mr. Thomas: We share the view of the Government of Montserrat (GoM) that development of the private sector is vital to Montserrat's economic recovery. A Private Sector Development Strategy has been agreed by the GoM; and design of a new Private Sector Development Project is nearly complete. This three year

DFID-funded project will create an appropriate environment for development of the sector through the provision of business support services, including access to finance and the promotion of inward investment. It will complement ongoing DFID support for tourism development.

The GoM also intends to set up a Montserrat Development Corporation, for which initial funding will be provided by DFID. The key roles of the corporation will be the promotion and co-ordination of private sector development activities and delivery of a project to establish a new capital town at Little Bay. We expect the corporation to be operational next year.

There has already been interest in investing, and in some cases re-investing, in Montserrat. Proposals under consideration include a water bottling factory, an ash slates factory, a geothermal energy project and establishment of a medical college.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to encourage holiday companies to introduce package holidays to Montserrat. [33678]

Mr. Thomas: A National Tourism Strategy and Plan was approved by the Government of Montserrat in May 2003. DFID is providing £1.6 million for three year Tourism Development Project, based on the strategy. This will develop and market Montserrat tourism products, and re-introduce Montserrat to the regional and international tourism markets. Although Montserrat is not suited to mass tourism, a combination of the resumption of fixed wing air services last July and marketing activities supported by the tourism project could help to encourage specialist holiday companies to offer package holidays to the island.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to encourage the tourist industry of scuba diving on the island of Montserrat. [33679]

Mr. Thomas: The development of tourism is seen by the Government of Montserrat and DFID as a key element in Montserrat's economic recovery. DFID is providing £1.6 million for a Tourism Development Project to re-develop and market Montserrat's tourism products. Among other things, the project will assist the private sector in establishing a market for diving through effective marketing and promotions. In addition, it will enhance the image of Montserrat as a destination for diving, while conserving the reef and marine environment through the establishment of diving sites and moorings.

Mosquito Nets (Africa)

Mr. Borrow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what aid his Department is providing to assist in the purchase of mosquito nets in Africa; and if he will list the aid provided to each country for this purpose. [26142]

Hilary Benn: DFID provides considerable amounts of aid to Africa as non-earmarked Poverty Reduction Budgetary Support (PRBS) or sector support. Consequently, it is not possible to provide a precise figure for the amount of aid DFID has provided towards specific programme components such as mosquito nets.

In addition, DFID supports a number of specific programmes which distribute insecticide treated mosquito nets as part of countries' comprehensive malaria control plans. In Tanzania, for example, DFID provided £8.4 million between 2003 and 2004 and has committed a further £10.3 million up until 2007 for delivery of insecticide treated nets.

DFID also channels funds through multilateral bodies such as the Global Fund to fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (GFATM) and UNICEF. In July 2005, DFID announced a doubling of its contribution to GFATM to £200 million for 2006–07, bringing our total pledge to the GFATM to £359 million through to 2008. DFID's contribution to the Global Fund is not earmarked, but so far around one third of GFATM funds have been spent on malaria interventions including mosquito nets.

Uganda

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the humanitarian situation in northern Uganda; and if he will make a statement. [33187]

Hilary Benn: The humanitarian situation in northern Uganda is extremely serious. 1.4 million people are living in camps for internally displaced people as a result of the conflict involving the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). Those displaced are dependent on food aid and other humanitarian assistance. Mortality rates in the camps are high. 63 per cent. of the population in the North live below the poverty line, compared to 38 per cent. in Uganda as a whole. Although the conflict is characterised by low levels of engagement, there is a constant threat of child abduction and people live in fear of their lives.

In our discussions with the Government of Uganda, the UK emphasises the importance of adequate protection for civilians in the North and meeting humanitarian needs. We are providing substantial assistance to help address the humanitarian situation. In 2004–05 we made available £11 million to improve access to food and essential social services. So far in 2005–06, we have already committed £3 million to the World Food Programme (WFP) and are currently conducting a further assessment of need with the intention of providing additional resources to WFP and other humanitarian agencies in the next few months. As a result of recent LRA attacks, many humanitarian agencies have been forced to curtail their movement outside major towns. The WFP, however, continues to deliver essential emergency food aid as normal under heavy military escort.

United States Hurricane

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the cost was of the ration packs delivered as hurricane disaster relief and impounded by US authorities; what the cost was of their delivery; what steps are being taken to retrieve them; from which Government reserves they came; what

discussions he has had with logistical staff from the Ministry of Defence on the impact of the despatch on army supplies; and if he will make a statement. [33741]

Hilary Benn: The ration packs were supplied by the Ministry of Defence and DFID had no direct involvement in the arrangements. The provision of these supplies does not impact on future humanitarian responses and therefore there has not been a need for DFID to discuss their impact on army supplies with the Ministry of Defence.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Adoption

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children were placed for adoption in Northern Ireland in each year since 1990, broken down by age. [33073]

Mr. Woodward: Information on how many children were placed for adoption in Northern Ireland is not available centrally.

Adult Illiteracy

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what criteria are used to assess illiteracy in adults in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [33082]

Mr. Hanson: In the absence of my hon. Friend, the Member for Basildon (Angela E. Smith), I have been asked to reply.

Research to date has focused on measuring levels of literacy and at present no data is available which specifically identifies the levels of illiteracy.

The International Adult Literacy Survey (IALS,) which was carried out in 1996, indicated that 24 per cent. of the adult population in Northern Ireland performed at the lowest levels of literacy, level 1. It defines literacy as,

> 'using printed and written information to function in society, to achieve one's goals and to develop one's knowledge and potential'.

Since the launch of the Essential Skills for Living Strategy in October 2002, the Department has met, and exceeded, its interim target to support 25,000 adults to improve their levels of literacy and numeracy.

All-Ireland Free Travel Scheme

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when discussions will be concluded between the Department of Regional Development in Northern Ireland and the Department of Social and Family Affairs in the Republic of Ireland on the technical details of the all-Ireland free travel scheme; when the implementation and introduction of the scheme will be announced; and when the new scheme will start. [33538]

Mr. Woodward: DRD officials are still considering with their Republic of Ireland counterparts the operational and resource issues related to extension of all-Ireland free travel for pensioners. I am not yet able to say when it will be completed or when a scheme could be implemented.

Bankruptcies

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many bankruptcies there have been in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [32232]

Mr. Hanson: In the absence of my hon. Friend, the Member for Basildon (Angela E. Smith), I have been asked to reply.

The following table shows the number of bankruptcies in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 financial years.

Year ending 31 March	*Number of bankruptcies*
1996	408
1997	371
1998	417
1999	405
2000	395
2001	331
2002	280
2003	350
2004[1]	582
2005[1]	685
Total	4,224

[1] The increase in the figures for years ending 31 March 2004 and 31 March 2005 are due mainly to an increase in the numbers of consumer (non-trader) bankruptcies which has been brought about by a rise in credit card debt and increased personal lending.

Blue Badge Thefts

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many incidents of the theft of disabled persons' blue badges have been reported in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [33080]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin to Mr. Peter Robinson, dated 1 December 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about how many incidents of theft of disabled persons' blue badges have been reported in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years.

I have been asked to reply as the issue raised falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

I must advise that Roads Service holds records in respect of blue badge applications for a 3 year period. As Roads Service receives approximately 2000 applications per month, the specific information you requested is not readily available and could only be compiled for the last 3 years at disproportionate costs.

However, to try to be of some assistance we have compiled information for the period January to October 2005, and can advise that during this period Roads Service received 88 applications for replacement blue badges where badge holders have stated theft was involved. This represents around 3% of the applications over the same period. Of these 29 were purely the theft of a blue badge and in 59 cases the blue badge was lost/stolen as part of an associated theft e.g. stolen handbag or stolen car.

I hope this information is helpful.

Bullying

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many instances of school bullying in *(a)* primary and *(b)* post-primary schools have been recorded in the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [32099]

Mr. Hanson: In the absence of my hon. Friend, the Member for Basildon (Angela E. Smith), I have been asked to reply.

The Department of Education does not collect the information requested.

Information about the scale and nature of bullying in Northern Ireland schools is contained in a research report published in October 2002. A research briefing summary is available on the Department's website at www.deni.gov.uk/rb8_2002.pdf.

The Department has recently commissioned updated research into bullying, in all its forms, and the results will also be published in due course.

Consumer Debt

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average level of consumer debt in Northern Ireland was in the last period for which figures are available; what assessment he has made of the differential with other parts of the UK; and if he will make a statement. [32104]

Mr. Hanson: In the absence of my hon. Friend, the Member for Basildon (Angela E. Smith), I have been asked to reply.

Research commissioned by the General Consumer Council for Northern Ireland in February 2004 estimated that overall consumer debt, including mortgages, averaged £15,300 per respondent. Excluding mortgages, the average debt was £2,300 per respondent. This was based on a representative sample of 1,020 Northern Ireland consumers.

At present, there are no directly comparable figures for the rest of the UK. Further research is under way and, when completed, will allow more detailed comparisons of consumer debt within the UK to be made.

Doctors and Nurses

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* doctors and *(b)* nurses there were per head of population in (i) Northern Ireland and (ii) each Health Board in each year since 1995. [33089]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is provided in the following tables.

Doctors employed within the NI HPSS per 1,000 head of population in Northern Ireland and by Health Board area by year as at 30 September

	Northern Ireland	Northern Board	Eastern Board	Southern Board	Western Board
1995	1.41	0.77	2.07	1.16	1.08
1996	1.47	0.94	2.09	1.12	1.13
1997	1.52	0.93	2.13	1.28	1.21
1998	1.65	1.00	2.36	1.26	1.33
1999	1.53	0.88	2.25	1.13	1.24
2000	1.59	0.89	2.35	1.21	1.28
2001	1.63	0.89	2.46	1.17	1.29
2002	1.71	0.91	2.63	1.20	1.35
2003	1.81	0.98	2.78	1.24	1.46
2004	1.89	1.01	2.90	1.31	1.52
2005	1.97	1.13	3.00	1.33	1.57

Notes:

The Mid-year HSSB Civilian Population Estimate for 2005 was not available, therefore the Mid-year HSSB Civilian Population Estimate for 2004 was used for 2005.

1. Doctors include all medical staff employed within the NIHPSS at the following grades: consultants, associate specialists, staff grade, specialist registrars, PRHOs, SHOs, hospital practitioners, general medical practitioners and medical officers.
2. These figures exclude primary care general practitioners.

Sources:

Doctor headcount figures: Human Resource Management System.

Civilian population figures: Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency.

Qualified nurses employed within the NI HPSS per 1,000 head of population in Northern Ireland and by Health Board area by year as at 30 September

	Northern Ireland	Northern Board	Eastern Board	Southern Board	Western Board
1995	8.35	5.80	10.48	7.88	7.52
1996	8.18	5.61	10.44	7.51	7.32
1997	7.83	5.54	9.92	7.02	7.11
1998	7.82	5.63	9.96	6.77	7.14
1999	7.86	5.59	10.04	6.78	7.29
2000	8.00	5.77	10.26	6.81	7.31
2001	7.99	5.84	10.28	6.77	7.20
2002	8.38	5.91	11.01	6.80	7.70
2003	8.80	6.18	11.60	7.17	8.10
2004	9.05	6.38	11.87	7.35	8.50
2005	9.23	6.45	12.10	7.52	8.75

Notes:

1. The Mid-year HSSB Civilian Population Estimate for 2005 was not available, therefore the Mid-year HSSB Civilian Population Estimate for 2004 was used or 2005.
2. Qualified nurses include midwives and health visiting staff.
3. These figures exclude bank staff who fill staffing shortfalls to maintain service delivery.
4. Nursing figures are not available for staff working in general practice surgeries and are therefore not included.

Sources:

Nursing headcount figures: Human Resource Management System.

Civilian population figures: Northern Ireland Statistics Research Agency.

Emergency Contraception

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many prescriptions of hormonal emergency contraception were prescribed in each of the last 10 years in each region of Northern Ireland. [33074]

Mr. Woodward: Information on the number of prescriptions for hormonal emergency contraception from GP practices, broken down by Health Board is outlined in the following table.

Number of hormonal emergency contraception prescriptions

	EHSSB	NHSSB	SHSSB	WHSSB	NI total
1995	4,766	3,669	2,819	2,475	13,729
1996	5,719	4,561	3,596	3,559	17,435
1997	5,906	4,763	3,961	3,960	18,590
1998	6,245	5,219	4,475	4,571	20,510
1999	6,229	5,335	4,639	4,642	20,845
2000	6,381	5,261	4,707	4,872	21,221
2001	5,697	4,936	4,652	4,729	20,014
2002	5,102	4,620	4,243	4,079	18,044
2003	4,827	4,357	4,096	3,877	17,157
2004	4,413	4,005	3,797	3,617	15,832

Note:
Prescriptions of hormonal emergency contraception are also available in accident and emergency units and specialist clinics. The data in the table only reflect prescriptions of hormonal emergency contraception from GP practices.
Source:
Central Services Agency

Family Planning Clinics

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many family planning clinics there were in Northern Ireland in each year since 1990; and how many women were seen by them in each year, broken down by health board. [33088]

Mr. Woodward: Information on the number of family planning clinics is not available centrally. Information on the number of women attending family planning clinics is shown in the following table, according to Health and Social Services Board, for the years for which the information is available centrally.

	Eastern HSS Board	Northern HSS Board	Southern HSS Board	Western HSS Board	Northern Ireland
2003–04	20,981	1,845	4,667	5,061	32,554
2002–03	23,319	1,750	4,206	4,866	34,141
2001–02	20,403	2,044	4,730	5,080	32,257
2000–01	22,714	2,283	4,676	4,679	34,352
1999–2000	23,769	3,156	6,112	5,086	38,123
1998–99	24,944	4,825	5,623	5,651	41,043
1997–98	25,217	5,072	5,930	5,255	41,474
1996–97	24,451	5,375	6,373	5,342	41,541

Notes:
1. Information is in respect of the financial year ending 31 March each year.
2. Figures relate to first attendances by women at family planning clinics during the relevant year.

Freelance Musicians

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will take steps to ensure that the policy of the Inland Revenue on liability for national insurance contributions does not lead to the loss of full-time jobs in the Ulster Orchestra. [30342]

Mr. Hanson: In the absence of my hon. Friend the hon. Member for Basildon (Angela E. Smith), I have been asked to reply.

The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure and the Arts Council of Northern Ireland are monitoring discussions currently taking place between the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, the Arts Council of England, the Association of British Orchestras and the Musicians Union about the national insurance liability on musicians' earnings. These discussions are ongoing and at an early stage.

Fugitives from Justice

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many fugitives from justice meet the criteria for release under the Government's plans. [31993]

Mr. Hain: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Lagan Valley (Mr. Donaldson) on 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1643W.

Hip Replacements

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many hip replacement operations were performed in each of the last five years, broken down by health board. [33075]

Mr. Woodward: Information on the number of hip replacement operations carried out in acute hospitals in Northern Ireland in each year from 2000–01 to 2004–05 (the latest year for which data is available) broken down by health board is shown in the following table.

Number of hip replacement operations in each HPSS board of residence

	EHSSB	NHSSB	SHSSB	WHSSB	Others[1]	All
2004–05	900	585	461	390	49	2,385
2003–04	844	530	405	330	57	2,166
2002–03	778	554	390	339	31	2,092
2001–02	761	489	406	288	32	1,976
2000–01	820	526	402	291	12	2,051

[1] 'Others' include patients whose place of residence is outside Northern Ireland or for whom a board of residence cannot be assigned.
Source:
Hospital Inpatient System

Hospitality Budgets

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total hospitality budget is for his Department's Ministers for 2005–06, including alcohol, food, staff in attendance and other related costs. [32088]

Mr. Woodward: The total hospitality budget for the Northern Ireland Ministers, for 2005–06, is £17,000. This figure includes alcohol, food and other related costs. The Minister's staff in attendance budget is not included as it forms part of the total staffing budget and we cannot identify the service specifically for Ministers.

The NIO provides for ministerial hospitality where the function is in the direct interests of the Northern Ireland Office. The level of hospitality must be defined, and a broad outline of cost and numbers attending must be provided on all occasions before authorisation. Expenditure should be kept as low as possible, compatible with the occasion and the standing of the guests.

Inward Investment

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his assessment is of the effect on

foreign direct investment of corporation tax differentials between Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland. [32120]

Mr. Hanson: In the absence of my hon. Friend, the Member for Basildon (Angela E. Smith), I have been asked to reply.

Care should be exercised in contrasting corporation tax rates with those, for example, in the Republic of Ireland. Comparing the headline rate fails to take account of differences in tax allowances. For example, the C.D. Howe Institute estimate the effective corporate tax rate to be 21.7 per cent. in the United Kingdom, compared to 13.7 per cent. for the Republic of Ireland.

However, in relation to the attraction of foreign direct investment, corporation tax is only one element in the decision-making process. Invest Northern Ireland tailors its marketing efforts towards foreign direct investment projects where Northern Ireland is likely to have the most competitive solution.

If corporation tax is the main deciding factor or driving force behind a project, it becomes considerably more difficult for Northern Ireland to secure such projects.

Mental Health Bill

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with his Cabinet colleagues on the extension of the draft Mental Health Bill to Northern Ireland; and if he will list the parts of that Bill which he expects to extend to Northern Ireland. [33236]

Mr. Woodward: Officials have been liaising with their colleagues in England on the draft Mental Health Bill on those parts that extend to Northern Ireland. These are section 214, "the Transfer and Return of Patients", sections 363 to 366, "Notification of Speaker in relation to Member of Parliament" and schedule 12, "Member of Parliament Liable to Compulsory Provision: Interpretation".

At present, the mental health legislation extant in Northern Ireland is the Mental Health (Northern Ireland) Order 1986. New legislation will be introduced following the current Review of Mental Health and Learning Disability.

Ministerial Travel

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent in each year from 1 May 1997 on ministerial travel, broken down by *(a)* provision and running costs of vehicular transport, *(b)* first class travel by rail, *(c)* standard class travel by rail, *(d)* first class travel by air, *(e)* club or equivalent class travel by air and *(f)* economy class travel by air. [27682]

Mr. Woodward: All ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the ministerial code and travel by Ministers, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

In respect of ministerial cars provided by the Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA); my hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Secretary at the Cabinet Office (Mr. Jim Murphy) has asked Roy Burke, chief executive of the GCDA, to write to the hon. Member with details of the costs of ministerial vehicles provided to Departments in 2004–05. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library.

For information for the financial years 2000–01 to 2003–04 I refer the hon. Member to the letters from the chief executive of the GCDA to the hon. Member for Buckingham (John Bercow) dated 10 January 2005 and to the then hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs (Howard Flight) dated 13 September 2003. Copies of these letters are available in the Library.

In respect to domestic ministerial travel, we are unable to provide the information in the format requested by the hon. Member. We cannot identify travel by class for both rail and air nor can we separately identify costs solely for the Ministers. The following table provides the total ministerial team (Ministers and their support staff) rail and air expenditure for the years for which the information is available.

£

	Travel by rail	*Travel by air*
1997–98	n/a	854,755
1998–99	n/a	947,626
1999–2000	n/a	467,815
2000–01	n/a	801,750
2001–02	3,751	665,047
2002–03	826	622,171
2003–04	4,242	587,043
2004–05	5,880	529,808
2005–06[1]	1,183	296,231

[1] Up to October

In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. These report information for the financial years 1995–06 to 2004–05. Information for 2005–06 will be published as soon as it is ready after the end of the current financial year.

Murders

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been murdered in each year since 1997 in *(a)* East Belfast, *(b)* North Belfast, *(c)* South Belfast and *(d)* West Belfast. [31985]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is provided in the following tables. The statistics for 1997 and 1998 are provided by sub-divisional command rather than district command unit as they are only available in this format.

1997–98

Police sub-division	*Number*
Musgrave Street	3
Mountpottinger	1
Donegall Pass	2
Grosvenor Road	1
Woodbourne	1
North Queen Street	2

1997–98

Police sub-division	*Number*
Antrim Road	1
Tennent Street	2
Strandtown	0

Financial year	*East Belfast*	*North Belfast*	*South Belfast*	*West Belfast*
1998–99	2	17	10	8
1999–2000	4	7	9	9
2000–01	1	10	3	6
2001–02	3	7	4	1
2002–03	3	7	6	0
2003–04	0	0	2	2
2004–05	1	4	2	1

NHS (Elderly Staff)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many employees aged over 70 years are working in the national health service in Northern Ireland. [33090]

Mr. Woodward: There were 12 (7.29 WTE) members of staff employed within the NI HPSS who were aged over 70 as at 30 September 2005.

Northern Ireland Assembly (Land Use Powers)

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what powers the Northern Ireland Assembly would have to *(a)* amend and *(b)* to delete (i) green belt designations, (ii) areas of outstanding natural beauty designations and (iii) sites of special scientific interest after area plans have been adopted. [30766]

Angela E. Smith: The Northern Ireland Executive would be responsible for the implementation of Northern Ireland legislation governing planning matters and conservation designations.

Green belts, but not areas of outstanding natural beauty or areas of special scientific interest, are established through the area plan process. In the case of green belt designations any amendment or deletion must be carried out through the statutory process to alter an area plan, as set out in the Planning (Northern Ireland) Order 1991.

The Nature Conservation and Amenity Lands (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 (as amended), under which areas of outstanding natural beauty are designated, also allows the Department to amend or delete these areas. Similarly, there are provisions in the Environment (Northern Ireland) Order 2002, under which areas of special scientific interest are declared, which empower the Department to amend or delete such areas where their scientific interest has been lost.

Nursing

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many nursing vacancies there are in each health board area; and how many nurses are employed in each of the hospitals in Northern Ireland. [33065]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is provided in the following tables.

Number of current qualified nursing staff vacancies in the NI HPSS by health board area as at 31 March 2005

Health board area	*Headcount*	*Whole-time equivalent*
Northern board	58	54.20
Eastern board	473	436.08
Southern board	46	40.26
Western board	65	63.32
Total	642	593.86

Notes:
1. Qualified nursing staff include health visitors, district nurses and midwives.
2. Information on qualified nursing staff vacancies includes community-based staff as well as hospital-based staff.
3. A current vacancy is an unoccupied post, which as 31 March 2005 was vacant and which the organisation was actively trying to fill.

Source:
NI Health Trusts and Organisations

Number of long-term qualified nursing staff vacancies in the NI HPSS by health board area as at 31 March 2005

Health board area	*Headcount*	*Whole-time equivalent*
Northern board	14	13.30
Eastern board	222	215.10
Southern board	9	8.84
Western board	38	37.32
Total	283	274.56

Notes:
1. Qualified nursing staff include health visitors, district nurses and midwives.
2. Information on qualified nursing staff vacancies includes community-based staff as well as hospital-based staff.
3. A long-term vacancy is an unoccupied post which at 31 March 2005 had been vacant for three months or more (was vacant prior to 31 December 2004) and which the organisation was actively trying to fill. long-term vacancies are a sub-set of current vacancies.

Source:
NI Health Trusts and Organisations

Qualified nursing staff employed within the NI HPSS by hospital as at 31 March 2005

Hospital	*Headcount*	*Whole-time equivalent*
Altnagelvin Area Hospital	909	809.72
Antrim Area Hospital	674	560.59
Ards Hospital	133	96.19
Armagh Community Hospital	7	5.87
Banbridge Hospital	3	3.00
Bangor Hospital	36	27.93
Belfast City Hospital	1306	1097.11
Braid Valley Hospital	73	65.00
Causeway Hospital	395	333.42
Craigavon Area Hospital	857	697.46
Daisy Hill Hospital	291	243.92
Dalriada Hospital	27	22.19
Downe Hospital	155	127.99
Downshire Hospital	144	137.79
Erne Hospital	403	343.77
Forster Green Hospital/Musgrave Park Hospital	527	435.82
Gransha Hospital	153	125.17
Holywell/Whiteabbey Hospital (Psychiatric Services)	330	231.27
Knockbracken Healthcare Park	145	133.28
Lakeview (Previously Stradreagh Hospital)	46	33.24
Lagan Valley Hospital	301	246.44
Longstone Hospital	92	84.90
Lurgan Hospital	83	65.65

Qualified nursing staff employed within the NI HPSS by hospital as at 31 March 2005

Hospital	*Headcount*	*Whole-time equivalent*
Mater Hospital	417	365.57
Mid-Ulster Hospital	204	171.09
Moyle Hospital	35	27.01
Muckamore Hospital	189	173.95
Mullinure Hospital	38	31.40
Regional Secure Unit (SEBHSST)	21	20.21
Robinson Hospital	23	16.59
Royal Hospital	2276	1910.79
Shaftesbury Square Hospital	22	18.60
South Tyrone Hospital	63	48.19
St. Lukes Hospital	172	149.44
Thompson House Hospital	44	39.64
Tyrone County Hospital	358	332.79
Tyrone and Fermanagh Hospital	263	256.15
Ulster Hospital	987	841.38
Waterside Hospital	54	37.21
Whiteabbey Hospital	204	161.78
Total	12460	10529.51

Notes:

1. Qualified nursing staff include health visitors, district nurses and midwives.

2. Figures for Antrim area hospital, Whiteabbey hospital, Mid-Ulster hospital, Braid Valley hospital and Moyle hospital are as at November 2005.

Source:

NI HSS Trusts

Parole

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what methods are used in Northern Ireland for tracking prisoners on parole; and if he will make a statement. [31982]

Mr. Woodward: The term "parole" in Northern Ireland is taken to refer to home and resettlement leave.

The Northern Ireland Prison Service is not directly involved with tracking prisoners on parole. However, the PSNI are provided with details of successful applicants for home leave including their addresses and any conditions attached to granting of leave, such as alcohol and/or curfew restrictions. In addition, prisoners may be required to undergo drugs and alcohol testing before leaving and on return to prison. They may also be required to report during release to the Probation Service, who are fully informed regarding home leave conditions. Prisoners may also be required to attend a "checkpoint" meeting with staff during home leave and keep a diary.

Certain prisoners, including life sentence prisoners, may be accompanied on periods of home leave particularly during the early stages. Where they are permitted overnight stays, there will be hostel supervision.

Young offenders are required to meet their Probation Officer during home leave. A member of Opportunity Youth may also call unannounced at the home address to check that conditions of temporary release, such as no alcohol, are being adhered to. Young Offenders not subject to custody probation orders are required to report to a local police station during home leave.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what criteria are applied in Northern Ireland when considering whether a prisoner is eligible for parole; and if he will make a statement. [31983]

Mr. Woodward: The term "parole" in Northern Ireland refers to home and resettlement leave.

On 1 March 2004 the Prison Service introduced a new home leave scheme which provides quotas of home and resettlement leave for determinate sentence and life sentence prisoners.

Determinate sentence prisoners sentenced on or after that date may now avail of leave only during the last 12 months of sentence. The number of days' leave granted depends on the length of sentence and continuous custody. All applications by determinate sentence prisoners are considered by the Home Leave Board of the prison establishment concerned and are subject to a satisfactory risk assessment. Each prisoner must provide the board with reasons why home leave is requested and indicate how he will use home leave constructively. Victim issues are also taken into consideration.

The same considerations apply to life sentence prisoners.

Police

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people are employed by each district command unit to collate and produce Police Service of Northern Ireland statistical information. [31936]

Mr. Woodward: The Police Service of Northern Ireland does not employ staff in any DCU with the specific remit of statistical collation.

Statistics relating to the main crime types (as outlined by the Home Office counting rules) are automatically generated by computerised crime recording. It is the responsibility of PSNI's central statistics unit to collate and present statistics relating to these matters of crime, security, drugs and certain roads policing offences.

PSNI Headquarters Departments also gather information from DCU's and Branches relating to matters of strategic importance, for example issues contained in the policing plan.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* female and *(b)* male Police Service of Northern Ireland officers were recruited in each year for which figures are available, broken down by (i) Protestants, (ii) Catholics and (iii) others. [31940]

Mr. Woodward: I am advised that the breakdown of officers recruited by PSNI are as follows.

	Male				Female				
	Protestant community background	*Catholic community background*	*Not determined*	*Sub total*	*Protestant community background*	*Catholic community background*	*Not determined*	*Sub total*	*Grand total*
2001[1]	39	31	1	71	12	23	0	35	106
2002	144	177	2	323	85	66	1	152	475
2003	137	146	1	284	84	77	3	164	448
2004	176	191	4	371	127	99	1	227	598
2005[2]	104	123	3	230	88	80	1	169	399

[1] From 4 November 2001 to 31 December 2001.
[2] Up to 28 November 2005.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what guidance his Department has given the Police Service of Northern Ireland on the *(a)* purchase and *(b)* hire of police road vehicles. [31953]

Mr. Woodward: Under the terms of the Management Statement issued by the Department to the Chief Constable in respect of the grant made available for police purposes, the Chief Constable is responsible for ensuring that efficient financial systems and procedures are in place. The Department has not given PSNI any specific guidance on *(a)* the purchase, *(b)* the hire of police road vehicles, however PSNI have a service level agreement (SLA) with the NIO Procurement Unit under which advice and guidance can be provided on procurement issues as required.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many police vehicles in each district command unit were *(a)* purchased and *(b)* hired in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [33069]

Mr. Woodward: The purchase and hire of vehicles is conducted by Transport Services Branch, not at DCU level. The total figures for vehicle purchase and hire are set out as follows:

	Vehicles purchased	*Hire of vehicles*
2001–02	445	4
2002–03	346	27
2003–04	461	4
2004–05	625	9
2005–06[1]	167	2

[1] End September 2005

Prescriptions

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* paid for and *(b)* free prescriptions were issued in each health board area in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [33071]

Mr. Woodward: As prescription forms may include several different items, which may each attract a separate charge, the questioner's term "prescriptions" is therefore interpreted as prescription items.

(a) The number of prescription items for which the full prescription charge was paid at the point of dispensing by board, from 1997 to 2004 is given in the table.

Based upon sample analyses, it is estimated that at the NI level a further 5 per cent. of prescription items are covered by pre-payment certificates (PPCs), which allow the patient to obtain as many prescription items as necessary during the four or 12 month validity of the certificate for a set fee.

Total items paid[1] for at point of dispensing by health and social services board—1997 to 2004

	Northern Ireland	*Eastern*	*Northern*	*Southern*	*Western*
1997	1,182,094	528,275	350,796	194,061	108,962
1998	1,200,997	533,224	356,744	200,891	110,138
1999	1,341,795	574,913	392,984	238,229	135,669
2000	1,409,347	599,206	410,335	257,328	142,478
2001	1,472,666	624,874	429,878	269,369	148,545
2002	1,545,006	647,390	443,897	286,729	166,990
2003	1,553,759	650,009	450,732	278,222	174,796
2004	1,591,521	666,810	457,021	281,375	186,315

[1] Figures exclude items covered by pre-payment certificate—estimated to be 5 per cent. at the Northern Ireland level.

(b) It is estimated that at the NI level about 89 per cent. of health service prescription items are dispensed free of charge to patients. As this is an estimate these figures could not be presented by board in the following table. Therefore, the table only shows items which the patient did not pay the prescription charge (£6.40 in 2004–05) directly to the pharmacist. A further estimated 5 per cent. of all items are covered by pre-payment certificates previously purchased by the patient.

Total prescription items not paid[1] for at point of dispensing by health and social services board—1997 to 2004

	Northern Ireland	*Eastern*	*Northern*	*Southern*	*Western*
1997	20,688,292	8,491,313	4,483,332	4,029,939	3,683,708
1998	21,314,929	8,829,638	4,592,844	4,116,488	3,775,959
1999	21,906,106	9,102,138	4,751,223	4,193,880	3,858,865
2000	22,254,285	9,313,514	4,818,510	4,215,256	3,907,005
2001	23,078,459	9,529,152	5,083,861	4,417,831	4,047,615
2002	23,874,951	9,892,410	5,233,327	4,554,270	4,134,944
2003	24,845,257	10,229,453	5,586,449	4,681,621	4,347,734
2004	25,726,828	10,593,205	5,811,504	4,837,362	4,484,757

[1] Figures include prescription items covered by pre-payment certificate, which cannot be separately identified.

Prisons

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost has been in each prison in Northern Ireland in the last five years of providing *(a)* educational facilities, *(b)* dental services, *(c)* medical services, including costs involved in transporting inmates to and from hospital, *(d)* clothing and *(e)* food; and if he will make a statement. [32092]

Mr. Woodward: The aggregate resource costs for the whole of the last five financial years, from 2000–01 to 2004–05 are:

£000

	Education facilities	*Dental services*	*Medical services*	*Clothing*	*Food*
Maghaberry	9,013	479	13,189	104	2,442
Magilligan	6,846	364	4,208	87	1,356
Hydebank Wood	5,070	203	3,077	102	662

Magilligan Prison

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Government has commissioned an economic assessment of the impact on the North West of Northern Ireland of *(a)* closing Magilligan Prison and *(b)* the potential alternatives for the site. [32832]

Mr. Woodward: Yes, the Prison Service commissioned an assessment of the socio-economic impact of the location of the second adult prison. The report will very shortly be finalised.

The economic assessment considered the location of the new prison in its current location and at three other geographical areas with Northern Ireland. These included:

1. The Ballymena area (including Antrim);
2. Lisburn
3. Portadown/Craigavon/Dunngannon.

Public Bodies

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many public bodies in Northern Ireland have paid travel and subsistence expenses in the past five years for non-executive directors and board members who live outside the UK and Ireland. [29171]

Mr. Hanson: In the absence of my hon. Friend, the Member for Basildon (Angela E. Smith), I have been asked to reply.

One public body in Northern Ireland has paid travel and subsistence expenses in the past five years for a non-executive director or board member living outside the UK and Ireland.

Sentencing

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will publish the conclusions of the Review of Minimum Terms and Life Sentence Cases. [32685]

Mr. Hanson: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave on 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1331W.

Smoking

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment has been made by his Department of the medical effects of smoking by pregnant women on the health of an unborn child. [33085]

Mr. Woodward: Smoking is a critical women's health issue for both mother and child. Smoking in pregnancy is associated with many problems both for the foetus and newly born baby, including miscarriage, placenta damage, pre-term delivery, low birthweight, perinatal death and sudden infant death syndrome.

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety published a five year tobacco action plan in 2003. The plan identified pregnant women as a key target group.

Stun Guns

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people he has authorised to have stun guns. [31944]

Mr. Woodward: One person has been authorised by the Secretary of State to possess Taser guns for demonstration to the Police Service Northern Ireland.

Translink

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether Translink takes into account pupils not using bus services as a result of their participation in extra-curricular activities when determining the number of bus journeys undertaken by children qualifying for the free school transport system in an academic year for the purposes of calculating the amount to be charged to the education and library boards in Northern Ireland for the service. [32217]

Mr. Hanson: In the absence of my hon. Friend, the Member for Basildon (Angela E. Smith), I have been asked to reply.

Translink does not take account of pupils attending extra-curricular activities when calculating the cost of a sessional ticket, as it is assumed that such pupils will use their sessional ticket to travel home on a later service. Pupils can use their sessional tickets on Translink services until 18.30 hours on any given school day. A sessional ticket cost is, therefore, calculated on the basis that pupils will avail of the Translink service both to and from home on each school day.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Child Support Agency

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many non-resident parents in Scotland are paying the £5 flat rate of child support per week in the latest period for which figures are available; and in how many cases these payments are being deducted from social security payments by the Child Support Agency; [31122]

(2) how many Scottish Child Support Agency claims operating under the old scheme of calculation due to transfer to the new scheme, but where the transfer had not yet taken place, there were in each month since March 2003; [31138]

(3) how many potential child support cases in Scotland are awaiting processing at the point of entry for benefit cases via the Jobcentre Plus interface; [31145]

(4) what his estimate is of the number of non-resident parents for Scottish Child Support Agency claims who *(a)* make maintenance payments under the Child Support Agency (CSA) rules, *(b)* cannot be traced to pay under the CSA, *(c)* are assessed to have a zero liability due to low income, *(d)* are assessed to make payments but do not do so regularly, *(e)* have made alternative maintenance arrangements outside the CSA and *(f)* make no payments and are not referred to the CSA; [31150]

(5) what his estimate is of the number of Scottish Child Support Agency claims *(a)* received and *(b)* cleared in each month between January 2004 and October 2005; [31151]

(6) what the Child Support Agency's Scottish caseload has been in each quarter from 1997 to the third quarter of 2005; and if he will make a statement. [31152]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the *(a)* latest accuracy rates and *(b)* accuracy targets are for (i) new and (ii) old Child Support Agency cases; and if he will make a statement. [21447]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty to Mr. David Laws, dated 1 December 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the *(a)* latest accuracy rates and *(b)* accuracy targets are for (i) new and (ii) old Child Support Agency cases; and if he will make a statement.

The compliance targets and performance rates to September 2005 are presented in the table below.

Percentage

	Target	*Performance at September 2005*
New scheme accuracy	90	83
Old scheme accuracy	82	80

Note:
Accuracy is measured cumulatively month-on-month throughout the year.

I hope you find this helpful.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he expects to report on housing benefit reform and the effects of the local housing allowance pilots. [33770]

Mr. Plaskitt: I refer my right hon. Friend to the written answer I gave the hon. Member for Wycombe (Mr. Goodman) on 24 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2254W.

Pensions

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the cost to business of the decision to allow into the Pension Protection Fund (PPF) the schemes of companies which had experienced an insolvency event before the PPF was launched. [30645]

Mr. Timms: The indicative view from the PPF is that the impact on levies and thus the cost to business is minimal.

Janet Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will bring forward further measures to restore pensions lost through scheme wind-ups prior to 5 April. [32516]

Mr. Timms: The Government have set up the Financial Assistance Scheme to help some people who have lost out on their defined benefit pension because their pension scheme is winding up underfunded and the employer is insolvent or no longer exists. It will apply to schemes which started to wind-up before 6 April 2005 when the Pension Protection Fund came in.

The scheme will be reviewed alongside other spending priorities in the forthcoming comprehensive spending review

Remploy

Dr. Iddon: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Remploy employees in management grades are disabled. [21713]

Mrs. McGuire: There are 220 people employed by Remploy in management grades that have declared themselves as disabled.

Source:
Remploy

Retirement Age

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether he plans to increase the compulsory minimum retirement age for members of stakeholder pension plans. [33572]

Mr. Timms: The normal minimum age at which a member may draw benefits from a stakeholder pension plan will increase from 50 to 55 by 6 April 2010, in line with the new simplified tax rules for pension schemes that take effect from 6 April 2006.

HEALTH

Avian Influenza

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made of which human population cohorts are most at risk from co-infection of the H5N1 and a human host adapted influenza virus; [24012]

(2) what steps she is taking to reduce the risk of co-infection by the H5N1 and a human host adapted influenza virus to those assessed as most at risk. [24016]

Caroline Flint: H5N1 is currently an avian influenza virus and mainly affects birds. There have been infrequent cases in some people who are closely exposed to infected poultry. As of 15 November 2005, there have been 125 cases of the H5N1 strain of avian influenza in people in South East Asia, 64 of whom have died. There is concern that the virus could evolve into a strain which readily infects people and is easily transmissible between people, resulting in a pandemic virus. This is why we are planning for a possible human flu pandemic.

People in close contact with infected poultry, or infected material from poultry, could be most at risk of co-infection with the H5N1 virus and a human influenza virus. This could include poultry farm workers, veterinarians and others directly involved in animal disease control.

In the event of an outbreak of H5N1 in United Kingdom poultry, those groups at high risk of exposure would be offered antiviral drugs to prevent the development of infection, and seasonal flu vaccination to prevent the risk of re-assortment with human flu virus.

Bed Occupancy (Dacorum)

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average bed occupancy rate was at NHS units in Dacorum in each year since 1997. [29902]

Caroline Flint: The average bed occupancy rate at national health service units in Dacorum in each year since 1997 is shown in the table.

Occupancy rate, beds provided by West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust and Dacorum PCT, 1997–98 to 2004–05

	Percentage occupancy
1997–98	77.1
1998–99	80.1
1999–2000	81.6
2000–01	85.6
2001–02	86.1
2002–03	87.0
2003–04	79.5
2004–05	79.0

Notes:
1. Beds provided by West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust and Dacorum PCT have been used in the table.
2. West Hertfordshire Hospitals NHS Trust was formed on 1 April 2000 following the merger of St. Albans and Hemel Hempstead NHS Trust and Mount Vernon and Watford NHS Trust.

Source:
Department of Health form KH03

Blood Transfusion Service

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total cost of the blood transfusion service in England has been in each of the last three years. [20168]

Caroline Flint: The National Blood Service[1] was responsible for the supply of blood in England and North Wales. The expenditure for the National Blood Service (NBS) for the last three years was:

Notes:
[1] From 1 October, the National Blood Service and UK Transplant were merged to form the new organisation NHS Blood and Transplant

	£
2002–03	277,344,000
2003–04	307,476,000
2004–05	339,781,000

Breast Cancer

Dr. Blackman-Woods: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what priority is being given by the Government to *(a)* the treatment, *(b)* research into and *(c)* the financing of measures concerned with inflammatory breast cancer. [15061]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department is taking action in several areas to improve the treatment of all breast cancers, including inflammatory breast cancer.

Five of the newer breast cancer drugs have already been appraised by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) for use in the national health service. It is estimated that around 7,500 women could benefit from these new drugs a year;

A number of other breast cancer drugs are currently being considered by NICE including hormonal therapies which are commonly used for inflammatory breast cancer;

Service guidance to all professionals on breast cancer was published by NICE in August 2002. The document aims to help shape and improve the delivery of healthcare for women with breast cancer;

NICE is also developing guidelines on the clinical management of breast cancer. This will help clinicians give the optimal care and treatment to breast cancer patients.

Cancer is a top Government priority. In the NHS cancer plan, published September 2000, the Department confirmed its commitment to increasing investment in

cancer research. The Government's total expenditure on cancer research was estimated to be £190 million in 2000–01. By 2004–05, it will be spending an additional £20 million a year on the NHS infrastructure for cancer research.

We are already putting record amounts of new investment into the NHS—between 2003 and 2008 NHS expenditure in England will increase on average by 7.5 per cent. each year. It is for primary care trusts (PCTs) to decide how best to spend these resources taking into account local circumstances.

PCTs have many competing priorities but cancer is a national and local priority. Every PCT will have a sizeable number of people in their area who will be diagnosed with the disease, live with the disease and who die from the disease each year. PCTs will need to ensure they allocate sufficient resource to meet their local contribution to tackling cancer care or other areas.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps she is taking to improve the accuracy of mammography screening; [28427]

(2) whether she plans to introduce a system which would allow for all mammography x-rays to be checked twice for signs of malignancy; [28428]

(3) what plans she has to increase the availability of mammography screening for younger women. [28429]

Ms Rosie Winterton: To improve the accuracy of mammography screening we have upgraded the national health service breast screening programme (NHSBSP) by offering two-view mammography, two x-rays of each breast, at all screening rounds. Over 95 per cent. of breast screening units have now implemented two-views, resulting in a 31 per cent. increase in the number of cancers detected annually since April 2001, when roll out began.

The quality assurance process ensures that the high quality standards of the NHSBSP are not only maintained, but continue to rise year on year. As part of this continuous improvement to the service, the NHSBSP, with the Department and Cancer Research UK funding, is about to begin a major study looking at the use of computer aided reading of mammograms in addition to a human reader. This study is expected to report in two years time.

The Department is also funding, along with the Medical Research Council and Cancer Research UK, the UK Coordinating Committee on Cancer Research randomised controlled trial of the effect on breast cancer mortality of annual mammographic screening of women starting at age 40, the age trial. The main aim of the study is to evaluate the effect of annual mammographic screening of women starting at ages 40 to 41 on mortality from breast cancer, thus giving a definitive answer to the outstanding question of whether population screening below 50 is beneficial or not. As the trial is primarily looking at mortality benefits, full results are not expected before spring 2006.

Dr. Ann David

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will ask Essex police to reopen its investigation into deaths of patients of Dr. Ann David at Basildon Hospital. [30949]

Ms Rosie Winterton: *[holding answer 22 November 2005]:* It would not be appropriate for the Secretary of State for Health to ask Essex police to reopen its investigation into deaths of patients of Dr. Ann David at Basildon Hospital. However, the Basildon and Thurrock Hospitals National Health Service Foundation Trust is in contact with Essex police, who are currently considering whether to reopen their investigations into the deaths of a number of patients.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will establish an inquiry into patients' deaths at Basildon Hospital, consequent upon the General Medical Council removing the name of Ann David from the Register; and if she will make a statement. [30950]

Ms Rosie Winterton: *[holding answer 22 November 2005]:* The Essex Strategic Health Authority will consider whether to hold an inquiry at the conclusion of the police investigations and other procedures.

Dentistry

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures she has taken to encourage patients to keep dental appointments; and what research her Department *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated into the effects of abolishing the capacity of dentists to impose a charge on patients for missed appointments to support the abolition of the option for general dental practitioners to make a small patient charge for missed appointments. [24559]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* The Department has agreed that advice should be available to the national health service and dentists about how appointments are managed to minimise missed appointments, without financial penalty to patients.

We do not think that the level of missed appointments would seriously undermine a dentist's ability to carry out the level of weighted activity agreed in the contract.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* hospital and (b community dentists have been employed in each year since 1997, broken down by strategic health authority area. [26008]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Details of the total number of hospital and community dentists employed in each strategic health authority area since 1997 are shown in the following table.

Hospital, public health medicine and community health services (HCHS) dental staff by strategic health authority, sector and year. As at 30 September each year

Numbers (headcount)

		1997		
		All Staff	*Of which: Hospital*	*Community*
England		3,567	2,188	1,379
Of which:				
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	Q20	177	110	67
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	Q02	73	37	36
Birmingham and The Black Country	Q27	241	167	74
Cheshire and Merseyside	Q15	209	114	95
County Durham and Tees Valley	Q10	85	54	31
Cumbria and Lancashire	Q13	120	56	64
Dorset and Somerset	Q22	66	52	14
Essex	Q03	79	46	33
Greater Manchester	Q14	235	152	83
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	Q17	110	60	50
Kent and Medway	Q18	71	30	41
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	Q25	82	46	36
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	Q01	133	81	52
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	Q11	88	58	30
North Central London	Q05	186	143	43
North East London	Q06	101	53	48
North West London	Q04	101	23	78
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	Q09	133	97	36
Shropshire and Staffordshire	Q26	67	45	22
South East London	Q07	207	170	37
South West London	Q08	92	59	33
South West Peninsula	Q21	112	73	39
South Yorkshire	Q23	125	90	35
Surrey and Sussex	Q19	162	97	65
Thames Valley	Q16	120	58	62
Trent	Q24	133	70	63
West Midlands South	Q28	85	38	47
West Yorkshire	Q12	173	108	65
Other	—	1	1	0

Numbers (headcount)

		1998		
		All Staff	*Of which: Hospital*	*Community*
England		3,610	2,225	1,385
Of which:				
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	Q20	196	117	79
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	Q02	71	36	35
Birmingham and The Black Country	Q27	249	177	72
Cheshire and Merseyside	Q15	214	114	100
County Durham and Tees Valley	Q10	84	58	26
Cumbria and Lancashire	Q13	126	59	67
Dorset and Somerset	Q22	67	53	14
Essex	Q03	66	43	23
Greater Manchester	Q14	235	153	82
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	Q17	99	52	47
Kent and Medway	Q18	70	31	39
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	Q25	78	42	36
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	Q01	131	78	53
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	Q11	87	54	33
North Central London	Q05	197	151	46
North East London	Q06	98	56	42
North West London	Q04	115	28	87
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	Q09	142	104	38
Shropshire and Staffordshire	Q26	62	40	22
South East London	Q07	207	164	43
South West London	Q08	101	61	40
South West Peninsula	Q21	128	83	45
South Yorkshire	Q23	120	88	32
Surrey and Sussex	Q19	150	97	53
Thames Valley	Q16	128	62	66
Trent	Q24	130	69	61
West Midlands South	Q28	89	45	44
West Yorkshire	Q12	169	109	60
Other	—	1	1	

Numbers (headcount)

		1999		
		All Staff	*Of which: Hospital*	*Community*
England		3,616	2,248	1,368
Of which:				
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	Q20	201	122	79
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	Q02	69	34	35
Birmingham and The Black Country	Q27	220	158	62
Cheshire and Merseyside	Q15	227	125	102
County Durham and Tees Valley	Q10	69	45	24
Cumbria and Lancashire	Q13	115	51	64
Dorset and Somerset	Q22	63	49	14
Essex	Q03	67	44	23
Greater Manchester	Q14	261	183	78
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	Q17	108	60	48
Kent and Medway	Q18	77	33	44
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	Q25	71	40	31
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	Q01	139	82	57
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	Q11	87	55	32
North Central London	Q05	192	148	44
North East London	Q06	102	57	45
North West London	Q04	97	27	70
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	Q09	151	112	39
Shropshire and Staffordshire	Q26	65	44	21
South East London	Q07	194	151	43
South West London	Q08	107	66	41
South West Peninsula	Q21	120	70	50
South Yorkshire	Q23	131	100	31
Surrey and Sussex	Q19	148	96	52
Thames Valley	Q16	139	65	74
Trent	Q24	137	76	61
West Midlands South	Q28	86	45	41
West Yorkshire	Q12	172	109	63
Other	—	1	1	0

Numbers (headcount)

		2000		
		All Staff	*Of which: Hospital*	*Community*
England		3,530	2,187	1,343
Of which:				
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	Q20	203	114	89
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	Q02	72	35	37
Birmingham and The Black Country	Q27	225	162	63
Cheshire and Merseyside	Q15	213	112	101
County Durham and Tees Valley	Q10	67	43	24
Cumbria and Lancashire	Q13	114	54	60
Dorset and Somerset	Q22	66	52	14
Essex	Q03	61	40	21
Greater Manchester	Q14	250	169	81
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	Q17	108	59	49
Kent and Medway	Q18	67	28	39
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	Q25	71	42	29
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	Q01	128	78	50
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	Q11	96	67	29
North Central London	Q05	157	111	46
North East London	Q06	105	58	47
North West London	Q04	93	29	64
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	Q09	169	141	28
Shropshire and Staffordshire	Q26	61	39	22
South East London	Q07	203	153	50
South West London	Q08	98	64	34
South West Peninsula	Q21	124	69	55
South Yorkshire	Q23	125	99	26
Surrey and Sussex	Q19	148	96	52
Thames Valley	Q16	129	61	68
Trent	Q24	131	74	57
West Midlands South	Q28	94	41	53
West Yorkshire	Q12	151	96	55
Other	—	1	1	0

Numbers (headcount)

		2001		
		All Staff	*Of which: Hospital*	*Community*
England		3,532	2,184	1,348
Of which:				
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	Q20	203	111	92
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	Q02	75	30	45
Birmingham and The Black Country	Q27	226	157	69
Cheshire and Merseyside	Q15	208	114	94
County Durham and Tees Valley	Q10	68	37	31
Cumbria and Lancashire	Q13	128	58	70
Dorset and Somerset	Q22	56	44	12
Essex	Q03	61	43	18
Greater Manchester	Q14	237	165	72
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	Q17	119	58	61
Kent and Medway	Q18	60	24	36
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	Q25	70	42	28
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	Q01	123	86	37
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	Q11	103	65	38
North Central London	Q05	163	119	44
North East London	Q06	130	83	47
North West London	Q04	88	33	55
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	Q09	154	134	20
Shropshire and Staffordshire	Q26	56	27	29
South East London	Q07	208	164	44
South West London	Q08	105	67	38
South West Peninsula	Q21	130	73	57
South Yorkshire	Q23	111	89	22
Surrey and Sussex	Q19	146	95	51
Thames Valley	Q16	127	54	73
Trent	Q24	126	71	55
West Midlands South	Q28	88	38	50
West Yorkshire	Q12	163	103	60
Other	—	0	0	0

Numbers (headcount)

		2002		
		All Staff	*Of which: Hospital*	*Community*
England		3,654	2,223	1,431
Of which:				
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	Q20	207	124	83
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	Q02	72	33	39
Birmingham and The Black Country	Q27	196	127	69
Cheshire and Merseyside	Q15	236	115	121
County Durham and Tees Valley	Q10	56	47	9
Cumbria and Lancashire	Q13	122	58	64
Dorset and Somerset	Q22	56	44	12
Essex	Q03	67	43	24
Greater Manchester	Q14	240	155	85
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	Q17	118	51	67
Kent and Medway	Q18	68	26	42
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	Q25	79	45	34
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	Q01	143	84	59
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	Q11	116	63	53
North Central London	Q05	149	125	24
North East London	Q06	130	84	46
North West London	Q04	98	38	60
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	Q09	173	149	24
Shropshire and Staffordshire	Q26	62	30	32
South East London	Q07	209	160	49
South West London	Q08	93	58	35
South West Peninsula	Q21	140	68	72
South Yorkshire	Q23	132	112	20
Surrey and Sussex	Q19	164	101	63
Thames Valley	Q16	126	55	71
Trent	Q24	130	69	61
West Midlands South	Q28	101	48	53
West Yorkshire	Q12	171	111	60
Other	—	0	0	

Numbers (headcount)

		2003		
		All Staff	*Of which: Hospital*	*Community*
England		3,763	2,245	1,518
Of which:				
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	Q20	223	131	92
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	Q02	79	34	45
Birmingham and The Black Country	Q27	202	132	70
Cheshire and Merseyside	Q15	229	120	109
County Durham and Tees Valley	Q10	67	42	25
Cumbria and Lancashire	Q13	119	54	65
Dorset and Somerset	Q22	63	46	17
Essex	Q03	62	38	24
Greater Manchester	Q14	277	144	133
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	Q17	121	57	64
Kent and Medway	Q18	67	26	41
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	Q25	77	43	34
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	Q01	136	79	57
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	Q11	117	68	49
North Central London	Q05	170	127	43
North East London	Q06	117	75	42
North West London	Q04	89	34	55
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	Q09	169	151	18
Shropshire and Staffordshire	Q26	74	43	31
South East London	Q07	203	160	43
South West London	Q08	95	63	32
South West Peninsula	Q21	144	71	73
South Yorkshire	Q23	123	93	30
Surrey and Sussex	Q19	180	113	67
Thames Valley	Q16	136	59	77
Trent	Q24	134	76	58
West Midlands South	Q28	105	52	53
West Yorkshire	Q12	185	114	71
Other	—	0	0	

Numbers (headcount)

		2004		
		All Staff	*Of which: Hospital*	*Community*
England		3,852	2,279	1,573
Of which:				
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	Q20	188	124	64
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	Q02	80	37	43
Birmingham and The Black Country	Q27	199	128	71
Cheshire and Merseyside	Q15	245	124	121
County Durham and Tees Valley	Q10	70	40	30
Cumbria and Lancashire	Q13	121	50	71
Dorset and Somerset	Q22	70	53	17
Essex	Q03	66	44	22
Greater Manchester	Q14	293	148	145
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	Q17	133	53	80
Kent and Medway	Q18	74	25	49
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	Q25	77	41	36
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	Q01	133	68	65
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	Q11	98	69	29
North Central London	Q05	182	134	48
North East London	Q06	139	93	46
North West London	Q04	98	41	57
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	Q09	174	150	24
Shropshire and Staffordshire	Q26	71	42	29
South East London	Q07	221	170	51
South West London	Q08	100	68	32
South West Peninsula	Q21	142	68	74
South Yorkshire	Q23	123	92	31
Surrey and Sussex	Q19	186	113	73
Thames Valley	Q16	133	59	74
Trent	Q24	146	80	66
West Midlands South	Q28	102	48	54
West Yorkshire	Q12	188	117	71
Other	—	0	0	0

Source:
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre medical and dental work force census.

Health Protection Agency

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if the Department will make a statement on *(a)* the evidence given by and *(b)* recommendations made by representatives of the Health Protection Agency (HPA) to the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution. [32286]

Caroline Flint: The Department will be contributing to the Government response to the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution's report on "Crop Spraying and the Health of Residents and Bystanders" which is being coordinated by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Officials in the Department have been discussing with the Health Protection Agency (HPA) issues of common interest with respect to the report.

The Government response may contain direct reference to statements made by the HPA. The Government are committed to respond to the report within a year of publication.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the survey that the Health Protection Agency carried out on laboratories, referred to in its oral evidence given to the Royal Commission on Environmental Protection; and whether the survey will be published. [32300]

Caroline Flint: The Department will be contributing to the Government response to the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution's report on "Crop Spraying and the Health of Residents and Bystanders", which is being coordinated by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. Officials in the Department have been discussing with the Health Protection Agency issues of common interest with respect to the report.

The Government response may contain direct reference to statements made by the Health Protection Agency (HPA). The Government are committed to respond to the report within a year of publication. The Department cannot comment on whether the HPA's survey will be published.

Community Pharmacies (Uxbridge)

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many community pharmacies in Uxbridge constituency have *(a)* opened and *(b)* closed since 1997. [29769]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information on the number of community pharmacies by constituency is not centrally collected. However, information prior to 2002 is available by health authority (HA), and from 2002, by primary care trust (PCT).

The Uxbridge constituency is currently served by Hillingdon PCT. It previously sat within Hillingdon HA.

Table one shows the number of community pharmacies by HA prior to 2002.

Table 1: By health authority 1997 to 2002

	Total number of pharmacies in Hillingdon HA	*Opened*	*Closed*
1997–98	63	0	0
1998–99	62	0	1
1999–2000	62	0	0
2000–01	62	0	0
2001–02	62	0	0

Table two shows the number of community pharmacies by PCI from 2002 onwards.

Table 2: By primary care trust 2002–04

	Total number of pharmacies in Hillingdon PCT	*Opened*	*Closed*
2002–03	62	0	0
2003–04	62	0	0

Notes:
Data on pharmacy numbers:
From October 2002, PCTs took over responsibility for community pharmacies from health authorities. Therefore, data on the number of pharmacies in England with NHS contracts is broken down to health authority level until 2001–02, and PCT level from 2002–03 level onwards. The change from HAs to PCTs may have resulted in some boundary changes that is reflected in the data.
Information on the number of community pharmacies is collected from PCTs via the annual PHS1 data collection. The latest data available on General Pharmaceutical Services (1993–94 to 2003–04) was published in January 2005 on the website www.publication.doh.gov.uk/public/sb0505.htm.
Data for 2004–05 is not yet available.

Influenza

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the take-up of the pneumococcal vaccine has been in *(a)* all those aged over 80 years and *(b)* all those aged over 65 years since 1997–98; and if she will make a statement. [28708]

Caroline Flint: As of 31 March 2005, around 81.0 per cent. of people aged 80 years and over had been vaccinated with pneumococcal vaccine. As of the 31 March 2005, around 48.1 percent., of people aged 65 years and over had been vaccinated with pneumococcal vaccine. It should be noted that up until this date only those 75 years and over had been offered the vaccine routinely.

The policy to vaccinate those aged 65 years and over was introduced on 1 April 2005. Data on the number of people aged 65 years and over who were vaccinated from 1 April 2005 to 1 April 2006 will be collected from autumn 2006.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment has been made of the stocks of influenza vaccine in the NHS. [28992]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 15 November 2005]:* There are 14 million doses of seasonal flu vaccine available this year, more than previous years, and enough to vaccinate all over 65s and those in at risk groups specified in the chief medical officer's letter of 25 July. We are aware that demand for the vaccine is higher than many surgeries were expecting at this stage in the vaccination campaign and are providing

additional vaccine general practitioners from our contingency stock. In addition to this, we have obtained a further 800,000 doses which will be delivered in January.

Mixed Sex Wards

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Shrewsbury and Atcham (Daniel Kawczynski) of 4 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 224W, on mixed sex wards, what criteria were used in setting the target at 95 percent. of trusts. [18563]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The target to eliminate mixed sex accommodation in 95 percent., of national health service trusts was established following a review of health authorities' target dates for meeting three objectives to eliminate mixed-sex accommodation.

The outcomes of this review were published in 1998 by my Noble Friend, Baroness Jay, and indicated that 95 per cent. of health authorities' forecast that they would achieve compliance by December 2002. This was adopted as the target for the NHS.

Northian and Broad Oak Surgeries

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations she has received regarding the development of Northian and Broad Oak surgeries; and if she will make a statement. [32142]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* Since June 2005, the Department has received seven letters and a parcel of 1,500 plus campaign letters.

The campaign letters have been forwarded to Bexhill and Rother primary care trust (PCT) which commissions services from the surgeries. This is because the modernisation of primary health care premises is determined locally by consultation between PCTs and general practitioner practices in conjunction with their strategic health authorities (SHAs).

Nationally, the Government are committed to improving the infrastructure of primary care by modernising service delivery, access and choice in the national health service. Increased funding has been made available to PCTs to implement these service improvements.

However, PCTs have to prioritise the planning, development and improvement of services to meet the needs of local people. With their specialised knowledge of the local community, they are effectively able to manage and improve local services.

Surrey and Sussex SHA advise that Bexhill and Rother PCT is working with partners at the surgeries to support their expansion plans within the funding that the PCT can make available.

Nutrition and Health Claims Directive

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the process will be for submitting claims to the Community Register under the proposed EU nutrition and health claims made on foods proposal; when her Department will begin the consultation process on the proposal; and if she will make a statement. [31947]

Caroline Flint: Under the proposed regulation on nutrition and health claims made on foods, member states must submit to the European Commission a list of certain health claims, notably those related to functions of the body, by one year after the regulation has been adopted. The proposal is not expected to be adopted until the second half of next year. The Food Standards Agency has been exploring possible bases for compiling the list with various interested parties and will consider how best to involve stakeholders further.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions her Department has had with other EU member states about the process for submitting claims to the Community Register under the proposed EU regulation on nutrition and health claims made on foods; what the outcome of these discussions was; and if she will make a statement. [31948]

Caroline Flint: The proposed regulation is still under negotiation and not expected to be adopted until the second half of next year. Member states' lists will not have to be submitted to the Commission for a further year. No formal discussions have been held with other member states although informal soundings of some countries have shown they are starting to explore the issues involved in drawing up and submitting their lists.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Department has conducted cost impact assessments in relation to the proposed EU directive on nutrition and health claims. [30228]

Caroline Flint: An initial regulatory impact assessment (RIA) was placed in the Library with the explanatory memorandum for this proposed European Union regulation in August 2003. It has since been revised by the Food Standards Agency to reflect progress in the negotiations on the proposed measure and information received from stakeholders. The partial RIA was copied to the Chairs of the European Scrutiny Committees of both Houses in April 2005.

Obesity

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 19 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1677W, on obesity, if she will place in the Library her Department's assessment of local delivery plans. [18807]

Caroline Flint: The local development plans (LDPs) including financial plans, with all strategic health authorities (SHAs) were signed off and agreed in August. As the LDPs are owned by primary care trusts and SHAs, it is usual practice for them to publish their own LDP once agreed with the Department.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research she has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the effect of obesity on the number of visits patients make to general practitioners regarding (i) their weight and (ii) other health complaints. [30240]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 22 November 2005]:* No research has been commissioned on the effect of obesity on the number of visits patients make to general

practitioners regarding their weight and other health complaints. However, the National Audit Office report, "Tackling Obesity in England", published in 2001, estimated that there were over 500,000 consultations recorded in 1998 at a cost of £6.8 million. As part of its enquiry into obesity, the Health Select Committee estimated that this figure had risen to £12–15 million by 2002.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what estimate she has made of the number of deaths where obesity was a contributory factor in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; [30242]

(2) if she will estimate the number of deaths where obesity is a contributory factor for the next 10 years. [30243]

Caroline Flint *[holding answers 22 November 2005]:* The National Audit Office, in their report "Tackling Obesity in England", estimated there were about 31,100 deaths in England attributable to obesity in 1998. The Health Select Committee updated this estimate to 34,100 in their 2004 report on obesity.

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of NHS expenditure on treating conditions for which obesity is a contributory factor in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [30244]

Caroline Flint: *[holding answer 22 November 2005]:* Information on the amount spent by the national health service on treating conditions for which obesity is a contributory factor is not held centrally. However, the National Audit Office report, "Tackling Obesity in England", published in 2001, estimated that the direct cost to the NHS of treating obesity and its consequences in 1998 was £480 million. As part of its inquiry into obesity, the Health Select Committee estimated that in 2002 the direct cost to the NHS was between £990 million and £1,225 million.

Organ Donation

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations she has received on moving towards a presumption of consent for organ donation. [25842]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This issue was debated extensively during the passage of the Human Tissue Act 2004. The Government have looked at the evidence but believes a system of presumed consent to organ donation to be contrary to the fundamental premise of the 2004 Act, which is that consent must be the basis for the donation of human organs after death. Nor do they believe that it would be effective in increasing the number of organs available for transplantation.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action is being taken by her Department to improve organ donation rates. [25843]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Action to improve donation rates includes providing more than £10 million since 2001 to UK Transplant to run hospital-based schemes such as live donor co-ordinators and non-heartbeating schemes, to increase the number of donors; and around £150,000 in section 64 funding each year to a number of charities to promote the organ donor register and to promote organ donation more widely. UK Transplant's recent year-long campaign to mark the 10th anniversary of the organ donor register resulted in one million additional registrations. Currently, almost 13 million people have registered, agreeing to help others after their death.

Patient and Public Involvement

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what are the terms of reference of the Department's strategic review of patient and public involvement in health; and when she expects it to be completed. [24264]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* A summary of the terms of reference is as follows:

> "We propose to carry out a strategic review of PPI to understand fully the need for PPI and accountability. The review being an umbrella title for a range of activities that will take place between now and the launch of the health and care outside hospitals (HCOH) White Paper, to draw together evidence on good practice in PPI and consideration of how it can be strengthened further. The review will draw evidence from desk research mapping the current configuration and interaction of various parts of the PPI structure, the HCOH deliberative consultation, and a targeted engagement exercise that will run alongside the consultation to check out and explore ideas and their implications for PPI as they emerge.[1]"

The review is taking place alongside the your health, your care, your say consultation and the work of the having my say policy taskforce, which will make wider recommendations on how national health service and social care services need to respond to the views and choices of its users. The work of the policy taskforce will help shape a new White Paper to be published at the turn of the year on improving community health and social care.

Source:
[1] Project brief 1.0

Pesticides

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what division in her Department is responsible for health aspects of pesticide use; what research programmes have been undertaken in the last five years; and which personnel have been involved. [32285]

Caroline Flint: The Department works closely with other Government Departments and agencies on matters related to the health aspects of pesticides use. The Health Protection—toxicology and radiation branch has responsibility for advice to the Secretary of State on these health aspects. Various personnel in this branch have been involved in provision of this advice.

In the last five years, the Department has, in conjunction with Imperial College and the Chairman of the Advisory Committee on Pesticides, initiated research using the hospital episode statistics database for England concerning admitted cases of pesticide poisoning. The Department is also undertaking an anonymised retrospective review of data held by the pesticides incident appraisal panel of likely and confirmed cases of irritancy.

Premature Babies

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will assess the merits of introducing a preventative

treatment programme for premature babies based on the revised recommendations from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation. [30162]

Caroline Flint: The advice from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation on preventative treatment for respiratory syncytial virus is currently being considered by the Department.

Primary Care Trusts

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* deficit for the 2004–05 financial year and *(b)* projected deficit for the 2005–06 financial year was for (i) South Hams and West Devon primary care trust, (ii) Teignbridge primary care trust, (iii) Torbay primary care trust, (iv) South Devon Health Care NHS Trust, (v) Westcountry Ambulance Services NHS Trust, (vi) Devon Partnership NHS Trust and (vii) South West Peninsula strategic health authority. [32163]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 29 November 2005]:* The audited year-end financial position for the organisations requested is provided in the table.

£000

Organisation	*Surplus/(Deficit) 2004–05*
South West Peninsula Strategic Health Authority	5,889
South Hams and West Devon Primary Care Trust	21
Teignbridge Primary Care Trust	474
Torbay Primary Care Trust	188
South Devon Healthcare National Health Service Trust	81
Westcountry Ambulance Services NHS Trust	35
Devon Partnership NHS Trust	(535)

The Department does not currently publish unaudited information relating to the in-year financial position of NHS organisations.

Prostate Cancer

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will ensure that revisions to the prostate cancer risk management programme are discussed by the prostate cancer advisory group; [28001]

(2) when she will publish her Department's evaluation of the prostate cancer risk management programme; [28002]

(3) what estimate she has made of the proportion of general practitioners who are aware of the prostate cancer risk management programme. [28003]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* The Department is committed to evaluating the prostate cancer risk management programmes (PCRMP). The primary care resource packs, issued to all general practitioners (GPs) in England in September 2002, were developed by the Cancer Research UK primary care education research group, Oxford, in collaboration with NHS cancer screening programmes and the Department.

The Cancer Research UK primary care education research group is now in the process of evaluating the use of the packs. This evaluation includes:

- a national survey of 400 GPs to describe their current practice and attitudes regarding public service agreement (PSA) testing for prostate cancer, as well as their views of the PCRMP policy and information pack;
- a population survey of 900 men aged 40 to 75 designed to look at the impact of the PCRMP patient information sheet on men's knowledge and attitudes regarding prostate cancer and the PSA test, their future intentions regarding having a PSA test, and what factors influence these intentions;
- a series of focus groups and interviews are being conducted with a sample of men from the population survey to gather more in-depth information on their views on PSA testing, and to explore how best to assist informed decision-making on this topic.

The evaluation is being jointly funded by the Department via NHS cancer screening programmes and Cancer Research UK, and results are expected to be published in peer reviewed journals in spring 2006. The results of the evaluation will inform the revision of the pack, which will be relaunched next summer, and will be discussed by the prostate cancer advisory group.

Public Service Agreement

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether 2004 public service agreement target 6 refers to problem drug users who have been through treatment programmes in a specific year. [29891]

Caroline Flint: The 2004 public service agreement target six refers to problem drug users who have been through treatment programmes in a specific financial year.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of babies who will be affected by the revised recommendations from the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation on preventative treatment for respiratory syncytial virus. [30163]

Caroline Flint: It has been estimated by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation that the revised recommendations would mean that around 2,000 babies would receive treatment. The Department will review these estimates.

Skin Cancer

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department is taking to increase public awareness of the danger of skin cancer caused by excess exposure to sunlight. [16084]

Ms Rosie Winterton: SunSmart, run by Cancer Research UK, was launched in 2003 as the national skin cancer prevention and sun protection campaign. It was commissioned by the Department and the other United Kingdom health departments to highlight the risks and dangers associated with exposure to sunlight and to offer information and advice. SunSmart's activities include raising public and professional awareness of the dangers of skin cancer and excess sunlight through media briefings, support for health promotion activities, and through the SunSmart website. This year,

SunSmart has particularly campaigned on raising awareness of the dangers of skin cancer amongst children and young people and has helped schools in developing their own sun protection policies through school guidelines produced by SunSmart.

Smoking

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment her Department has made of the proportion of the population who want a complete ban on smoking in work places and all enclosed public spaces. [30874]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 22 November 2005]:* The results of the consultation on the smoke-free elements of the Health Bill were published on 24 November 2005, and are available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/36/21/04123621.pdf.

Copies are also available in the Library.

Mr. Garnier: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will publish the *(a)* minutes of the meetings of the (i) Scientific Committee on Tobacco and Health and (ii) its Technical Advisory Group on the effects of second-hand smoke and *(b)* the conclusions reached at each meeting. [32946]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 29 November 2005]:* We have received a Freedom of Information request from the Tobacco Manufacturers' Association for the minutes of these meetings and departmental Officials are currently working on this.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Serious Fraud Office

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Solicitor-General pursuant to the answer of 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1885W, on the Serious Fraud Office (SFO), if he will place in the Library briefing provided to the Attorney-General by the SFO relating to difficulties it has faced in *(a)* investigating and *(b)* prosecuting overseas corruption offences in such cases where legal proceedings are (i) not commenced and (ii) completed. [33543]

The Solicitor-General: I will not provide such case briefing material but earlier this year the Attorney-General commissioned a paper from the SFO setting out the policy and legislative changes that they thought would most assist them in the investigation and prosecution of overseas corruption offences. Work is continuing on the options identified and it is hoped that it will be possible to place some of the proposals in the public domain in the near future.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Afghanistan

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much money has been committed to the Afghan drug-control strategy in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [32791]

Dr. Howells: The UK has spent the following amounts on the Afghan counter narcotics (CN) strategy over the last four years:

Financial year	*Amount spent (£)*
2001–02	31,000
2002–03	1,599,036
2003–04	16,500,931
2004–05	24,442,350

In this financial year, the UK is spending in the region of £100 million on all CN activity, £50 million of which is for Alternative Livelihoods.

On 5 September, I announced new UK funding for Afghan CN activity in a joint press conference with Afghan CN Minister Qaderi. In total, we will provide more than £270 million over the next three financial years. This is a funding increase of £115 million. £130 million of this funding will be provided by the Department for International Development with the rest coming from other Government Departments including the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Ministry of Defence and the Home Office.

The funding will be spent on CN activity supporting the Government of Afghanistan in delivering their National Drugs Control Strategy. In the next three years we will focus on the following three key priorities, which we judge will make the greatest impact on tackling the drugs trade. First, targeting the trafficker and the top end of the drugs trade. Second, strengthening and diversifying legal rural livelihood opportunities. And third, developing strong and effective CN institutions. In line with these priorities, we will spend over 50 per cent. of the £270 million budget on law enforcement, interdiction and criminal justice activity.

Bribery

Chris Huhne: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many complaints of bribery have been made against British-based companies since the OECD convention on bribery came into force; how many investigations have been undertaken; and how many prosecutions have been undertaken. [32570]

Ian Pearson: Part 12 of the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 extended the jurisdiction of the UK judicial system to acts of bribery committed wholly overseas by UK nationals or companies incorporated in the UK. Since the Act came into force in February 2002 approximately 60 allegations of foreign bribery have been reported to UK law enforcement agencies. Of these about 20 are under consideration for formal investigation. So far no charges have yet been brought under the provisions of the Act.

Caribbean Countries

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what impact EU external action has had on funding for the Caribbean countries; and what progress has been made on the proposed EU sugar reforms. [30265]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: At the EU Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 24 November, EU Minister agreed to reform the EU Sugar Regime. These major reforms will bring the regime into line with other sectors of the common agricultural policy which have already been through reform. They will produce significant economic benefits and put the EU in a stronger position ahead of the World Trade Organisation negotiations in Hong Kong in December. The reforms will also benefit producers in some of the world's poorest countries, which have had to compete with dumped EU sugar exports. This will open up new opportunities for them on world and regional markets.

We recognise the negative short-term impacts that the EU reforms will have on some African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) sugar producers with preferential access to the EU market. However, a smaller price cut and longer adjustment period than originally proposed will give the ACP a better opportunity to adjust to the reforms. The EU will also provide transitional assistance to help them improve their efficiency in the sugar sector where feasible or diversify into more profitable sectors.

The Commission similarly implemented an assistance scheme for ACP banana producers in 1999 after the last reform of the EU banana regime. We are working closely with the European Commission to improve the efficiency with which funds are allocated to those who need it.

EC funding for Caribbean countries is provided principally through the European Development Fund (EDF). The EU in February this year agreed that the overall funding for the EDF, which also covers African and Pacific countries, should increase in the next EDF period. A precise figure has yet to be agreed.

Chagos Islands

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much in legal fees the Government has incurred in the Chagos Islands case in respect of *(a)* the judicial review decided on 3 November 2000, *(b)* the group litigation decided by the Court of Appeal in July 2004 and *(c)* the judicial review concerning the Orders in Council dated June 2004. [32514]

Mr. Douglas Alexander *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* There have been three separate legal cases concerning the Chagos Islands, British Indian Ocean Territory. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, has paid the following sums in respect of legal fees incurred in defending those cases:

R (Bancoult) v. Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs and another

£175,268.44—Secretary of State's legal fees; £280,000—applicant's legal fees paid by the Secretary of State following judgment in favour of the applicant.

Chagos Islanders v. (1) The Attorney-General; (2) Her Majesty's British Indian Ocean Territory Commissioner

£752,362.78—Secretary of State's legal fees.

R (Bancoult) v. Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs

£247,724.19—Secretary of State's legal fees. The case is ongoing and further legal fees will be incurred.

China

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action the Government are taking in respect of the persecution of Christians in China. [32727]

Ian Pearson: We regularly raise concerns about freedom of religious belief in China with the Chinese Government. We did so at the last UK China Human Rights Dialogue in June. Freedom of religion was a focus of the last EU China Human Rights Dialogue in October. We include cases of Christians among individual cases of concern raised within these dialogues. Ministers regularly raise human rights with Chinese interlocutors.

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to address human rights concerns in China. [32728]

Ian Pearson: We raise our concerns with the Chinese government regularly, including through the UK China Human Rights Dialogue, ministerial engagement and EU mechanisms such as the EU China Human Rights Dialogue and EU demarches.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the United Kingdom's relations with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. [32800]

Ian Pearson: The UK remains committed to working towards long-term peace and stability in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). We support the transitional government process and continue to exert pressure on the Government to hold credible elections within the June 2006 deadline. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn) reinforced this message during his recent visit to the DRC.

The UK is one of the largest bilateral donors to the DRC. We have a £55 million package of bilateral development assistance this year, with a focus on ending conflict and supporting the transition process to start to move towards long-term development. Other support includes justice reform to end the culture of impunity, delivery of health and education services, infrastructure rehabilitation, media and work on the transparent management of natural resources. We work closely with non-governmental organisations, the UN, the EC, World Bank and other bilateral partners.

Diego Garcia

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what permission is required from *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the UK diplomatic representative of the British Indian Ocean

Territory for (i) US military missions and (ii) landing of US military or civilian aircraft on the island of Diego Garcia. [32180]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The 1976 Exchange of Notes, the Diego Garcia Agreement, between the Government and the Government of the United States of America concerning a United States Navy Support Facility on Diego Garcia, British Indian Ocean Territory, states in paragraph 3 that:

> "Both Governments shall consult periodically on joint objectives, policies and activities in the area. As regards the use of the facility in normal circumstances, the US Commanding Officer and the Officer in Charge of the United Kingdom Service element shall inform each other of intended movements of ships and aircraft. In other circumstances the use of the facility shall be a matter for the joint decision of the two Governments."

The Diego Garcia Agreement is published by Her Majesty's Stationery Office in the United Kingdom Treaty Series, No. 19 (1976).

Ecuador

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the political situation in Ecuador since April. [32446]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Former President Gutierrez was dismissed by Congress in April following demonstrations in Quito in protest at interference by Gutierrez in the judiciary. Gutierrez had controversially dismissed the Supreme Court. Congress appointed the Vice-President, Alfredo Palacio, to replace him. President Palacio has called for a popular consultation on possible political reforms. His Government is in discussion with political parties in Congress, and with representative social organisations, on the possible format and timing of a popular referendum. There is no agreement so far. The appointment of new judges to a new Supreme Court is expected shortly.

With our European partners, we are monitoring the situation in Ecuador closely.

EU Directives

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which EU directives he expects will be converted into regulations in accordance with the policy set out in COM (2005) 535. [32898]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Commission made a series of proposals for simplifying existing European legislation in its Communication COM (2005) 535. We have welcomed these proposals as a practical contribution to the common efforts of the Commission and UK Presidency to pursue the European better regulation agenda—an agenda crucial to European competitiveness. The Commission Communication includes proposals to substitute directives with regulations, where this fits with simplification goals and principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. The choice of legal instrument will be decided on a case by case basis, with negotiations on the individual dossiers beginning in 2006.

EU Reform

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on recent progress in the reform of the European Union's institutions. [32419]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Government's focus during the UK presidency of the EU is on taking forward a wider debate about the future direction of the EU rather than looking once again at its institutional architecture. The EU needs to find new ways to meet better the challenge of globalisation. In that context the UK will continue to advocate positive reforms of the EU institutions where it makes sense.

European Parliament

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place in the Library a copy of the rules of procedure governing the conference of Presidents of the European Parliament. [32195]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The rules governing the conference of Presidents, who are the heads of the political groups in the European Parliament, are contained within the rules of procedure of the European Parliament, specifically rules 23, 24, 28 and 200. A copy of these rules is already in the Library of the House.

European Union (Opt-outs)

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1266W, on European Union (opt-outs), in which areas where the UK had an option not to participate the Government have joined in specific policy developments since 1997. [32002]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The UK retains the right to opt in to EU measures on visas, asylum, immigration and other policies related to the free movement of persons (Title IV TEC), as set out in the 1999 treaty of Amsterdam. We opt in to such measures when it is in our interests to co-operate with our EU partners and where they are not incompatible with our right to operate and retain our own frontier controls. The UK has opted in to all proposals and measures on judicial co-operation in civil matters.

In reference to immigration and asylum, I refer the hon. Member to the answer that my right hon. Friend, the Member for Kilmarnock and Loudoun (Mr. Browne) gave to the right hon. Member for Wells (Mr. Heathcoat-Amory), on 7 March, 2005, *Official Report*, column 1596W. Since that question was answered, the UK has opted into three further immigration and asylum proposals: a proposal for a council decision establishing a European fund for the Integration of third-country nationals and two proposals for decisions of the European Parliament and Council establishing a European refugee fund and a European return fund.

India

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on India's compliance with the Nuclear Suppliers Group rules. [32447]

Dr. Howells: India is not a member of the Nuclear Suppliers Group, and therefore is not bound by the rules of the group. India has taken action in recent years to conform to international non-proliferation norms, for example the adoption of new export control legislation in April this year. The commitments made by India in its joint statement with the US on 18 July include adhering to the guidelines of the Nuclear Suppliers Group.

Iran

David Lepper: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Iran regarding *(a)* the provisions of the 1991 Memorandum of the Supreme Revolutionary Council of Iran regarding expulsion of Baha'is from university and *(b)* access to education for Baha'is in Iran. [32081]

Dr. Howells: During the UK's presidency of the EU, we have pressed the Iranian authorities on several occasions to address the problems faced by the Baha'i community. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary did so when he first met Iran's new Foreign Minister, Manuchehr Mottaki, in September. The access of Baha'is in Iran to higher education is of particular concern. In 1993 the special representative of the UN Commission on Human Rights reported the existence of a 1991 memorandum from the Supreme Revolutionary Council of Iran that informed all authorities to deny Baha'i students access to university. The Baha'i International Community continue to report that Baha'i students are not able to access higher education unless they deny their faith or accept that it is recorded incorrectly on official university forms. The UK co-sponsored a resolution on human rights in Iran that was adopted by the United Nations General Assembly Third Committee on 18 November. The resolution expresses serious concern at, among other things, the

> "increased discrimination against the Baha'is, including . . . the denial of access to higher education."

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has raised Iranian help to Iraqi insurgents with the government of Iran. [32653]

Dr. Howells: We continue to investigate extremist Shia groups in Iraq and their reported links to Iran. Ministers and officials have discussed these links with the Iranian authorities on many occasions. Senior officials did so most recently on 15 November. We have pressed Iran to do more to live up to its public commitments to fight terrorism, improve border security, and not to interfere in Iraq's internal affairs.

Iraq

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the use of private military companies in Iraq. [32785]

Dr. Howells: The Government do not employ private companies in Iraq for military purposes. However, we do employ two companies for security purposes: ArmorGroup, which provide static guarding of our compounds in Baghdad and Basra; and Control Risks Group, which provides mobile security.

Israel

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations the Government have made to Israel on withdrawal from the Occupied Territories. [33031]

Dr. Howells: We welcome Israel's recent withdrawal from the Gaza Strip and part of the West Bank. We believe the next step should be for both sides to meet their Roadmap commitments. The Roadmap is the best way to achieve a lasting and just settlement of two viable states living side by side in peace and security with their neighbours.

Latin America (Trade Disputes)

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the trade dispute between Venezuela and Mexico. [32445]

Ian Pearson: We consider this to be a bilateral issue between the two Governments.

Liberia

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met the President of Liberia; and what was discussed. [32387]

Ian Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and the new President of Liberia, Mrs. Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf, have not met.

Nuclear Proliferation

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps have been taken by the Government to ensure the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons in the last five years. [32346]

Dr. Howells: The UK continues to regard the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty as the cornerstone of the nuclear non-proliferation regime and has played an active role over the past five years of the treaty review cycle. We have promoted strengthening of the treaty and have addressed the challenges it faces, by implementing the decisions of past review conferences, and taking forward work in the International Atomic Energy Agency and the Nuclear Suppliers' Group. We played an active role in the adoption of UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) 1540 and continue to do so in the 1540 Committee.

The UK takes part in the Proliferation Security Initiative (PSI), which contributes to fulfilling the requirement of UNSCR 1540 to take co-operative action to prevent illicit trafficking in nuclear, chemical or biological weapons, their means of delivery and related materials. The UK secured important counter-proliferation amendments to the Convention on the Suppression of Unlawful Acts at Sea.

The UK has been active on specific country issues. Working with the US, the UK was able to convince Libya in December 2003 to abandon its weapons of mass destruction programmes, which led to the uncovering and dismantlement of the international proliferation network run by AQ Khan and his associates. With France and Germany, supported by the office of the EU high representative, we have been working for two years to reach a long term arrangement which will give the international community objective guarantees regarding the exclusively peaceful nature of Iran's nuclear programme. While not directly involved in the 6 Party Talks on North Korea's nuclear programme, the UK has regularly expressed its support for the process as the best available means to reach a solution based on negotiation.

Security Personnel

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many security personnel *(a)* are employed overseas by his Department and *(b)* were so employed in the 2004–05 financial year; and how many are (i) in-house and (ii) contract staff in each case. [32336]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: In the financial year 2004–05, approximately 500 contract staff were employed under the overseas security contracts paid by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London. In addition there were 37 UK based security managers employed in our overseas missions.

Figures for those missions who have guarding contracts with local security companies are not available centrally and would only be available at disproportionate cost.

Sick Leave

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many of his Department's employees who are within one year of the official retirement age are on extended sick leave. [32599]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: There are three employees over the age of 59 in the Foreign and Commonwealth Officer who are on extended sick leave.

Terrorism (Human Rights)

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the UK has taken at EU level to ensure full respect for European human rights law in the event of the detention by a non-EU state of a person suspected of a terrorist act or intent within any state of the EU. [31961]

Ian Pearson: All EU member states are parties to the European convention on human rights and, as such, are obliged to secure to everyone within their jurisdiction the rights and freedoms set out in the convention. Individuals claiming to be the victim of a violation of a convention right by one of the parties are entitled to make an application to the European Court of Human Rights. The EU has consistently stressed the importance of respect for human rights in the fight against terrorism.

Uzbekistan

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answers of 24 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 2247–48W, on Uzbekistan, to the hon. Member for Hammersmith and Fulham (Mr. Hands), when EU Ministers plan to review the exemption of Islam Karimov and his family from the list of Uzbek officials banned from travelling to the European Union; what discussions he has had with German authorities regarding the visit of Uzbek Interior Minister Almatov; and whether Mr. Almatov is still in Germany. [33768]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The measures announced by the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 3 October in relation to Uzbekistan came into force on 14 November. They clearly demonstrate the profound concern of the European Union (EU) about the situation in Uzbekistan and the EU's strong condemnation of the refusal of the Uzbek authorities to allow an independent international inquiry into the events in Andizhan in May.

The Council decided to implement these measures for an initial period of one year. In the meantime, the Council will keep under constant review the measures it has implemented in the light of any significant changes to the current situation, in particular any that demonstrate the willingness of the Uzbek authorities to adhere to the principles of respect for human rights, rule of law and fundamental freedoms.

The German authorities consulted us before Almatov's visa was issued and we agreed with their assessment that Almatov qualified for an exemption as a case of urgent humanitarian need. Our embassy in Berlin remains in contact with the German authorities with regard to this case.

The details of Almatov's presence are a matter for the Germans.

West Papua

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the Government's policy is with regard to West Papua; if he will make representations regarding alleged human rights abuses there; what steps he is taking to ensure that this part of Indonesia is subject to international scrutiny; and what discussions his Department has had with those organisations that wish to secede from Indonesia. [32292]

Ian Pearson: We support the territorial integrity of Indonesia. We encourage the Indonesian Government to engage in dialogue with Papuan representatives and to proceed with full implementation of the 2001 Special Autonomy legislation. We are encouraged by the formation of the Papuan People's Council (MRP) in November 2005. The MRP is made up of native Papuans and will act as an advisory panel to the devolved Papuan legislature (DPRP), advising on a range of issues that affect native Papuans.

We also welcome the high priority that the President of Indonesia, Susilo Bambang Yudhoyono, has attached to the resolution of conflict in Papua and his commitment, on 17 August, to resolve the issue of Papua in a peaceful, just and dignified manner by emphasising dialogue. As

part of this, President Yudhoyono met a delegation of Papuan leaders on 9 August. He has stated that he will implement the Special Autonomy law. We and other members of the international community encourage him to do so. We hope that the MRP can work together with the local and central Government to bring about solutions to Papua's problems.

We are concerned about reports of human rights abuses in Papua, and we raise these with the Government of Indonesia.

Staff from our embassy in Jakarta make periodic visits to Papua to discuss the situation with local Papuan organisations, human rights organisations, church leaders, academics and non-governmental organisations.

Zimbabwe

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what issues he has raised with the Zimbabwe High Commission in the last 12 months; and what result was achieved in each case. [30549]

Ian Pearson: Over the last 12 months, the Zimbabwean ambassador has been summoned three times by Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Ministers. My noble Friend the Minister for Africa (Lord Triesman of Tottenham), formally protested about Operation Murambatsvina on 13 June, while my hon. Friend, the former Minister for Africa (Mr. Mullin) protested against the pre-election crackdown on the media and the opposition on 22 February. My right hon. Friend the former Minister for Europe (Mr. MacShane) also summoned the Zimbabwean ambassador in November 2004, to express concern at British journalists denied access to cover the England cricket tour of Zimbabwe. FCO officials have also maintained a dialogue with other Zimbabwe embassy staff, ensuring our concerns on the manipulated elections, the crackdown on urban poor and the continued lack of respect for good governance, human rights and the rule of law, are clear and understood.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Arrest Warrants (Gravesham)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many warrants were issued from Dartford magistrates court for the arrest of non-attendees resident in Gravesham in the last year for which figures are available. [32641]

Ms Harman: The information is as follows:

Warrants issued by Dartford magistrates court

The requested data are not available. Data is recorded for the Dartford and Gravesham Local Justice Area only.

Between 1 November 2004 and 31 October 2005 the following warrants were issued in respect of absent defendants for Dartford and Gravesham Local Justice Area.

	Number
Fail To Appear Warrants	440
Other (Crime) Warrants	21
Misc. Breach Warrants	116
Total Warrants	577

Child Care Lawyers

Mr. Hands: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on the duty of care that child care lawyers have to the children of their clients. [32077]

Bridget Prentice: Lawyers dealing with public law Children Act work may be representing the parents or other carers of children subject to a section 31 application.

In contract law, the lawyer's obligations are to his/her client to deliver the relevant service. A duty of care indicates a liability, including for damages in negligence (as opposed to contract).

Professional conduct obligations are a matter for the Law Society. The Professional Conduct Rules are set out in the Guide to the Professional Conduct of Solicitors published by the Law Society.

The Law Society's Good Practice in ChildCare Cases says

> "Solicitors must ensure that the principle that a child's interests are paramount is reflected in the conduct of the case itself. Solicitors acting for local authorities, for parents and other adult parties, or for the child or children's guardian, giving instructions on the child's behalf, all have a duty to act on the instructions of their particular client. Each client may have a different view on the child's interests. However, all solicitors can, and should, adopt a child-focused approach by ensuring that the presentation of their client's case takes into account the needs of the child throughout."

Criminal Offences

Simon Hughes: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by the Department since May 1997, broken down by Act. [26705]

Ms Harman: The following primary legislation that falls under the current responsibilities of the Department for Constitutional Affairs has been passed since May 1997:

1997–98

Audit Commission (Consolidation) Act 1998

Human Rights Act 1998

Magistrates' Courts (Procedure) Act 1998

Statute Law (Repeals) Act 1998

Petroleum Bill (Consolidation) Act 1998

1998–99

Access to Justice Act 1999

Contracts (Right of Third Parties) Act 1999

Trustee Delegation Act 1999

1999–2000

Freedom of Information Act 2000

Powers of Criminal Courts (Sentencing) Act 2000

Trustee Act 2000

2001–02

Criminal Defence Service (Advice & Assistance) Act 2001

Regulatory Reform Act 2001

Commonhold and Leasehold Act 2002

European Parliamentary Elections Act 2002

Land Registration Act 2002

Public Trustee Act 2002

2002–03

Courts Act 2003

European Parliament (Representation) Act 2003

2003–04

European Parliament & Local Elections (Pilots) Act 2004

Gender Recognition Act 2004

Statute Law (Repeals) Act 2004

2004–05

Constitutional Reform Act 2005

Mental Capacity Act 2005

Inquiries Act 2005

Franchise (Mobile Homes)

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what eligibility UK nationals with rights of residency in a mobile home for nine out of 12 months a year and a full-time address elsewhere in the UK have to vote in *(a)* general elections and *(b)* local elections in the UK in the constituency where the mobile home is located. [32869]

Ms Harman: A UK national must be resident at an address within an electoral area to be included in the relevant register of electors. Residence is not defined in law but it has been ruled by the courts to entail a considerable degree of permanence. In practice, Electoral Registration Officers (EROs) normally require someone to be resident at an address for four to six months of the year in order for them to be included in the electoral register. Provided the mobile home was permanently sited in a particular location for at least six months of each year and the elector could satisfy the ERO responsible for the electoral area where it was sited that he or she was resident in that mobile home during that period it is likely that the elector would be included in the relevant electoral registers and would therefore be entitled to vote there in any general or local election.

Vehicle Details

Norman Baker: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidance her Department has provided to *(a)* the Department for Transport and *(b)* the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA) in respect of the provision upon request by DVLA of vehicle owner details to private individuals and companies. [33696]

Ms Harman: None. The Department for Constitutional Affairs' website provides information on the Data Protection Act 1998, with particular emphasis on the needs of the general public. It is the task of the Information Commissioner, as the independent regulator established under the terms of the Data Protection Act 1998, to issue guidance on the operation of the Act, to designate best practices for data controllers, and to consider particular data processing circumstances that raise compliance issues.

Voter Registration

Mr. Bone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will introduce individual voter registration. [28304]

Ms Harman: The Electoral Administration Bill, currently before Parliament, includes provision for the collection of personal identifiers such as individual signatures and dates of birth at the point at which a person registers to vote.

In order that the effect of this policy may be tested in order to obtain evidence as to whether it should be implemented or not, the Bill provides for personal identifiers to be first piloted at a local level, with the results to be evaluated by the Electoral Commission.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers were placed in each local authority area in Essex in each year since 1997. [29743]

Mr. McNulty: Information in respect of the number of persons dispersed to an area during a given year is not available and could be produced only at disproportionate cost.

Information on the number of asylum seekers supported directly by NASS is published quarterly. The next publication covering the third quarter of 2005 (July to September) was made available on 22 November on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.hml

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum-seekers deported from the UK in *(a)* 2000, *(b)* 2001, *(c)* 2002, *(d)* 2003, *(e)* 2004 and *(f)* 2005 were due to sit examinations for (i) GCSEs or (ii) A-levels in the year they were deported; and if he will make a statement. [29998]

Mr. McNulty: No information is available to the Home Office on asylum seekers who were due to sit GCSE or A-level exams in their year of removal.

Information on the removals of asylum applicants is published quarterly on the Home Office RDS website:

www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Removals of failed minor asylum seekers by quarter for 2004 and 2005[1]

	2004					2005	
	Q1	*Q2*	*Q3*	*Q4*	*Total*	*Q1*	*Q2*
Adult	3,485	3,290	3,180	3,030	12,985	3,075	3,160
Minor	605	485	400	405	1,895	365	425
Unknown[2]	10	10	10	5	30	0	5
Grand total	4,100	3,780	3,585	3,440	14,905	3,445	3,590

[1] Minors defined as under 18 on the date of their removal.

[2] For those where no date of birth is available.

Notes:

1. This is based on provisional management information.
2. The figures have been rounded to the nearest five and totals may not sum.

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers have been returned to EU member states under the provisions of the Dublin II Regulation since it came into force on 1 September 2003. [31459]

Mr. McNulty: A total of approximately 2,600 failed asylum seekers (including dependants) have been returned under the provisions of the Dublin II Regulations between 1 September 2003 and 30 September 2005. These totals are based on internal management information. The regular asylum statistics are available from the Library of the House and on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Community Support Officers

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether he plans to increase the number of police community support officers working in *(a)* Battle, *(b)* Etchingham, *(c)* Ticehurst and *(d)* Hurst Green in East Sussex; [32694]

(2) whether he plans to increase the number of community support police officers in Bexhill-on-Sea; and how many are working in the town. [32696]

Hazel Blears: We are making funding available to help increase the number of community support officers (CSOs) in England and Wales to 24,000 by 2008. This investment will help deliver our commitment that by 2008 every area in England and Wales will have access to a dedicated, visible, accessible and responsive neighbourhood policing team.

CSOs are employed by police authorities, and their deployment is an operational matter for the Chief Constable. At 30 June 2005 Sussex police had 237 CSOs of whom the Hastings and Rother Division, which includes Bexhill, had 36.

Countryside Alliance Protests

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Act during the Countryside Alliance protests in Parliament Square on 15 September 2004. [30476]

Hazel Blears: According to police records, no arrests were made on 15 September 2004 under the Terrorism Act 2000.

County Councils Legislation

Mr. Whittingdale: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will introduce legislation to extend the provisions of the Kent County Council Act 2001 and the Medway Council Act 2001 to the whole of England and Wales; and if he will make a statement; [32334]

(2) what measures he is taking to tackle the sale of counterfeit goods at car boot sales; and if he will make a statement. [32333]

Hazel Blears: The Kent County Council Act 2001 and the Medway Council Act 2001 (the Kent Acts) provide for the regulation of traders in both second-hand goods and occasional sales. The Act required both councils to submit jointly a report to the Home Secretary on the working of the provisions of the Acts. When I laid their report before Parliament in December 2004 I undertook to consult further on the case for extending the legislation throughout England and Wales.

The consultation paper which I plan to launch shortly will seek views on the best way forward. While focusing predominantly on the issues around the registration of traders in second-hand goods, the consultation will also seek views on the regulation of occasional sales, such as car boot sales.

Criminal Records Bureau Checks

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Criminal Records Bureau checks in Wales have given incorrect or inappropriate information on criminal records to individuals applying for an enhanced disclosure award broken down by regions of Wales. [30781]

Andy Burnham: The information sought by the hon. member for Bridgend is not available in the format requested.

The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) does operate a procedure for applicants to contest, or dispute the information provided on their Disclosure. If, upon investigation the CRB finds that a conviction(s) do not relate to the person for whom the Disclosure was issued, they will re-issue a corrected Disclosure free of charge. Prior to the launch of the CRB, had an applicant applied for a position which required a police check under the previous arrangements, details of any alleged convictions would have been passed only to the prospective employer and not to the applicant. Applicants now have the opportunity to contest any conviction details.

Crime Statistics

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total level of violent crime recorded by the police in North Kent was in each of the last two years for which figures are available. [32633]

Hazel Blears: The available information relates to the number of offences recorded in the North Kent basic command unit (BCU) and is given in the table.

Number of offences recorded in the North Kent basic command unit, 2004–05

Offence type	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Violence against the person	2,812	3,387
Sexual offences[1]	141	184
Robbery	288	355
Violent crime	3,241	3,926

[1] The Sexual Offences Act 2003, introduced in May 2004, altered the definition and coverage of sexual offences.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average number of crimes per day was in the Essex police force area in each of the last five years. [31393]

Hazel Blears: The published data relate to the number of crimes recorded by the Essex police in terms of financial years and is given in the table.

The introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002 had the effect of increasing the total number of offences recorded in Essex by an estimated 21 per cent. in the first year. This means that figures for the financial year 2002–03 and later are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Table :1 offences recorded by the police in Essex—2000–01 and 2001–02

Period	*Total no. of recorded offences*
2000–01	106,768
2001–02	113,150

Note:
The data in this table is prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Table 2: offences recorded by the police in Essex 2002–03 to 2004–05

Period	*Total no. of recorded offences*
2002–03	136,181
2003–04	144,512
2004–05	134,789

Note:
The data in this table takes account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent assessment he has made of the work of the Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority; and if he will make a statement. [32805]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Criminal Injuries Compensation Authority (CICA) is a non-departmental public body, which is responsible for all first and reviewed decisions on applications made under the Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme. Appeals against decisions of the Authority are considered by an independent tribunal, the Criminal Injuries Compensation Appeals Panel. There is no onward right of appeal to the Secretary of State. The Home Secretary has policy responsibility for the Compensation Scheme, and the general working of CICA is kept under review by the Home Office on a continuing basis.

Criminal Justice Act

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made towards implementing conditional cautioning under Part 3 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003; and if he will make a statement. [32883]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Conditional Cautions scheme has been implemented in six Early Implementation Areas to test its application and adaptation from policy to local frontline delivery.

This began in one police basic command unit in each area, with the intention of growing the scheme across the wider police force area once the pathfinder phase was complete. Lancashire is the first force to use the scheme across their police force. The evaluation report from these Early Implementation Areas is due to be published in early 2006 but initial indications suggest that overall use of the scheme is positive. Victim satisfaction with the scheme is reportedly high and practitioners in the areas see benefit in rolling the scheme out more widely.

Offenders questioned as part of the evaluation have also considered the scheme a success. The strategy for national rollout of Conditional Cautions is currently being planned, taking into consideration the evidence of the Early Implementation Areas. Initial rollout across one basic command unit per criminal justice area is expected to be completed within 18 months.

Custodial Sentences (Women)

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what offences custodial sentences were imposed on women in the last 12 months for which information is available. [32314]

Fiona Mactaggart: This information is provided in the latest Home Office sentencing statistics publication: Sentencing Statistics 2004, HOSB 15/05 England and Wales (Chapter two. Table 2.10, Number of persons sentenced to immediate custody by sex and offence group). This publication is available in the House Library.

DNA Profiles

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people under 18 years have DNA profiles stored in the police national database without having been charged or cautioned for any offence. [24974]

Hazel Blears: At the 31 October 2005 there were 3,466,792 subject sample profiles loaded to the National DNA Database. Of these 741,605 related to people who were under 18 at the time the sample was taken.

We cannot currently determine how many of the people sampled were not subsequently charged or cautioned. Technical changes to the link between the Police National Computer and the National DNA

Database to enable this information to be captured are under consideration by the Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO).

Electronic Monitoring Contract

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment has been made of the electronic monitoring contract; and if he will make a statement. [32794]

Fiona Mactaggart: New contracts with two electronic monitoring service providers came into operation on one April 2005 covering England and Wales. Monthly auditing by Home Office officials indicates that the service providers' compliance with contractual obligations is generally satisfactory.

The National Audit Office has been conducting a study of electronic monitoring in England and Wales this year, and its report is expected at about the end of the year.

Holding Cells (Medical Practitioners)

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what monitoring is carried out of the length of time taken by medical practitioners contracted to visit prisoners to arrive at the holding cells where the prisoner is awaiting police questioning; [28515]

(2) what assessment he has made of the amount of police time spent awaiting medical practitioners contracted to visit prisoners in holding cells prior to questioning. [20335]

Hazel Blears: Monitoring the length of time taken by medical practitioners to visit detainees at a police station awaiting questioning is a local matter for the individual police force concerned. To help minimise the impact of any potential delay and to help improve the response times for accessing healthcare treatment, the Code of Practice on Detention, Treatment and Questioning of Persons by Police Officers (Code C) issued under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 was amended in April 2003 to allow the use of a healthcare professional. This means the ability to use a clinically qualified person working within the scope of practice as determined by their relevant professional body.

Guidance was also issued at that time to chief officers to assist them in setting up local protocols to encourage partnership working with healthcare agencies.

Horses (Protective Headgear)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females have been (i) charged with and (ii) convicted of offences under section 1 of the Horses (Protective Headgear for Young Riders) Act 1990 in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement on the operation of the Act. [29298]

Fiona Mactaggart: Statistics on the number of persons charged with a crime are not centrally collected.

Data collected on the Home Office Court Proceedings database for offences under these sections of the Horses (Protective Headgear for Young Riders) Act 1990 form part of a miscellaneous group, which cannot be separately identified.

Hunting with Dogs

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been arrested for breaching the law banning hunting with dogs since it was introduced. [32986]

Hazel Blears: The Hunting Act 2004 came into force on 1 February 2005. The summary offences introduced under the Act are non-notifiable and as a result are not covered by the Home Office statistical collection on arrests for notifiable (recorded crime) offences.

Imitation Firearms

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many incidents involving imitation firearms occurred in the Essex police force area in each of the last five years. [31392]

Hazel Blears: The available information is given in the tables.

Table 1: Offences involving imitation firearms recorded by Essex police, 1999–2000 to 2001–02

	Number of offences
1999–2000	4
2000–01	3
2001–02[1]	11

[1] Figures for some crime categories may have been inflated by some police forces implementing the principles of the National Crime Recording Standard in advance of national implementation.

Table 2: Offences involving imitation firearms recorded by Essex police, 2002–03 and 2003–04

	Number of offences
2002–03[1]	8
2003–04	14

[1] The National Crime Recording Standard was introduced on 1 April 2002. Figures before and after this date are not directly comparable.

Independent Police Complaints Commission

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many complaints have been *(a)* made and *(b)* upheld against the Independent Police Complaints Commission since its inception; and if he will make a statement; [32549]

(2) how many staff were employed at the Independent Police Complaints Commission on *(a)* 1 May and *(b)* 1 November; and if he will make a statement; [32550]

(3) how many *(a)* management, *(b)* administrative and support staff and *(c)* investigative and casework staff at the Independent Police Complaints Commission are (i) temporary, (ii) casual and (iii) agency; what percentage of the total number of staff each category represents; and if he will make a statement; [32561]

(4) how many permanent full-time equivalent staff *(a)* joined and *(b)* left the Independent Police Complaints Commission in each month since its inception; and if he will make a statement; [32583]

(5) what steps the Independent Police Complaints Commission has taken to ensure that future information requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 are responded to within the required 20 days; and if he will make a statement. [32548]

Hazel Blears: The Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) is responsible for the management of the police complaints system. I will ensure that the Chairman receives copies of the questions and replies to you directly. Copies of the letters containing the IPCC's response will be placed in the House Libraries.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the number of non-recorded complaints against the police in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [32552]

Hazel Blears: The non-recording of the complaints against the police is contained in the police complaints procedure for which the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) have responsibility in their role as the guardians of the police complaints system. Non-recording of complaints is a matter for the appropriate authority and the IPCC and is not a matter on which I should make an assessment.

National Criminal Justice Board

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the National Criminal Justice Board in providing direction for the criminal justice system. [16474]

Fiona Mactaggart: The National Criminal Justice Board (NCJB) provides effective, joint leadership for the Criminal Justice System. It has developed a vision and clear set of goals for Criminal Justice Reform and oversees delivery, primarily through the 42 local criminal justice boards. Under its leadership the Criminal Justice System is currently well on course to meet all its Public Service Agreement targets.

National Policing Improvement Agency

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the *(a)* funding, *(b)* staffing and *(c)* work of the National Policing Improvement Agency. [26652]

Hazel Blears: An Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO)-led Programme Team has been established to deliver the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA). Delivery of the programme is still in its early stages. The agency is scheduled to be fully operational from 1 April 2007 subject to legislation. Its purpose is to drive improvements in policing. I have yet to determine the exact staffing levels, but these will be considerably lower than the current functions it will replace. Similarly, I am considering the specific funding provision for the NPIA which will be within the current budgets of the existing organisations.

New Technology (Crime Prevention)

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list police forces which are carrying out pilots on *(a)* wireless technology to combat crime and *(b)* hand-held computing devices. [32546]

Hazel Blears: Information is not held centrally on all the initiatives conducted by individual forces on either wireless technology or hand-held computing devices. The Police Information Technology Organisation is currently working with four forces, and one as a reserve, on trialling the use of wireless technology and hand-held devices.

Non-reported Crime

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of non-reported crimes in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [32553]

Hazel Blears: The British Crime Survey (BCS) collects information on whether victims report crimes to the police.

Based on the 2004–05 BCS, 58 per cent. of comparable crimes had not been reported to the police. This figure is the same as that for BCS interviews in 2003–04. Comparable crimes are vandalism, domestic burglary, vehicle related theft, bicycle theft, theft from the person, robbery, common assault and wounding.

Whether crimes are reported to the police varies considerably by type of offence. Thefts of vehicles are most likely to be reported (95 per cent.). Domestic burglaries in which something was stolen had the second highest reporting rate (77 per cent.). Reporting rates are relatively low for crimes such as common assault, theft from the person and vandalism (34 per cent., 32 per cent. and 32 per cent. in 2004–05).

The majority of crimes that go unreported are relatively minor offences. The more serious offences in the comparable subset—wounding, robbery, theft of vehicles and burglary with loss—only accounted for 16 per cent. of incidents that were not reported in 2004–05).

O'Connor Report

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the definition is of proactive capability as used in the O'Connor Report published by HM Inspector of Constabulary in the context of policing protective services. [32853]

Hazel Blears: The Protective Services Review examined to what extent forces have the necessary capability (i.e. access to the specialist skills and assets) and capacity to deal with serious and organised crime, terrorism, major crimes and other significant events without impacting on other policing services.

One of the key components was an assessment of the degree to which each force is practised and prepared for these types of incidents, its investment in seeking proactive intelligence, and the extent to which it is engaged in enforcement and preventative activity, such as murder suppression. As such, proactive capability

cannot be defined in numerical terms, instead the litmus test is

"is a force able to do more than just react to incidents?"

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) concluded that many forces, but particularly the smaller ones, had low levels of readiness and were only able to react to these incidents as they occurred as opposed to predicting and preventing them. Additional work is now being carried out to determine what proportions of a force's strength might need to be dedicated to this sort of activity to provide an effective service, however this work is still in the early stages.

Philip Lawrence

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make inquiries into the reasons why the widow of Mr. Philip Lawrence was asked questions by the Probation Service regarding the possible release of the person convicted of his killing; and if he will make a statement. [30494]

Fiona Mactaggart: It is not appropriate to discuss the details of an individual's contact with the National Probation Service, particularly where it would involve the disclosure of personal information. However, set out are details of the National Probation Service Victim Contact Scheme in operation across England and Wales.

The National Probation Service has a statutory duty to operate a Victim Contact Scheme. The scheme operates for all victims where the offender has been sentenced to 12 months or more for a sexual or violent offence.

The purpose of the scheme is to provide a point of contact with the probation service through which victims are able to express any concerns or anxieties about the offender and, if they wish, be kept informed about key stages in an offender's sentence.

Victims are also offered the opportunity to express their views on the offender's conditions of release. The victim's views on licence conditions will usually be set out in a written report from the victim contact officer to those responsible for making decisions about an offender's release.

Participation in the scheme is entirely voluntary and victims may choose to take up the offer of contact at any point during an offender's sentence. The probation service's work with victims is an important contribution to community safety and helps to address issues of risk to the public, as well as providing support to victims.

Police

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received on the proposed changes to the structure of North Yorkshire police force. [25429]

Hazel Blears: I wrote to all members on 9 November with an update on the progress of the police force structures review. This letter included a regional summary of options. The Home Secretary made a written ministerial statement with an overview of the national picture on 11 November. The review process is ongoing and the onus is on police forces and authorities to develop their proposals for submission to the Home Secretary on 23 December. Consultation is a vital part of the process and police forces and authorities are consulting with their local communities and stakeholders on their proposals.

Mr. Dunne: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the evidential basis was for the minimum force size of 4,000 officers or 6,000 personnel in the Closing the Gap efficiency criteria for strategic police forces. [27594]

Hazel Blears: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary's (HMIC) report, Closing the Gap, found that forces with over 4,000 officers or 6,000 staff tended to meet the standard for protective services in that they demonstrated good reactive capability with a clear measure of proactive capacity. Protective services were assessed against national standards identified and agreed with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) on intelligence (what is known about an issue), prevention (what is being done to stop this) and enforcement/resolution (what ability is there to intervene effectively).

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his policy is on the routine arming of police officers; and if he will make a statement. [32652]

Hazel Blears: The Government believe that police officers should not generally be armed. The fact that officers are not routinely armed gives a character to our policing that we should not readily give up. Where an operational need arises specialist armed officers should be available to be deployed. The use of firearms by the police should always be as a last resort.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which police forces have diving units; how many divers each force has; when *(a)* diving suits and *(b)* equipment was last replaced in each unit; and if he will make a statement. [32675]

Hazel Blears: Data are provided in the following tables and has only been provided for forces with figures. Figures are provided for officers and staff whose main function is recorded as 'Underwater-Operational'. This includes members predominantly employed in an Underwater Search Unit, but not including those employed in Marine Units.

Figures for members predominantly employed in Marine or boat patrol are given separately. It should be noted while this function may include diving, it is not possible to specify how many of these officers are employed specifically in diving.

Figures regarding diving equipment are not collected centrally.

Police officers and police staff whose main function is 'Underwater-Operational'[1], by force, as at 31 March 2005

	Full-time equivalent
Avon and Somerset	8
Cumbria	2
Greater Manchester	2
Humberside	1
Lancashire	2
Merseyside	2

Police officers and police staff whose main function is 'Underwater-Operational'[1], by force, as at 31 March 2005

	Full-time equivalent
Metropolitan Police	8
North Yorkshire	6
Nottinghamshire	3
South Wales	8
Sussex	8
Thames Valley	8
West Yorkshire	11

[1] Staff with multiple responsibilities (or designations) are recorded under their primary role or function. The deployment of police officers is an operational matter for individual Chief Constables.
'Underwater-Operational'—includes staff who are predominantly employed in an Underwater Search Unit but not including officers employed in Marine Units.

Police officers and police staff whose main function is 'Marine-Operational, Operational Support or Organisational Support'[1], by force, as at 31 March 2005

	Full-time equivalent
Dorset	7
Dyfed-Powys	4
Essex	12
Hampshire	9
Kent	6
Metropolitan Police	66
Northumbria	21

[1] Staff with multiple responsibilities (or designations) are recorded under their primary role or function. The deployment of police officers is an operational matter for individual Chief Constables.
'Marine-Operational'—includes staff who predominantly conduct marine or boat patrol including supervisors.
'Marine-Operational Support'—includes staff who predominantly perform support function within Marine Sections/ Units.
'Marine-Organisational Support'—includes staff who predominantly perform support functions within Marine Sections.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to reduce the number of fatalities caused by police cars. [32762]

Hazel Blears: Both the Government and the police recognise that effective police pursuit of offenders, response to emergencies and conduct of other business, must take full account of the risk to the public. The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) launched in 2004 new Guidance for the Management of Police Pursuits to help achieve this. There is continuing work to ensure that the correct training is provided, that there are adequate management controls, and that robust risk assessments are in place to ensure that safety is maintained at all times. Operational measures also exist to avoid pursuits or curtail them.

We are co-operating fully with the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC), which announced on 17 July a review of road traffic incidents involving police vehicles that result in a fatality or serious injury. The review, which is due to report its findings by November 2006, will aim to identify any lessons that can be learned for police policy and operational practice.

Ian Lucas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list police authorities in England and Wales which the North Wales police paid for using their officers in the last three years for which figures are available; and how much North Wales police paid to each authority in each year. [32982]

Hazel Blears: North Wales police inform me that payments to police authorities for the provision of mutual aid have been made as set out in the following table:

North Wales police: mutual aid payments 2002–03 to 2004–05

	Authority	Amount (£)
2002–03	Merseyside	816
2003–04	Merseyside	21,459
	West Mercia	16,478
	Dyfed Powys	825
2004–05	—	Nil

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the functions of the Police Bureaucracy Adviser are; and if he will make a statement. [33596]

Hazel Blears: The National Bureaucracy Adviser provides practical assistance to forces in the timely and effective implementation of their work on reducing bureaucratic burdens on police officers in order to increase the capacity of officers to undertake frontline duties. This includes visiting forces to spread good practice; challenge, where necessary, existing practices; and drive force-led reductions in bureaucracy.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the extent to which the level of formula grant will need to be adjusted as a result of the proposed police officer pension funding changes from April 2006; and what representations he has received from police authorities on this issue. [32893]

Hazel Blears: From 2006–07 a specific pension grant will be created and used to 'top up' any deficits on the pension accounts of police authorities in England and Wales. In the first two years of the new system of financing, this central pension budget will be funded by a reduction in police grant based on the sum of each authority's estimate of its net pension requirement after accounting for income from employees and employers contributions.

The transfers in 2006–07 and 2007–08 from general grant will be £313 million and £328 million respectively. The change in financing of police pensions will have no net impact on the level of funding made available to the police in England and Wales.

Representations from the police have been fully taken into account in determining this process.

Prisoners

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people leaving prison entered employment, education or training through the Custody to Work initiative in the latest year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [32789]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information on the numbers of prisoners leaving custody in 2004–05 and entering employment, training or education (ETE) is as follows. The outcomes include those who attended FRESHSTART appointments at Jobcentre Plus, whereby prisoners who do not have a job or training

place to go to on release are linked into employment, training and benefits advice and support immediately after release.

In recording outcomes there is no differentiation made between those attained through the Custody to Work initiative or any other.

	2004–05
Discharges	85,685
Info Recorded	83,991
ETE outcomes (inc FRESHSTART)	41,146
ETE outcomes (inc FRESHSTART) as percentage of total discharges	48

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many prisoners have left prison in each of the last eight years; and how many left prison without accommodation; [31822]

(2) if he will make a statement on the number of prisoners leaving prison without accommodation; [31823]

(3) what steps he is taking to strengthen data collection on prisoners' accommodation status on leaving prison; and if he will make a statement. [31824]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Prison Service Accommodation Key Performance Indicator has been in place since 2003. The number of prisoners discharged from custody, and the number of those without accommodation to go to are given in the table.

The level of recording has increased from 76 per cent. in 2003–04 to 95 per cent. in 2005–06 year-to-date. The Prison Service Custody to Work co-ordinators continue to work with establishments to ensure that accurate data is entered onto the Local Inmate Data System (LIDS).

	Discharged	*Discharged without accommodation*
2003–04	87,449	39,764
2004–05	85,685	18,797
2005–06 (Year to Date)	50,004	6,435

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners received special family visits in each of the last three years. [32884]

Fiona Mactaggart: There are no collated figures available on the number of prisoners receiving special family visits. Such visits, which can vary in kind, are organised by individual prisons taking account of local needs.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made towards the introduction of targets for prisons in the area of family ties; and if he will make a statement. [32885]

Fiona Mactaggart: There is an existing Prison Performance Standard on Family Life which contains key baselines against which prisons are audited. There are no current plans to introduce targets.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the costs per minute to prisoners are of calls from prison to *(a)* local, *(b)* national, *(c)* international and *(d)* mobile lines. [32886]

Fiona Mactaggart: The rate for national and local calls within the UK is identical at 11p per minute (10p minimum charge for 55 seconds plus 1p for each 5.5 seconds or part thereof).

Calls to Mobiles within the UK are charged at the following rates:

	Pence
Monday to Friday 08.01–18.00	63.0
Monday to Thursday 18.01–08.00	37.5
Friday 18.01–24.00	37.5
00.01 Saturday to 24.00 Sunday	19.0

International calls are charged at the rates in the following table:

All charges are per minute @ £0.00

Country	*BT charge band*	*BT price*
Afghanistan	13	3.00
Albania	3	1.00
Algeria	3	1.00
Andorra	1	0.75
Angola	13	3.00
Anguilla	5	1.20
Antarctica Aus Try	13	3.00
Antigua and Barbuda	5	1.20
Antilles (Dutch)	8	2.00
Argentina	10	2.40
Armenia	8	2.00
Aruba	8	2.00
Ascension Island	13	3.00
Australia	6	1.00
Austria	2	0.75
Azerbaijan Republic	a8	2.40
Azores	1	0.75
Bahamas	5	1.20
Bahrain	8	2.00
Bangladesh	12	2.00
Barbados	5	1.20
Belarus	a8	2.40
Belgium	a1	0.66
Belize	8	2.00
Benin	10	2.40
Bermuda	5	1.20
Bhutan	14	3.00
Bolivia	13	3.00
Bosnia Herzegovina	3	1.00
Botswana	10	2.40
Brazil	10	2.40
Brunei Darussalam	14	3.00
Bulgaria	3	1.00
Burkina Faso	13	3.00
Burundi	13	3.00
Cambodia	17	3.00
Cameroon	10	2.40
Canada	4	0.75
Canary Islands	1	0.75
Cape Verde	13	3.00
Cayman Islands	5	1.20
Cent African Rep	13	3.00
Chad	13	3.00
Chatham Island	6	1.00
Chile	10	2.40
China	14	3.00
Christmas Island	6	1.00
Cocos Islands	6	1.00

All charges are per minute @ £0.00

Country	*BT charge band*	*BT price*
Colombia	13	3.00
Comoros	10	2.40
Congo	13	3.00
Cook Islands	13	3.00
Costa Rica	10	2.40
Cote d'Ivoire	10	2.40
Croatia	3	1.00
Cuba	13	3.00
Cyprus	2	0.75
Czech republic	2	0.75
Denmark	a1	0.66
Diego Garcia	13	3.00
Djibouti	13	3.00
Dominica	5	1.20
Dominican Republic	a5	1.20
East Timor	17	3.00
Ecuador	13	3.00
Egypt	9	2.40
El Salvador	10	2.40
Equatorial Guinea	13	3.00
Eritrea	10	2.40
Estonia	a8	2.40
Ethiopia	10	2.40
Falkland Islands	13	3.00
Faroe Islands	1	0.75
Fiji	13	3.00
Finland	2	0.75
France	a1	0.66
French Guiana	13	3.00
French Polynesia	13	3.00
Gabon	10	2.40
Gambia	10	2.40
Georgia	8	2.00
Germany	a1	0.66
Ghana	10	2.40
Gibraltar	1	0.75
Greece	1	0.75
Greenland	13	3.00
Grenada	5	1.20
Guadeloupe	8	2.00
Guam	13	3.00
Guatemala	10	2.40
Guinea	13	3.00
Guinea Bissau	13	3.00
Guyana	8	2.00
Haiti	8	2.00
Honduras	10	2.40
Hong Kong	7	1.00
Hungary	2	0.75
Iceland	3	1.00
India	16	2.00
Indonesia	14	3.00
Iran	10	2.40
Iraq	10	2.40
Ireland (Republic of)	IR	0.66
Israel	a9	2.40
Italy (+ Vatican City)	1	0.75
Jamaica	5	1.20
Japan	1	1.50
Jordan	9	2.40
Kazakhstan	a8	2.40
Kenya	10	2.40
Kiribati	13	3.00
Korea (North)	13	3.00
Korea (South)	14	3.00
Kuwait	8	2.00
Kyrgyz Republic	a8	2.40
Laos	13	3.00
Latvia	a8	2.40
Lebanon	9	2.40
Lesotho	10	2.40
Liberia	10	2.40

All charges are per minute @ £0.00

Country	*BT charge band*	*BT price*
Libya	3	1.00
Liechtenstein	a1	0.66
Lithuania	a8	2.40
Luxembourg	a1	0.66
Macao	14	3.00
Macedonia	3	1.00
Madagascar	13	3.00
Madeira	1	0.75
Malawi	10	2.40
Malaysia	11	1.50
Maldives	13	3.00
Mali	13	3.00
Malta	2	0.75
Marshall Island	13	3.00
Martinique	8	2.00
Mauritania	13	3.00
Mauritius	10	2.40
Mayotte	10	2.40
Mexico	14	3.00
Micronesia	13	3.00
Midway Island	17	3.00
Moldova	8	2.00
Monaco	1	0.75
Mongolia	13	3.00
Montserrat	5	1.20
Morocco	3	1.00
Mozambique	13	3.00
Myanmar	13	3.00
Namibia	10	2.40
Nauru	13	3.00
Nepal	14	3.00
Netherlands	a1	0.66
New Caledonia	13	3.00
New Zealand	6	1.00
Nicaragua	10	2.40
Niger	13	3.00
Nigeria	15	2.40
Niue	13	3.00
Norfolk Island	13	3.00
Northern Marianas	13	3.00
Norway	2	0.75
Oman	8	2.00
Pakistan	12	2.00
Palau	13	3.00
Panama	10	2.40
Papua New Guinea	13	3.00
Paraguay	10	2.40
Peru	10	2.40
Philippines	14	3.00
Pitcairn Islands	13	3.00
Poland	2	0.75
Portugal	1	0.75
Puerto Rico	5	1.20
Qatar	8	2.00
Reunion	13	3.00
Rodriguez Islands	10	2.40
Romania	a8	2.40
Russia	a8	2.40
Rwandese Republic	13	3.00
Samoa (US)	13	3.00
Samoa (Western)	13	3.00
San Marino	1	0.75
S Tome and Principe	13	3.00
Saudi Arabia	8	2.00
Senegal	10	2.40
Seychelles	10	2.40
Sierra Leone	10	2.40
Singapore	7	1.00
Slovak Republic	2	0.75
Slovakia	3	1.00
Slovenia	3	1.00
Solomon Islands	13	3.00

All charges are per minute (a £0.00

Country	*BT charge band*	*BT price*
Somalia	10	2.40
South Africa	a8	2.40
Spain	1	0.75
Sri Lanka	12	2.00
St. Helena	13	3.00
St. Kitts and Nevis	5	1.20
St. Lucia	5	1.20
St. Pierre and Miquelon	5	1.20
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	5	1.20
Sudan	10	2.40
Suriname	10	2.40
Swaziland	10	2.40
Sweden	a1	0.66
Switzerland	a1	0.66
Syria	9	2.40
Taiwan	14	3.00
Tajikistan	a8	2.40
Tanzania	10	2.40
Thailand	14	3.00
Togolese	10	2.40
Tokelau	13	3.00
Tonga	13	3.00
Trinidad and Tobago	5	1.20
Tristan Da Cunha	13	3.00
Tunisia	3	1.00
Turkey	3	1.00
Turkmenistan	a8	2.40
Turks and Caicos Islands	5	1.20
Tuvalu	13	3.00
US Virgin Islands	5	1.20
US Virgin Islands	5	1.20
Uganda	10	2.40
Ukraine	a8	2.40
United Arab Emirates	8	2.00
Uruguay	10	2.40
USA	4	0.75
Uzbekistan	a8	2.40
Vanuatu	13	3.00
Vatican City (Italy)	1	0.75
Venezuela	10	2.40
Vietnam	13	3.00
Wake Island	17	3.00
Wallis and Futuna	17	3.00
Yemen	10	2.40
Zaire	13	3.00
Zambia	10	2.40
Zimbabwe	10	2.40

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many girls under the age of 18 years in prison in England and Wales are reported *(a)* to suffer from mental problems and *(b)* to self-harm. [30327]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information available about the prevalence of mental health problems for girls and young women is recorded in the Office for National Statistics Survey "Psychiatric Morbidity among Young Offenders in England and Wales." A copy is in the Library. The following table shows the number of reported incidents of self-harm involving female juveniles (those aged 15 to 17 inclusive) in 2003, 2004 and in 2005 to July.

Female juveniles

	Number of incidents	*Number of Individuals*[2]
2003	462	67
2004	585	73
2005[1]	469	56

[1] January to July 2005 only.
[2] Based on the 90 per cent. of recorded incidents where the individual is identifiable.

Prisons

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisons have a policy on *(a)* HIV/AIDS and *(b)* hepatitis C; and what percentage of the total number of prisons this represents. [29829]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Health Services for Prisoners Standard of May 2004 requires all establishments to have effective arrangements for the prevention, control and management of communicable diseases. We will be considering findings of the Prison Reform Trust and the National AIDS Trust just published work on "HIV and Hepatitis in UK Prisons: addressing prisoners' healthcare needs" in due course.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the incidence of hepatitis C among *(a)* male and *(b)* female prisoners. [29830]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information about the number of prisoners with hepatitis C is not collected centrally. The then Public Health Laboratory Service (PHLS) undertook an unlinked, anonymous survey of the prevalence of blood borne viruses among prisoners in England in 1997–98. This indicated that 9 per cent. of adult men, 11 per cent. of women and 0.6 per cent. of male young offenders had evidence of previous exposure to hepatitis C.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures are being taken to encourage prisons without a policy on *(a)* HIV/AIDS and *(b)* hepatitis C to adopt one; and what assessment he has made of the merits of giving prisoners access to free (i) condoms and (ii) needles. [31438]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Health Services for Prisoners Standard of May 2004 requires all establishments to have effective arrangements for the prevention, control and management of communicable diseases. We will be considering findings of the Prison Reform Trust and the National AIDS Trust just published work on "HIV and Hepatitis in UK Prisons: addressing prisoners' healthcare needs" in due course.

Prison doctors were advised in 1995 that they should make condoms available to individual prisoners, on application, if in their clinical judgment, there is a risk of transmission of HIV infection during sexual activity.

The Prison Service is planning to issue, in early 2006, revised guidance and instructions which aim to clarify the policy on condoms so that it can be applied more evenly across the prison estate.

The Prison Service has no present plans to introduce a needle exchange scheme. It continues to monitor developments in the field both at home and abroad,

including existing practice in the community here, policy and practice in custodial settings abroad and the effectiveness of needle exchange schemes over other harm minimisation measures.

Schedule 1 Offenders

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Schedule 1 offenders in the community have received or are receiving treatment under sex offender treatment programmes. [32780]

Paul Goggins: The majority of sex offender treatment programmes in the community are run by the National Probation Service. Accredited sex offender treatment programmes began to be implemented in 2001 and by October 2003 all Probation Areas were running an accredited programme. By 2005 1,100 individuals had completed treatment, and at any one time an estimated 1,800 sex offenders will be attending treatment programmes on a weekly basis.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* average length and *(b)* variance has been in 2005 of (i) the time between release from prison of Schedule 1 offenders and their embarkation on a sex offenders treatment programme and (ii) the duration of such a sex offender's treatment programme. [32784]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested on average length and variance between release and start of treatment is not collected centrally. Offenders who are subject to licence conditions to address their offending behaviour are required to commence work as soon as possible. However, for sex offenders there is often a period of preparatory work and assessment, before commencement on a treatment programme is possible.

The duration of sex offender treatment programmes in the community is between 12 months and two years depending on risk and treatment need identified.

Terrorism

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the requests for an extension of the maximum pre-charge detention period for suspected terrorists by the Security Services, referred to by the Prime Minister on 5 August and by the Minister of State for Crime, Security and Communities on 12 October. [30335]

Hazel Blears: The Government's position on the maximum pre-charge detention period in terrorism cases, having assessed all the evidence, was set out in the Terrorism Bill. As my right hon. Friend, the Home Secretary, made clear at Third Reading of that Bill on 10 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 493, the Government accepts the decision of the House of Commons in this matter.

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received about allowing the questioning of suspected terrorists after charge. [30339]

Hazel Blears: The issue was raised during the passage of the Terrorism Bill through the House of Commons. Beyond that, we have received no representations on this subject.

Victim Support

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what funding is to be allocated to Victim Support in each of the next three years; and if he will make a statement. [32808]

Fiona Mactaggart: The grant in aid to Victim Support in 2005–06 is £30 million. Funding for 2006–07 and 2007–08 will be announced in due course.

Young Offenders

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many children were put into bed and breakfast accommodation on release from custody in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005 to date. [33098]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information is not collected in the form requested. Figures collected by the Youth Justice Board show that in 2004, and in the first nine months of 2005, 86 per cent. of young people who left custody went to satisfactory accommodation. (Bed and breakfast accommodation is not considered satisfactory.) The figures are set out in the following table:

Accommodation of young people leaving custody

	Young people subject to a custodial sentence transferred to the community	*Assessed as living in satisfactory accommodation*
2004	5,269	4,520
2005[1]	3,902	3,351

[1] January to September.

Youth Offending Teams

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the national performance targets are for youth offending teams; and what the performance of Torbay Youth Offending Team has been against those targets. [32059]

Fiona Mactaggart: The following table shows performance against Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for Torbay Youth Offending Team and the outturn for England and Wales for the period April 2004 to March 2005:

Torbay: Performance

	April 2004 to March 2005	
Key performance indicator	*Torbay YOT outturn*	*England and Wales outturn*
Prevention[1] (Number)	247	24,411
Recidivism[2] (Percentage)	50.8	46.9
Final warnings (Percentage)	92.8	85.3
Use of custody (Percentage)		
Use of custodial remands (Percentage)	35.3	44.4
Use of custodial disposals (Percentage)	0.8	6.2
RJ and victim satisfaction (Percentage)		
Use of restorative processes (Percentage)	90.6	81.8
Victim satisfaction (Percentage)	97.6	96.8
Parenting (Percentage)		
Parental Intervention (Percentage)	18.7	11.7
Parental Satisfaction (Percentage)	93.3	97.6
ASSET (Percentage)		
Community Asset Start (Percentage)	100	94.7
Community Asset End (Percentage)	100	95.8

Torbay: Performance

Key performance indicator	*April 2004 to March 2005* *Torbay YOT outturn*	*England and Wales outturn*
Custodial Asset Start (Percentage)	100	97.9
Custodial Asset Middle (Percentage)	100	98.0
Custodial Asset End (Percentage)	100	97.6
Pre Sentence Reports (Percentage)	100	88.6
DTO Training Plans (Percentage)	100	82.1
Education, Training and Employment (Percentage)	81.7	74.2
Accommodation (Percentage)	99.0	93.6
CAMHS (Percentage)		
Acute Mental Health (Percentage)	[3]n/a	85.3
Non Acute Mental Health (Percentage)	100	90.4
Substance Misuse (Percentage)		
Substance Misuse Assessment (within five days) (Percentage)	77.8	73.5
Substance Misuse Treatment (within 10 days) (Percentage)	98.4	92.2

[1] Measured as a figure rather than as a percentage. As the target was 200, this has been met by Torbay.
[2] Recidivism rate of the 2002 cohort after 24 months.
[3] Torbay had no acute mental health referrals in the period so there is no data for this KPI.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Access to Learning

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people have started work-based learning in each year since 2000, broken down by programme. [31264]

Phil Hope: Full year figures for the numbers starting work-based learning (WBL) broken down by programme are published annually in a Statistical First Release (SFR) produced by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in consultation with Department for Education and Skills (DfES) statisticians.

The most recent version, entitled 'Further Education, Work Based Learning for Young People and Adult and Community Learning—Learner Numbers in England 2003/04', was published on 14 December 2004. Table 5 contains figures for WBL starts broken down by programme for every year between 2000/01 and 2003/04. The SFR can be downloaded from both the DfES and LSC websites:

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000546/index.shtml

http://www.lsc.gov.uk/National/Partners/Data/Statistics/LearnerStatistics/StatisticalFirst

Releases/StatisticalFirstRelease200304.htm

Revised and updated figures for 2004/05 are due to be published on 8 December 2005.

A-level Grades

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what proportion of candidates attending *(a)* non-maintained schools, *(b)* grammar schools, *(c)* comprehensive schools and *(d)* further education colleges received (i) A and (ii) B grades at A-level in (A) chemistry, (B) physics, (C) mathematics, (D) French and (E) German in 2005. [33144]

Jacqui Smith: The data requested on GCE A Level results of 16 to 18[1]-year-old students in 2005 (provisional data) can be found in the following table.
[1] Ages are taken at the start of the academic year i.e. 31 August.

		Comprehensive[1]	*Selective*	*Independent*	*FE Sector*
Number of students attaining					
Chemistry	A grade	2,574	1,859	3,843	1,607
	B grade	3,146	1,206	2,049	1,862
Physics	A grade	1,962	1,297	2,575	1,074
	B grade	1,968	798	1,315	1,046
Maths	A grade	5,821	2,895	6,603	3,365
	B grade	4,385	1,345	2,326	2,760
French	A grade	951	570	1,804	573
	B grade	1,128	518	1,064	613
German	A grade	455	283	812	280
	B grade	498	230	320	269
As a percentage of students attempting subject					
Chemistry	A grade	19.7	40.7	47.9	21.6
	B grade	24.0	26.4	25.5	25.0
Physics	A grade	18.9	38.6	46.8	22.3
	B grade	19.0	23.8	23.9	21.7
Maths	A grade	31.4	51.0	62.6	30.0
	B grade	23.6	23.7	22.1	24.6
French	A grade	22.5	35.9	47.4	24.6
	B grade	26.7	32.6	28.0	26.4
German	A grade	22.4	36.5	57.6	27.5
	B grade	24.5	29.7	22.7	26.4

[1] Comprehensives include City Technology Colleges and Academies.

Apprenticeships

Mr. Anthony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many Government-funded apprentices there were in *(a)* Great Yarmouth and *(b)* Norfolk in each year since 1996–97. [28040]

Phil Hope: Figures for those participating in apprenticeships funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) derive from the individual learner record (ILR). This was collated for the first time in 2001/02 (as an interim ILR) and comparable figures are only available for the three years from then. National figures for 2004/05 are scheduled for publication on 8 December 2005.

The following table shows the average number in learning[1] for Government-funded apprentices whose home address is in the parliamentary constituency of Great Yarmouth and the local LSC area of Norfolk for each year 2001/02 to 2003/04.

[1] Learner numbers for apprenticeships are monitored monthly. The monthly total changes due to new starts and completions; the number presented is the average number of learners from August to July.

	2001/02	*2002/03*[1]	*2002/03*[2]	*2003/04*
Great Yarmouth				
Advanced apprenticeship	172	171	170	140
Apprenticeship at level 2	228	232	249	274
Total	400	403	419	414
Norfolk				
Advanced apprenticeship	1,427	1,358	1,377	1,330
Apprenticeship at level 2	1,758	1,928	2,040	2,242
Total	3,185	3,286	3,417	3,572

[1] Old methodology, consistent with 2001/02 figures.

[2] New, consistent with 2003/04 figures.

Basic Skills Agency

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 16 November 2005, *Official Report,* column 1280W, on the Basic Skills Agency, what steps she is taking to promote the Basic Skills Agency Quality Mark in schools. [33206]

Jacqui Smith: The main responsibility for promoting the Quality Mark to schools rests with the Basic Skills Agency's partner local authorities. Most local authorities (LAs) make the link between the Quality Mark and the school improvement agenda and self evaluation requirements. Some LAs use working for the Quality Mark award as part of the exit strategy from a period of additional support provided through the Primary National Strategy Leadership Programme or Intensifying Support Project. Local authorities also advertise the award through their own networks and communications with schools, including head teacher meetings and governor conferences. Many authorities also ensure that all their advisers are aware of the Quality Mark award and can suggest it to schools that they think will benefit when they are on school visits. The Agency publishes termly in "The Times Educational Supplement" the names of the schools who have gained the award and also produces print and website information about the Quality Mark.

Bournemouth Schools

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools in Bournemouth local education authority stayed within budget in the 2004–05 financial year. [33424]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is contained within the following table:

	Total
Number of local authority maintained schools reported on section 52 outturn during FY 2004–05[1]	40
Number of schools within their revenue budget for 2004–05[2,3]	26
Number of schools over their revenue budget for 2004–05[2,4]	14

[1] Included in the above table are all local authority maintained nursery, primary, secondary and special schools reported by Bournemouth local authority on their 2004–05 section 52 outturn statement (table B). The data are still being validated by the Department and they are likely to change.

[2] For the purposes of this table, a school is defined as operating within its revenue budget during 2004–05 if its revenue expenditure for the year does not exceed its revenue income.

[3] Of the 26 schools who were under budget for 2004–05:

2 (both primary schools) started the year with a deficit revenue balance and remained in deficit at the end of the year;

2 (1 primary and 1 secondary school) went from having a deficit revenue balance at the start of the year to being in surplus at the end of the year;

21 (15 primary, 5 secondary and 1 special school) started the year with a surplus revenue balance and ended the year further in surplus;

1 (secondary school) started the year with no revenue balance and ended the year in surplus.

[4] Of the 14 schools who were over budget for 2004–05:

9 (8 primary and 1 special school) had sufficient surplus revenue balances at the start of the year that they still remained in surplus at the end of the year;

1 (primary school) went from having a surplus revenue balance at the start of the year to being in deficit at the end of the year;

4 (all secondary schools) started the year with a deficit revenue balance and ended the year further in deficit.

Bullying

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent on anti-bullying initiatives in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in each year since 1997. [31596]

Jacqui Smith: I refer my hon. Friend to the reply given to the hon. Member for Kingston and Surbiton (Mr. Davey) on 14 November 2005, *Official Report,* columns 928–29W, which sets out this information.

We do not hold figures which separate primary and secondary school funding information.

Child Care

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of people are eligible to use registered childcare paid for by pre-tax salary under the nursery/childcare vouchers scheme. [33301]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

If an employer offers employer supported childcare or childcare vouchers, an employee is entitled to the first £50 a week tax and NIC free, so long as all the conditions are met. Employers can provide this help to their employees either on top or instead of salary.

We do not have information about the percentage of employees that have taken advantage of the exemptions.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what financial support her Department provides for *(a)* the University for Industry, *(b)* learndirect centres and *(c)* learndirect hubs; what role her Department (i) has and (ii) had in the governance and establishment of each; and what policy her Department has adopted in relation to the legal status of each. [33428]

Phil Hope: The latest year for which the figures are available is 2004/05. Of the £218 million provided to Ufi in 2004/05, £107.2 million went to learndirect centres and £27.8 million went to hubs. Since August 2004, the Department has given the Learning and Skills Council responsibility for funding Ufi's infrastructure and learndirect provision in England. Each year the LSC and Ufi reach agreement on the targets to be achieved, the funding to be paid, the methodology for use of the funds and the values which Ufi will use for the funding it passes to hub operators and learndirect centres.

On governance, in 1999, the Department established a company structure which Ufi then cleared with the Charity Commissioners. This led to the setting up of Ufi Charitable Trust (a company limited by guarantee registered as a charity) and Ufi Ltd. (a trading subsidiary, limited by shares wholly owned by the parent company). The Department and Ufi agreed the hub and centre structure for the delivery of learndirect learning as this was considered the appropriate structure at that time for ensuring that learndirect provision was responsive to local and regional skills need. The hubs and learning centres are a mix of private companies and other organisations.

Education White Paper

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she proposes to create the capital fund referred to in paragraph 2.35 of the Education White Paper, Higher Standards, Better Schools for all. [32327]

Jacqui Smith: Further information about the operation of the fund will be announced in due course.

Examination Results

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many 16 to 19-year-lds achieved five A*-C passes or the equivalent in 2004. [30818]

Jacqui Smith: The following table shows numbers and proportions of 16 to 19-year-olds qualified to at least Level 2 (equivalent to five A*-C GCSEs) by the end of 2003/04.

Attained L2+ by end 2003/04

Age in 2004	*Number*[1]	*Proportion (percentage)*
16	345,800	53.7
17	387,800	61.4
18	406,500	65.7
19	411,700	67.0

[1] Rounded to nearest 100.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) which GCSEs count as qualifications in *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy; [30819]

(2) what percentage of *(a)* 15 and *(b)* 16 to 19-year-olds achieved a Level 2 qualification in literacy and numeracy in 2004. [30820]

Jacqui Smith: The answer to this question is based on the approach taken during this year's Achievement and Attainment Tables English and maths pilot.

For the 2005 Achievement and Attainment Tables pilot the following rules have been applied:

For the English and maths indicators, to demonstrate achievement in GCSE maths, any maths GCSE qualification will be recognised. To demonstrate achievement in GCSE English, any English GCSE qualification will be recognised, except English Literature.

Results in all educational establishments by the end of 2003/04[1]

	Number of 15-year-old pupils[2] *achieving*	*Percentage of 15-year-old pupils*[2] *achieving*	*Number of 16 to 19-year-olds*[3] *achieving*
GCSE English A* to C or level 2 functional English[4]	359,323	55.8	9,257
Of which:			
Level 2 English GCSE	359,250	55.8	9,039
Of which:			
Level 2 functional English	73	0.0	218
GCSE maths A* to C or Level 2 functional mathematics[5]	318,908	49.6	10,705
Of which:			
Level 2 mathematics GCSE	318,874	49.5	10,623
Of which:			
Level 2 functional mathematics	34	0.0	82

[1] Includes achievements in previous academic years for 15-year-old pupils and achievements in 2003/04 only for 16 to 19-year-olds. Includes schools for 15-year-old pupils and schools and colleges for 16 to 19-year-olds.
[2] Age at start of academic year i.e. 31st August.
[3] 16 to 19-year-olds achieving as a percentage of all 16 to 19-year-olds cannot be provided, as we only have information on those in that age range who attempted a qualification.
[4] To demonstrate functional English through Key Skills and Basic Skills, only Key Skills qualifications in communication and Basic Skills qualifications in literacy are recognised.
[5] To demonstrate functional mathematics through Key Skills and Basic Skills, only Key Skills qualifications in application of number and Basic Skills qualifications in numeracy are recognised.

Examination Standards

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action she is taking to ensure maintenance of standards in *(a)* GCSE and *(b)* A level examinations. [33112]

Jacqui Smith: The Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) is the body with statutory responsibility for ensuring that the standards of GCSE and A level qualifications are maintained over time. QCA has a rolling programme of standards reviews, which began in 1997. The reports are available on the QCA website. This includes the report of the Independent Committee on Examination Standards chaired by Barry McGaw, Dec04, which found that no examination system at the school or other level is so tightly or carefully managed.

Failing Schools

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what new powers will be required by local education authorities to enable them to intervene in failing schools in the manner envisaged in the Schools White Paper. [31880]

Jacqui Smith: Local authorities already have a range of powers to enable them to intervene when a school is judged by Ofsted to be failing. These include appointing additional governors, appointing an interim executive board and removing the school's delegated budget. We intend to create an addition power to enable local authorities to force a weak school to join a federation with a stronger school. We also intend to strengthen local authorities' existing powers to issue warning notices to schools that are badly under-performing, but which have not yet failed an inspection—we want local authorities to intervene early to ensure a school's weaknesses are addressed at an earlier stage to prevent formal school failure. If a school failed satisfactorily to comply with the warning notice, the local authority would be able to use the powers of intervention described above.

We are also proposing a new duty on local authorities to consider radical options to secure school improvement at an early stage; and to reconsider action if the school fails to make adequate progress. We have already reduced the numbers of schools in special measures by over half since 1998, and significantly reduced the average time a school spends in special measures. We now need to ensure local authorities take swifter and more decisive action to address school failure so that all children can achieve their full potential.

Falling School Rolls

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment the Department has made of the effects of falling school rolls in *(a)* England and *(b)* Cheltenham constituency; and if she will make a statement. [32782]

Jacqui Smith: The Department's national forecasts indicate that primary school rolls will fall by 129,000 between 2004/05 and 2007/08 with secondary rolls falling by 133,000 between 2004/05 and 2007/08.

Local authority forecast data is at authority level and we do not have forecasts for the Cheltenham constituency. Gloucestershire local authority's 2004 forecasts indicate that primary rolls will increase by 964 between 2004/05 and 2007/08 and secondary rolls will increase by 2,212 between 2004/05 and 2010/11.

We have developed a toolkit offering practical advice to help local authorities manage the challenges and opportunities presented by falling primary rolls. The toolkit is available at www.teachernet.gov.uk/falling rolls.

Independent Schools

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of pupils aged under 11 years attended independent schools in England in each of the last five years, broken down by local authority area. [32678]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many independent schools taking pupils under the age of 11 years have opened in England in each of the last five years, broken down by local authority area. [32679]

Jacqui Smith: The following table shows the number of independent schools, which in part or in full cater for pupils with an age range below 12, opening in each of the last five calendar years in England, by local authority. Independent special schools are included.

Local authority	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*[1]
Barnet	3	—	2	—	—
Barnsley	—	—	1	—	—
Bedfordshire	—	1	1	—	1
Birmingham	1	2	2	—	3
Blackburn with Darwen	2	—	—	—	—
Blackpool	—	—	—	—	1
Bolton	1	—	—	—	—
Bradford	1	—	4	—	3
Brent	2	—	—	—	—
Brighton and Hove	1	—	—	—	—
Bristol City of	—	—	2	—	1
Bromley	—	—	1	—	—
Buckinghamshire	—	—	1	1	—
Bury	—	—	1	—	—
Cambridgeshire	—	1	2	—	2
Cheshire	1	—	—	—	—
Cornwall	—	—	1	—	1
Coventry	—	—	1	—	—
Croydon	—	—	1	—	1
Cumbria	1	1	1	1	—
Derby	—	—	1	—	1
Derbyshire	1	—	—	—	—
Devon	—	2	2	—	—
East Riding of Yorkshire	—	—	1	1	1
East Sussex	—	—	2	1	—
Enfield	—	—	2	—	—
Essex	—	1	—	—	1
Gloucestershire	—	1	1	—	—
Hackney	2	2	1	—	—
Halton	1	—	—	—	—
Hammersmith and Fulham	—	1	—	—	1
Hampshire	—	1	2	—	1
Haringey	—	—	—	1	—
Harrow	—	—	—	—	1
Herefordshire	1	—	—	—	1
Hertfordshire	—	1	—	1	2
Hounslow	—	—	2	1	1
Isle of Wight	—	—	1	—	—
Islington	—	—	—	1	1

Local authority	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005[1]
Kensington and Chelsea	1	—	—	3	2
Kent	1	—	5	2	2
Kingston upon Hull City of	—	1	—	—	—
Kirklees	1	—	—	—	—
Knowsley	1	—	—	—	—
Lambeth	—	1	1	—	—
Lancashire	3	—	1	1	4
Leeds	—	—	1	—	—
Leicester	2	—	1	—	2
Leicestershire	—	—	1	—	1
Lewisham	1	—	2	—	—
Lincolnshire	—	1	1	—	2
Liverpool	1	—	1	—	—
Luton	—	—	—	2	—
Manchester	—	—	3	—	1
Medway	—	—	—	1	—
Merton	—	—	1	—	1
Middlesbrough	—	—	1	—	—
Milton Keynes	—	—	—	1	1
Newham	—	—	4	—	1
Norfolk	—	—	2	—	3
North East Lincolnshire	—	—	—	1	—
North Tyneside	—	—	—	—	1
Northamptonshire	—	—	—	1	—
Nottinghamshire	—	—	1	1	—
Oxfordshire	—	—	3	1	—
Peterborough	—	—	—	1	—
Plymouth	—	1	—	—	—
Redbridge	—	—	1	—	1
Richmond upon Thames	—	—	—	—	1
Rochdale	—	—	1	—	1
Rotherham	—	—	1	—	—
Sheffield	—	—	1	—	—
Shropshire	1	—	—	—	—
Slough	—	—	1	—	—
Somerset	—	—	1	—	3
Southwark	—	—	1	—	—
Stockport	—	—	—	—	1
Suffolk	—	1	1	—	2
Surrey	1	—	2	—	1
Sutton	—	—	1	—	—
Tameside	—	1	—	—	—
Telford and Wrekin	—	—	1	—	—
Tower Hamlets	1	1	1	1	—
Trafford	—	—	2	—	—
Walsall	—	—	1	—	—
Waltham Forest	1	—	2	—	—
Wandsworth	1	—	2	—	1
Warrington	—	—	1	—	—
Warwickshire	—	—	1	—	—
West Berkshire	—	1	—	—	—
West Sussex	—	1	2	—	1
Westminster	—	—	—	—	1
Wiltshire	—	—	1	—	1
Wokingham	—	—	1	—	—
Wolverhampton	—	—	1	—	—
Total	34	23	92	24	59

[1] Includes those opening up until 28 November 2005.

Source:

The Department's Register of Independent Schools (EduBase).

Investors in People

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what proportion of *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools are (i) accredited as Investors in People and (ii) have been awarded a Charter Mark. [32912]

Jacqui Smith: On the basis of information provided by Investors in People UK (IIPUK) 7,511 out of 22,343 primary schools in the United Kingdom are recognised as Investors in People. Approximately 33.6 per cent. of all UK primary schools are recognised as Investors in People.

2,632 out of 4,230 secondary schools in the United Kingdom are recognised as Investors in People. Approximately 62 per cent. of all UK secondary schools are recognised as Investors in People.

On the basis of information provided by the Cabinet Office 36 out of 22,343 primary schools in the United Kingdom have achieved the Charter Mark. Approximately 0.16 per cent. of all UK primary schools have achieved the Charter Mark.

56 out of 4,230 secondary schools in the United Kingdom have achieved the Charter Mark. Approximately 1.3 per cent.

Key Stage Grades

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what grade was necessary for a pupil to achieve a level 4 at key stage 2 in *(a)* reading, *(b)* writing, *(c)* mathematics and *(d)* science in each year since 1995. [29540]

Jacqui Smith: The marks required for a pupil to reach the level 4 threshold in each subject, tested at the end of Key Stage 2, is decided each year by a process, known as level-setting, designed to ensure that the level 4 standard is the same as the previous year's. The level thresholds are published each year on the QCA website. The exact number of marks varies from year to year according to the difficulty of the subject papers. The national curriculum tests have evolved over the years to reflect the curriculum, for example in 1998 mental maths was included in the key stage maths test.

The following table shows the marks required for a pupil to be awarded a level 4 at Key Stage 2.

	English overall	Reading	Writing	Math	Science
1995	[1]n/a	[2]n/a	[2]n/a	31	37
1996	57	[2]n/a	[2]n/a	41	45
1997	52	21	31	40	41
1998	51	20	31	[3]52	42
1999	48	17	31	52	42
2000	49	18	31	50	43
2001	50	19	31	49	39
2002	49	18	31	49	40
2003	44	19	[4]25	45	40
2004	41	18	23	48	39
2005	42	17	25	48	42

[1] In 1995 the overall level was not calculated using a single level threshold. Writing and reading were combined in a two-way table (see following table) to provide an overall level.

[2] In 1996 there were no separate mark allocations for reading and writing, therefore the level threshold was set for English overall.

[3] In 1998, a mental mathematics element was introduced into the mathematics test. This increased the total number of marks available and therefore the level thresholds were intentionally raised in 1998.

[4] In 2003, the model of English writing assessment was changed in order to normalise the distribution. The old model meant that most pupils achieved high marks, which was felt to be an inappropriate way of discriminating between levels. The new model of assessment means that the majority of the pupils are around the middle of the mark range. In order to maintain standards between the two models, the thresholds were intentionally lowered in 2003.

Total mark for writing	Reading task score					
	0–1	2–10	11–27	28–46	47–58	59–63
0–3	Level 1	Level 1	Level 2	Level 2	Level 3	Level 3
4–8	Level 1	Level 2	Level 2	Level 3	Level 3	Level 4
9–14	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 3	Level 4	Level 4
15–19	Level 2	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 4	Level 5
20–25	Level 2	Level 3	Level 3	Level 4	Level 5	Level 5
26–30	Level 3	Level 3	Level 4	Level 4	Level 5	Level 6
31–33	Level 3	Level 4	Level 4	Level 5	Level 5	Level 6

Learning and Skills Council

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many staff employed by the Learning and Skills Council have previously worked in administrative posts in the offender learning sector; [24963]

(2) how many staff employed by the Learning and Skills Council have previously worked in the offender learning sector. [24965]

Bill Rammell: The Learning and Skills Council is responsible for the planning and funding of the Offenders' Learning and Skills Service. The LSC is working in close partnership with the National Offender Management Service, the Prison and Probation Services, Youth Justice Board and Jobcentre Plus and other organisations to deliver our vision that offenders in custody and in the community should, according to need, have access to opportunities which enable them to gain the skills and qualifications they need to hold down a job and to play a positive role in society, so that they are less likely to reoffend. Information about its staff is an operational matter for the LSC. Mark Haysom has written to the hon. Member with further information. A copy of his reply has been placed in the Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom to Mr. Stephen O'Brien, dated 30 November 2005:

I write in response to your recent Parliamentary Question where you asked the Secretary of State for Education and Skills:

a) how many staff employed by the Learning Skills Council (LSC) have previously worked in administrative posts in the offender learning sector.

b) how many staff employed by the LSC have previously worked in the offender learning sector.

All we can state is that the Offender Learning function when transferred will be adequately resourced. In preparation for the transfer the LSC has appointed in each of its 9 regions and at the national office, dedicated senior postholders with recent experience in the offender learning sector. These Learning and Skills Advisors work closely with the Heads of Learning and Skills employed in every prison in England.

I trust this is what you require as we have no further information to disclose.

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make an assessment of the impact of funding decisions by Learning and Skills Councils on adult education provision in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06. [33479]

Phil Hope: The Learning and Skills Council will publish the Statistical First Release for 2004/05 on 8 December (as pre-announced in the Schedule for the Publication of National Statistics) which will show numbers of learners in LSC funded provision. Similar information for 2005/06 will be published in December next year.

This Government has significantly increased funding for further education (FE) in recent years. Total funding has increased by £1 billion in 2005/06 when compared to 2002/03 which represents a 25 per cent. increase. In 2005/06 total funding for FE has increased by 4.4 per cent. compared to 2004/05. This level of funding will enable us to meet our key priorities for 2005/06 to meet the needs of young people, those lacking literacy, numeracy and English language skills and those seeking a first full Level 2 qualification.

Funding for non-vocational learning opportunities for adults, delivered mainly through local authority adult education services, has also increased. In 2004/05 we provided over £207 million to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in support of this learning. This has risen to £210 million in 2005/06. The Government is committed to safeguarding the availability of a wide range of learning for personal and community development (previously termed adult and community learning).

Learning Difficulties (Schools)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools for children with learning difficulties have received a *(a)* grade 1, *(b)* grade 2, *(c)* grade 3, *(d)* grade 4 and *(e)* grade 5 rating by Ofsted inspectors in their most recent inspection. [32763]

Jacqui Smith: This is a matter for Ofsted. HM Chief Inspector, David Bell has written to my hon. Friend and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Letter from David Bell, dated 29 November 2005:

Your recent parliamentary question has been passed to me, as her Majesty's Chief Inspector, for reply.

The table attached shows an analysis of the overall effectiveness judgments for special schools inspected between January 2000 and July 2005. Most special schools (89 per cent.) were inspected in this period. Although all the schools include children with statements of special education need, not all cater solely or mainly for children defined as having learning difficulties; some will include children with physical or sensory disabilities. In addition to the breakdown you asked for, I have also included, for reference, the numbers of schools that were graded 6 or 7 for overall effectiveness.

Overall effectiveness of special schools—January 2000 to July 2005

Special Schools	Number
Highly effective (grade 1)	41
Very effective (grade 2)	297
Effective (grade 3)	501
Fairly effective (grade 4)	196
Ineffective (grade 5)	34
Very ineffective (grade 6)	15
Very poor (grade 7)	5

Note:

1. Where schools have been inspected twice during the period 2000 to 2005, only data from the most recent inspection is included.
2. The framework for inspection changed in September 2003, so the figures contain judgments made under two inspection frameworks.
3. The table includes 101 schools which have closed since they were inspected.

Local Education Authority Employees

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many individuals are employed by local education authorities; and how many of these are *(a)* on schools' payrolls and *(b)* not on schools' payrolls. [33145]

Jacqui Smith: The Department collects data on the school work force in England, but not the number of persons employed by local authorities. The latest information available (January 2005) shows that there were 431,900 full-time equivalent teachers and 268,600 full-time equivalent members of support staff working in maintained nurseries and schools in England. These figures include persons employed by local authorities, directly by those maintained schools which employ their own staff, and by third parties.

Local Education Authority Schools (Newcastle)

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will estimate the number of secondary school age children resident in Newcastle who were educated at local education authority sector schools in *(a)* Northumberland, *(b)* North Tyneside and *(c)* Gateshead in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [32326]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested has been provided in the following table.

Number of secondary age pupils[1] resident in Newcastle-upon-Tyne local authority who attend school in Northumberland, north Tyneside and Gateshead local authorities—2000–05

		2002		2003		2004		2005	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Northumberland	Secondary[2]	494	3.4	483	3.3	488	3.4	509	3.6
	Special	3	0.0	10	0.1	11	0.1	8	0.1
North Tyneside	Secondary[2]	306	2.1	323	2.2	334	2.3	351	2.4
	Special	18	0.1	19	0.1	20	0.1	16	0.1
Gateshead	Secondary[2]	141	1.0	147	1.0	151	1.1	162	1.1
	Special	0	[3]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]	[4]

[1] Pupils aged 11 to 15.
[2] Includes middle deemed secondary, CTCs and academies
[3] Denotes negligible percentage
[4] Denotes suppressed value
Source:
Annual school census.

Local Education Partnerships

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether a future *(a)* foundation school and *(b)* trust school whose land and buildings are under a local education partnership arrangement will have the right (i) to negotiate and (ii) to terminate such an arrangement. [32413]

Jacqui Smith: Schools which acquire new foundation or trust status will take on all legal benefits and obligations of the predecessor schools, including where they have received investment through Building Schools for the Future. The new foundation or trust school will inherit any existing contracts agreed by the previous governing body. It will not be able to opt out of contracts it inherits, but will be able to renegotiate existing contracts, including termination, with its private sector provider, where the contractual provisions enable this. Where the authority has entered into a contract on behalf of the school it will require the authority's cooperation.

Management Allowances

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much was spent on management allowances in each of the last three years for which figures are available. [33355]

Jacqui Smith: The estimated costs of management allowances in England and Wales for the last three years are £770 million in 2002–03, £894 million in 2003–04, and £905 million in 2004–05. These include on costs (employers' contributions for pensions and national insurance).

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teachers are in receipt of management allowances. [33356]

Jacqui Smith: During 2004–05 an estimated 193,000 full-time equivalent classroom teachers were receiving management allowances in England and Wales.

Public Service Worker Skills

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what criteria were used in making the decision explicity to include improving the skills of workers delivering public services in the Learning and Skills Council's Priorities for Success; and whether this excludes workers delivering private services. [28766]

Bill Rammell: Strengthening the skills of the workforce that delivers public services is central to the Government's public service reforms. This was recognised by the Learning and Skills Council in December 2004 in its Annual Statement of Priorities for 2005–06. This was reinforced in "Priorities for Success", issued in October this year, which sets out its funding priorities for the next two years. The detailed rationale behind these funding priorities is a matter for the LSC and Mark Haysom, the Council's chief executive, has written to the hon. Member setting out the detail. A copy of his letter has been placed in the House Library.

Letter from Mark Haysom dated 30 November 2005:

Improving the Skills of Workers Delivering Public Services

I am writing in response to your recent Parliamentary Question to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills, asking what criteria were used in making the decision explicitly to include

improving the skills of workers delivering public services in the Learning and Skills Council's Priorities for Success; and whether this excludes workers delivering private services.

The LSC's Annual Statement of Priorities identifies the key actions to be taken by the LSC in creating a more highly skilled and productive workforce. In 2004, one in five establishments (20%) reported that they employed staff that they considered not fully proficient and over 1.5 million workers are considered to be not fully proficient by their employers, representing 7% cent of the total workforce in England.

This continues to be one of the biggest challenges for employers, and the actions within the Annual Statement of Priorities are aimed at addressing these issues in all businesses, whether private, public or voluntary. Our work with the public services sector includes workers employed directly in the sector and employees of private organisations sub contracted to the sector, for example in cleaning and catering.

Improving the skills of workers delivering public services is a separate priority within the Annual Statement because the challenges they face are substantial in comparison with other sectors. In addition, the impact of better investment in skills on the improved delivery of services to the public, and of better targeted joint investment from the public purse are correspondingly significant.

Our work with the sector on skills needs has identified that whilst the public sector workforce contains more Level 2 and above qualified workers than the private sector, 21% of employees are still without a first full Level 2. Based on 2003/04 Labour Force Survey data, over a million public service workers across a range of sub sectors have therefore not reached the minimum threshold for employability.

In addition, a NIACE Skills for Life survey identified that 72% of healthcare staff have numeracy skills below Level 2 and 56% have literacy skills below Level 2. Skills for Life therefore remain a key barrier to upskilling the sector workforce and increasing the number of people with employability skills.

Finally the LSC intends to enable the sector to attract and retain apprentices and new entrants in the workforce. The sector is characterised by an aged and aging demographic profile that does not match the profile of the communities that it serves. Currently, however, levels of participation in Apprenticeships are low compared to other sectors, with less than 10% of all Apprentices readily identifiable as working in public services.

It is our intention, working across Government, to secure a joint investment plan for meeting skills needs in the sector. We will progress this work in conjunction with our range of activities detailed in the Annual Statement of Priorities that support employers and employees in any business, including the roll out of the National Employer Training Programme (NETP) which will better equip us to meet the skills needs of all employers by offering them real choice and flexibility in the training available to them.

I hope that this information is helpful, and demonstrates the LSC's commitment to both targeted action with public services and to our broader work to address the skills needs of employees in all sectors.

Qualifications (Newcastle)

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of working age people were *(a)* qualified to (i) graduate level, (ii) level 4, (iii) level 2 and *(b)* without qualification in Newcastle-upon-Tyne Central in each year from 1992. [32328]

Phil Hope: The table shows analysis of the level of highest qualification held by the working age population in the parliamentary constituency of Newcastle-upon-Tyne Central at *(a)* qualified to (i) graduate level, (ii) level 4, (iii) level 2 and *(b)* without qualification. Data comes from the local labour force survey. Data at parliamentary constituency level is not available prior to 1999.

Percentage

	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Qualification level						
Graduate level	[1]27	[1]32	28	30	31	32
Level 4 and higher, exc. graduates			7	5	6	4
Level 3	17	22	18	21	17	19
Trade Apprenticeships[2]	10	7	7	7	5	4
Level 2	11	11	11	13	10	9
Below level 2	11	8	9	8	10	9
Other qualifications[3]	11	7	7	6	6	10
No qualifications	13	13	12	10	15	14

[1] Data identifying graduates only, is not available for 1999–2000 or 2000–01.

[2] For the purposes of target measurement people with trade apprenticeships as their highest qualification are assigned to level 3 and level 2 in the ratio of 50:50.

[3] Qualifications that cannot be assigned directly to levels. For the purposes of target measurement, people with other qualifications as their highest qualification level are assigned to level 3: level 2: below level 2 in the ratio of 10:35:55.

Notes:

Columns may not sum to 100 per cent. due to rounding. Working age people are defined as males and females aged 16 to 64 and 16 to 59 respectively.

Race Equality Impact Assessments

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many Race Equality Impact Assessments her Department completed between *(a)* April 2004 and March 2005 and *(b)* April 2005 and November 2005; and how many assessments in each period resulted in a change of policy. [32825]

Jacqui Smith: The Department for Education and Skills' commitment not to discriminate unfairly on any grounds is set out clearly in our recently revised equality and diversity policy, which recognises that everyone should have an equal opportunity to meet their aspirations, realise their full potential and improve their life chances.

This means that equality and diversity is the responsibility of everyone in the Department and is an ever evolving commitment mainstreamed within the normal course of business. It is therefore not possible to identify the number of Race Equality Impact Assessments (REIAs) which have been undertaken within specified periods as this information is not held centrally and it would involve disproportionate cost to collect.

Under the Race Relations Amendment Act we as a Department are required to publish a triennial Race Equality Scheme and an associated annual action plan. The Race Equality Scheme was published in May 2005 and annex 1 of the publication details a summary of impact assessments.

We continue to be proactive in this area by working with our major programme boards to build a stronger evidence based strategy to address race equality challenges and to ensure that all staff continue to be aware of their responsibilities.

School Finance

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of *(a)* capital and *(b)* revenue investment in schools which have received private sector investment in the last five years is accounted for by private sector investment of each type. [32113]

Jacqui Smith: The proportion of *(a)* capital and *(b)* revenue investment, in schools which have received private sector investment in the last five years, which is accounted for by private sector investment of each type, is set out as follows.

Except as noted, virtually all capital investment in schools over the period 2000–01 to 2005–06 is estimated to be publicly funded. While no records are kept centrally on local initiatives to generate private sector funding, these are believed to be small scale. Regarding the Academy programme, where the first school opened in 2002, private sector sponsors contribute up to around £2 million towards an average cost of £25 million. Sponsors of Voluntary Aided Schools contribute 10 per cent. towards capital costs.

The proportion of revenue funding from private sources to all maintained schools and academies for the period 2000–01 to 2005–06 has been relatively constant. Accordingly, although data collection in its current form only commenced in 2002–03, and figures have yet to be compiled for the current year, it is most likely that private funding will be less than 3 per cent. throughout this period. This is made up of income provided to the schools from foundation, diocese or other trust funds, business sponsorship, fund-raising activities, and voluntary contributions from parents.

School Nursing

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps her Department is taking to encourage school nurses to develop their work in *(a)* the classroom and *(b)* health promotion. [24429]

Jacqui Smith: The recently published Schools White Paper recognises the value of school nursing and notes that school nurses can play a critical role in supporting schools to promote good health. School nurses are already active partners in helping schools achieve Healthy School status. We have recently produced a new guide for schools detailing the criteria for Healthy School status. The guide recognises the importance of schools involving professionals from appropriate external agencies such as school nurses to support and improve personal, social and health education (PHSE) delivery. DfES is also supporting with Department of Health, the PSHE certificate for both teachers and school and community nurses.

In addition, officials from my Department have been working closely with the Department of Health on work to increase the capacity of school nurses both in terms of numbers and the development of their child-centred public health role in line with the Choosing Health commitments. We intend to publish two documents arising from this work:

"Looking for a School Nurse?"—modelled on an earlier document published by the DfES (on school bursars). This guide is aimed at head-teachers, setting out both the advantages, and some of the practical considerations, that head-teachers would need to be aware of in terms of having a school nurse either on-site or assigned to a school or cluster of schools; and

An update of the "School Nurse Development Pack" (first published by DH in 2001) to outline the principles of a modern role and to enable school nurses to expand their knowledge, skills and competencies.

School Sport

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1197W, on school sport, how many secondary schools have disposed of a sports pitch in the last five years. [32363]

Jacqui Smith: The number of approved applications to dispose of an area of school playing field capable of forming at least a small sports pitch in England in each of the last five years is as follows:

	Number
2000/01	28
2001/02	29
2002/03	19
2003/04	13
2004/05	11

The numbers of above applications that involve the loss of an area of land capable of forming at least a small sports pitch at a secondary school or special school in England in each of the last five years is as follows:

	Number
2000/01	15
2001/02	14
2002/03	15
2003/04	8
2004/05	7

Of the total 59 approved applications at secondary and special schools, 21 concerned redundant playing fields at closed schools that were not wanted by any other local schools.

Science A-levels

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils gained an A-Level in *(a)* chemistry, *(b)* physics and *(c)* mathematics or further mathematics in each year since 1990. [32625]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested on 16 to 18[1]-year-olds passing GCE A Levels 1993–2005[1] can be found in the following table.

[1] Age at the start of the academic year.

[2] The number of students passing A Levels in specific subjects is not available prior to 1993.

	Chemistry	*Physics*	*Mathematics*[1]
2004/05[2]	32,151	23,012	44,736
2003/04	31,072	23,426	44,344
2002/03	29,833	24,890	42,439
2001/02	30,705	26,089	41,624
2000/01	31,004	25,167	47,970
1999/2000	32,142	25,350	47,943
1998/99	32,476	26,588	49,770
1997/98	33,067	26,461	50,196
1996/97	31,929	25,449	49,254
1995/96	29,964	24,506	47,172
1994/95	29,629	25,185	43,978
1993/94	28,318	25,403	42,900
1992/93	27,651	26,315	42,050

[1] Includes those achieving mathematics and/or further mathematics A Levels.

[2] 2005 figures are provisional.

Special Educational Needs

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether children with special educational needs have a statutory right to express a preference for a place at an academy over a school maintained by a local authority. [32979]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 29 November 2005]:* Parents have a right to make representations to the local authority (LA) for an academy (an independent school) to be named in their child's statement of special educational needs. When this happens and the LA proposes to name the academy, under the terms of the academy's funding agreement it must consent to being named except

> "where admitting the child would be incompatible with the efficient education of other children and no reasonable steps may be made to secure compatibility".

An academy's independent status, does not affect parents' rights to appeal to the SEN and disability tribunal.

Specialist Schools

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if she will list the subjects in which specialist schools may select by aptitude.; [33210]

(2) how many and what proportion of specialist schools select a portion of their pupils by aptitude in a subject. [33230]

Jacqui Smith: Specialist schools are bound by the School Admissions Code of Practice. Under legislation there is provision for schools with a specialism to select up to 10 per cent. of students by aptitude in the relevant subjects. Modern foreign languages, performing or visual arts (including music), physical education, design and technology and information technology are prescribed subjects for this purpose. The Government informed the Education Select Committee in November 2004 that regulations would be amended to prohibit new selection in design and technology and information technology while allowing schools already using such selection to continue to do so. A consultation on these proposed regulations closed on 18 October.

We believe relatively few specialists select by aptitude—our figures suggest that less than 6 per cent. of schools that were specialist in summer 2001 did so.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of specialist schools she estimates will adopt trust status under the proposals in the White Paper, Higher Standards, Better Schools for All. [33228]

Jacqui Smith: It will be for individual schools to decide whether to change category to become trust schools. The Government has not set targets for the number of trust schools.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools are specialist schools; and how many she estimates will become specialist by the beginning of the academic year 2006–07. [33231]

Jacqui Smith: There are currently 2,380 designated specialist schools out of 3,385 maintained secondary schools in England. By September 2006 we expect over 80 per cent. of maintained secondary schools in England to have a specialist designation subject to applicant schools meeting the required standards of the Specialist Schools Programme.

Student Numbers

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many students in year 7 and above attend each middle and secondary schools in Newcastle upon Tyne, including independent schools in each year since 2000–01; and how many of these were in sixth forms at each school. [32316]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* The available information requested is shown in the table.

Maintained secondary schools and independent schools: number (headcount) of pupils, pupils aged 11 and above[1] and pupils in a sixth form, schools in Newcastle upon Tyne local authority

Position as at January each year

	2001			*2002*			*2003*		
		Of which:			*Of which:*			*Of which:*	
	Total pupils	*Aged 11 to 19*	*Number of pupils in sixth form*[2,3]	*Total pupils*	*Aged 11 to 19*	*Number of pupils in sixth form*[2,3]	*Total pupils*	*Aged 11 to 19*	*Number of pupils in sixth form*[4,5]
Middle Deemed Secondary Schools:									
Chapel Park Middle School	358	178	0	351	178	0	355	177	0
Chapel House Middle School	456	222	0	460	230	0	464	232	0
Throckley Middle School	339	173	0	339	174	0	337	169	0
Gosforth Central Middle School	500	246	0	504	252	0	508	253	0
Gosforth West Middle School	467	238	0	427	247	0	394	243	0

Maintained secondary schools and independent schools: number (headcount) of pupils, pupils aged 11 and above[1] and pupils in a sixth form, schools in Newcastle upon Tyne local authority

Position as at January each year

	2001			2002			2003		
		Of which:			Of which:			Of which:	
	Total pupils	Aged 11 to 19	Number of pupils in sixth form[2,3]	Total pupils	Aged 11 to 19	Number of pupils in sixth form[2,3]	Total pupils	Aged 11 to 19	Number of pupils in sixth form[4,5]
Gosforth East Middle School	468	234	0	466	234	0	466	237	0
Denton Park Middle School	268	144	0	204	147	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
Chevyside Middle School	221	103	0	162	105	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lemington Middle School	437	225	0	371	215	0	319	195	0
Maintained Secondary Schools:									
West Denton High School	466	466	40	408	408	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
Gosforth High School	1,502	1,502	432	1,529	1,529	461	1,572	1,572	470
Walbottle Campus Technology College	1,418	1,418	217	1,430	1,430	226	1,392	1,392	225
Walker Technology College	1,338	1,337	160	1,325	1,325	167	1,298	1,298	156
Benfield School	838	837	69	819	819	69	870	870	84
Kenton School	1,960	1,960	264	1,967	1,967	247	1,980	1,980	257
Heaton Manor School	1,823	1,823	290	1,864	1,864	328	1,906	1,906	359
West Gate Community College	1,400	1,400	132	1,452	1,452	103	1,509	1,509	120
St. Mary's Catholic Comprehensive School	1,042	1,042	164	1,051	1,051	144	1,061	1,061	138
St. Cuthbert's High School	1,099	1,099	181	1,109	1,109	181	1,087	1,087	171
Sacred Heart High School	1,261	1,261	243	1,264	1,264	197	1,313	1,313	214
Firfield Community School	410	410	0	303	303	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
All Saints College	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	977	977	38
Independent Schools:									
Newcastle-upon-Tyne Church High School	630	355	84	617	343	90	607	340	?—
La Sagesse School	377	251	63	341	237	69	288	199	?—
Newcastle Preparatory School	314	24	0	321	19	0	330	29	?—
Akhurst Private School	154	[6]—	0	173	3	0	158	[6]—	?—
Westfield School	354	209	46	357	212	53	368	227	?—
Ascham House School	261	16	0	276	21	0	281	23	?—
Newcastle School for Boys	196	44	0	186	32	0	164	18	?—
Eastcliffe School	137	91	0	128	87	0	122	83	?—
Central Newcastle High School	983	647	162	993	650	158	1,003	664	?—
Dame Allan's Boys' School	508	442	99	495	433	119	485	429	?—
Dame Allan's Girls' School	435	378	93	438	382	93	424	380	?—
Royal Grammar School	1,063	918	260	1,099	953	289	1,127	981	?—
Talbot House Special School	39	39	0	41	41	0	n/a	n/a	?—

Position as at January each year

	2004			2005		
		Of which:			Of which:	
	Total pupils	Aged 11 to 19	Number of pupils in sixth form[4,5]	Total pupils	Aged 11 to 19	Number of pupils in sixth form[4,5]
Middle Deemed Secondary Schools:						
Chapel Park Middle School	327	171	0	243	176	0
Chapel House Middle School	420	224	0	307	225	0
Throckley Middle School	311	166	0	236	173	0
Gosforth Central Middle School	507	249	0	504	247	0
Gosforth West Middle School	365	220	0	347	226	0
Gosforth East Middle School	466	236	0	463	232	0
Denton Park Middle School	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Chevyside Middle School	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lemington Middle School	189	138	0	n/a	n/a	n/a
Maintained Secondary Schools:						
West Denton High School	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Gosforth High School	1,572	1,572	468	1,625	1,625	513
Walbottle Campus Technology College	1,360	1,360	231	1,394	1,394	221
Walker Technology College	1,241	1,241	157	1,214	1,214	157
Benfield School	943	943	119	949	949	94
Kenton School	1,930	1,930	233	1,985	1,985	282
Heaton Manor School	1,933	1,933	397	1,944	1,944	393
West Gate Community College	1,466	1,466	112	1,444	1,444	85
St. Mary's Catholic Comprehensive School	1,056	1,056	159	1,018	1,018	151
St. Cuthbert's High School	1,082	1,082	171	1,100	1,100	180
Sacred Heart High School	1,315	1,315	237	1,337	1,337	246
Firfield Community School	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
All Saints College	987	987	75	949	949	48

Position as at January each year

	2004			2005		
		Of which:			Of which:	
	Total pupils	Aged 11 to 19	Number of pupils in sixth form[4,5]	Total pupils	Aged 11 to 19	Number of pupils in sixth form[4,5]
Independent Schools:						
Newcastle-upon-Tyne Church High School	579	326	[7]—	558	333	[7]—
La Sagesse School	252	164	[7]—	262	164	[7]—
Newcastle Preparatory School	310	40	[7]—	278	29	[7]—
Akhurst Private School	117	[6]—	[7]—	n/a	n/a	n/a
Westfield School	353	217	[7]—	364	220	[7]—
Ascham House School	294	20	[7]—	280	19	[7]—
Newcastle School for Boys	152	33	[7]—	156	38	[7]—
Eastcliffe School	111	75	[7]—	n/a	n/a	n/a
Central Newcastle High School	995	664	[7]—	961	638	[7]—
Dame Allan's Boys' School	467	419	[7]—	500	441	[7]—
Dame Allan's Girls' School	423	380	[7]—	421	382	[7]—
Royal Grammar School	1,139	993	[7]—	1,119	979	[7]—
Talbot House Special School	n/a	n/a	[7]—	n/a	n/a	n/a

n/a = Not applicable. School not open.
[1] Age as at 31 August the previous year.
[2] A school is classified as having a sixth form if there are 8 or more pupils aged 16 and eight or more pupils aged 17.
[3] Pupils aged 16 to 19 in a school sixth form.
[4] A school is classified as having a sixth form if there are 1 or more pupils in National Curriculum Year Group 12,13 or 14.
[5] Pupils in National Curriculum Year Groups 12,13 and 14. Information not available for independent schools.
[6] Less than 3 pupils.
[7] Not available.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Teachers

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average salary of *(a)* state school and *(b)* city academy teachers was in 2004–05. [31430]

Jacqui Smith: In March 2004, the latest information available, it is provisionally estimated that the average salary of full-time regular teachers in maintained sector schools was £31,680.

No reliable figures are available to estimate the average salary of teachers employed in city academies that were open in March 2004.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what proportion of black and minority ethnic teachers *(a)* retired and *(b)* resigned from each London secondary school in each year since 1997; [33310]

(2) what percentage of teachers in each secondary school in each London borough were of a black and minority ethnic background in each year since 1997. [33311]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Information on the minority ethnic background of teachers is not available at school level or by phase of education. Information at local authority level for January 2005 was published in SFR41/2005 on 28 September 2005. A copy of this publication has been placed in the House of Commons Library. Alternatively it is available at the following URL: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000603/index.shtml

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the number of teachers in receipt of management allowances who will not qualify for a teaching and learning responsibility payment; and if she will make a statement. [33354]

Jacqui Smith: Following reviews of their staffing structures, it will be for individual schools to determine whether teachers currently holding Management Allowances meet the criteria for Teaching and Learning Responsibility payments. Reviewing staffing structures will build on work force reform to help ensure that teachers focus on teaching and leading teaching and learning.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what percentage of teachers had remained in the profession after *(a)* two, *(b)* five and *(c)* 10 years in the last period for which figures are available; [31372]

(2) what assessment she has made of the teacher retention rate in state schools in England. [31383]

Jacqui Smith: The latest information available relates to March 2004. It shows that an estimated 80 per cent. of full and part-time regular qualified teachers were still in service in 2004 after entering the maintained sector service for the first time between two and three years previously. The equivalent figure for those entering between five and six years earlier was 74 per cent; and for those entering between 10 and 11 years earlier, 60 per cent.

Many teachers take a break from service at some stage and return later, and many take a break fairly early in their career. Figures show that in 2003–04, 26 per cent. of all entrants were returning to service, and of these over a third had accrued less than five years service before their break. In addition to those on a break, an unknown number will be in teaching service outside of the English maintained sector.

In January 2005 the full-time equivalent number of teachers in service was 32,700 higher than in 1997. There are now more teachers in service than in any year since 1981.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* parents and *(b)* pupils have been prosecuted for attacks on teaching staff in each of the last 10 years; and if she will make a statement. [32664]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information is not collected centrally.

Vocational Training

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the effects on industry of vocational training in *(a)* Tamworth and *(b)* Staffordshire. [32029]

Phil Hope: The Department is committed to ensuring that everyone has the skills he or she needs to be employable and personally fulfilled. Our 14–19 and Skills White Papers set out our strategies for ensuring that education and training meets the needs of employers.

The Staffordshire Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is responsible for the effective planning and funding of learning to raise the skills of the workforce and the potential workforce. It engages through the year with providers and employers to ensure that provision matches employer skills demands.

Progress has already been made in improving the availability and quality of relevant vocational skills training to support local employers and local people:

The LSC funded National Employer Skills Survey 2003 (NESS 2003) showed that Staffordshire was in line with the West Midlands and England in having just 4 per cent. of employers reporting skill shortage vacancies.

NESS 2003 also showed that Staffordshire LSC had a lower proportion of employers reporting "hard to fill" vacancies at 14 per cent. compared to West Midlands (16 per cent.) and England (17 per cent.).

With regard to barriers to developing staff, just 13 per cent. of Staffordshire LSC employers quoted a lack of suitable courses compared to 18 per cent. nationally.

The data for NESS 2005 is due to be released before the end of December and Staffordshire LSC plans to monitor progress as soon as the data is validated and made available.

Separate information for Tamworth is not available.

Westgate College, Newcastle

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what percentage of students achieved five or more A* to C grade GCSEs at Westgate College, Newcastle in *(a)* the three years before Newcastle city council announced that it was to be closed and replaced by a city academy and *(b)* 2005. [32317]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* The information for the three years prior to the announcement in November 2004 are given in the following table. Figures for 2005 are not available at school level until the publication of the School and College Achievement and Attainment Tables in January 2006.

Number and proportion of 15-year-olds[1] achieving 5+ A-C grades at GCSE and equivalent[2] at West Gate Community College[3]*

	Number of 15-year-olds achieving 5+ A-C at GCSE and equivalent*	*Percentage of 15-year-olds achieving 5+ A*-C at GCSE and equivalent*
2004	75	32
2003	54	21
2002	31	14

[1] 15-year-old pupils at the beginning of the academic year (ie 31 August).
[2] Figures are for GCSE and equivalent qualifications for 2004. All previous years are for GCSE/GNVQ only.
[3] Newcastle city council issued a press release on 17 November 2004 stating the intention for an Academy to replace West Gate Community College.

Written Answers to Questions

Friday 2 December 2005

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

British Overseas Territories

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development when he last visited each British Overseas Territory; and whether he has plans for future visits. [33671]

Mr. Thomas: I visited Montserrat in June of last year. I have no immediate plans for any further visits to the Overseas Territories.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his Department's plans further to improve transport links that would encourage tourism in each of the overseas territories. [33766]

Mr. Thomas: A new airport financed jointly by DFID and the European Union, became operational in Montserrat earlier this year. Last March, I announced plans for an airport in St. Helena, subject to satisfactory contract bids and a rigorous environmental assessment.

Cayman Islands

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what actions are being taken by his Department to limit the effect of natural disasters on the Cayman Islands. [33754]

Mr. Thomas: We are supporting a project, which includes an adviser based in the Caribbean, aimed at improving and strengthening disaster preparedness in all UK Overseas Territories in the region. In the particular case of the Cayman Islands, we also funded a study of the impact of Hurricane Ivan to help learn from the Cayman Islands' experience of handling the emergency.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much financial assistance was directed to the Cayman Islands after they were struck by Hurricane Ivan in September 2004. [33763]

Mr. Thomas: Her Majesty's Government's assistance totalled approximately £250,000, provided in response to the immediate humanitarian need. This included the cost of deploying naval vessels in the immediate aftermath of the hurricane and the provision of essential water and medical supplies, plus help with the costs of a contingent from the Bermuda Regiment to help with the clean-up operation. We also offered advice to the Cayman Islands authorities in handling the emergency and we have since funded a review of the hurricane's impact.

Damages

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for South Holland and The Deepings (Mr. Hayes) of 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1077–78W, on damages, why *(a)* compensation was paid to pensioners for arrears of payment, *(b)* interest and a penalty payment was made to the Inland Revenue and *(c)* compensation was paid to a member of staff for personal effects; and if he will make a statement. [32000]

Hilary Benn: Compensation was paid to pensioners to recompense them for the reduced pensions they received. Incorrect exchange rates were used in the calculation of their pensions, which resulted in them being paid lower rates of pension than they were due. Besides paying the arrears, DFID paid compensation for their losses.

Payment of interest and a penalty were made, as required by the Inland Revenue, for backdated national insurance contributions that had not been paid correctly by DFID.

Compensation was paid to a member of staff for the loss of personal effects which had been placed in store at DFID expense, under the terms of the employment contract while she was working in one of our offices overseas. An administrative error resulted in invoices never being received by DFID, leading the storage company sub-contracted by DFID's freight contractor eventually to sell the effects to cover their costs. DFID's payment was a contribution to the total loss, with the bulk of the compensation paid by our freight contractor.

Departmental Consultants/Special Advisers

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many *(a)* consultants and *(b)* special advisers were employed by his Department in each year since 1997; what the cost of each was in each year; and if he will make a statement. [27424]

Hilary Benn: For details of the consultancy contracts awarded by DFID since 1997 to assist with international development, I refer the hon. Member to the response I have given to the hon. Member for St. Ives (Andrew George) on 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 55W.

Since 2003, the Government have published on an annual basis, the names and overall cost of special advisers and the number in each pay band. For the most recent information I refer the hon. Member to the statement made by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, columns 158–62WS.

Information on the numbers of special advisers prior to 2003 was provided at regular intervals and this information is available in the Libraries of the House.

Direct Budgetary Support

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much money the UK has granted for non-poverty reduction direct budgetary support in each year since 1999, broken down by country recipient. [32443]

Mr. Thomas: The following table gives details of DFID spending on direct budget support to UK overseas territories since 1999, with the objectives of maximising economic growth, meeting basic needs on the way to self-sufficiency and supporting good governance.

Budgetary aid to Dependent Territories

	£
Montserrat	
1999–2000	8,232,403
2000–01	5,740,000
2001–02	7,605,000
2002–03	11,265,000
2003–04	12,450,653
2004–05	10,132,664
St. Helena	
1999–2000	5,456,920
2000–01	6,233,728
2001–02	6,019,419
2002–03	5,936,656
2003–04	6,814,138
2004–05	10,024,489

Low-paid Home Workers

Colin Burgon: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what financial support his Department has given to organisations assisting low paid home workers in developing countries in the last two years. [32665]

Mr. Thomas: For the period 2004–06, DFID is providing £500,000 to support HomeWorkers Worldwide to build the capacity of regional organisation in Latin America, South Asia and Eastern Europe who are working to improve the economic and social conditions of poor women home based workers. This builds on support given to the organisation between 2001–04 to map home based work and establish independent organisations of home based workers in 13 countries.

Home based workers also benefit from many other programmes aimed at improving the livelihoods and labour conditions of poor workers. Examples include: DFID's support to the technical assistance programme of the International Labour Organisation; and support to the work of the Ethical Trading Initiative whose corporate, trade union and NGO members are collaborating in a project to develop guidelines for ethical trading where homeworkers are included in the supply chains of corporate members.

Montserrat

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress his Department has made towards the goal set out in its publication Montserrat: Country Policy Plan 2004–05 to 2006–07 to achieve improved public information and publicity. [33756]

Mr. Thomas: A number of initiatives are being implemented by the Government of Montserrat to facilitate public access to information. These include the development of websites for Government News and Information, the Tourism Department, the Economic Development Unit, the Government Radio Station and the Montserrat Volcano Observatory. An e-Government Strategy has been drafted, which will further enhance the public availability of Montserrat Government information. Information and Communication Technology has been identified as a priority area for funding from Montserrat's 9th European Development Fund allocation.

St. Helena

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what rules govern the application for land purchase licences by those holding official Government positions in St. Helena, with particular reference to potential conflicts of interest. [34079]

Mr. Thomas: For officials holding 'islander' status, there are no restrictions apart from the general prohibition in Order 84 of the St. Helena Public Service Orders. This forbids the abuse of office to further personal interests. For officials who do not hold 'islander' status, there are requirements for: *(a)* a licence from the Governor in Council, under the Immigrants Landholding (Restriction) Ordinance; and *(b)* concurrent permission of the Governor and the Secretary of State, in accordance with Order 81 of St. Helena Public Service Orders.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the answer of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1600W, on St. Helena, what evidence he assessed from *(a)* Dr. Philip Ashmole and *(b)* the St. Helena conservation officer Vince Williams before reaching his conclusion that the giant earwig is extinct. [34084]

Mr. Thomas: I refer the hon. member for Lewes to the response which I gave on of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1600W, in which was explained that the giant earwig is believed to be extinct, not that it is extinct. My understanding is that this is the view currently held by professional entomologists, who are familiar with this species and its habitat. We have frequent contact with Dr. Ashmole and with environmental officials in the Government of St. Helena.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the answer of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1599W, on St. Helena, for what reason a public inquiry has been ruled out. [34086]

Mr. Thomas: I understand that legislation in St. Helena does not provide for a public inquiry process. Submissions for planning approval are subject to a period of public consultation. This will apply when an application is made in respect of the airport.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the estimated cost is of the proposed airport on St. Helena; and what percentage of this cost will be met by *(a)* his Department, *(b)* other UK funds, *(c)* public funds in St. Helena and *(d)* other sources. [34087]

Mr. Thomas: Our estimates have not been published, as to do so could commercially prejudice current procurement processes. Our intention is that the full

cost of building the airport will be funded by DFID, subject to acceptable contract bids and a rigorous environmental impact assessment.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment was made of the potential to operate feeder services from Ascension Island to St. Helena in deciding the optimum size of the proposed airport at St. Helena. [34113]

Mr. Thomas: This was considered but rejected as part of last year's feasibility study of future access options for St. Helena. Wideawake Airfield in Ascension Island is a military facility, where civilian operations are limited.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the answer of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1600W, on St. Helena, if he will instruct the Government of St. Helena to withdraw the requirement for members of the Planning and Development Board to sign the Official Secrets Act on the grounds of disproportionality. [34116]

Mr. Thomas: The Planning and Development Board occasionally considers material which is commercially or otherwise sensitive. The St. Helena Government have advised that the Official Secrets Act is currently the only mechanism for protecting such material within its existing legislation. We will not, therefore, be requesting the Government of St. Helena to withdraw the requirement.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the answer of 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 359W, what proportion of the funding for the airstrip on St. Helena will be provided by his Department. [34409]

Mr. Thomas: The Government's intention is to fund the full cost of building the airport, subject to acceptable contract bids and a rigorous environmental impact assessment.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the progress of the building of the new airport in St. Helena. [33765]

Mr. Thomas: A notice has been published in the Official Journal of the European Union, seeking capability statements from suitably qualified contractors. We expect to issue an invitation to tender as early as possible in 2006, with construction starting in 2007. Work on environmental and social impact assessments, the outcome of which will be reflected in the airport "design, build and operate" contract, is well under way.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Colchester Borough Council

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whose complaint gave rise to the decision by the National Audit Office on the Objection to the Accounts for year ended 31 March 2004 of Colchester borough council; what estimate he has made of the costs of investigating this complaint; and to whom the costs will fall. [33995]

Mr. Woolas: This is an operational matter for the Audit Commission. I will ask the chief executive to write to the hon. Member and to ensure the answer is made available in the Library of the House.

Departmental Estate

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* land and *(b)* property his Department (i) owns and (ii) rents in each constituency; and if he will make a statement. [33259]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The information is as follows:

(a) Land which Office of the Deputy Prime Minister owns and rents, and the constituencies in which it lies, is as follows:

Land	*Constituency*	*(i) Owned*	*(ii) Rented*
The Grange, Twenty Acre Road, Great Sankey, Warrington	Warrington, South	Yes	—
Mast Pond Wharf, Woolwich	Greenwich and Woolwich	Yes	—

(b) Property which Office of the Deputy Prime Minister owns and rents, and the constituencies in which it lies, is as follows:

Property	*Constituency*	*(i) Owned*	*(ii) Rented*
Ashdown House, Victoria Street, London SW1	Cities of London and Westminster	—	Yes
Eland House, Bressenden Place, London SW1	Cities of London and Westminster	—	Yes
Part 15th floor, West Point, Manchester	Stretford and Urmston	—	Yes
Hempstead House, Hemel Hempstead	Hemel Hempstead	—	Yes
1 High Street Glossop	High Peak	—	Yes
Building 3 BRE, Garston	St. Albans	—	Yes
Sheffield House, Stevenage	Stevenage	—	Yes
Fire Experimental Unit, Moreton-in Marsh	Cotswold	Yes	—
Hangar 97, Little Rissington	Cotswold	Yes	—
Marchington, Staffordshire	Burton	—	Yes
Fire Service College, Moreton-in -Marsh (Executive Agency)	Cotswold	Yes	—
Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre, Westminster (Executive Agency)	Cities of London and Westminster	Yes	—
Planning Inspectorate, Temple Quay, Bristol (Executive Agency)	Bristol East	—	Yes
Old Burlington House, Piccadilly	Cities of London and Westminster	Yes	—
New Burlington House, Piccadilly	Cities of London and Westminster	Yes	—

This answer does not include buildings occupied by Government offices, who carry out functions on behalf of 10 Government Departments.

Firelink

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what inter-operability will exist at local level between the emergency services following the decision of his Department to contract O2 to undertake the provision of Firelink. [33782]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is committed to procuring a wide area radio system which meets the requirements for inter-operability and resilience of voice communications in line with the 2002 agreement between the chief officers' associations of the fire and rescue service, police and ambulance service. This provides for major incident multi-service inter-operability at strategic and tactical command levels. Both Firelink tenderers have demonstrated the capability to provide multi-service inter-operability.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has announced a preferred bidder, however a final decision has not yet been made about letting the Firelink contract.

Fire Services

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate the Government have made of the number of *(a)* job losses and *(b)* redundancies that will result from the abolition of local fire control rooms. [33173]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister estimates that around 1,000 staff (full-time equivalents) will be employed in the new control centres, subject to decisions by the employers. Currently according to figures supplied by Fire and Rescue Authorities 1,435 people are involved in providing control services, not all of whom are full-time. Some of the functions currently carried out by control room staff will remain elsewhere in Fire and Rescue Services. The number of job losses will depend on decisions made by the employers.

It is not possible to say whether there will be redundancies and if so how many. This will depend on a number of factors including how many staff choose to transfer to the new control centres, how many leave existing control rooms or retire before the creation of the new centres, and how many are redeployed.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects each regional fire control centre to be operational; and if he will make a statement. [32661]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The current FiReControl timetable schedules all regional controls to be rolled out in 2008 and 2009. A new timetable will be drawn up shortly, when contracts have been awarded for the provision of infrastructure services.

The first three regions (south west, north east and east Midlands) will go live simultaneously and the remainder will become operational in the following order:

South East,

West Midlands,

North West,

East of England,

Yorkshire and Humberside,

London.

Local Government

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the Government's plans for unitary local government; and whether the Government intend to propose *(a)* unitary districts and *(b)* unitary counties. [31787]

Mr. Woolas: We are considering the arguments for changes to the local government structure in county areas. We have no decisions thus far.

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what method he will use to consolidate the data needed to assess 2004 public service agreement target number 1. [29950]

Jim Fitzpatrick: This is very clearly set out in the PSA 1 technical note published by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in November 2004, and available on both the ODPM's website and on HM Treasury's website. It sets out the data sources for each of the floor targets that underpin our PSA 1 target and the frequency of data updates.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister why an 11-year average starting in 1999 is used to measure performance against 2004 public service agreement target number 3. [29952]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The 11-year period was chosen to provide consistency across Government with the time scales for other "healthier nation" targets, as set out in the 1999 White Paper "Saving lives: Our healthier nation".

Social Services Funding

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Wigan (Mr. Turner) of 24 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2238W, on social services funding, if he will extend the table to include the relevant data for Wirral local authority. [34139]

Mr. Woolas: The information is as follows.

£ per person

	Personal social services for younger adults FSS per person aged 18 to 64	Personal social services for children FSS per person aged 0 to 17	Personal social services for older people FSS per person aged 65 and over	Total personal social services FSS per person
Inner London boroughs including the City of London	212.04	1,141.53	1,385.83	519.66
Outer London boroughs	134.21	498.33	858.63	312.52
Metropolitan districts	126.04	406.49	860.18	305.85
Wigan	109.30	295.17	880.77	263.99
Salford	142.48	471.94	1,021.78	355.46
Knowsley	145.43	595.74	1,062.50	397.77
South Tyneside	134.12	467.19	902.12	347.39
Leeds	121.32	358.01	762.24	271.72
Wolverhampton	134.11	453.09	934.74	342.46
Wirral	124.71	423.99	789.29	311.73

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Departmental Tendering Policy

Martin Horwood: To ask the Leader of the House what his policy is on including *(a)* ethical and *(b)* environmental factors in tenders for services. [33338]

Nigel Griffiths: In tendering for services, the Office of the Leader of the House has regard to the rules and general principles of community law deriving from the EC Treaty that apply to all procurement by public bodies.

The general principles of Community law are: non-discrimination, equal treatment, transparency, proportionality and mutual recognition.

Members' Salaries

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Leader of the House how many different salary levels may be paid to hon. Members, including those for Select and Standing Committee Chairmen; and how many hon. Members are in each band. [34264]

Nigel Griffiths: 641 hon. Members are entitled to the full parliamentary salary of £59,095. (This excludes the five Sinn Fein Members who do not receive a salary). In addition, 31 Select Committee Chairmen are paid £13,107 per year and, since 1 November 2005, 30 Members of the Chairmen's Panel are paid according to length of service on the Panel as follows:

Under one year: £2,165 (12 hon. Members)

one to three years: £7,340 (three hon. Members)

three to five years: £9,960 (five hon. Members)

Over five years: £13,107 (10 hon. Members)

Members of the Chairmen's Panel who are also Select Committee Chairmen only receive the Select Committee Chairmen's salary.

These figures exclude those Members paid salaries out of the ministerial and other Salaries Act 1975.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Departmental Estate

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what *(a)* land and *(b)* property her Department (i) owns and (ii) rents in each constituency; and if she will make a statement. [33263]

Mr. Lammy: The Department for Culture Media and Sport owns a section of land adjoining the British Library in London.

The Department owns the freeholds to the following properties:

Property	Constituency
Blythe House, 23 Blythe Road, London W14 OQX	Hammersmith and Fulham
20, 21, 22, 23 and 29 Park Windsor	Windsor
St. Fairview Cottage, Windsor	Windsor
9 St. Mark's Place.	Windsor

The Department rents the following properties in central London for its office accommodation:

Property	Constituency
1a, Cockspur Street, London SW1A 5DY	Cities of London and Westminster
2–4 Cockspur Street, London SW1A 5DY	Cities of London and Westminster
Grove House 2–6 Orange Street, London WC2H 7ED	Cities of London and Westminster
Queen's Yard, Tottenham Court Road	Holborn and St. Pancras
55 Blandford Street, London W1U 7HW	Cities of London and Westminster

The Royal Parks Agency owns the following properties:

Property	Constituency
Victoria Tower Gardens, London, SW1P 3JA	Cities of London and Westminster
Brompton Cemetery, Old Brompton Road, London, SW5 9JE	Kensington and Chelsea

The agency does not rent any properties.

Departmental Tendering Policy

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her policy is on including *(a)* ethical and *(b)* environmental factors in tenders for services. [33328]

Mr. Lammy: DCMS Terms and Conditions for Services include the subjects of 'Prevention of Corruption' and 'Discrimination'. It is already the policy in DCMS for all catering to make use of Fair Trade goods and provisions wherever possible.

The Department requires bidders to complete a pre-qualification questionnaire which incorporates questions about their environmental capabilities. This is assessed prior to selection of candidates to participate in the tendering process.

DCMS alongside other Government Departments is developing a sustainable development strategy. Part of that strategy will be to take guidance from the OGC/ DEFRA Joint Note on Environmental Issues in Purchasing. DCMS has also been taking guidance from the list of "Quick Win" environmentally friendly products supplied by OGC Buying Solutions and the toolkits currently being devised by DEFRA.

Licensing

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many and what proportion of licensed premises have applied for a variation extending their licensing hours under the Licensing Act 2003. [32498]

James Purnell: We do not hold the information in the form requested. However, initial feedback from licensing authorities suggests that around 40 per cent. of premises in England and Wales that converted their old licences, also applied for variations including, but not exclusively, extensions to hours. This would equate to about 57,000 premises.

From an ongoing survey of licensing authorities in England and Wales in relation to pubs, bars and nightclubs, we estimate that two-thirds (about 54,000) will have secured licences for a variety of hours beyond 11 pm and that about 80 per cent. of these (or about 43,000) will have terminal hours of 1 am or earlier.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate the Government have made of the average cost to *(a)* village halls and community centres and *(b)* sports clubs of applying for a full premises licence and personal licences under the Licensing Act 2003. [32500]

James Purnell: We do not hold the information in the form requested. Under the Licensing Act 2003, premises apply for a one-off premises licence and then pay an annual charge for their licence thereafter. The charge is based on the rateable value of the property. The current fee structure for these two payments is as follows:

£

Rateable value bands	*Main application fee*	*Main annual charge*
A	100	70
B	190	180
C	315	295
D	450	320
E	635	350

The fee relating to an application for a personal licence has been set at £37 to be paid every 10 years. This would not be paid by sports clubs that hold club premises certificates.

The regulatory impact assessment that accompanies the fees regulations states that non commercial premises such as village and community halls and sports clubs tend to fall in fee bands A and B which should not place an undue or disproportionate burden on the premises affected. In addition, no fee is payable by a village hall or community centre if it intends only to put on entertainment. The Licensing Act 2003 also brings deregulatory benefits, reducing the number of administrative licensing processes under the previous arrangements by almost tenfold. This benefits village halls, community centres and sports clubs by removing the need to apply for several licences and permissions and allows them to offer a wider range of activities to their users and members under a single licence. Once the new licence is obtained, there will be no more form filling for committees unless the hall or sports club wish to change their licence.

As part of our arrangements for monitoring the impact of the Licensing Act 2003, an Independent Licensing Fees Review Panel has been established to consider the impact of fees on a wide range of stakeholders, including village and community halls and sports clubs. The panel will deliver an interim report shortly, followed by a Final report in autumn 2006 detailing findings and where appropriate making recommendations for the development of the licensing fees regime. We will consider carefully the evidence from these exercises and any recommendations to help community and village halls and sports clubs operate within the new regime.

TREASURY

Bank Accounts (Foreign Nationals)

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what role his Department has in monitoring bank accounts held in the UK by foreign politically exposed persons which are thought to hold funds derived from corrupt activities or theft of state assets; [34010]

(2) pursuant to the answer of 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1911W, on overseas public assets, whether his Department has undertaken analysis based on financial reporting of the amount of money circulating in the UK financial system which is derived from the illicit acquisition of foreign states' public assets. [34018]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: As part of its objective to promote efficient, stable, and fair financial markets the Treasury has lead responsibility for ensuring that the UK's anti-money laundering controls meet the requisite international standards, and are effective in their operation. Treasury approved guidance available to the financial services sector highlights the importance of a risk-based approach to politically exposed persons. The Financial Services Authority ensures that financial service providers are compliant with the obligations placed on them

The analysis of financial reporting on customer relationships and transactions involving politically exposed persons that are perceived to be suspicious is carried out by NCIS. Channels of communication exist for law enforcement and Government Departments to receive, and comment or act upon the products of NCIS analysis.

Corporation Tax

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much corporation tax was raised from business in Northamptonshire in each year since 1997. [34434]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The information is not available to estimate the amount of corporation tax raised from business in Northamptonshire in each year since 1997.

Correspondence

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Paymaster General will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire of 5 October. [34238]

Dawn Primarolo: I have replied to the hon. Member.

Council Tax

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Valuation Office Agency's Automated Value Model computer database will be used by the Northern Ireland Valuation and Lands Agency for the purpose of its rates revaluation. [33161]

Mr. Hanson: In the absence of my hon. Friend the hon. Member for Basildon (Angela E. Smith), I have been asked to reply.

The Valuation and Lands Agency is not using the Valuation Office Agency's Automated Valuation Model computer database nor any valuation models constructed by Valuation Office Agency to value properties in Northern Ireland in connection with its rates revaluation. It has constructed its own regional valuation models to apply to its own local property database.

Departmental Expenditure

Martin Horwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much the Department and its agencies have spent on *(a)* the design and production of new logos and *(b)* employing external (i) public relations and (ii) graphic design agencies in each year since 2000, broken down by project. [33226]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given to the hon. Member for Twickenham (Dr. Cable) on 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 932W, which set out the total spending on rebranding by the Chancellor's Departments and their agencies in the last five financial years. Further analysis of spending on rebranding into the headings requested and by project, and analysis by project of any spending under those headings for purposes other than rebranding, could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

National Insurance

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much revenue was obtained from national insurance contributions in each of the last three years. [34095]

Dawn Primarolo: National insurance contribution receipts are published in Table PSF6 of Public Sector Finances. A link to the most recent publication is given as follows.

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/pdfdir/psf1105.pdf

Office of National Statistics

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the impact of making the Office for National Statistics independent on its staff working at the Titchfield office. [34117]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Member to the Chancellor's written answer to my hon. Friend the Member for Gillingham (Paul Clark) on 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 79W.

Private Pensions

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the net cost of tax relief on private pensions was in the last year for which figures are available; what proportion of UK gross domestic product that figure represents; and what the projected figures are in each case for *(a)* 2010, *(b)* 2020, *(c)* 2030, *(d)* 2040 and *(e)* 2050. [34865]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Latest estimates of cost of tax relief on contributions to occupational pension schemes are included in table 7.9 of the HMRC website: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/pensions/7_9_sep05.pdf.

Latest figures for UK gross domestic product, for comparison, can be obtained from the HMT website: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk./economic_data_and tools/gdp_deflators/data_gdp_fig.cfm.

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what guarantees were *(a)* sought from and *(b)* given by EDS in respect of the tax credits IT project within one month of the introduction of the new tax credits system in 2003; and if he will make a statement; [19286]

(2) what written undertakings and assurances were sought from EDS by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the Inland Revenue prior to the new tax credits system going live in 2003; when these assurances were (i) sought and (ii) given; and if he will make a statement. [19299]

Dawn Primarolo: Before the IT system supporting tax credits went into live running on 7 April 2003, the Inland Revenue received assurances and commitments from EDS that the IT system would be available and performing as expected, and would be fit for the purpose of supporting tax credits.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the late change requests to the tax credits IT project made between April 2002 and April 2003, including those made by the Inland Revenue project board and policy board. [19288]

Dawn Primarolo: In a large-scale project of this sort there are inevitably many change requests as specific issues arise. The information is not available in the form requested.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for how many months the IT project for the Inland Revenue's new 2003 tax credits system was assessed as red light before April 2003; and if he will make a statement. [19290]

Dawn Primarolo: IR classified this project as having a red risk status from July 2001. This classification reflected the large and complicated nature of the project and the necessity for project risks to be properly managed. OGC's review of the project indicated that risks were being well managed.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the dates since the beginning of 2002 on which his Ministers met *(a)* EDS and *(b)* revenue officials to discuss the IT problems with the new tax credits system. [23572]

Dawn Primarolo: Treasury ministers held regular meetings to discuss tax credits issues with Inland Revenue and HMRC officials in the period from January 2002. There were no meetings between Ministers and EDS to discuss tax credits.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the legal status of additional wife/wives/husband(s) is in relation to applications for tax credits; [26587]

(2) if he will set out the criteria for additional wife/wives/husband(s) in relation to applications for tax credits. [26588]

Dawn Primarolo: Where a man and a woman are married under a law which permits polygamy, and either of them has an additional spouse, the Tax Credits (Polygamous Marriages) Regulations 2003 allow them to claim tax credits as a polygamous unit. It is only those in legal polygamous unions who are covered by these regulations and there is no provision for those in less formal arrangements to claim as a polygamous unit.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in how many cases where action was taken to prevent automatic recovery where a claimant disputed an overpayment of tax credits automatic recovery ceased within *(a)* one, *(b)* two, *(c)* three, *(d)* four, *(e)* five and *(f)* six weeks of the overpayment being disputed in the last year for which figures are available. [29317]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 17 November]:* New procedures to allow HM Revenue and Customs to suspend the recovery of disputed tax credits overpayments were introduced on 7 November 2005. The Tax Credit Office will now take action to prevent recovery until it has looked into the case and made a decision.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when a Minister in his Department *(a)* last met and *(b)* next expects to meet representatives from the voluntary sector to discuss tax credits. [30005]

Dawn Primarolo: Treasury Ministers meet representatives from the voluntary sector on a regular basis to discuss a wide range of issues.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in how many tax credit cases the claimant received an award notice stating that the claimant had no qualifying children but that an award of maximum child tax credit had been made in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 to date. [31525]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs do not know of any instances where maximum child tax credit payments had been made and there were no qualifying children shown on award notices.

If the right hon. Gentleman has a specific case in mind, then I will investigate it if he will write to me with the details.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in how many cases in Scotland where tax credit overpayments have been disputed *(a)* they have been written off, *(b)* additional tax credits have been awarded to deal with hardship and *(c)* claimants in receipt of additional tax credits due to hardship have also (i) disputed their overpayment and (ii) had it written off in (A) 2003–04, (B) 2004–05 and (C) 2005–06 to date. [33018]

Dawn Primarolo: The information is not available in the format requested.

I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Yeovil on 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 331W.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in how many cases in Scotland HM Revenue and Customs and its predecessors applied to the Appeals Service under section 32(1) and (2) of, and Schedule 2 to, the Tax Credits Act 2002 for a summons against an individual for failing to provide information or evidence or failing to comply with a requirement regarding a final notice in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 to date. [33019]

Dawn Primarolo: To the end of October HMRC has made one application in 2005–06 for a summons against an individual under section 32(1) and (2) of, and Schedule 2 to, the Tax Credits Act 2002. No such applications were made in 2003–04 or 2004–05.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total number of overpayments is in Scotland due to official errors in the new tax credit system; and what their value was in each year since April 2003. [33023]

Dawn Primarolo: Estimates for 2003–04 of the numbers of in-work families with tax credits awards, including information on overpayments and underpayments by constituency, based on final family circumstances and incomes for 2003–04 are published in "Child and Working Tax Credits. Finalised Awards. 2003–04 Geographical Analysis." This publication and provisional estimates for the number of in-work families by constituency with tax credit awards as at selected dates in 2004–05 are available on the HMRC website at: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/cwtc-geog-stats.htm

Estimates of numbers of overpayments or underpayments for 2004–05 awards at 5 April 2005 will not be available until after family circumstances and incomes for 2004–05 have been finalised.

A breakdown of the causes of these overpayments is not available.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the value of unclaimed income-related tax credit, in each of the past five years, broken down by tax credit. [33294]

Dawn Primarolo: Estimates of the value of unclaimed Working Families' Tax Credit entitlements for 2000–01, 2001–02 and 2002–03 are available on the HMRC website at http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/wftc/takeup_rates.htm (table 2 of each annual publication). Analysis of the value of unclaimed tax credit entitlements for 2003–04 is ongoing and we expect this work to be completed towards the end of 2005–06.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will give a full reply to the letter of the right hon. Member for Birkenhead regarding the tax credits of his constituents, Mr. and Mrs. Holland, sent on 1 November. [33771]

Dawn Primarolo: I replied to my right hon. Friend on 30 November 2005.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many separate payments are included in the aggregate settlement agreed with Electronic Data Systems on tax credits; and when these payments fall due; [33948]

(2) whether the aggregate settlement with Electronic Data Systems (EDS) on tax credits involves changes to the payments made to EDS by HM Revenue and Customs. [33949]

Dawn Primarolo: The settlement agreement reached between HM Revenue and Customs and EDS is commercial-in-confidence as is normal with settlements of this sort.

Tax Yields

Chris Huhne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will estimate the extra annual yield in 2005–06 had the *(a)* landfill tax, *(b)* vehicle excise duty, *(c)* air passenger duty and *(d)* fuel duty been raised in line with (i) the GDP deflator and (ii) GDP, (A) since its introduction and (B) since 1996–97; and what the (1) rate would be and (2) percentage difference between that rate and the current rate is in each case; [33123]

(2) if he will estimate the extra annual yield in 2005–06 had the *(a)* climate change levy and *(b)* aggregates tax been raised in line with (i) the GDP deflator and (ii) GDP since its introduction; and what the (A) rate would be and (B) percentage difference between that rate and the current rate is in each case. [33124]

John Healey: Reliable estimates of the extra yield or rates in 2005–06 are not available for vehicle excise duty, air passenger duty and fuel duty due to changes in the structure of these rates from their introduction and again from 1996–97. Reliable estimates of the extra yield in 2005–06 are not available for landfill tax because the actual standard rate of landfill tax differs markedly from the scenarios outlined in the question and disentangling behavioural effects would be very difficult and highly uncertain. Estimates for climate change levy and aggregates levy are shown in the following tables.

£ million, rounded

	Estimated extra yield in 2005–06	
	If raised in line with GDP deflator[1] since introduction	*If raised in line with money GDP[1] since introduction*
Climate change levy—introduced in April 2001	75	150
Aggregates levy—introduced in April 2002	25	50

Note:
Includes behavioural effects.
[1] *Source:*
HM Treasury.

	Rate in 2005–06 if raised in line with GDP deflator[1] since introduction		*Rate in 2005–06 if raised in line with money GDP[1] since introduction*	
	Pence per kWh	*Percentage difference from current rate*	*Pence per kWh*	*Percentage difference from current rate*
Climate change levy—introduced in April 2001				
Gas, coal and solid fuels	0.166	10.9	0.185	23.4
Electricity	0.477	10.9	0.531	23.4
LPG[2]	0.078	10.9	0.086	23.4
Aggregates levy—introduced in April 2002	£1.72 per tonne	7.5	£1.87 per tonne	16.8

[1] Source: HM Treasury.
[2] Liquefied Petroleum Gas.

Information on the rates of landfill tax, air passenger duty, fuel duty, climate change levy and aggregates levy is available at the UK Trade Info website: www.uktradeinfo.com/index.cfm?task=statindex

Information on the rates of vehicle excise duty is available at the DVLA website: www.dvla.gov.uk/vehicles/taxation.htm

Information on the GDP deflator and GDP is available at HM Treasury's website: www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/economic_data_and_tools/data_index.cfm

Venture Capital Trusts

Jim Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of *(a)* the number and *(b)* the total asset size of venture capital trusts. [34399]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: There were 98 venture capital trusts managing funds as at September 2005, as published on the National Statistics pages of the HMRC Website (http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/venture/8_6_sep05.pdf).

Venture capital trusts have raised a total of over £2.2 billion since the scheme's inception but we do not have an estimate for the current value of total assets for these funds.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Correspondence

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire of 26 September. [34240]

Mrs. McGuire: I replied to the hon. Member on 11 October 2005. I am arranging for a copy to be sent to him.

Pensioner Poverty

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners have been assessed as living in poverty in *(a)* Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* the United Kingdom in each year since 1997. [33279]

Mr. Timms: The seventh annual 'Opportunity for all' report (Cm 6673) sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and reports progress against a range of indicators.

Information on the number of pensioners in low income is not available below regional level. The following table gives estimates for the number of pensioners in relative low income and absolute low income in the North East and in Great Britain.

Number of pensioners living in households with incomes below 60 per cent. of GB median income in the North East (in millions) based on three-year rolling averages

	Relative low income		*Absolute low income (1996–97 terms)*	
	Before housing costs	*After housing costs*	*Before housing costs*	*After housing costs*
1996–97 to 1998–99	0.10	0.14	0.10	0.13
1997–98 to 1999–2000	0.11	0.13	0.09	0.11
1998–99 to 2000–01	0.12	0.13	0.09	0.09
1999–2000 to 2001–02	0.12	0.12	0.07	0.07
2000–01 to 2002–03	0.11	0.11	0.06	0.06
2001–02 to 2003–04	0.10	0.10	0.04	0.04

Number of pensioners living in households with incomes below 60 per cent. of GB median income in Great Britain (in millions) based on single-year estimates.

	Relative low income		*Absolute low income (1996–97 terms)*	
	Before housing costs	*After housing costs*	*Before housing costs*	*After housing costs*
1996–97	2.2	2.8	2.2	2.8
1997–98	2.3	2.7	2.2	2.6
1998–99	2.4	2.7	2.1	2.4
1999–2000	2.3	2.6	1.9	2.0
2000–01	2.2	2.5	1.6	1.6
2001–02	2.3	2.4	1.5	1.2
2002–03	2.3	2.3	1.2	1.0
2003–04	2.2	2.0	1.1	0.9

Notes:
1. Figures for the North East are provided using a three-year rolled average, as single-year estimates do not provide a robust guide to year-on-year changes. Figures are therefore not the same as previously published single-year estimates and there may be differences in changes over time. Due to this, the absolute and relative figures in 1996–97 to 1998–99 will not necessarily match. In circumstances such as a change in trend, rolled averages will show less variation than single year estimates.
2. Regional three-year rolled average figures are rounded to the nearest 10,000.
3. The estimates use the same income measures as the Department for Work and Pensions publication 'Households Below Average Income' (HBAI). Income is net of income tax and council tax, and adjusted for household size and composition.

Source:
Family Resources Survey (FRS)

TRANSPORT

Driving (Sleep Disorders)

Mrs. Riordan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what research his Department has undertaken into the medical status of individuals involved in sleep-related traffic accidents; [32573]

(2) what estimate he has made of the number of road accidents caused by excessive sleepiness due to *(a)* obstructive sleep apnoea and *(b)* other sleep disorders in each of the last three years; [32578]

(3) what estimate he has made of the number of adults with *(a)* diagnosed and *(b)* undiagnosed obstructive sleep disorder who hold a driving licence. [32579]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department has not undertaken research into the medical status of individuals involved in sleep-related traffic accidents. However it held an expert workshop into the medical causes of daytime sleepiness in 2002. Following that event, it has strengthened advice provided to doctors. A question on sleep disorders is now included in the medical report form that must accompany any application, and re-application (from the age of 45 years), for a vocational (i.e. heavy goods vehicle or bus/coach) driving licence.

There is no information on the number of accidents resulting from specific sleep disorders and we have no estimate of the number of adults with sleep disorders who hold a driving licence. Research for the Department for Transport has established that sleepiness is a principal factor in 10 per cent. of all road accidents and 15–20 per cent. of all accidents on motorways.

Mrs. Riordan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidance his Department provides to *(a)* licensing category Group 1 drivers and *(b)* licensing category Group 2 drivers to increase drivers' awareness of obstructive sleep apnoea (i) at the time of initial applications for a driving licence and (ii) on renewal of a licence. [32575]

Dr. Ladyman: The Group 1 and Group 2 driving licence application forms require applicants to declare a history of obstructive sleep apnoea (OSA) and this is reiterated in DVLA's information booklet on forms completion. Following normal medical investigations, drivers who are issued a licence, in the knowledge of OSA syndrome, are sent information pointing out the

dangers of driving while drowsy and the need to report any deterioration to DVLA. Information is also provided to their general practitioner. This process is repeated at licence renewal.

DVLA has produced an information leaflet about the danger of tiredness and driving for use in sleep clinics.

All medical practitioners have access to the DVLA handbook "At a Glance Guide to the Current Medical Standards of Fitness to Drive". The most up-to-date version can be found on DVLA's website at www.dvla.gov.uk and includes information on obstructive sleep apnoea.

Mrs. Riordan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many doctors have approached the Driver Vehicle Licensing Agency on behalf of patients with diagnosed symptomatic sleep disorders in the last five years. [32576]

Dr. Ladyman: These data are not available.

Mrs. Riordan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many drivers have informed the Driver Vehicle Licensing Agency of diagnosed symptomatic sleep disorders in the last five years. [32577]

Dr. Ladyman: Data are available only in relation to the number of DVLA inquiries about Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA). The following figures show separately the number of cases where OSA was the only medical condition, and where OSA combined with another relevant medical condition was declared.

	Number
2000	
Sleep Apnoea only	666
Sleep Apnoea with another relevant notifiable condition	527
2001	
Sleep Apnoea only	1,097
Sleep Apnoea with another relevant notifiable condition	616
2002	
Sleep Apnoea only	2,059
Sleep Apnoea with another relevant notifiable condition	881
2003	
Sleep Apnoea only	1,724
Sleep Apnoea with another relevant notifiable condition	701
2004	
Sleep Apnoea only	3,483
Sleep Apnoea with another relevant notifiable condition	1,137

Growth Areas Directorate

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the Department has a growth areas directorate. [34077]

Dr. Ladyman: A team of officials in the Department's regional and local transport delivery directorate is responsible for overseeing the delivery of transport infrastructure in the growth areas. They have close working relations with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, which has lead responsibility for the sustainable communities plan agenda.

Public Transport Usage (London)

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of how many commuters travelled on public transport in London in each month since January 2002. [27154]

Ms Buck: Overall responsibility for transport in London rests with the Mayor and Transport for London (TfL). TfL have provided information on London Buses, *London Underground and the Docklands Light* Railway, which has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Rail Regional Planning Assessments

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the *(a)* original and *(b)* expected completion dates of the rail regional planning assessments are. [32439]

Derek Twigg: The original completion dates of the rail Regional Planning Assessments (RPA) were published by the SRA in October 2003. At that time it was anticipated that the programme would be complete by December 2005. I am currently considering the drafts of the North East England RPA and Eastern RPA with a view to publication shortly. An updated programme will be published after the publication of these first two RPAs.

Roads

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what role the regional assemblies have in prioritising the construction of new road building schemes of national importance in their region. [34071]

Dr. Ladyman: Regional assemblies are consulted on major road schemes on the strategic road network within their regions, including schemes on routes of national importance, before decisions are taken on whether to add such schemes to the Highway's Agency's targeted programme of trunk road improvements.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the Department expects to publish the results of the Demonstration of Interoperable Road user End-to-end Charging and Telematics Systems project. [34092]

Dr. Ladyman: We expect to publish results from the DIRECTS (Demonstration of Interoperable Road user End-to-end Charging and Telematics Systems) project, assuming data capture and analysis continue to go well, in the 4th quarter of 2006.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidance and best practice manuals his Department has produced for local authorities' highway departments on *(a)* speed cameras and *(b)* traffic-calming measures. [33171]

Dr. Ladyman: The information is as follows.

(a) General guidance on the use of speed cameras was originally contained in Circular Roads 1/92 and 1/95. The Department has since introduced strict criteria to govern the deployment of cameras operating within the National Safety Camera Programme. These are

contained in a Handbook of Rules that has been issued to every Safety Camera partnership in England and Wales. A copy is available in the House Library.

(b) The Department's Traffic Calming Bibliography, Traffic Advisory Leaflet 2/05 published in January this year, lists the main items of published advice and research into the design, use and effectiveness of traffic calming measures. Copies of this leaflet are available in the House Library.

In addition, a Local Transport Note on Traffic Calming is being drafted. This will summarise existing information on the design and effectiveness of traffic calming measures. The Department plans to publish this Local Transport Note early next year.

Road Traffic (London)

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what was the average speed travelled by private cars in London in *(a)* 1999–2000 and *(b)* 2004–05. [31883]

Dr. Ladyman: Estimates are available for average traffic speeds in London and are derived from speed surveys conducted on a three-year cycle by Transport for London. These surveys measure the average speed of all traffic. Speeds by individual vehicle class such as cars are not available.

Average traffic speeds for the periods 1997–2000 and 2003–06 are as follows:

Average traffic speeds in London 1997–2006

Miles per hour

	Central area	*Inner area*	*Outer area*	*All areas*
Morning peak period				
1997–2000	10.0	12.0	18.2	15.9
2003–06	10.6	11.7	—	—
Daytime off-peak period				
1997–2000	10.0	14.8	21.9	18.5
2003–06	10.5	14.1	—	—
Evening peak period				
1997–2000	10.2	11.4	19.1	16.2
2003–06	10.6	12.3	—	—

The 2003–06 cycle is not complete and the outer area survey information is not yet available.

School Buses

David Mundell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent assessment he has made of the effectiveness of safety provisions in legislation covering the use of buses transporting children to school with particular reference to safety of buses *(a)* with more than 16 seats and *(b)* carrying older pupils. [32906]

Dr. Ladyman: Government statistics distinguish accidents involving mini-buses from those involving larger passenger vehicles but are unable to differentiate those accidents involving buses from those involving coaches. Similarly, the statistics do not differentiate between organised school transport and regular bus services carrying children to school.

With respect to children (12 to 15), and making no distinction for the time of day at which the accident occurred, there was an average of 0.4 fatalities and 20 serious injuries per year for the period 1994–98. In 2004 there was one fatality and 18 serious injuries. These figures reduce slightly if we consider the peak time of day for school transport. Considering only the period 7 am to 10 am and 3 pm to 6 pm during weekdays, serious injuries reduce to 15.

The figures are lower for the younger age group (0 to 11) where the 1994–98 average was 0.2 fatalities and 14 serious injuries. In 2004 the figures for this group were 0 fatalities and nine serious injuries, reducing to eight during the peak school transport period.

Buses and coaches are the safest mode of personal/passenger road transport, when considering the number killed and seriously injured (KSI) with respect to the number of kilometres travelled. Figures for 2003 indicate that the rate of KSI per billion kilometres travelled was 10 for bus and coach travel compared with 27 for passenger cars, 534 for cyclists and 443 for pedestrians.

The Government is committed to improving child road safety. In 2000 it set itself a challenging target to reduce, by 2010, the KSI child casualties (0 to 15 years) to 50 per cent. of the 1994 to 1998 average. The data indicate that in 2004 there were 3,905 KSI child casualties. This represents a reduction of 43 per cent. on the baseline and we are therefore well on track to meet or exceed our target.

Seat Belts

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many copies were issued of the consultation document published by his Department in 2004 on changes to seat belt wearing regulations; if he will place responses in the Library; and if he will make a statement; [34259]

(2) if he will list the *(a)* organisations and *(b)* individuals who were sent a copy of the consultation document published by his Department in 2004 on changes to seat belt wearing regulations; and if he will make a statement; [34260]

(3) if he will list the *(a)* organisations and *(b)* individuals who requested a copy of the consultation document published by his Department in 2004 on changes to seat belt wearing regulations; and if he will make a statement. [34261]

Dr. Ladyman: This consultation document concerns seat belt wearing in buses and coaches. It was published in September 2004, and 278 copies were then issued by the Department.

The consultation document is available on-line at: www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_rdsafety/documents/divisionhomepage/039143.hcsp

The Department's decision following consultation, including a Summary of Responses, was published on 19 July 2005 and has been placed in the Library. It is also on the Department's website.

A list of the consultees is available at annex B to the consultation document. No records are available for those who subsequently requested a copy of the document or downloaded it from the website.

Regulations are in preparation to come into force in 2006 (subject to parliamentary approval) to require seated passengers aged three years and above to use seat belts where they are available in the larger buses and coaches. Seat belt wearing is already a requirement in vehicles below 2,450 kgs unladen weight (roughly 16 seats) where they are installed.

Tintwistle Bypass

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he made of traffic levels on the *(a)* M62 and *(b)* A628 Mottram in Longdendale, Hollingworth and Tintwistle bypass immediately after the opening of the bypass. [34408]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency has estimated the traffic levels on the M62, between Junctions 22 to 23, and A628 Mottram in Longdendale, Hollingworth and Tintwistle bypass immediately after opening of the bypass in 2010. These are shown in the following table:

Route	*Annual average daily traffic (AADT) per day*
M62	
Junction 22 to 23	111,350
A628 Mottram in Longdendale, Hollingworth and Tintwistle	
Bypass around Mottram in Longdendale	42,600
Bypass around Hollingworth and Tintwistle	20,800

Transport Staff (Abuse)

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1867W, on transport staff (abuse), when his Department expects to have in place a reliable method of monitoring levels of violence on buses; and when his Department expects to resume recording this information. [33465]

Mr. Darling *[holding answer 1 December 2005]:* The Department for Transport is working with the Safer Travel on Buses Panel to identify a workable method of collecting and reporting reliable data on crime on buses. Once a method is fully worked up we will be in a position to say when we will resume reporting information.

PRIME MINISTER

Iraq

Tim Loughton: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to the answer to question 33139, on how many occasions and in what locations he has visited UK military personnel in hospital who have been wounded in Iraq. [34410]

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Prime Minister on how many occasions he has visited wounded soldiers since May; and in which locations. [33403]

The Prime Minister: I have nothing further to add to the answer I gave the hon. Member for East Worthing and Shoreham (Tim Loughton) on 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 289W.

Ministers' Salaries

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Prime Minister how many salary bands there are for Ministers; and how many Ministers are in each band. [34263]

The Prime Minister: The number and level of salaries available for ministerial posts are set out in the Ministerial and Other Salaries Act 1975, as amended.

Official Residences

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the Ministers who have occupied each of the three flats in Admiralty House in each year since May 1997. [17494]

The Prime Minister: The three flats in Admiralty House are currently occupied by: the Deputy Prime Minister; the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; and the Leader of the House of Commons and Lord Privy Seal. With the exception of the Leader of the House of Commons, who took up residence in 2002, the other Ministers have been in residence since 1997. Other Ministers who occupied the flats since 1997 were the then Defence Secretary (1997–79) and the then Northern Ireland Secretary and later Minister for the Cabinet Office (2000–01).

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list Departments which pay council tax for Ministers who reside in official residences; and which Ministers do not have a personal council tax liability for official residences. [17508]

Mike Penning: To ask the Prime Minister which hon. Members are currently resident in publicly-owned grace and favour properties for which the Government are responsible; and at what cost to the public purse. [32369]

The Prime Minister: I, the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, and the Leader of the House of Commons and Lord Privy Seal declare our official residences as our main residence and are responsible for paying council tax on them. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and HM Treasury pay the council tax on the official residences allocated to their Ministers, because their Ministers primary residences (on which they pay council tax) are elsewhere. In addition, as my right hon. Friend the Member for Sheffield, Brightside (Mr. Blunkett) made clear to me when he stepped down from office, he would make the necessary arrangements to move out of the official residence as quickly as possible.

The running costs of official residences are the responsibility of the relevant Department. For information on the costs of my residence, I refer the hon. Members to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Southend, West (Mr. Amess) on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1934W.

Shrewsbury Livestock Market

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Prime Minister if he will visit Shrewsbury for the opening of the new livestock market. [33363]

The Prime Minister: I have no current plans to do so.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Adoption and Children Act

Mr. Drew: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs for what reasons the British Association of Play Therapists was not included in consultations in relation to the Adoption and Children Act 2002, with particular reference to the role to be played by adoption support agencies. [33038]

Maria Eagle: I have been asked to reply.

The British Association of Play Therapists was not excluded from consultations in relation to the Adoption and Children Act 2002 (the 2002 Act). These were full public consultations, open to all. Five consultation documents on the adoption and special guardianship regulations and guidance to be made under the 2002 Act were published for full public consultation in 2003–04: "Arranging Adoptions and Assessing Prospective Adopters; Adoption Reports and Adoptions with a Foreign Element, Access to Information; Adoption Support and Adoption Support Agencies and Care Planning and Special Guardianship". The "Adoption Support and Adoption Support Agencies" document set out the Government's proposals in relation to adoption support agencies (ASAs) and included draft Regulations and National Minimum Standards for ASAs. All of these consultation documents were fully accessible to the public on the Department for Education and Skills website, and consultation responses were invited from anyone who wished to express a view.

DEFENCE

Aircraft Carriers

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will ensure that the future aircraft carriers are in service before the retirement of the current aircraft carriers. [30823]

Mr. Ingram: The in-service dates for our new aircraft carriers will not be fixed until the main investment decision is taken. It is therefore too soon to know whether there will be implications for the planned out of service dates for the Invincible class carriers.

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on *(a)* progress on the Royal Navy's future aircraft carrier (CVF) programme and *(b)* French involvement in the CVF programme. [32558]

Mr. Ingram: The Government remain committed to providing this important capability for our armed forces. Work is continuing to mature the design, address risks and refine costs to the point at which the main investment decision can sensibly be taken and we can commit to manufacture within defined time, cost and performance parameters.

Given that both we and France are embarking on major, complex carrier procurement projects, we are examining areas of mutual benefit and opportunities to deliver economies. It is for industry to put forward proposals which will be judged on their merits and in light of national policies. It has been agreed with France that for co-operation to work, it must deliver cost savings and must do so without delaying UK or French programmes.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what criteria the Prime Minister used in making the statement to the press that Swan Hunters should be permitted to bid for inclusion in the CVF programme. [32881]

Mr. Ingram: The Government have always said that the development of an optimum shipbuild strategy for the CVF programme will be made by all alliance participants based on cost effectiveness and best long-term value for money while taking into account the capability, capacity and resources of the United Kingdom industry. No company is ruled out, but we are not prepared to give guarantees of work that could be placed with particular shipyards, as each will need to demonstrate the capability and competitiveness required to meet our needs.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reason the internal planning assumption for the entry into service of the first future aircraft carrier has been classified as commercially sensitive. [33052]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 30 November 2005]:* As for all projects, the in-service dates for the future aircraft carriers will only be set following the main investment decision and once they have been approved by Ministers. This decision has not yet been taken, and will only be taken when we know with confidence the risks, the costs and the associated contractual framework involved in building the carriers.

Defence Documents

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library a copy of *(a)* the voluntary code of conduct for European defence equipment sales and *(b)* the EU's Military Requirements Catalogue. [32708]

John Reid: I will place a copy of the voluntary code of conduct for European defence procurement in the Library of the House.

I am unable to place a copy of the EU's Military Requirements Catalogue in the Library. This is a classified EU document and therefore any decision to place it in the public domain must be made collectively.

However, I will place in the Library a copy of the Council Conclusions agreed by Ministers on 21 November, which sets out the aims of the Catalogue.

Departmental Contracts (Direct Mail)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many contracts for direct mail were signed by his Department by *(a)* 2005–06 to date and *(b)* 2004–05; and what the value was in each case. [27663]

Mr. Ingram: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Estate

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what *(a)* land and *(b)* property his Department (i) owns and (ii) rents in each constituency; and if he will make a statement. [33264]

Mr. Touhig: Details of the land and property owned by the Ministry of Defence are listed in the National Assets Register, a copy of which is held within the Library of the House and can also be found at www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/mediastore/otherfiles/217.pdf.

Details of land and property rented by the Ministry of Defence are not held centrally. To provide the information in the format requested would incur disproportionate cost.

Departmental Expenditure

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much the Department and its agencies have spent on *(a)* the design and production of new logos and *(b)* employing external (i) public relations and (ii) graphic design agencies in each year since 2000, broken down by project. [33215]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence's expenditure on External Assistance, of which consultants employed to manage PR is part, is available in the Library of the House for years 1995–96 to 2004–05. Although this is broken down by various categories, the MOD does not centrally record expenditure on external PR and other related agencies, or other costs associated with the design and production of new logos. This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Procurement

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) which procurements have been cancelled by his Department since 1997; and what *(a)* losses were incurred and *(b)* the reasons were for cancellation in each case; [32192]

(2) if he will list defence procurements that have seen capability reductions against the initial Memorandum of Understanding; and what *(a)* capability modifications and *(b)* cost savings resulted in each case. [32201]

Mr. Ingram: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Staff

Helen Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what restrictions there were on his Department's officials seeking employment with companies in the defence sector while they remain employed by the Ministry. [32356]

Mr. Ingram: Members of the armed forces and Ministry of Defence officials, like other Crown servants, are required to comply with rules on the acceptance of outside business appointments if they wish to take up other employment—whether in the defence industry or elsewhere—within two years of their retirement or resignation. The rules provide for the scrutiny of applications and for the imposition of a waiting period or other conditions where there might be cause for concern. The rules for the home civil service are set out in Section 4.3 Annex B of the civil service management code, a copy of which is available in the Library of the House. Corresponding requirements also apply to members of the armed forces.

Helen Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people working in his Department are on secondment from arms *(a)* manufacturers and *(b)* traders. [32357]

Mr. Ingram: There are currently 20 staff seconded in to the Ministry of Defence from private industry. Information available on these staff is as follows:

Company	*Number of staff*
BAE Systems	3
Partnerships UK	1
Thales	1
Rolls Royce	1
Alstom	1
Qinetiq	1
DSTL	2
Paradigm	1
DML	3
Halcrow Group	3
Baptie Group	2
Grant Thornton	1

Due to the size and scope of these companies it is not possible to determine whether they have come from the arms manufacturing or trading divisions within them.

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many of his Department's employees who are within one year of the official retirement age are on extended sick leave. [32603]

Mr. Touhig: As at 25 November 2005, 50[1] Ministry of Defence civilian employees[2] were within one year of their official retirement age and on extended sick leave[3].

[1] Number has been rounded to the nearest 10.

[2] This includes all permanent and casual staff, but excludes Trading Fund, Locally Engaged Civilian and Royal Fleet Auxiliary personnel.

[3] Extended sick leave is defined as a continuing period of sickness absence in excess of 28 days (four weeks), which is the point at which a referral should be made to occupational health.

HMS Intrepid

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to dispose of HMS Intrepid; and if he will make a statement. [28355]

Mr. Ingram: It is intended to either dismantle Intrepid, or sell it on for re-use. The Disposal Services Agency (DSA) invited tenders for the dismantling of Intrepid in 2004, however none of the proposals received were deemed suitable. The DSA continues to work

on identifying suitable facilities for dismantling, both in the UK and overseas. In parallel any potential opportunities for sale are being explored.

Iraq

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many medical staff serving with British armed forces in Iraq have been *(a)* injured and *(b)* killed since March 2003; and if he will make a statement. [31415]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* No serving Royal Army Medical Corps personnel have died or been killed while on Operation Telic. Three Royal Army Medical Corps personnel have been injured as a result of hostile action. No Royal Naval Medical Service personnel and no Royal Air Force Medical Service personnel have been killed or injured as a result of hostile action.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many servicemen have received treatment for mental health problems since serving in Iraq during the current conflict; and where they have been treated. [33140]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 29 November 2005]:* Currently available statistics show that between January 2003 and September 2005, 1,333 UK service personnel who deployed on operation Telic subsequently received treatment for mental health conditions. This represents around 1.5 per cent. of total UK service personnel deployed to the region during the same period. Out-patient treatment takes place at 13 MOD Departments of community mental health (DCMH) located throughout the UK and three satellite centres in Cyprus, Germany and Gibraltar. In-patient treatment, when required, has been provided by The Priory Group since April 2004.

Due to data capture problems, we have been unable to include figures from DCMH Cyprus for the period June to September 2005. This will be rectified in future, but the numbers will be very small and should not significantly affect the total.

Joint Strike Fighter

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his latest estimate is of when the Joint Strike Fighter will be operative; and what the cost of the Joint Strike Fighter will be. [32455]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to my answers of 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2054W, to the hon. Member for New Forest, East (Dr. Lewis). The UK's procurement cost is likely to be up to £10 billion, depending on the eventual number of aircraft required. In service support costs will be determined by whatever through life support strategy we decide to adopt.

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on progress on introducing the joint strike fighter. [32559]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 567W, and 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 378W, to the hon. Members for Romford (Andrew Rosindell) and Congleton (Ann Winterton) respectively.

Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary)

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what the total value is of the computer systems for the four Alternative Landing Ships Logistic which are under construction; [32043]

(2) what proportion of the contract value of the Alternative Landing Ships Logistic being built by Swan Hunters has been placed with companies in the north east; and if he will list the *(a)* United Kingdom and *(b)* overseas subcontractors that have received orders of £500,000 and above; [32044]

(3) from which country the computer systems for the four Alternative Landing Ships Logistic which are under construction were procured. [32052]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence contractual relationship is with Swan Hunter, the Lead Yard Supplier for the Landing Ship Dock (Auxiliary) programme and therefore its arrangements with sub-contractors are a matter for the company.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Defence Procurement Agency personnel are working on the Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) at the Swan Hunter yard; and in what roles. [32713]

Mr. Ingram: The Defence Procurement Agency employs a team of seven site surveillance engineers within the Swan Hunter shipyard which is in line with the Department's normal approach to ship build contracts. The team monitors the company's progress and performance in the build of each ship, including fabrication and commissioning activities and ensuring the vessels comply with the statutory authorities and classification societies standards.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether he has asked BAE Systems to second personnel to work on the Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) at the Swan Hunter yard. [32714]

Mr. Ingram: The secondment of BAE Systems personnel to work on the Landing Ship Dock (Auxiliary) Project was a commercial arrangement between BAE Systems and Swan Hunter.

Lynx Helicopters

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the current Lynx fleet he expects to be used as donors for the Future Lynx project; and when he expects this process to begin. [32699]

Mr. Ingram: The Future Lynx is our preferred procurement option to meet the Surface Combatant Maritime Rotorcraft and Battlefield Reconnaissance Helicopter requirements. This is, however, subject to continuing negotiations with the company, and the main investment decision has not yet been taken. If we decide to proceed with Future Lynx, the intention is that parts would be removed from existing Lynx helicopters as they are progressively withdrawn from service, but until we can assess the condition of the parts it is not possible to say how many will be used.

Neuron Programme

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions his Department has had with its French counterpart on the Neuron programme; and whether it is his policy that the United Kingdom will participate in the programme. [32710]

Mr. Ingram: There have been no formal discussions with France about Neuron. It is not our policy to join the Neuron programme.

Noise-induced Hearing Loss

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department keeps a record of hearing tests carried out on service and ex-service personnel and their results. [26859]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* Records of hearing tests and their results are held as part of an individual's personal medical record. The medical records of serving personnel are held at their unit medical centre, whereas the medical records of individuals who have left the services are held by each service at individual central locations. The Ministry of Defence does not, however, hold records of hearing tests which take place after an individual has left the services. The MOD does not hold a central database of hearing test results.

Postal Services

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what is the subsidised mail allowance for service personnel serving abroad; and what is the average time taken to deliver mail to troops serving in Iraq. [32636]

Mr. Ingram: Postcards, letters and small packets, up to a maximum weight of 2 kg, can be sent by airmail to any member of HM forces or otherwise entitled persons serving abroad, at a concessionary rate, which is subsidised by the Ministry of Defence. For example, a 2 kg packet can be sent by airmail to a British forces post office address at a cost of £7.16, whereas to send the same packet by the standard Royal Mail airmail tariff to a civilian address in Germany would cost £10.59, and, to a civilian address in world zone 1 (i.e. outside Europe) would cost £37.31.

BFPO mail for Iraq is normally despatched six times per week by RAF aircraft. Typically, a letter posted in the United Kingdom could take one to two days to reach the BFPO sorting office in London, and a further two days to reach the British forces post office deployed in Iraq. Final receipt by the addressee is of course dependent on the operational activities of the addressee's unit, and the difficulty of effecting delivery from the forces post office, via the addressee's unit, to the named individual.

RAF Bases

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether the number of military aircraft using RAF Northolt in a year is restricted; [33055]

(2) pursuant to the answer of 21 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1250W, on RAF Northolt, how many *(a)* civil and *(b)* military aircraft landed and departed from RAF Northolt outside the hours of 8.00 am to 10.00 pm in (i) 2002, (ii) 2003 and (iii) 2004; [33273]

(3) pursuant to the answer of 21 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1250W, on RAF Northolt, what process is used to authorise increases in the number of civilian aircraft that land and take off from RAF Northolt; who authorises such increases; and whether an increase has been authorised for 2006. [33277]

Mr. Ingram: Authority for the number of civil commercial aircraft movements at RAF Northolt rests with the Ministry of Defence. Flying activity at RAF Northolt is restricted to the minimum required to meet operational and training requirements.

Information on the number of civil and military aircraft that have landed and departed outside the hours of 8.00 am and 10.00 pm is not held in the format requested and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

There is no formal process for increasing the number of civil commercial aircraft movements at RAF Northolt. However, the hon. Member was informed by my right hon. Friend the then Minister of State for the Armed Forces (John Reid), on 30 June 1998, *Official Report*, columns 272–73, that any changes to the number of civil commercial aircraft movements would be subject to full consultation with the local authority and interested parties.

No increase in the number of civil commercial flights at Northolt in 2006 has been authorised.

Reservists

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many reservists in the armed forces are teachers. [33143]

Mr. Touhig: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Security Passes

Jeremy Corbyn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people, excluding employees, have passes, other than day passes, giving access to his Department's headquarters; and by which companies these people are employed. [24607]

Mr. Touhig: Currently 4,585 people, representing the companies listed, hold passes allowing access to the Ministry of Defence's headquarters.

Companies/contractors listed in alphabetical order:

A.A. Osborn and Sons
A.D.I. STE
ABB
ABB Building
ABE (UK)Ltd
Acorn Nursery
Actica
AD Fairbanks Weston
Adecco

Advanced Door Care
Advanced Door Care
Advantage
AGS Transport
Agustawest
Air Research
Allen Fencing Ltd.
Allen Fencing Ltd.
Alpha Health Club
Alstom Pow
Amazon
Amey
Amicus
AMS Ltd.
Analix
Anite PS Consulting
Anite PS Consulting
Antine Bus
Apex Security
Aqua Air Systems
Aquisition
Argenta Research
Arup
Arup Project Managing
Asset Management Solutions Ltd.
Atkins
Atlas
Atmaana
Ave Systems
Avondale Construction Ltd.
Awe
Awe Aldermaston
Axima
B&P
Babcock
Babcock SGI Ltd.
BAE International Systems Ltd.
BAE System
Ballincrie
Banner
Beacon Milking Systems
Bearingpoint Ltd.
Bell Decorators Ltd.
Bell Group
Benchmark
Berkshire
Bernard Williams Associates
Better Bus
BGSS
Bishops Move Ltd.
BMI Health
BNFL
Boeing
Boon Edam
Boon Edam Ltd.
Bovis Lend Lease Holdings
BPP Malpas Ltd.
BPP Malpas
Bray Leino
Brey Leino
Bright Horizons
Briton Fire Co. Ltd.
BRL Ltd.
BT
BT ATE
BT Defence
BT Ignite
Burton Generators
Burtonwood
Burtonwood
Business Safety Solutions Ltd.
Bycullah
C & F Electronical Contractors
C&I Controls
C&I Controls
C&I Controls
Cable Lift
Cambridge
CAN Defence Staff
Canadian High Commission
Canadian High Commission
Cannon Hygiene
Canon UK Ltd
Cap Gemini
Carillion
Cartograph
Catch 22
Catch 22
Cavendish
CB Environmental
CB Environmental
CFS Ltd.
Chairman of NEAB
Chapter Services Ltd.
Charles Douglas
Check Comp
Chloride Power Protection
Chubb
Chubb Electronic Security
Churchmans Marketing Comm
City Maintenance
City Maintenance
City Maintenance
City Maintenance
Civil Service Benevolent Fund
Claritas Diagonal Security Ltd.
Clark + FE
CLC
CLC Electrical Ltd.
Close Brothers
CMG
CMG
Cofathec
Cofathec Heatserve
Colebrand Defence
Combi Fire Service

Comfort Controls
Company/AG
Competition Appeal Tribunal
Comwell Management Consultants
Comwell Management Consultants
Concept Building Services
Concept Building Services
Concept Building Services
Consultant
Corda
Corda Ltd.
Cornard Consulting Ltd.
Cornwall Management Consultants
Cornwall Management Consultants
Cornwell Management Cons
Cornwell Management Cons
Coverite L
Coverite L
Cox & King
CPCR
CPCR
CPCR Ltd
Cradle Access Services
Crystal Blinds
Crystal Blinds
CSBF
CSC Computer Sciences
CSI
CSI
CSSC
Cubic Defence Applications Grp
Cuerden Consulting Ltd.
Cunning Running Software
Curtis-CA
D & R Scaffolding
D & R Scaffolding
D J Goode
D SAC Independent
D UK
D&C Lifts
Daletech
Daletech
DBS Ltd
DDA
Defence and Naval Attache
Defence Naval Attache
Defence Strategy and Solutions
DEGW
DEGW Plc
Deloitte &
Deloitte C
Delrac
Deltaweb International
Dennis Boyse Ltd.
Detica
DG WGC
DGFM
DHE/Steria
Diagonal
Diagonal Security Ltd.
Dipcog
DJ Talbot
DMA
Dome Building Services
Dome BSPM
Doorman Services
Down Training and Development
Down Training and Development
DPBAC Consultant
DPMT
DS&S
DSTL
D-T-D
Ductclean
SAC
EADS Defence andSecurity Services
EAS
Eastgate
EAW Services Ltd.
Echelon Consulting Ltd.
ECS Philip
ECS Philli
ECS Phillips
Eden Browne Ltd.
EDS
EH Industries Ltd.
EHGE Ltd.
EHGE Ltd.
Electronic
Eliesha Training Ltd.
Elmwest Electrical Company
Elyouk Industrial
Emcor Facilities Services
EMS
EMS Group
EMS Group
Ernst & Young LLP
Engineering Management Services
Engineering Management Services
English Heritage
Enviroguard
Environ
Equion Ltd.
ESS
Eurest
Euro Installation SVCS
Euro Installation SVCS
Euro Property
Euro Property SVCS
European Asbestos SVCS
European Asbestos SVCS
European Asbestos SVCS
Eurostaff
EV Bullen and Son
Everson Hewitt
Everton Hewitt Ltd.

Excalabur
Exchange Officer
External Member
Eylo UK Ltd.
F.S.I.
Facilities Partnership Team
Fields Associates
Forces Pension Society
Four Square
Freelance ER Taylor
Freshfield
Fujitsu
Fullbrite
Future Sys
GAD
Gail Smith
GD (UK) Ltd.
General Dynamics Ltd.
Gent Ltd.
Gents
Global Associates
Global Solutions UK Ltd.
Goldman Sach
Goodfellow Associates
Gratte Manly
Gregory Harland
Grosvenor
Group4
GSL Global
GSL UK Ltd.
Gunnebo Security
Guy's Kings and St. Thomas' School of Medicine
H & B Scaffolding
Hallmark Kitchins
Halycon EW
Harrow Green
Hartley &
Hatmet
Havana Consultancy Ltd.
Hays Accountancy
HCL Safety
Health Pro
Hedra
Hewlett Packard Ltd.
HHB Services
Hi-Q Systems Ltd.
Hok International
Holden + Brooke
House Protection Agency
HP Services
Hurst International
HVR Consulting Services
Hyder Cons
Hyssen Krupp
IBM UK Ltd
ICAM Solutions
IEH
Impact Plus
Impact Plus
Imperial College
Industrial Pipe Freezing SVCS
Information Security Systems
Information Security Systems
Inframan
Institute of Business Ethics
Insys Ltd.
Interserve
Intruder Alert
Investigative Data Mining Ltd.
IPS
IPS Group
ISS
ISTA
J&S Marine
J.A. Brook
JAB Defence Consulting Ltd.
Jackson Lift Group
Jacobs-Babtie
James Harrington
Janes' Fighting Ships
JB Carton and Company
Jola Ref and Air Conditioning
Josephine Sammons
JSB Training and Development
JUEP
K&M McLoughlin Decorating Ltd.
Kardex Systems
Kent Commercials
KG Ceiling
Kidde Fire
Kinderquest
Kings College London
Knight Frank
Kone Lifts
KPMG Corporate Finance
LA International
L-3 Com
Laing
Lambeth College
Leonard and Roberts
Lexmark Internationals
Liric
Liric Association
Lissajous Nucleonics Ltd.
LJB Recruitment Search
LM Stasys Ltd.
Lockheed Martin
Logica CMG
Loughton Contract Carpet
MacLellans
MacLennan
Maey Bus Services
Mallinson
Mallinson
Manpower PLC
Mar-Com International Ltd.

Marcom Systems Ltd.
Marconi Mobile Ltd.
Mass Consultants Ltd.
Matra Bae
Matt Ltd.
MBDA
MBDA UK Ltd.
MBOA UK
McGinley
McKinsey and Company
McQuay Services Ltd.
Met Office
MHL Consultancy Ltd.
Michelmore
Michelmore
Mick Rawso
Micotec-Al
Microtec Air Ltd.
Microtec-Air Ltd.
MJC Transport Ltd.
Modis International
Modus
Modus Services
Morden Associates
MRC IEH
MSD International
MSD International
Mulalley and Company Ltd.
Mulalley and Company Ltd.
Myco Installations Ltd.
N&W Global
NAO
National Audit Office
NCIS
NHS
NISCC
Niteworks
Non-Executive Director
Northrop Grumman IT
Novar Gent Ltd.
OAC
Octavia
ODC UK
ODP
Office of PMO
OGC
OGC
OGC Buying
OPI Tel
Orostream
Orpington
Ove Arup and Partners Ltd.
Oxford Development Partnership
PA Consulants
P M Sciences Ltd.
Parity
Parker Bridge
Parker Bridge Ltd.
Parkway Group Ltd.
Parsons Brothers
Partnership
PAYE Stonework Restorations
Payestone
PCRU
PCS
Pearson Engineering
Pemberton Group Plc
Pep-UK
Peter Wyat
Phase Technology Ltd.
Phase Technology Ltd.
Phoenix Electrical Company Ltd.
PHS Greenleaf Ltd.
PHS Greenleaf Ltd.
PHS Ltd.
Pickfords
Pinacle Ltd.
Pink Roccade UK Ltd.
PJ Joyce
PMO
PMO
Pneumatic Engineering Ltd.
Polaris Finance Ltd.
Pragmatix Ltd.
Premier Projects Ltd.
Premier Risk Management Ltd.
President
Price Heating Ltd.
Pricewater
Professional Ltd.
Project Management Ltd.
Prospect
Public Recruitment Ltd.
PUK
PWC
Qinetiq
Quality South West Ltd.
Radio Tech
Rand Europe UK
Raytheon Systems Ltd.
Raytheon Systems Ltd.
Regal
Relocam
Relocom Ltd.
Remsdaq
Remsdaq Ltd.
Remsdaq Ltd.
RGS
Right Consultants Ltd.
Right Coutts Consulting
Right Management Consulting
Riverbank
RJA Associates Ltd.
RJD Technology Ltd.
Robert Half International
Robert Laing

Robore Cuts
Roger Preston and Partners
Rolls-Royce Plc
Rope Access
Royal and Sun Alliance
Royal Bank
RSL
Ruddy Joinery Ltd.
RWAF
S E A
S.E.C.
SaBRE
Safety Planning
SAIC
Salamander
Sales and Business Development
Salvo Software Solutions
SBL
Scadia Consulting Ltd.
SCOM
SCS
SCS
SCS Consultants Ltd
Selecta
Selex Ltd.
Selex S&AS Ltd.
Self Employed
Senior Hargreaves
Serco Consultancy
Serco Consultancy
Serco Ltd.
SGC
SGC Ltd.
Siemens Building Technologies
Siemens Building Technologies
Siemens Communications
Siesman
Simmons and Simmons
SISYS
SITA
SITA
SJN Ltd
Skanska
SKM Productions
SL Group
Smiths Aerospace
Smiths Detection
SMS Management and Technology
Society of British Aerospace
Software Box Ltd.
Spa Flow
Spa Flow
Special Adviser
SRW
Stanton Marris Ltd.
Stasys
Steria
Steria Ltd.
Stevenson
Stonegrove
Stratum Management Ltd.
Stulz
Stulz
Sun Microsoft
SVGC Ltd.
Swift Horseman
SWR
Sykes and Sons Ltd.
Symantec-Lyric Ltd
Symbia Ltd.
SYSIS
System Consulting
Systems Consultancy Services Ltd.
Systems Consultants Services Ltd.
T.P.S.
Taylor Consultancy
Technology
Telco Electronics Ltd.
TFPL Ltd.
Thales L&J
Thales Naval UK
Thales Optronics
Thales Underwater Systems
The Carlyle Group
The Projects Team
The Salamander Organisation
The Salamander Organisation
Thyssen Krupp
Thyssen Krupp
TNT
TPS Consulting
TQMI Ltd
Trafalgar
Transaction Services
Trend Network Services
Trend Network Services
Trusted Experts
Turner &
TYGWU
Ultra Electronics
University
Unusual Suspects
Vector FTS Ltd.
Vectra Group
Vectra Jones
Vectra J Jones
Vega Group
VMC
VMC Ltd.
Vospa Thornycroft Shipbuilder
WEAC
Wessex Products
Westland Helicopters
Wheelers
Wilston Electrical Services
WSP
WSP South Ltd.
Xerox

Royal Highland Fusiliers

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many self-harm incidents have been recorded among members of the Royal Highland Fusiliers *(a)* at Fort George Barracks, Inverness and *(b)* on overseas duty in Cyprus in the past two years. [25296]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence does not have centrally-held data of self-harm within the Services.

Medical records are confidential and not all individuals seek medical assistance. Thus not all cases of self-harm are reported, although those that are reported to the chain of command are investigated.

No incidents of self-harm were investigated among members of the Royal Highland Fusiliers at Fort George: three incidents have been investigated in Cyprus during the period 31 October 2003 to 31 October 2005.

Shipbuilding

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what proportion of fabrication work on the vessels *(a)* Largs Bay and *(b)* Lyme Bay has been carried out overseas. [32069]

Mr. Ingram: I refer my hon. Friend to my noble Friend (Lord Bach) the then Defence Procurement Minister's letter of 26 July 2002 (reference D/MIN (DP)WB/1/1). Ship fabrication work undertaken overseas constitutes less than 0.5 per cent. of the overall contract value. Since my noble Friend's letter no other fabrication work has been placed overseas.

Type-23 Frigates

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has for a successor to the Type-23 frigates. [33051]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 30 November 2005]:* The future surface combatant project is looking at how the capability currently provided by the Type 22 and Type 23 frigates will be delivered after the end of their service lives. This project is still in its concept phase and no decisions have been taken.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Civil Servants

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many employees have been dismissed by each of the Northern Ireland Departments in each of the past five years. [30191]

Mr. Hanson: In the absence of my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon (Angela E. Smith), I have been asked to reply.

The following table reflects the number of dismissals on grounds of inefficiency (capability and/or attendance) and discipline (conduct) from Northern Ireland Departments, including their agencies. Agencies have been included to give a more representative picture of the number of dismissals.

	DE	*DCAL*	*DARD*	*DETI*	*DFP*	*OFM DFM*	*DSD*	*DEL*	*DHSSPS*	*DRD*	*DOE*
2001	1	—	15	2	1	0	11	1	2	9	—
2002	2	1	15	2	2	0	35	3	—	5	—
2003	1	—	12	2	1	2	26	8	6	7	6
2004	2	1	15	4	0	0	46	4	4	17	5
2005	2	1	13	2	6	0	41	3	3	12	3
Total	8	3	70	12	10	2	159	19	15	50	14

Additionally, the Northern Ireland Office dismissed two employees in 2004.

Departmental Estate

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which buildin, s and sites used by his Department and related agencies *(a)* have ceased to be used in the last year and *(b)* will be closed under current plans for relocation. [31731]

Mr. Hain: The property portfolio of the Northern Ireland Office and its agencies has not reduced in the last year. The Youth Justice Agency's Juvenile Justice Centre in Rathgael is planned for closure in the 2006–07 fiscal year, and will be relocated to a different area of the current site. The FSNI currently occupies part of a PSNI site and has long-term plans to relocate from its current location. The PSNI would continue to use the site and neither the site or the buildings would be closed due to this future relocation.

NIO staff in two rented buildings will be transferred to a building leased from DFP within the Stormont Estate.

Departmental Staff

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many new staff started employment in the *(a)* Office of the First and Deputy First Minister, *(b)* Department for Social Development, *(c)* Department of Education, *(d)* Department of the Environment, *(e)* Department for Agriculture and Rural Development and *(f)* Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety during 2004; and how many of these were (i) Protestant and (ii) Roman Catholic. [31076]

Mr. Hanson: In the absence of my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon (Angela E. Smith), I have been asked to reply.

The following table provides details of appointments for the year 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005 and includes industrial and non-industrial, permanent and temporary.

Department including Agencies	New staff (Catholic)	New staff (Protestant)	Non determined
OFMDFM	4	5	0
DSD	659	418	14
DE	34	59	2
DOE	228	179	29
DARD	266	248	31
DHSSPS	55	76	1

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many staff in his Department are registered as being disabled, broken down by grade; and what the equivalent figures were for each of the last five years for which figures are available. [33064]

Mr. Woodward: The following table details the number of staff in the Northern Ireland Office, broken down by grade, who have advised the Department that they have a disability.

Number

	April				
Grade	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
SCS	1	1	1	2	2
Grade A	6	6	7	7	6
Grade B1	4	8	12	12	12
Grade B2	7	7	6	8	10
Grade C	8	10	13	16	16
Grade D1	11	11	15	17	20
Grade D2	4	7	10	11	13
Total	41	50	64	73	79

Enumeration Districts

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the enumeration districts which were in the top five per cent. measured by *(a)* reduction in population and *(b)* change of population in the last (i) 10, (ii) 20 and (iii) 30 years for which information is available. [32483]

Mr. Hanson: In the absence of my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon (Angela E. Smith), I have been asked to reply.

The boundaries of enumeration districts, the area within which each census enumerator delivers census forms, are specific to each census reflecting changes in ward boundaries over time. It is not possible to track population changes at enumeration district level directly from available census outputs.

Unsolved Murders

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with the Police Service of Northern Ireland about the potential impact the Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill will have on continued investigations into unsolved murder cases in Northern Ireland. [32809]

Mr. Hain: NIO Officials have been in discussion with the PSNI on the scheme provided for by the Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill, including its interaction with the operation of the PSNI Historic Enquiries Team (MET). The HET have also been briefed on the scheme. The scheme that the Bill provides for has been designed to take the HET Review into account.

Valuation and Lands Agency

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the estimated cost to the Valuation and Lands Agency is of conducting the domestic rates revaluation in Northern Ireland. [30706]

Mr. Hanson: In the absence of my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon (Angela E. Smith), I have been asked to reply.

The Valuation and Lands Agency's running costs are made up of salary costs, general administrative expenditure, capital costs and charges levied on a notional basis by other Government Departments and agencies for services provided. On this basis the cost to the Valuation and Lands Agency of carrying out the revaluation is estimated at £11 million.

This estimate does not include any costs associated with the handling of contacts or challenges in the post-publication period.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what guidance the Valuation and Lands Agency has issued to its staff on the personal safety of inspectors conducting a valuation of a property in Northern Ireland. [30709]

Mr. Hanson: In the absence of my hon. Friend the Member for Basildon (Angela E. Smith), I have been asked to reply.

The Valuation and Lands Agency provides information and training relating to the personal safety to all staff who may need to carry out property inspections.

Regular risk assessments are carried out in respect of staff working in the field. These assessments are carried out by trained risk assessors and the outcomes and recommendations are incorporated into guidance and policy.

In May 2005 the agency issued an updated (draft) Health and Safety in the Field Policy document to staff, incorporating best practice guidance from a number of sources, including the Suzie Lamplugh Trust. This policy was formally adopted in October 2005, following final consultations with trade union side.

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Senior Board Members

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what estimate she has made of the number of women in senior board positions in businesses in *(a)* Southend, *(b)* Essex, *(c)* Hertfordshire, *(d)* Greater London and *(e)* England and Wales in each of the last 10 years. [33652]

Meg Munn: Over 2 million companies are registered on the Companies House register for England and Wales. A full response to this question would require manual scrutiny of business documents for all these companies and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The Female FTSE 100 Index provides a diversity measurement for women being recruited to senior board positions in the UK. Figures for 2005 were published last week and revealed an increase in the number of women on the boards of FTSE 100 companies. 78 companies have women on their boards, which reflects an increase of 13 per cent. since 2004. Women now make up 10.5 per cent. of board members, compared to 5.8 per cent. in 2000.

HEALTH

Abortion

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of whether the exemptions under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 apply to files held by her Department relating to *(a)* the Abortion (Amendment) Bill, 1979–80 Session, *(b)* the Abortion (Amendment) Bill 1987–88 Session and *(c)* the Unborn Children (Protection) Bills in sessions (i) 1984–85, (ii) 1985–86 and (iii) 1987–88; and if she will make a statement. [30506]

Caroline Flint: No assessment has been made on whether any exemptions under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 would apply to these files.

Advisory Committee on Topic Selection

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* remit and *(b)* membership of the Advisory Committee on Topic Selection is; and how often the Committee meets. [31929]

Jane Kennedy: The terms of reference of the Advisory Committee for Topic Selection are:

On the basis of the criteria agreed by Ministers, assess the requirement for guidance in respect of clinical issues identified by the National Horizon Scanning Centre, by the National Co-ordinating Centre Health Technology Assessment, by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) and other sources of internal and external advice.

To advise Ministers whether referral to NICE is the most appropriate means of meeting those requirements.

Where referral to the NICE is recommended, to advise further whether:

(a) guidance should take the form of a technology appraisal, a clinical guideline, or some other combination or form of guidance;

(b) (in the case of technology appraisals of new technologies) whether guidance should issue at around the expected time of launch, or whether the appraisal should be deferred for a period.

The Advisory Committee for Topic Selection is chaired by a senior Department official and is made up of representatives of

the professions—medical, nursing, primary care and allied healthcare;

patient groups—the Consumers Association, Royal National Institute for Deaf People, The Pain Society and Diabetes UK;

the national health service—a mental health trust, an acute trust, a strategic health authority and a primary care trust;

industry—the Association of British Pharmaceutical Industries and the Association of British Healthcare Industries;

the Director of the Health Technology Assessment Programme and the Chairman of the Technology Assessment Services Collaboration; and

representatives of key policy areas within the Department.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the length of time taken was to select each drug that has been referred for each of the stages of her Department's topic selection process for drugs and treatments referred to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. [31930]

Jane Kennedy: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The Department and the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) are currently reviewing the current arrangements for selecting topics for NICE'S work programme. We expect to be able to say more about this later in the year.

The typical timescale for referral of appraisal topics to NICE for consultation on their remit and scope is in the region of 9–12 months from consideration by the Advisory Committee on Topic Selection.

Alzheimer's Disease

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what her policy is on the availability of drugs for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease; [29784]

(2) what representations she has received from *(a)* patients and *(b)* carers on the availability of drugs for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease; and if she will make a statement. [29785]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for North-West Leicestershire (David Taylor) on 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 244W.

Avian Influenza

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health why the UK is not using the generic drug available for avian influenza; and what recent discussions she has had within the World Trade Organisation on the availability of that drug. [30617]

Caroline Flint: There has been some confusion between seasonal flu, avian flu and pandemic flu. Avian influenza is a disease which mainly affects birds. Seasonal flu refers to the virus that circulates in the human population and causes widespread illness each winter. Pandemic flu will only occur after an avian virus has mutated into a strain to which large numbers of the population have not been exposed and which can spread easily between humans.

We have purchased 14.6 million courses of oseltamivir (Tamiflu) to treat the 25 per cent. of the population that may fall ill during a pandemic. Deliveries will be complete by September 2006 and we have produced guidance to inform local national health service planning for the distribution and storage of these medicines.

Roche, the company that has manufacturing license for Tamiflu, recently announced that it is exploring sub-licensing other manufacturers to produce Tamiflu.

Blindness

Mr. Bacon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made towards delivering the objectives set out in the Vision 2020 programme for eliminating avoidable blindness. [30896]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We are committed to the principles of Vision 2020 for the elimination of avoidable blindness.

We allocated £73 million to drive down the maximum waiting time for cataract operations to three months. This was achieved in January 2005, four years ahead of the NHS Plan target.

Primary care trusts (PCTs) are expected to deliver the national commitment that by 2006, a minimum of 80 per cent. of people with diabetes will be offered screening for the early detection, and treatment if needed, of diabetic retinopathy as part of a systematic programme that meets national standards, rising to 100 per cent. coverage of those at risk by end of 2007. This is reflected in the delivery strategy for the diabetes national service framework.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence issued its guidance on photodynamic therapy on 24 September 2003. All PCTs are funding photodynamic therapy treatment for patients with both the wholly classic and predominantly classic forms of age-related macular degeneration.

The Department established the eye care services steering group in December 2002 comprising representatives of key stakeholders across the profession, national health service and voluntary sector, including Vision 2020 UK, to deliver proposals for eye care services in England which were consistent with and which supported the Vision 2020 programme.

The group has developed evidence-based pathways for four key conditions: cataracts, age-related macular degeneration, glaucoma and low vision services.

The report of the eye care services steering group, along with the four pathways, were issued to the NHS as commissioning guidance in May 2004. The Department has allocated £4 million to eight pilot sites to test out the pathways in glaucoma, age-related macular degeneration and low vision services.

Mr. Bacon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps the Department is taking to facilitate the use by opticians of cameras which photograph the back of the eye; and if she will make a statement about diabetes retinopathy screening. [30902]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Primary care trusts are responsible for implementing diabetic retinopathy screening to national standards as set out in "Improvement, Expansion and Reform: the next three years", the planning and performance framework for 2003 to 2006 and diabetes national service framework delivery strategy. It is for local health services to decide how they want the programme to be delivered locally. Optometrists have played an important role on the national diabetic retinopathy screening project advisory group set up to steer the development of the programme.

Body Mass Index

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average body mass index was in *(a)* England, *(b)* each region and *(c)* each strategic health authority in the latest year for which figures are available. [32023]

Caroline Flint: The data are not available in the exact format as requested. The information that is available is shown in the table which provides the mean body mass index (BMI) for England, each Government office region (GOR) and strategic health authority (SHA).

Age standardised mean body mass index (BMI), by year (three-year moving average) and sex

Area code	*Name*	*2000–02 mean*
	England	26.7
A	North East	27.0
Q10	County Durham and Tees Valley	27.4
Q09	Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	26.8
B	North West	26.7
Q15	Cheshire and Merseyside	26.6
Q13	Cumbria and Lancashire	26.8
Q14	Greater Manchester	26.8
D	Yorkshire and the Humber	26.7
Q11	North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	27.1
Q23	South Yorkshire	26.4
Q12	West Yorkshire	26.4
E	East Midlands	27.1
Q25	Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	26.9
Q24	Trent	27.2
F	West Midlands	27.1
Q27	Birmingham and the Black Country	27.3
Q28	West Midlands South	26.8
Q26	Shropshire and Staffordshire	27.1
G	East	26.8
Q02	Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	26.5
Q03	Essex	26.8
Q01	Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	27.0
H	London	26.4
Q05	North Central London	26.0
Q06	North East London	26.4
Q04	North West London	26.0
Q07	South East London	26.2
Q08	South West London	26.9
J	South East	26.4
Q17	Hampshire and Isle of Wight	26.6
Q18	Kent and Medway	26.8
Q19	Surrey and Sussex	26.1
Q16	Thames Valley	26.4
K	South West	26.4
Q20	Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	26.2
Q22	Dorset and Somerset	26.5
Q21	South West Peninsula	26.5

Notes:

The data show BMI as a three-year moving average, with the latest data available being 2000–02

Source:

Health Survey for England: Health and Lifestyle indicators for Strategic Health Authorities 1994–2002

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Caesareans
(Southampton University Hospitals Trust)

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the Caesarean rate has been in each of the last five years at Southampton University Hospitals Trust. [29192]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is shown in the table.

Number of deliveries and percentage that were by caesarean for Princess Anne Hospital, Southampton, to 2003–04

	Total deliveries	*Caesarean (percentage)*
1999–2000	4,420	19
2000–01	4,244	19
2001–02	4,135	22
2002–03	4,490	20
2003–04	4,720	22

Note:
In 2001–02 to 2003–04, method of delivery was not submitted for Princess Anne hospital, Southampton. Data is therefore estimated from procedure code.
Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics

Cancer

Lynda Waltho: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress her Department has made in reducing deaths from cancer since 1997. [30646]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The 2002–04 monitoring data for the Our Healthier Nation mortality targets shows that since 1995–97 cancer mortality in people under 75 in England has fallen by 13.9 per cent.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cancer drugs have been approved by the European Medicines Evaluation Agency in each of the last five years. [19864]

Jane Kennedy: The following anti-cancer drugs were approved by the European Commission by way of Centralised Procedures administered by the European Medicines Evaluation Agency.

Five, between October 2000 and September 2001:

DepoCyte (cytarabine) for the treatment of lymphomatous meningitis.

MabCampath (alemtuzumab) for the treatment of chronic lymphocytic leukaemia.

Panretin (alitretinoin) for the treatment of cutaneous lesions in AIDS-related Kaposi's Sarcoma.

Targretin (bexarotene) for the treatment of cutaneous T-cell lymphoma.

Xeloda (capecitabine) for treatment of patients following surgery for colon cancer.

Three, between October 2001 and September 2002:

Foscan (temoporfin) for the treatment of advanced head and neck carcinoma.

Glivec (imatinib) for the treatment of chronic myeloid leukaemia.

Trisenox (arsenic trioxide) for the treatment of acute promyelocytic leukaemia.

One, between October 2002 and September 2003:

Busilvex (busulfan) for the treatment of certain leukaemias and non-Hodgkin's lymphoma.

Six, between October 2003 and September 2004:

Velcade (bortezomib) for the treatment of progressive multiple myeloma.

Aldara (imiquimod) for the treatment of superficial basal cell carcinomas.

Alimta (pemetrexed) for the treatment of pleural mesothelioma and non-small cell lung cancer.

Lysodren (mitotane) for the treatment of advanced adrenal cortical carcinoma.

Litak (cladribine) for the treatment of hairy cell leukaemia.

Erbitux (cetuximab) for the treatment of metastatic colorectal cancer.

Two, between October 2004 and September 2005:

Avastin (bevacizumab) for the treatment of metastatic colorectal cancer.

Tarceva (Erlotinib) for the treatment of patients with locally advanced or metastatic non small cell lung cancer after failure of at least one prior chemotherapy regimen.

In addition, during this period authorisations have been granted through the European Centralised Procedure for a number of other drugs used to treat cancer symptoms, serious side effects of other anti-cancer drugs and for cancer diagnosis and imaging.

Children's Diet

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the average daily calorie intake was of children under 16 years in the last year for which figures are available; [30275]

(2) what the average daily calorie intake was for children *(a)* five years ago, *(b)* 10 years ago, *(c)* 20 years ago and *(d)* 30 years ago. [30276]

Caroline Flint: The most recent information available on the average daily energy (calorie) intake of children is shown in the following table and is taken from the 1992–93 national diet and nutrition survey of children aged 1½ to 4½ years and the 1997 national diet and nutrition survey of young people aged four to 18 years which is shown in the table. There is no earlier or more recent comparable data available.

Average daily energy intake (kcal) by sex and age

	Energy Intake (kcal/day)	
Age (years)	*Male*	*Female*
1½–4½	1,172	1,108
4–6	1,520	1,397
7–10	1,777	1,598
11–14	1,968	1,672
15–18	2,285	1,622

Notes:
1. Data from Gregory J, Collins DL, Davies PSW, Hughes JM & Clarke PC. "National Diet and Nutrition Survey: Children aged 1½ to 4½ years. Volume 1: Report of the diet and nutrition survey". HMSO (London: 1995).
2. Data from Gregory J, Lowe S, Bates CJ, Prentice A, Jackson LV, Smithers G, Wenlock R & Farron M. "National Diet and Nutrition Survey: young people aged 4 to 18 years. Volume 1: Report of the diet and nutrition survey" (2000). TSO (London: 2000).

This lack of trend data was the major driver behind the Food Standards Agency's decision to set up a new rolling programme of national diet and nutrition surveys. The rolling programme will cover all ages from

1½ years upwards and will provide more frequent data for children and other age groups, so strengthening the ability to track changes over time. The first results from the rolling programme should be available from 2008–09.

Consultants/Advisers

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much has been spent by the Shropshire and Staffordshire strategic health authority on management consultants in each of the last five years; [29380]

(2) what projects in the Shropshire and Staffordshire strategic health authority *(a)* have required and *(b)* will require the assistance of external management consultants in 2005. [29381]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is not held centrally.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list departmental projects conducted by consultants in each year since 2000; what the cost was in each case; and what the total cost of employing consultants was in each year. [29073]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* consultants and *(b)* special advisers were employed by her Department in each year since 1997; what the cost of each was in each year; and if she will make a statement. [27411]

Jane Kennedy: There is no centrally held data on the number of consultants within the Department.

Obtaining the information requested would incur disproportionate costs to the Department. With regards to part *(b)* I refer to the hon. Member to the response provided by the Parliamentary Secretary (Jim Murphy) at the Cabinet Office sent on 16 November.

Information on the numbers of special advisers prior to 2003 was provided at regular intervals and this information will be available in the Library.

Dentistry

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she intends to publish the likely values for units of dental activity under the new general dental services contract. [26004]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Under the national health service dental reforms being introduced from April 2006, units of dental activity (UDA) refer to courses of treatment that are weighted to reflect their relative complexity. The proposed weightings for different courses of treatments, that is the number of UDA to which they correspond, were set out in the draft general dental services (GDS) and personal dental services (PDS) contract regulations, which were published in August 2005. The final version of these proposed regulations will be laid before Parliament shortly.

UDA do not have a fixed price attached to them. It is for primary care trusts (PCTs) and dentists to agree annual contract values and to agree the number of UDA that the dentist is expected to carry out over the course of the year in return for this contract value. The cost of a UDA will therefore be locally determined.

From the end of November, GDS dentists began to receive information showing their level of activity, expressed in terms of UDA, during the reference period, 1 October 2004 to 30 September 2005, and their NHS earnings during the same period. PCTs and dentists will use this as the basis for agreeing new annual contract values and the number of UDA that the dentist is expected to carry out over the course of the year in return for this annual contract value. GDS dentists will be guaranteed an annual contract value based on their reference period earnings, uplifted to reflect 2006–07 pay and prices, provided the dentists agree with their PCT an annual level of UDA equivalent to 95 per cent. of their activity during the reference period.

PDS dentists are due to receive similar information from PCTs at the end of November. PDS dentists will be guaranteed an annual contract value worth at least that of their current PDS agreement, uplifted to 2006–07 pay and prices, in return for carrying out annually an appropriate level of UDA agreed with their PCT.

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many new personal dental service contracts were agreed for the Rochdale primary care trust in financial year 2005–06. [30580]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Since the beginning of the 2005–06 financial year the Secretary of State has approved one personal dental service contract application in the Rochdale primary care trust area. This is for the Castlemere community centre, Tweedale street.

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists have been recruited in the Rochdale primary care trust area in the last five years. [30581]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the table.

Number of dentists who have joined the general dental services (GDS) or personal dental services (PDS) in Rochdale primary care trust, as at 30 September each year 2001–05

	Complete new entrant[1]
2005	5
2004	0
2003	1
2002	3
2001	9

[1] Complete new entrant means the dentist had an open GDS or PDS contract in September of the specified year but no GDS or PDS contract in September of the previous year.

Source:
Dental Practice Board.

Departmental Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to relocate staff in her Department and related agencies into London and the South East. [31769]

Jane Kennedy: Neither the Department nor either of its two executive agencies, NHS Purchasing and Supplies Agency and Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, have any plans to relocate any groups of staff into London and the South East.

Diet

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the cost to the NHS in the last five years of complications relating to a poor diet, with particular reference to *(a)* food poisoning, *(b)* heart disease, *(c)* stroke, *(d)* diabetes, *(e)* cancer and *(f)* tooth decay. [32072]

Caroline Flint: This information is not collected centrally in the form requested.

Doctors and Nurses

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* doctors and *(b)* nurses are working in the NHS in (i) Oxfordshire and (ii) Banbury constituency; and what the equivalent figures were in 1997. [30644]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is shown in the following table.

General medical practitioners[1], GP practice nurses, hospital, public health medicine and community health services (HCHS): medical and dental staff[2] and nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff within Thames Valley by specified organisation

Numbers (headcount)

	1997[3]					
		Of which:			*Of which:*	
England[4]	*All doctors*	*HCHS doctors[1]*	*General medical practitioners*	*All nurses*	*Nursing, midwifery and health*	*GP practice nurses*
Thames Valley	3,525	2,293	1,232	12,315	11,539	776
of which						
Cherwell Vale PCT	n/a	0	n/a	n/a	0	n/a
North East Oxfordshire	n/a	0	n/a	n/a	0	n/a
Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre NHS	n/a	56	n/a	n/a	232	n/a
Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust	n/a	564	n/a	n/a	1,666	n/a
Thames Valley SHA	n/a	0	n/a	n/a	0	n/a

Numbers (headcount)

	2004					
		Of which:			*Of which:*	
England[4]	*All doctors*	*HCHS doctors[1]*	*General medical practitioners*	*All nurses*	*Nursing, midwifery and health*	*GP practice nurses*
Thames Valley	4,729	3,283	1,446	15,238	14,301	937
Of which:						
Cherwell Vale PCT	84	2	82	149	121	28
North East Oxfordshire	84	33	51	116	83	33
Nuffield Orthopaedic Centre NHS	82	82	0	319	319	0
Oxford Radcliffe Hospitals NHS Trust	1,104	1,104	0	3,736	3,736	0
Thames Valley SHA	21	21	0	0	0	0

n/a = not available.

[1] General medical practitioners (excluding retainers) includes contracted GPs, GMS others and PMS others. Prior to September 2004 this group included GMS unrestricted principals, PMS contracted GPs, PMS salaried GPs, restricted principals, assistants, salaried doctors (Para 52 SFA), PMS other, flexible career scheme GPs and GP returners.

[2] Excludes medical hospital practitioners and medical clinical assistants, most of whom are GPs working part-time in hospitals.

[3] There is no PCT data available in 1997 as PCTs came into existence in 2001.

[4] Data as at 30 September 2004, In 1997, data for HCHS medical and dental staff and nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff as at 30 September, data for GP and practice nurse data as at 1 October.

Source:

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre General and Personal Medical Services Statistics
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre medical and dental workforce census
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre non-medical workforce census

Epilepsy

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment her Department has made of the work force development requirements to meet *(a)* the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence epilepsy standards and *(b)* the National Service Framework for long-term medical conditions in respect of epilepsy. [31640]

Jane Kennedy: The Long Term Conditions Care Group Workforce Team, hosted by Skills for Health, has identified a range of work force issues and is working with the Department and other stakeholders to support local planning and develop solutions for local implementation.

Food Additives

Jeremy Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment her Department has made of the

impact of food additives being listed by name instead of by E numbers on food products, with particular reference to nursery and child care facilities. [30945]

Caroline Flint: Policy responsibility for food labelling lies with the Food Standards Agency. The law requires that additives be identified by a category name, which describes the function performed by the additive in the food, followed by either the specific name of the additive and/or its E number. The Government have not commissioned any research into the usage of specific names instead of E numbers or the impact of such labelling.

Formula Milk

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what controls her Department imposes on the contents of formula milk products sold in England. [29595]

Caroline Flint: The Food Standards Agency has the policy lead on the Infant Formula and Follow-on Formula Regulations (1995) which control the content of infant formula products in the United Kingdom. The regulations, which implement European Commission directive 91/321/EEC, lay down strict rules regarding the composition of infant formula. The directive and the implementing national measure also contain rules on the labelling, advertising and promotion of infant formula to ensure that this information does not negatively impact on the promotion of breastfeeding. The regulations are enforced in England by local authorities.

GM Food

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if her Department will obtain an analysis of the recent research by the Institute of Higher Nervous Activity and Neurophysiology of the Russian Academy of Sciences conducted by Irina Ermakova on GM-fed rats. [29431]

Caroline Flint: A short report of the research was published on the website of a Russian environmental organisation in October 2005. This report describes a small scale study on rats fed an unspecified variety of genetically modified soya flour. The Food Standards Agency is seeking advice from the Advisory Committee on Novel Food and Processes on what conclusions may be drawn from this research.

Hemel Hempstead Hospital

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many letters she has received from members of the public in Hemel Hempstead constituency about the closure of the *(a)* acute accident and emergency unit, *(b)* wards, *(c)* stroke unit and *(d)* cardiac unit at Hemel Hempstead hospital; and if she will make a statement; [30180]

(2) how many letters she has received from members of the public in Hemel Hempstead constituency inviting her to visit the Hemel Hempstead hospital; and if she will make a statement; [30181]

(3) how many letters she has received from members of the public in Hemel Hempstead constituency about *(a)* the proposed closure of the children's ward and *(b)* the closure of the intensive care unit at Hemel Hempstead hospital; and if she will make a statement. [30259]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer (30259) 21 November 2005]:* The information is not collected in the format requested. However, the number of letters received from members of the public about Hemel Hempstead hospital in the period 1 June to 16 November 2005 is approximately around 800. This figure does not include campaign slips of which there were approximately 3,500.

Hemicrania Continua

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to improve the standard of care offered to those suffering from hemicrania continua; what treatments are available for the condition; and what steps she is taking to ensure the most clinically appropriate treatment for the condition is offered to patients throughout England. [31013]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The national service framework (NSF) for long-term conditions, published in March 2005, specifically focuses on improving the health and social care for people with neurological conditions, including those suffering from hemicrania continua. People with these conditions will get faster diagnosis, more rapid treatment and a comprehensive package of care under the NSF.

There are a range of drugs, and clinical interventions, which can be used to alleviate the symptoms of hemicrania continua. It is for health professionals to decide, on an individual basis, the most appropriate treatment.

HIV

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the overall cost to *(a)* the NHS and *(b)* other public funds of an untreated case of HIV infection. [31007]

Caroline Flint: We have made no estimate of the overall cost to the public purse of leaving a case of HIV infection untreated.

Our estimate of the cost to the national health service of drug treatment for an individual with HIV ranges from approximately £12,000 to £18,000–19,000 per year depending on disease stage. The average cost is £14,000, per person per year. The treatment is lifelong.

Hospitals (Catering)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which outside companies provide catering services to NHS hospitals. [33132]

Jane Kennedy: The table shows the external catering companies that are identified in the estates related information collection as providers of whole or part catering services to national health service hospitals.

Catering providers 2003–05

Angilia Crown
Anglia Support Partnership
Appetitto
Aramark
ASP
Avenance
Berrywood Catering
Birmingham City Council
Brake Brothers Frozen Foods
Carillion
Catalyst
Choices
Classic Catering
Compass Group
Compass Medirest
Consort Healthcare
Criterion
Dalkia
Dash
Ecovert FM
Eric Wright FM
Eurest
Fairway Catering
G. Morgan and Sons
Global Solutions Limited
Granada
Initial Services
Interserve
ISS Mediclean
Just Deli
Meal Courier Service
Medirest
NHS Logistics
Norfolk County Services
OCS Ltd.
Pabullum
Redcliffe Contract Catering Limited
Robertsons
Ryhurst Facilities
Selecta
Serco
Snackattack
Sodhexo
Sovereign Hospital Services
Suffolk Support Services
SUHT
Tillery Valley Foods
TVF and CDDAST
UHL/Bateman/RCO
Worthing and Southlands
YHT—Catering

Joint Planning Group

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* remit and *(b)* membership of the Joint Planning Group is; and how often the group meets. [31928]

Jane Kennedy: The terms of reference of the Joint Planning Group are to:

Consider topics recommended by the Advisory Committee for Topic Selection and advise Ministers on

(a) the strategic and policy significance of topics from a Health Departments' and national health service perspective; and

(b) the resource and implementation consequences for the NHS of the proposed topics;

Assess the proposed work programme in relation to National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's overall capacity; and

Advise Ministers of the priority to be given to individual topics proposed within the work programme.

Guide the process of topic selection by advising the Advisory Committee for Topic Selection and any ad hoc specialty mapping groups of the intended broad balance of the future work programme; and give any additional guidance that may be required.

The group is chaired jointly by a Deputy Chief Medical Officer from the Department and the Chairman of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. Membership comprises

the Chief and Deputy Chief Executive of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence;

senior officials from the Department's Medicines Pharmacy and Industry, Finance, Delivery and Quality Groups;

the Departments national clinical directors

one primary care trust representative and

one representative from a strategic health authority.

Mental Health

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to be in a position to publish the Mental Health Bill. [32014]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Mental Health Bill will be introduced when the legislative timetable permits.

MRSA

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of MRSA have been identified in hospitals within Coventry South in each year since March 2003. [31424]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* The information requested is not available centrally on an individual hospital basis. The information in the following table shows the number of meticillin-resistant *Staphylococcus aureus* (MRSA) reports and the rate per 1,000 bed days for the university hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS trust for the periods shown.

University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS trust

	Number of MRSA bacteraemia reports	*MRSA rate per 1,000 bed days*
April 2003 to March 2004	79	0.19
April 2004 to March 2005[1]	55	0.13

[1] The MRSA rate for 2004–05 per 1,000 bed days is provisional, as final 2004–05 activity data for the trust is not yet available.

National Diet and Nutrition Survey

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment her Department has made of the results of the national diet and nutrition survey of 2000; what impact the survey results have had on her public health and nutrition policy; and what plans her Department has to evaluate the nutritional status of people aged *(a)* under 19 and *(b)* over 64 years. [29553]

Caroline Flint: The findings of the 2000–01 national diet and nutrition survey of adults aged 19 to 64 years show a mixed picture of the diet and nutritional health of this age group. On average, adults in Britain were getting sufficient nutrients from their diets. There were some positive dietary changes since the previous survey of this group in 1986–87, notably the fall in average intake of fat, which is now close to the recommended amount. However, intakes of saturated fat, non-milk extrinsic sugar and salt are still higher than the recommended levels. Young adults in particular had low consumption of fruit and vegetables and low intakes of some vitamins and minerals.

The survey findings have informed the development of Government's priorities for action on diet and nutrition set out in "Choosing A Better Diet: a food and health action plan" to reduce the consumption of fat, salt and sugar and increase the consumption of fruit and vegetables. It has also informed the development of specific targets in the Food Standards Agency's (FSA) Strategic Plan for 2005 to 2010. These include targets to reduce population intakes of salt and saturated fat.

The FSA is setting up a new rolling programme of national diet and nutrition surveys. The survey will cover all age groups including people under 19 years and over 64 years, providing data to supersede earlier surveys of these age groups. The first results from the rolling programme should become available by 2008–09.

NICE

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State (1) for Health when the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence single technology appraisal for Velcade will commence; and when guidance will be published. [33034]

(2) whether the statutory timeframe for primary care trusts to implement National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidance issued under the single technology appraisal will be less than three months. [33035]

Jane Kennedy: I announced on 3 November that proposed changes to enable the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) to produce faster guidance on life-saving drugs would go ahead immediately. Preparatory work on the appraisal of Velcade has commenced and I understand that NICE will publish a time scale for completion of this work in due course.

The existing direction to primary care trusts and national health service trusts concerning arrangements for the funding of technology appraisal guidance from NICE, does not differentiate between appraisals conducted using the existing appraisal process and those conducted using the new single technology appraisal processes.

Susan Kramer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the average time taken by the National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence to appraise pharmaceuticals under the early referrals process has been since it was established; [31463]

(2) if she will issue interim guidance to primary care trusts on the prescription of bortezomib (Velcade) for use as a myeloma treatment. [31465]

Jane Kennedy: I announced on 3 November that proposed changes to enable the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) to produce faster guidance on life-saving drugs would go ahead immediately. It is not possible to give an average for the length of appraisals conducted under this new process because none have yet been completed.

In 1999, the Department issued Health Service Circular 1999/176, which asks national health service bodies to continue with local arrangements for the managed introduction of new technologies where guidance from NICE has not yet been issued. These arrangements should include an assessment of the available evidence.

Obesity Clinics

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 970–71W on obesity clinics, if she will list the services provided at each of the clinics; and what the *(a)* average waiting time, *(b)* the number of people waiting and *(c)* number of finished consultant episodes were in each year since inception. [31044]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is not collected centrally, as data is only collected at trust level and not specialist clinic level.

Ophthalmic Practices

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on her plans to reduce the number of ophthalmic practices that deliver NHS eye examinations. [31481]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* There are no plans to reduce the number of ophthalmic practices delivering eye examinations funded by the national health service.

Pesticides

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress the working group within her Department has made in producing a module of toxicology for use by general practitioners in relation to

the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution report, with particular reference to the impact on the health of residents and bystanders of crop spraying of pesticides. [32298]

Caroline Flint: Meetings between the Department and the Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP) have been held and it has been agreed that a working group comprising representatives of the RCGP and senior clinical toxicologists should be set up. The terms of reference of the working group will include reporting on the need to provide improved training in toxicology as part of the RCGP training syllabus. If this is agreed and considered feasible, a draft module in toxicology will be defined. It is expected that the group will report during 2006.

Prescriptions (Pre-payment Certificates)

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many pre-payment certificates for prescriptions have been issued in Lancashire in each of the last 12 months. [21896]

Jane Kennedy *[pursuant to the reply, 27 October 2005, Official Report, c. 507W]:* I regret my previous reply was incorrect. It should read:

Information on the number of pre-payment certificates (PPCs) issued for Lancashire is not separately identifiable. However, the number of PPCs issued for England, by month for each of the last 12 months is as follows:

Month/year	*Number of PPCs issued for England*
October 2004	87,443
November 2004	93,823
December 2004	77,050
January 2005	95,299
February 2005	91,868
March 2005	127,400
April 2005	84,821
May 2005	90,624
June 2005	97,744
July 2005	88,624
August 2005	92,221
September 2005	93,500

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many pre-payment certificates for prescriptions have been issued in London in each of the last 12 months. [16905]

Jane Kennedy *[pursuant to the reply, 17 October 2005, Official Report, c. 777W]:* I regret my previous reply was incorrect. It should read:

Information on the number of pre-payment certificates (PPCs) issued for London is not separately identifiable. However, the number of PPCs issued for England, by month for each of the last 12 months is as follows.

Month/year	*Number of PPCs issued for England*
October 2004	87,443
November 2004	93,823
December 2004	77,050
January 2005	95,299
February 2005	91,868
March 2005	127,400
April 2005	84,821
May 2005	90,624
June 2005	97,744
July 2005	88,624
August 2005	92,221
September 2005	93,500

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) why her Department has used three year averages to measure performance against 2004 public service agreement target number one; [29203]

(2) why her Department has used three year averages to measure performance against 2004 public service agreement target number two. [29204]

Caroline Flint: Three-year rolling average rates are generally used for monitoring purposes, in preference to single year rates, in order to produce a smoothed trend from the data and to ensure the underlying trend is captured rather than year-on-year fluctuations. The resulting trend is more statistically robust than that produced by using single year rates. This approach has been successfully used in monitoring many of the national targets from current and previous public health strategies, for example, Our Healthier Nation (1999) and Health of the Nation (1992).

The Department's public service agreement targets, agreed as part of the 2004 spending review, are published on the Department's website and full technical details for each target, including target dates and how they are measured are included in the associated technical notes. The full website address containing the relevant details is: http://www.dh.gov.uk/AboutUs/HowDHWorks/ServiceStandardsAndCommitments/DHPublicServiceAgreement/fs/en.

Respiratory Syncytial Virus

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Government have set a time scale for bringing the guidelines for preventative treatment against respiratory syncytial virus up to EU recommended standards. [30158]

Caroline Flint: The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) recently reviewed all the available evidence on the use of palivizumab for the prevention of respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). The minutes to this meeting (22 June 2005) are available on the Department's website: www.advisorybodies.doh.gov.uk/JCVI/minutes.htm.

Any recommendation on immunisation made by the Department will be based on the advice of JCVI.

SANELINE

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking for the continued provision of the services provided by SANELINE. [31069]

Ms. Rosie Winterton: SANE, in common with other voluntary and community sector organisations, is eligible to apply for funding from Government funding streams aimed at the voluntary and community sector—including the Department's section 64 general scheme of grants, or to tender for specific pieces of work commissioned by the Department.

In terms of overall provision of helpline services for people with mental health issues, NHS Direct provides a 24 hour, seven day a week service telephone helpline service and its fully-trained staff respond to about 325,000 calls per year from people with mental health issues. NHS Direct works in close partnership with the member organisations of the Mental Health Helpline Partnership (MHHP) of which SANELINE is a member, which, jointly, handles over five million telephone calls or contracts per year. MHHP member organisations jointly, respond to 99 per cent. of all calls made to mental health helplines.

The MHHP is currently in the procurement stage of purchasing a telecommunications solutions package that will enable MHHP members to work more efficiently in terms of call-switching between MHHP members and to work towards overall 24-hour provision of MHHP helpline services and, therefore, improve the overall level of service provision to people with mental health issues.

Seasonal Adjustment Disorder

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what NHS treatment is available for seasonal adjustment disorder. [29539]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Although seasonal adjustment (affective) disorder is not listed in the international classification of mental and behavioural disorders (ICD-10), it is generally accepted that there are people who appear to be affected in this way. Whatever the causes, which are not fully understood, depression is a matter of concern to those delivering mental health services. People suffering from depression that varies seasonally can access the full range of mental health services available in primary and secondary care.

Thames Valley SHA

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what capital allocations she expects to be made available to the Thames Valley strategic health authority over the next three years; and for what purpose each allocation will be made. [30643]

Caroline Flint: No decisions have yet been made on national health service capital allocations for 2006–07 onwards.

The last round of capital allocations was announced in January 2003, covering 2003–04, 2004–05 and 2005–06.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Bournemouth Schools

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what additional funding has been made available for schools in Bournemouth which are unable to remain within their financial budgets in 2005–06. [33425]

Jacqui Smith: Bournemouth local authority received transitional support grant (TSG) of £670,000 in 2004–05, and is due to draw down a further £335,000 in 2005–06. Distribution to schools will be in accordance with the authority's agreed transitional support plan which was approved by the Secretary of State.

Authorities, generally, are free under the LEA budget regulations to support schools in financial difficulty through sums held centrally by the authority, or by extending licensed deficit facilities under the terms of the local financial scheme.

Child Care

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her estimate is of the number of child care places that are required but not being supplied. [34022]

Maria Eagle: At September 2005, the total number of (registered) child care places reported from Ofsted stood at 1.22 million. We do not collect national data on the demand for child care places although we have commissioned a number of sample surveys of parental needs and surveys, most recently in 2001. This survey found that a quarter of all households experienced some form of unmet demand in that year. Estimating the supply and demand at the national level is difficult because the child care market operates at a very local level, leading to significant local variation. We know for example the gap is bigger in London, South West and the East Midlands.

The Childcare Bill currently going through parliament formalises a new duty on local authorities to secure sufficient child care to meet local needs. Within this the duty also requires LAs to carry out an assessment of the local child care market, at least every three years, to develop an overall picture of child care provision in the area. This will help them to identify gaps in provision—and to support providers, from all sectors, to achieve a child care market that meets local needs of working parents. Statutory guidance will support the provisions.

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many child care places have been created in Normanton in each year since 1997. [32452]

Beverley Hughes: The Department is unable to provide details of child care places for Normanton because we do not collect data by parliamentary constituency. However, from April 1999 to March 2005 Wakefield local authority increased the stock of registered child care places in Wakefield by more than 2,900. The Ofsted registered stock of child care in Wakefield in March 2005 was 5,099 places.

Nationally, from April 1999 to March 2005 local authorities have created almost 487,000 registered child care places. The Ofsted registered stock of child care nationally at March 2005 was 1,175,275.

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what powers her Department has to pursue local authorities who fail to fulfil their duties as set out in the Childcare Bill. [33517]

Beverley Hughes: Our legislative proposals include provision for the proposed functions in the Bill, which fall upon local authorities, to be subject to the existing powers of the Secretary of State to secure proper performance. These will ensure that where the Secretary of State is satisfied that a local authority is failing to perform the duties set out in the Bill, for example through the independent evidence of a Joint Area Review, the proposals will allow the Secretary of State to intervene.

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans her Department has to enable parents to require a local authority to fulfil its statutory duties under the Childcare Bill. [33544]

Beverley Hughes: Local authorities already have in place procedures to consider complaints relating to the services they provide. Statutory guidance issued to local authorities under the Childcare Bill will make clear that they must provide parents with a clear pathway within existing procedures for considering complaints about the availability of child care and other early years services. We will also expect local authorities to advise parents of this complaints procedure and, where parents need assistance, to help them navigate through it.

If parents are not satisfied with the action taken by the local authority and believe that there has been maladministration, they can refer the complaint to the local government ombudsman.

All complaints received by a local authority about its duties under the C dcare Bill will be available to Ofsted to take into account when forming judgments as part of the Joint Area Review and the Comprehensive Performance Assessment process.

Child Contact Procedures

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to improve safety checks on new partners of a parent with custody of a child in cases of disputed contact with a non-resident parent. [33060]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 29 November 2005]:* We wish to ensure that safety checks are undertaken in all cases where there is a concern that a child could be at risk. Subject to parliamentary approval, the Children and Adoption Bill will strengthen the safeguards for children, by placing a statutory duty on Children and Family Court Advisory and Support Service (CAFCASS) officers to undertake risk assessments whenever they are involved in private law family proceedings, where they suspect that a child is at risk of suffering harm. This will include those cases of disputed contact which are the subject of court applications, where the child resides with a parent who has a new partner and there is a concern that a child might be at risk.

Since section 120 of the Adoption and Children Act 2002 came into effect on 31 January 2005, parties in contact, and other section 8 Children Act 1989 proceedings, have the opportunity of raising concerns about harm, when an application for proceedings is first made or when the respondent files an acknowledgement of proceedings. If either party indicates there may be an issue of harm, including concerns about a new resident partner, they are then expected to provide details in a supplemental information form. These forms will be copied to CAFCASS by the courts, thus enabling its practitioners to prepare in advance of the hearing by making relevant checks and assessments. These include checks of social services and police records, which CAFCASS is entitled to ask for through its duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 12 of the Criminal Justice and Courts Services Act 2000.

Subsequently, assisted by information from CAFCASS, the courts are then well placed to consider whether it is necessary, at the outset of formal proceedings, to make findings of fact.

Child Protection Registers

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children were placed on child protection registers in each year since 2002, broken down by category of registration; and how many were taken into care in each case. [33151]

Maria Eagle: Details of registrations to child protection registers broken down by category of abuse may be found in table E of the Department's Statistical First Release on "Referrals, Assessments and Children and Young People on Child Protection Registers England: Year Ending 31 March 2005". Information on the number of looked after children that are placed on child protection registers can be found in table C of the same publication. This information can be downloaded from the Department's website at: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000614/index.shtml. It is also placed in the House of Commons Library.

Class Sizes

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in the constituency of Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland have class sizes of more than 30 children. [31602]

Jacqui Smith: In January 2005 there were 15 primary schools and four secondary schools in the constituency of Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland with class sizes of 31 or more children (classes taught by one teacher).

Legislation to limit the size of classes taught by one teacher to 30 or fewer pupils only applies to infant classes for 5, 6 and 7 year olds. In January 2005 there were no key stage 1 classes in Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland that exceeded the statutory maximum class size of 30.

Correspondence

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire of 17 October. [34239]

Bill Rammell: My right hon. Friend the Minister of State for Schools and 14 to 19 Learning, replied to the hon. Member's letter of 17 October on 30 November.

Departmental Websites

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will take steps to ensure the Department's websites attain the W3C AAA standard of accessibility for people with visual and other disabilities; and if she will set a target date for this standard to be achieved by. [30962]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) follows government policy on publication on the web. This entails following the Guidelines for UK Government websites and compliance with the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines Version 1. Neither these Guidelines, e-Accessibility communications from the European Union or advice from the RNIB have ever suggested that government websites should attain and maintain Level AAA.

Government Guidelines currently indicate that websites should meet Level A of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines that is the Priority One Checkpoints. They also identify a significant number of the Priority Two and Priority Three Checkpoints that have been deemed to be best practice.

The Department for Education and Skills websites currently meet Level A of the Web Content Accessibility Guidelines that is the Priority One Checkpoints. The DfES is currently working towards making all of its websites attain Level AA accessibility by July 2006. In addition to this, DfES identify that a number of checkpoints from the Level AAA requirement are essential best practice and routinely use aspects such as ensuring that there is sufficient contrast between foreground and background colours (P3 Checkpoint 2.2), the provision of search facilities (P3 Checkpoint 13.7) and the use of consistent presentation across all pages (P3 Checkpoint 14.3) in all websites.

Early-years Education

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many three and four-year-olds in *(a)* Wakefield district and *(b)* Normanton constituency are receiving (i) 12.5 hours a week, (ii) 15 hours a week and (iii) 20 hours a week of free early-years education. [32450]

Beverley Hughes: Information is not collected in the form requested.

All four-year-olds have been entitled to a free early education place since 1998 and from April 2004 this entitlement was extended to all three-year-olds. The free entitlement consists of a minimum of five two-and-a-half hour sessions per week for 33 weeks of the year for six terms before statutory school age, which is the term following their fifth birthday.

Some local authorities may additionally offer subsidised child care places but this information is not collected centrally.

Figures for January 2005 show that all four-year-old children receive some form of free entitlement. The figure for three-years-olds is 96 per cent. This covers all maintained, private, voluntary and independent providers and represents 535,100 three-year-olds and 568,300 four-year-olds.

In January 2005 in Wakefield LA there were 3,200 free nursery places taken up by three-year-old children. The equivalent figure for four-year-olds was 3,600. Information for private and voluntary providers is not currently available for Normanton constituency in 2005.

The latest figures on early education places for three and four-year-olds in England were published in Statistical First Release 43/2005 "Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2005 (final)" in September, which is available on my Department's website http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000604/index.shtml

Extended Schools Programme

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how much funding has been allocated to *(a)* Staffordshire local education authority and *(b)* local schools in Tamworth constituency to develop and roll out the extended schools programme in (i) 2005–06, (ii) 2006–07, (iii) 2007–08 and (iv) 2008–09; [33731]

(2) what estimate she has made of the number of schools in *(a)* Staffordshire and *(b)* Tamworth constituency that will be delivering extended services in (i) 2006, (ii) 2007 and (iii) 2008; and to how many children and parents such provision will be available. [33733]

Beverley Hughes: This Government want all schools to provide access to a core offer of extended services by 2010, with half of all primary and a third of all secondary schools doing so by 2008. We want to see at least 2,500 schools providing access to the core offer by September 2006. The core offer, which should be available to all parents and pupils of the school, comprises: high quality child care; a varied menu of study support activities parenting support programmes; swift and easy referral to a wide range of specialised support services; and wider community access. It will be for individual local authorities, in discussion with all schools in their area, to take a strategic approach to developing access to the core offer through schools. This will include determining how many primary and secondary schools develop access to the core offer in each year. On 29 September 2005 my Department published its report on the baseline survey of extended services in schools which it commissioned earlier in the year. The survey showed that nationally the vast majority of schools were providing access to some form of extended activity. The survey did not provide figures at local authority level.

On 13 June 2005 my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced funding of £790 million over 2005–08 to support the development of extended schools. £110 million of this was allocated in 2005–06 and

Staffordshire received £1,223,340. Of the £680 million to be allocated across 2006–08, £250 million will go direct to schools through the School Standards Grant and the formula for calculating each school's allocation for 2006–07 will be announced in the near future. The remaining £430 million will be distributed to local authorities through the Standards Fund and the General Sure Start Grant. Of this Staffordshire will receive £2,537,634 in 2006–07 and £3,121,417 in 2007–08. Funding will be released to schools in accordance with each local authority's extended schools strategy. My Department wrote out to each local authority on 13 June 2005 detailing what their extended schools allocation, excluding the School Standards Grant, will be over the period 2005–08.

Funding for extended schools beyond 2007–08 is subject to the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review in 2007 when the Department will be reviewing all its programme budgets.

Fostering

Jim Sheridan: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in England are awaiting fostering. [34309]

Maria Eagle: There is currently no central collection of data regarding the number of children in England who are awaiting fostering.

However, work to identify and resolve difficulties in the collection of national data about foster carers is on-going. Fieldwork involving a sample of local authorities has recently taken place in order to contribute to the development of an informative and workable data collection, the first results of which we expect to receive in 2007.

Higher Education

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what assessment she has made of the effect on *(a)* the science and knowledge base of regions and *(b)* regional development of the system for allocating research funding to higher education institutions; [33849]

(2) what discussions she has had with ministerial colleagues at the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on the links between university research funding and tackling regional productivity differences; and if she will make a statement. [33850]

Bill Rammell: My right hon. Friend and I welcome the contribution that higher education is making to national and regional economic development and have discussed this on a regular basis with a wide range of partners, including representatives of the higher education sector, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and other Government Departments. Although we have no present plans to change the system whereby HEFCE's research funding allocations reward research excellence wherever it is found, the Higher Education Innovation Fund continues to support universities' capacity to interact productively with business and the community. The third phase of the fund will run from 2006–08 and will guarantee all HEFCE-funded higher education institutions a minimum allocation from a total budget of more than £200 million. We also welcome the work that regional partners, including the regional development agencies, are doing to support collaboration, knowledge transfer, innovation and inward investment within their regions.

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the *(a)* projects and *(b)* services run by the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children which have received public funding in each of the last three years; and what the *(a)* amount and *(b)* duration of each grant was. [33059]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 29 November 2005]:* The Department for Education and Skills awarded the NSPCC a grant up to 3,085 from the Children and Young People's Participation Fund 2003–04 for an international consultation event on 19–20 February 2004 in Belfast, to enable children and young people to meet together and with members of the NSPCC's board of trustees.

This is the extent of Department for Education and Skills grant funding to the NSPCC.

The NSPCC does receive public funding in relation to services it provides from local authorities and possibly other public bodies but this information is not held centrally.

Pre-school Education

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what assessment she has made of the merits of *(a)* informal and *(b)* formal pre-school education; [31414]

(2) what research she has commissioned into the long-term effects of pre-school education for *(a)* emotional and social development and *(b)* attainment at key stage 1. [31420]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* To assess the benefits of funded early education, delivered in a wide range of both maintained and private, voluntary and independent settings, my Department commissioned the effective provision of re-school education (EPPE) study. This study, which began in 1997, follows 3,000 children from the age of three to the end of key stage 2. So far, the study has demonstrated that there are benefits of pre-school education for attainment and social and emotional development in key stage 1. Other findings include that children with experience of pre-school education demonstrate significantly higher attainment in KS1 national assessments in mathematics and English compared with children who have no experience of pre-school education. The EPPE study will continue to follow children's development to the end of key stage 2. Further information can be found at www.dfes.gov.uk/research

This study found that the children of those parents who actively engaged in activities such as teaching songs and nursery rhymes and reading to the child did better at the end of key stage 1 compared to children whose parents did not engage in such activities.

My Department has also commissioned the University of Bristol to look at the impact of different types of childcare (including informal care, for instance with relatives) on children's behavioural and cognitive outcomes at ages five and seven, using data from the Avon longitudinal study of parents and children. We will publish a report of these findings in early 2006.

Sure Start

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many three and four-year-olds in *(a)* Staffordshire and *(b)* Tamworth constituency are receiving (i) 12.5 , (ii) 15 and (iii) 20 hours a week free early-years education. [33734]

Beverley Hughes: Information is not collected in the form requested.

All four-year-olds have been entitled to a free early education place since 1998 and from April 2004 this entitlement was extended to all three-year-olds. The free entitlement consists of a minimum of five two and a half hour sessions per week for 33 weeks of the year for six terms before statutory school age, which is the term following their fifth birthday.

Some local authorities may additionally offer subsidised child care places but this information is not collected centrally.

Figures for January 2005 show that all four-year-old children receive some form of free entitlement. The figure for three-year-olds is 96 per cent. This covers all maintained, private, voluntary and independent providers and represents 535,100 three-year-olds and 568,300 four-year-olds.

In January 2005 in Staffordshire local authority there were 6,700 free nursery places taken up by three-year-old children. The equivalent figure for four year olds was 8,400. Information for private and voluntary providers is not currently available for Tamworth constituency in 2005.

The latest figures on early education places for three and four-year-olds in England were published in Statistical First Release 43/2005 "Provision for children under five years of age in England—January 2005 (final)" in September, which is available on my Department's website http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000604/index.shtml.

Youth Matters

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 11 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 457W, on the Youth Matters Green Paper, if she will list the companies that have expressed an interest in working with the Government to develop the entitlement card scheme proposed in the Youth Matters Green Paper since 6 October [33862]

Maria Eagle: Since 6 October 2005, Axcess, Validate UK and y-gen Ltd. have expressed an interest in working with the Department for Education and Skills to develop the Youth Opportunity Card scheme proposed in Youth Matters.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she plans to publish her response to the consultation on the Youth Matters Green Paper. [34020]

Maria Eagle: We are analysing the tremendous response to the consultation, including over 19,000 questionnaires completed by young people, and expect to publish the Government response and next steps in early 2006.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she expects to announce the pilots for the youth opportunity card proposed in the Youth Matters Green Paper. [34021]

Maria Eagle: I expect to announce the pilot areas in February 2006.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agricultural Shows

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will visit the West Midlands agricultural show in Shrewsbury next summer. [33291]

Jim Knight: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and other DEFRA Ministers make every effort to attend public events reflecting the full range of DEFRA's wide ranging responsibilities. Attendance at the West Midland agriculture show will be given every consideration as part of this process.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many agricultural shows she has visited in 2005. [33364]

Jim Knight: My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, visited one agricultural show this year.

Berkeley Nuclear Power Station

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects that the site of the Berkeley nuclear power station will be returned to green field status. [32941]

Malcolm Wicks: I have been asked to reply.

The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) assumed responsibility for the decommissioning and clean up of the UK's civil nuclear legacy on 1 April 2005. The NDA has set out its plans for the decommissioning and clean up of its sites including the proposed closure dates of its fleet of Magnox power stations in its draft strategy. The NDA will seek the views of stakeholders on the site end state and when this should be achieved. The NDA's draft strategy assumes that Berkeley nuclear power station will be returned to green field status by 2083, however, the NDA has been consulting on the possibility of accelerated reactor decommissioning in respect of its Magnox sites. Further details are available in the strategy which can be found at www.nda.gov.uk

Byway Claims

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many

applications for byway claims are pending; and how many of these claims have been made in each month since 1 January. [33537]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 1 December 2005]*: This information is held by local highway authorities and could be gathered only at a disproportionate cost.

Correspondence

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the Parliamentary Under-Secretary will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire of 5 October 2005. [34242]

Mr. Bradshaw: I have replied to the hon. Member today.

Departmental Websites

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will take steps to ensure the Department's websites attain the W3C AAA standard of accessibility for people with visual and other disabilities; and if she will set a target date for this standard to be achieved by. [30960]

Jim Knight: It is our policy that our websites should comply fully with the World Wide Web Consortium's Web Accessibility Initiative's guidelines as detailed in UK Government guidelines. These currently require websites to meet the W3C A standard. We aim for compliance with the W3C AA standard, and have already incorporated a number of aspects of the W3C AAA standard identified as best practice. We are taking a number of further steps to improve the accessibility of DEFRA's websites. Work is being undertaken to update older content that may not meet current standards in full, and further work on both technical and authoring issues is intended to enable us to meet higher standards.

Discovering Lost Ways Project

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many claims have been lodged with the surveying authorities in England since the inception of the Discovering Lost Ways Project. [33585]

Jim Knight: As yet, no claims have been logged with the surveying authorities in England as a result of the Discovering Lost Ways Project.

We expect work on compiling evidence in the two pilot counties of Cheshire and Wiltshire to be complete by the end of March 2006. Further work will be undertaken to assess and develop this evidence for submission to local surveying authorities later in 2006.

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate was made by the Countryside Agency, at the time of setting up the Discovering Lost Ways Project, of the distance in kilometres of *(a)* footpath, *(b)* bridleway and *(c)* byway open to all traffic which would need (i) correcting and (ii) adding to the definitive map before it could be considered accurate and complete. [33586]

Jim Knight: A study commissioned by the Countryside Agency and the Countryside Council for Wales to identify the size of the potential task of recording lost ways, by reporting on the progress made in bringing the definitive map and statement up to date; and estimate how many unrecorded rights of way are likely to be brought onto the definitive map, reported in March 2002. 70 highway authorities (of 136) responded to the research questionnaire. 20 per cent. of the authorities that responded to the consultation had undertaken structured assessments of the extent of unrecorded rights. Based on these estimates, the report concluded that the number of unrecorded rights in England was likely to be in the region of 20,000. The estimate for the length of additional unrecorded rights was 16,009 km. It was estimated that 58 per cent. of that increase would be in the form of footpaths (9,300 km), 25 per cent. would be bridleways (4,000 km), and the remaining 17 per cent. (2,700 km) would be byways.

Food Labelling

Susan Kramer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she has taken since 20 July on best practice guidelines for labelling foods that contain allergies. [31442]

Caroline Flint: I have been asked to reply.

The Food Standards Agency met with consumers and enforcement officers and with representatives of the food manufacturing industry and the catering industry during July to discuss the development of best practice guidelines on the provision of allergen information on non-prepacked foods. A further meeting with all stakeholders has been arranged for 1 December with the intention of subsequently producing draft guidance, which will be the subject of a public consultation.

Freedom of Information

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many freedom of information applications her Department has received since 2000; how many have taken more than 20 days to process; and how many of these gave rise to complaints about the time taken. [31212]

Jim Knight: As is shown in the monitoring reports published by the Department for Constitutional Affairs (http://www.foi.gov.uk/statsapr-jun05.htm), the Department logged 520 requests for information since the Freedom of Information Act came into force on 1 January 2005 to 30 June 2005. Of these requests, 187 took longer than 20 working days, although the majority (101) were subject to formal extensions. The Department has received four formal requests for internal review of the length of time taken to respond.

The Department for Constitutional Affairs is committed to publishing quarterly updates in relation to departmental performance under FOI, including information on both the volume and outcomes of requests. The bulletin for the second quarter was published on 30 September 2005 and can be found, together with the bulletin for the first quarter, on

the DCA website at http://www.foi.gov.uk/statsapr-jun05.htm and in the Libraries of both Houses. The next bulletin will be published before Christmas, while an annual report will be published in early 2006.

IT Projects

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many of the IT projects costing over £1 million in use in her Department and introduced since 1997 have been scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee; and if she will list them. [26617]

Jim Knight: There have been 15 IT projects costing in excess of £1 million that have been developed within and introduced into the core Department since 2001 and are currently still in use. None of these has been scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee, although there have been some comments on the overarching programmes or schemes requiring the IT projects.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many IT projects which cost over £1 million and were introduced since 1997 are in use in her Department. [26619]

Jim Knight: There are 15 IT projects costing in excess of £1 million that have been developed within and introduced into the core Department since 2001 and are currently still in use.

Maladministration

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many payments for maladministration have been made by *(a)* her Department, *(b)* its agencies, *(c)* its non-departmental public bodies and *(d)* other bodies for which her Department has responsibility in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [32246]

Jim Knight: It is the policy of DEFRA, its agencies, non-departmental public bodies and, where appropriate, its sponsored organisations to make financial redress in accordance with the guidance set out in Chapter 18.7 and Annexes 18.1 and 18.2 of "Government Accounting".

However, the information you requested relating to DEFRA's agencies, NDPB's and other bodies sponsored by Defra is not held centrally by the Department and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The information you requested for core DEFRA only is set out in the following table:

DEFRA

	Number of payments made for maladministration
2001–02	57
2002–03	51
2003–04	15
2004–05	14

DEFRA was created on 8 June 2001, therefore information is only available from financial year 2001–02.

Milk

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will support the launch of a brand of fair trade milk in England. [31429]

Jim Knight: In line with our sustainable farming and food strategy, we support any initiative which seeks to reconnect farmers to markets and add value to products.

Navigable Waterways (England)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many rivers in England are navigable by unpowered craft; whether she plans to increase that number; and whether she plans to improve access to those waters for canoeists. [33814]

Jim Knight: The lengths of water for canoeing on canals, rivers with public navigation rights, and rivers with formal access agreements in England total some 5,000 km (34 per cent. of the major river and canal network.

Following a study commissioned from the Countryside Agency into the feasibility of improving recreational access to water, DEFRA has asked the Environment Agency to complete agreements in four pilot areas; the Teme, Waveney, Wear, and Mersey. In addition, we are supporting the Agency in its proposals to work with other stakeholders in developing regional strategies to identify new opportunities for access to rivers and canals.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many negotiated access agreements the Environment Agency has concluded for access to waterways for users of unpowered craft. [33816]

Jim Knight: The Environment Agency is on course to complete agreements in the four pilot areas by the summer of 2006. This is expected to create over 70 km of newly negotiated access.

In addition, the Agency has acted, and will continue to act, as an honest broker in access agreements negotiated by others when requested to do so.

Protected Wild Animals (Internet Trade)

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to combat internet trade in protected wild animals. [33026]

Jim Knight: The National Wildlife Crime Intelligence Unit based at the National Criminal Intelligence Service has been working with internet service providers in the UK, advising them on the controls affecting the trade in wildlife items, and these providers have responded positively. Ebay, in particular, have recently revised the information given to sellers about the controls relating to the trade in endangered species.

Sick Leave

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many of her Department's employees who are within one year of the official retirement age are on extended sick leave. [32600]

Jim Knight: There is currently one member of staff in DEFRA who is within one year of retirement and on extended sick leave.

Single Farm Payments

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what progress she is making in the arrangements for single farm payments. [32913]

Jim Knight: Ministers regularly assess the likely timing of Single Payment Scheme awards with officials at the Rural Payments Agency (RPA), which is responsible for the administration of the scheme in England. RPA is still targeting commencing payments in February 2006 and completing 96 per cent. of payments by the end of March, in line with announcements made at the start of the year.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

British Embassies (Overnight Visitors)

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what system is in place to log *(a)* day and *(b)* overnight visitors to the British embassies in (i) France, (ii) Germany, (iii) Iran, (iv) Italy, (v) Russia, (vi) Saudi Arabia, (vii) North Korea, (viii) Zimbabwe and (ix) the US. [32742]

Ian Pearson: The embassies in these countries log all official visitors by the following means:

	Logs
France	Security Office Log Book used day and night
Germany	Logging-in form during the day, log Book at night
Iran	Log Book used day and night for all official visitors
Italy	Logging-in form used day and night for all official visitors
Russia	All official visitors logged in and out electronically
Saudi Arabia	All official visitors logged in and out electronically
North Korea	Log Book operated at front gate on behalf of UK, German and Swedish embassies (shared premises) for all official visitors
Zimbabwe	Log Book used for all official visitors
USA	Log Books used for all official visitors

British Nationals (Deaths Overseas)

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many British nationals have been killed abroad in unexplained deaths in the last 12 months. [33025]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We do not currently collect detailed information on deaths of British Nationals abroad. In financial year 2004–05 there were 3,925 deaths requiring action by our consular staff. These ranged from accidental deaths to natural deaths where we were asked to provide assistance.

Burma

Mr. Binley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the United Nations Security Council to empower the Secretary-General to mediate in Burma in order to bring about national reconciliation and a transition to democracy. [33184]

Ian Pearson: We agree that the UN has a vital role to play in Burma. We strongly support the UN Secretary-General's efforts to promote national reconciliation and democratisation in Burma, and agree with his most recent 'good offices' report of 10 October. We also support the work of the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Burma, Professor Sergio Pinheiro, and the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy to Burma, Tan Sri Razali, who have not been allowed to visit Burma since November 2003 and March 2004 respectively. We also support the efforts of Ali Alatas, who visited Burma on behalf of the UN Secretary-General earlier this year. We urge the State Peace and Development Council to allow free access for the UN Secretary-General's representatives, and to work closely with the UN and its agencies in the interests of lasting peace and inclusive democratic reform in Burma.

Cambodia

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of progress made in bringing former leaders of the Khmer Rouge to justice in Cambodia; and if he will make a statement. [33189]

Ian Pearson: The UK supports the efforts of the United Nations and the Government of Cambodia to bring to justice some of those who bear the greatest responsibility for crimes against humanity carried out by the Khmer Rouge. A successful outcome to the Khmer Rouge Tribunal (KRT) will help strengthen accountability, the rule of law and judicial reform in Cambodia and will send a strong international signal that war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide will not be treated with impunity.

Progress in achieving a KRT has been slow to date for many reasons and significant hurdles still need to be overcome. The Government of Cambodia has encountered major difficulties in raising the $13.8 million contribution it is expected to deliver. Less than $2 million has been made available to date. Other factors include finding, selecting and training suitably qualified, experienced and politically independent national judicial staff including judges, prosecutors, investigators etc. who can meet international standards. In that context, we welcome the recent appointments of a director and a deputy director by the Government of Cambodia and the UN respectively. Addressing gaps in Cambodia's national legislation to ensure it is compatible with international criminal law has also proved problematic.

The UK has been one of the leading financial contributors to the KRT to date. We provided £500,000 in 2004–05 and expect to do so again for 2005–06 and 2006–07. Bilaterally, EU members have pledged a total of $8.5 million approximately and the European Commission has additionally pledged a further €1 million. We continue to underline the importance we

attach to a credible Tribunal starting work as soon as possible with the Cambodian authorities at official and ministerial level and have offered our support.

Colombia

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations the Government have made to the Colombian Government regarding implementation of UN human rights recommendations; and if he will make a statement. [32731]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 1 December 2005]:* Human rights lie at the heart of our policy towards Colombia. We regularly urge the Colombian Government to implement all outstanding UN human rights recommendations arising from successive annual reports of the Colombia office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), and have offered our assistance to achieve this goal. When Vice-President Francisco Santos called on Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) officials in August 2005, we made clear, as Presidency, the importance the EU attaches to active progress by the Colombian Government in implementing the UNHCHR recommendations. We regularly reinforce this message in our contacts with the Colombian Government.

In addition, the EU Ministerial Council conclusions, which were agreed on 3 October 2005, state the willingness of the EU to discuss a mid-year progress on the implementation of the UNHCHR recommendations within the framework of the G24, the group drawn from participants in the 2003 London meeting of international support for Colombia, in Bogota. We will continue to look for ways to encourage and assist the Colombian Government to improve the human rights situation in Colombia. My noble Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the FCO (Lord Triesman of Tottenham) discussed human rights issues with Vice-President Santos on 28 November 2005.

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the paramilitary demobilisation in Colombia. [32732]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 1 December 2005]:* The UK, in line with the EU, considers that the only viable solution to the armed conflict in Colombia is through a negotiated settlement. We have made it plain to the Colombian Government that the rights of the victims of the armed conflict to truth, justice and reparation must be taken into account in the paramilitary demobilisation process. These issues were raised directly with President Uribe during his visit to London on 14 July. The EU expressed its willingness, in the EU Ministerial Council conclusions of October 2005, to work with the Government, institutions and civil society of Colombia, as well as with the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR), Michael Fruhling, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, and others who may be involved in monitoring the implementation of the judicial process of the demobilisation of the paramilitary groups. The EU also welcomes the continued engagement of the Organisation of American States in accompanying the demobilisation process. The Conclusions also spelled out specific areas of intervention where the EU is willing to assist Colombia in support of the search for peace. While we do have some concerns over the pace of paramilitary demobilisation, we acknowledge that effective and transparent implementation of the recently agreed Colombian Justice and Peace Law would make a positive contribution to the search for peace in Colombia.

Commonwealth

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to ensure the future effectiveness of the Commonwealth. [32476]

Ian Pearson: The UK is committed to a Commonwealth that is effective and able to tackle the challenges of the 21st century, including terrorism and intolerance. We are the largest financial contributor to the Commonwealth, providing 30 per cent. of the Commonwealth Secretariat's funding. We participate fully in Commonwealth organs and rejoined the Commonwealth ministerial action group during the Malta Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting 25–27 November.

Departmental Estate

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what *(a)* land and *(b)* property his Department (i) owns and (ii) rents in each constituency; and if he will make a statement. [33255]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has the following land and property in the UK:

Land/property	*Type of ownership*	*Constituency*
Main Building (King Charles Street)	Owned	Cities of London and Westminster
Old Admiralty Building	Owned	Cities of London and Westminster
Carlton Gardens	Rented	Cities of London and Westminster
Lancaster House	Rented	Cities of London and Westminster
Albert Embankment (1 floor)	Rented	Vauxhall
Apollo House (5 floors)	Rented	Croydon Central
Hanslope Park (Land and Property)	Owned	North East Milton Keynes

Common Agricultural Policy

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the French Government regarding reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. [33006]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: As my right hon. Friend, the Foreign Secretary, made clear to the House on 1 November, we speak regularly to our French counterparts, as we do with all EU member states, on the way to take forward the negotiations on the EU's budget for 2007–13, including the issue of Common Agricultural Policy reform.

Departmental Expenditure

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much the Department and its agencies have spent on *(a)* the design and production of new logos and *(b)* employing external (i) public relations and (ii) graphic design agencies in each year since 2000, broken down by project. [33218]

Ian Pearson: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has spent £18,450 on the production of new logos. We have not employed any external public relations agencies and have spent the following on associated external graphic design agencies since 2000:

	Logo	£
2000	—	0
2001	—	0
2002	TGi logo	350
2003	TGi logo Genie Worldwide logo	700
2004	Temporary Passports logo Halo logo (widermarkets work for Her Majesty's Customs and Excise (HMCE) Excise (HMCE) CTE logo Biometrics logo Wider Markets logo Your World Leadership Conference	5,250
2005	Mitre logo (wider-markets work for HMCE) Pluto logo (wider-markets work for HMCE) Amigo logo (wider-markets work for HMCE) Metro2 logo (widermarkets work for HMCE) Talon logo (widermarkets work for HMCE) Future Firecrest logo Gypsy logo Better World Antarctic logo	12,150

Departmental Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many staff in his Department have been relocated into London and the South East in each of the last five years for which records are available. [31778]

Ian Pearson: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has not relocated any staff into London and the South East in the past five years.

Eritrea

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what steps he *(a)* is taking and *(b)* has taken towards stopping the persecution of Christians in Eritrea; [33104]

(2) what representations he has received on the persecution of Christians in Eritrea. [33105]

Ian Pearson: We have received various representations, including from members of the public, hon. Members, noble Lords and religious organisations.

We raise the issue of religious freedom with the Eritrean Government regularly, both bilaterally and with our European partners.

Most recently, my noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa (Lord Triesman of Tottenham), raised our concerns with the Eritrean ambassador on 28 July and again on 24 October, and in a letter to President Isaias Afwerki on 6 October.

EU Budget

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made under the UK presidency of the EU to agree a new budget for the EU. [32456]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, South (Mr. Cunningham) on 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 157W.

Iran

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the progress of talks with Iran about that country's nuclear ambitions. [32448]

Dr. Howells: There are no negotiations at present between the E3/EU and Iran. On 5 August 2005, the E3/EU presented a comprehensive proposal for long term arrangements intended to give the international community objective guarantees that Iran's nuclear programme was exclusively for peaceful purposes, while equally providing firm guarantees on nuclear, technological and economic co-operation and firm commitments on security issues. Regrettably, Iran rejected this proposal and resumed uranium conversion activities on 8 August 2005, in violation of the framework for talks it had agreed with the E3/EU. The resolution adopted by the International Atomic Energy Agency Board of Governors on 24 September and the discussion at the board's meeting on 24 November have underlined that questions about Iran's nuclear programme remain unresolved. The Secretary-General of Iran's Supreme National Security Council, Ali Larijani, wrote to the E3/EU on 6 November expressing Iran's interest in resuming talks. In their reply on 27 November, E3 Foreign Ministers and EU High Representative, Javier Solana, expressed the hope that Iran would meet the expectations of the international community and help create conditions that would enable talks to resume. They outlined the European sides willingness to meet to see if a basis for the resumption of negotiations can be agreed.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of EU policy on Iran and its nuclear activities. [32660]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Iran's nuclear programme continues to be of deep concern to the whole international community. This was highlighted in the resolution adopted by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) board of governors on 24 September 2005 and at the Board's most recent meeting on 24 November. Since 2003, the UK, France and Germany, with the support of the EU high representative, Javier Solana, have pursued a diplomatic solution, that would give Iran an opportunity to address international concerns and provide objective guarantees that its nuclear programme is solely for peaceful purposes. These efforts have helped raise international awareness of Iran's activities and have enjoyed increasing support. But, although we have seen limited progress in some areas, the steps taken so far by Iran fall far short of what is required. The E3/EU will continue to engage closely with key partners including Russia, the USA, EU member states and members of the IAEA board of governors to maintain the pressure on Iran to address the international community's concerns.

Iraq

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures are in place to protect his Department's employees in Iraq. [32783]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Our staff in Iraq are housed in office and residential accommodation which has been strengthened in line with the demands of the current security situation. All such accommodation is located within protected compounds guarded by armed personnel from a private security company.

All of our staff are issued with body armour and helmets and attend a surviving hostile regions course before deployment.

To ensure that our staff are safe when travelling, they are only allowed to travel by air with the Royal Air Force. Staff must travel by road in armoured vehicles, accompanied at all times by armed personnel from another private security company.

These (protective security) measures are regularly reviewed by local security managers and a London based senior security adviser who visits Iraq on a regular basis.

Labour Camps

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the scale of manufacture of goods in labour camps abroad for sale to other countries; and what steps he is taking to prevent imports of such goods to the UK. [29207]

Ian Pearson: The UK has played a leading role in ensuring that the international framework to promote and to tackle abuses of labour rights throughout the world is in place, particularly through our work with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the UN specialised agency responsible for developing, promoting and monitoring labour standards. We play an active role in the ILO Committee on Multinational Enterprises and support the promotion and follow-up of the ILO Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy which seeks to enhance the positive social and labour effects of multinational corporations' operations throughout the world.

Through its Partnership Agreement with the ILO, DFID is providing more than £2 million to the Special Action Programme on Forced Labour, which has enabled the ILO to significantly deepen and extend its work. In addition we have provided over £2 million to the ILO's regional programmes against forced labour. And our country programmes have made commitments of nearly £12 million to the ILO's anti-trafficking programmes.

The UK also promotes the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises which recommend standards of responsible business conduct for businesses operating in or from the 37 adhering countries. My department has written to the FTSE 100 companies to raise awareness of these expectations. We have also set out our approach to encouraging environmentally and socially responsible practice internationally in our International Strategic Framework on Corporate Social Responsibility published in March.

The UK's Department for International Development helps fund the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI): an alliance of companies, non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and trade union organisations which exists to promote and improve the implementation of corporate codes of practice which cover supply chain working conditions. The ETI's ultimate goal is to ensure that the working conditions of workers producing for the UK market meet or exceed international labour standards.

Nepal

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of steps being taken to restore multi-party democracy in Nepal; and if he will make a statement. [33190]

Dr. Howells: Since the King dismissed Nepal's multi-party Government and assumed direct power on 1 February this year, the UK, along with our international partners, has been seeking to restore multi-party democracy and pressing all concerned to work towards a negotiated political settlement to the conflict.

In response to the recent announcement between the political parties and the Maoists on the terms of a possible peace process in Nepal, the UK has said that, if by this agreement the Maoists commit to giving up violence and human rights abuses in favour of a democratic political settlement, then this is welcome news for the long- suffering people of Nepal.

The UK sees an effective multi-party democracy as the only sustainable solution to the problems of Nepal. We continue to support a negotiated political settlement involving all of the parties to the conflict, including the Maoists. This process must involve the King working

with the political parties to develop a common agenda for a full return to multi-party democracy and the Maoists renouncing violence unconditionally and putting their weapons verifiably beyond use.

In this context we have urged the Maoists to extend their present ceasefire as a demonstration of their willingness to enter sincerely into negotiations. At the same time, we have urged the King of Nepal to call a truce, reach out to the political parties and take this opportunity for serious engagement on a negotiated settlement to the conflict.

The UK, along with our international partners, stands ready to support a meaningful peace process.

Private Military Companies

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether his Department employs private military companies. [32777]

Ian Pearson: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not employ private companies overseas for military purposes but it does employ two companies for security purposes: ArmorGroup and Control Risks Group who provide mobile security for our staff and static guarding for our compounds in Iraq, Afghanistan and Saudi Arabia. Control Risks Group also has a contract to provide a guard force for our missions at Cairo, Moscow, Beijing and Hong Kong.

Race Equality Impact Assessments

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many Race Equality Impact Assessments his Department completed between *(a)* April 2004 and March 2005 and *(b)* April 2005 and November 2005; and how many assessments in each period resulted in a change of policy. [32836]

Ian Pearson: Between April 2004 and November 2005 the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has conducted the following Race Equality Impact Assessments (REIA):

Consular Directorate: the Forced Marriage Unit in this Directorate is currently doing a REIA on whether to make forced marriage a specific criminal offence.

Human Resources Directorate: a full diversity impact assessment was completed in September 2005 on a major reorganisation of HR Directorate as a result of the Gershon review. The reorganisation is still ongoing and changes have been made to it as a result of the impact assessment.

Lyons review: the FCO plans to move some of its central London staff to our existing site at Hanslope Park, Milton Keynes. Although a formal REIA was not completed on this, we have taken into account the different populations in these two areas in this work.

In addition, the FCO has a programme of wide-ranging consultation with external stakeholders, including minority ethnic groups, on its work. Examples of these are included in our Race Equality Scheme.

Small Arms Trade Treaty

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress is being made towards securing non-European support at the UN small arms review conference in July 2006 for the adoption of an international treaty on the trade in small arms. [32640]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The UK, in co-operation with a wide range of other partners, has made good progress in building support for agreement at the 2006 UN Small Arms and Light Weapons Programme of Action Review Conference on minimum common criteria to underpin controls on transfers of small arms and light weapons controls, including import, export and transhipment. We already have much non-European support, especially in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean, and we are working to match that in Asian countries.

Separate from and outside the UN Programme of Action, which specifically only covers small arms and light weapons and is politically binding, the Government are pursuing the wider, longer term initiative for a legally binding international arms trade treaty to cover the trade in all conventional weapons. Support for this initiative, and for the launch of a formal UN based process, is steadily growing, including among non-European countries.

St. Helena

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2135W, on St. Helena, on which dates *(a)* the Legislative Council in St. Helena disapplied the UK Freedom of Information Act 2000, *(b)* the notice of intent to disapply the Act was gazetted and *(c)* the disapplication became effective. [34114]

Ian Pearson: The provisional order was made on 11 January 2005. The order was gazetted on 30 March 2005. The motion to ratify the order was debated and passed by the Legislative Council the week commencing 27 June at which time the disallowance of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 became effective.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2135W, on St. Helena, what mechanisms are available to enable the Public Solicitor to be available to members of the public in the light of his being retained by the proposed developers, SHELCO; and if he will make a further statement. [34115]

Ian Pearson: The terms of reference of the Public Solicitor require him to provide independent legal advice to members of the public and entities registered on St. Helena. Consistent with his terms of reference, he accepted instruction to act for the proposed developers SHELCO. He now cannot accept instruction from another party to oppose SHELCO. The public on St. Helena are familiar with the position that, should the Public Solicitor be unable to help them, they may seek the help of a lay advocate. There is a small fund which allows lay advocates to seek the advice of a UK solicitor if necessary.

Terrorist Suspects

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will take steps

to ascertain whether flights being used for the extraordinary rendition of suspected terrorists to countries that practise torture are making use of UK airports. [33844]

Ian Pearson: The Government are aware of media allegations about "extraordinary rendition" operations allegedly conducted by the United States (US) authorities. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has written to the US Secretary of State, Condoleezza Rice, on behalf of EU partners.

Uganda

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department is taking to support planned multiparty elections in Uganda in 2006; and if he will make a statement. [32921]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 1 December 2005]:* The UK welcomed the decision of the Ugandan people, in their referendum of 28 July, to endorse the re-introduction of a multi-party political system. On 18 November the UK, as EU Presidency, issued a statement making clear our concerns regarding the recent arrest of the opposition leader, Dr. Kiiza Besigye. It is important that all parties are able, and are seen to be able, to compete freely and fairly in the 2006 elections.

The UK is an active member of the Kampala based Partners for Democracy Group, which co-ordinates international support for the political transition in Uganda. The Department for International Development has provided £600,000 to the donor funded Election Support Unit and has also committed £400,000 to the national civic education programme. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is currently funding a project to help build capacity in all Uganda's major political parties as they prepare for the 2006 elections.

UN Convention Against Corruption

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many rounds of discussions his Department has held with business groups regarding the UN Convention Against Corruption; which business groups were involved in these discussions; and what concerns were raised by business groups in relation to the convention. [33507]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 1 December 2005]:* The Foreign and Commonwealth Office regularly discusses the UN Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) in meetings with businesses and business associations, including with the International Chamber of Commerce and the Confederation of British Industry, as it does in contacts with other stakeholders, especially non-governmental organisations.

Concerns raised by businesses about UNCAC include the potential misuse of the convention, the scope of UK courts to investigate the substance of corruption allegations made overseas and arbitration mechanisms.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Governments of *(a)* China and *(b)* South Africa regarding their support for President Mugabe's regime in Zimbabwe. [33016]

Ian Pearson: China is aware of our views on Zimbabwe. Our ambassador to the UN has raised Zimbabwe with his Chinese opposite number on several occasions, and has made clear our views in Security Council discussions, most recently on 4 October 2005. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office political director raised our concerns directly with the Assistant Foreign Minister in July, and the embassy in Beijing has discussed Zimbabwe with the Chinese Government at all levels, particularly on the issue of military assistance.

We discuss Zimbabwe with the Government of South Africa frequently. They are aware that we believe more should be done in the region to put pressure on the Government of Zimbabwe to reform. My right hon. Friend, the Foreign Secretary, raised Zimbabwe with South African Foreign Minister, Zuma, most recently on 7 November at the EU-South Africa Co-operation Council.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Civil Partnerships Act

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total cost has been of awareness campaigns for the Civil Partnerships Act 2004, broken down by campaign. [33737]

Meg Munn: The total cost of the awareness campaign for the Civil Partnership Act 2004 has been £30, 648.

The Civil Partnership publicity materials production costs have been £19, 435.

The distribution costs of these publicity materials have been £11,213 to date.

Coal Imports

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of the coal used for electricity generation in the United Kingdom was imported in each of the last three years. [32938]

Malcolm Wicks: In 2004, 57 per cent. of coal used for electricity generation in the UK was imported.

Correspondence

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the Minister of State for Energy will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, of 19 September on behalf of a constituent, Alan Stedall. [29152]

Malcolm Wicks: The response to my right hon. Friend has been delayed by administrative issues. The response will be with you in the next few days.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects to reply to Mr. Tony Humphrey's letter to him of 3 November on his announcements on public sector pensions. [30728]

Alan Johnson *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* My Department has no record of receiving this letter. If the hon. Member is able to provide me with a copy, I will ensure it receives a speedy reply.

Corruption

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1W, on corruption, when his Department was first informed of the allegations of corruption involving a Department for Trade and Industry employee; and if he will make a statement. [27874]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* There are sensitivities linked to any allegations made against individuals. I am not in a position to comment on such allegations. However, bribery and corruption are criminal offences and as such dealt with by the criminal justice system. UK Trade and Investment takes such allegations very seriously and co-operates fully with the criminal justice system.

Departmental Estate

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which buildings and sites used by his Department and related agencies *(a)* have ceased to be used in the last year and *(b)* will be closed under current plans for relocation. [31740]

Alan Johnson: In the last year, the Department has vacated its accommodation in Elizabeth House, York Road, London SE1; 10–18 Victoria Street, London SW1; 4 Abbey Orchard Street, London SW1. In the next 12 months, the Department plans to vacate its accommodation in Oxford House, Oxford Street, London WC1 and two floors of 151 Buckingham Palace, London SW1.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry who the Director of Human Resources and Change Management is in his Department; what relevant specialist qualifications he or she holds; and what the details are of his or her career to date. [26315]

Alan Johnson: The Director of HR and CM at the DTI is Shirley Pointer. She has over 25 years' experience working as an HR professional within the private sector with substantial experience.

She has a degree in psychology and is a member of the CIPD.

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry who the Director of Finance and Resource Management is in his Department; what relevant specialist qualifications he or she holds; and what the details are of his career to date. [26317]

Alan Johnson: The (acting) Director of Finance and Resource Management is Adam Jackson, who was formerly Director of Business Planning. He is a career civil servant who has wide experience of the Department, including corporate services and policy delivery. He has no specialist financial qualifications, but is supported by a team of professionally qualified accountants and procurement specialists.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 699W, on departmental staff, what the *(a)* job role and title, *(b)* grade and *(c)* responsibilities are for each of the secondees working in his Department. [28661]

Alan Johnson: The following table shows all the people currently working in the Department of Trade and Industry on secondment. The table indicates the job title and notional grade for each secondee and the name of the DTI directorate to which the secondee is attached.

Name	*Secondment Job Title*	*Notional DTI Range*	*DTI Directorate*
Professor Christine Adams	Network Technology Advisers Project Manager	R10	Technology Innovation and Sustainable Development
Mr. Lew Adams	Export Promoter	R10	UK Trade and Investment
Dr. Helen Almey	Assistant Director	R10	Transdepartmental Science and Technology
Dr. Geoff Archenhold	Assistant Director	R10	Business Relations 2
Mr. Norman Bolton	Programme Supervisor	R9	Technology Innovation and Sustainable Development
Mr. Edwin Bowles	Trade Development Advisor	R11	UK Trade and Investment
Ms Sara Brazendale	Deputy Director	R10	Business Relations 2
Mr. David Brooks	Assistant Director	R11	Business Support
Mr. Michael Cauter	Accountant	SCS	Shareholder Executive
Mr. Andy Clarey	Assistant Director	R10	Business Relations 1
Mr. Edward Clarke	Assistant Director	R10	Science and Engineering Base
Ms Jessica Cobb	Investigator	R9	Corporate Law and Governance
Mr. Brian Nicholas Cook	Head Downstream Oil	R10	Energy Markets Unit
Mr. Graham Cook	Assistant Director	R11	Shareholder Executive
Mr. Hugh Crooks	Export Promoter/Technical Advisor	R10	UK Trade and Investment
Mr. Mark Donougher	Head of Global Entrepreneurs	R11	UK Trade and Investment
Ms Julia Durham	Quality and Training	R8	Consumer and Competition Policy
Mr. Kevin Ennis	Assistant Director	R10	Consumer and Competition Policy
Dr. Andy Feest	Industrial Secondee	R10	Business Relations 1
Ms Rebecca Garrod	Assistant Director	R10	Facilitating Innovation
Mr. Michael Gilbert	Emergency Planning Project Manager	R10	Energy Markets Unit
Mr. Jeremy Goad	Export Promoter	R10	UK Trade and Investment
Dr. Paul Gower	Assistant Director	R10	Corporate Law and Governance
Ms Claire Graham	Investigator	R9	Corporate Law and Governance
Mr John Griggs	Construction Products Issues and Impact Manager	R9	Business Relations 2

Name	Secondment Job Title	Notional DTI Range	DTI Directorate
Mr. William Harris	Senior Policy Advisor	R8	Consumer and Competition Policy
Mr. Nick Heyes	Innovation Advisor	R10	Business Relations 1
Mr. Ben Higgin	Accountancy Advisor	R10	Corporate Law and Governance
Dr. Diane Houston	Research and Strategy Advisor	RII	Women and Equality Unit
Mr. Thomas Huang	Export Promoter	R10	UK Trade and Investment
Mr. Robert Hudson	Export Promoter	RII	UK Trade and Investment
Mr. Jonathan Hughes	Financial Adviser	RII	Shareholder Executive
Mr. Marcus Jackson	Assistant Director	RII	Shareholder Executive
Ms Rosie Janes	Investigator	R9	Corporate Law and Governance
Mr. Gary Kass	Assistant Director	R10	Science and Engineering Base
Mr. Patrick Keen	Assistant Director	R10	Business Relations 1
Mr. John Law	Export Promoter	R10	UK Trade and Investment
Mr. Markus Loebbert	Assistant Co-ordinator	R7	Europe and World Trade
Mr. Jonathan Lonsdale	Project Manager	R10	Business Relations 1
Dr. Christopher Mansfield	Senior Economist	RII	Energy Markets Unit
Mr. Alan McArthur	Export Promoter	R10	UK Trade & Investment
Mr. Iain McCord	Senior Policy Advisor	R8	Consumer and Competition Policy
Ms. Kathryn Mills	Investigator	R9	Corporate Law and Governance
Mr Malcolm Mitchell	Assistant Director	R10	Business Relations 2
Ms Barbara Morton	Project Manager	R10	Business Relations 1
Mr. Noah Myers	Project Manager	R10	Business Relations 1
Mr. Daniel Ninan	Project Manager	R10	Business Relations 1
Ms Emily Nott	Technology Innovation Policy	R10	Technology Innovation and Sustainable Development
Mr. Allan Ockenden	Export Promoter	RII	UK Trade and Investment
Mr. Ray Parkinson	Assistant Director	R10	Nuclear and Coal Liabilities Unit
Mr. Phillip Patterson	Export Promoter	RII	UK Trade & Investment
Dr. Robert Quarshie	Chief Analytical Advisor	RII	Business Relations 1
Ms Anber Raz	Outreach Manager	R8	Women's National Commission
Mr. Leon Rogers	Programme Supervisor	R9	Technology Innovation and Sustainable Development
Mr. Mark Russell	Director	SCS	Shareholder Executive
Mr. Dave Schultz	OFT Transitions Manager	R10	Consumer and Competition Policy
Mr. Stephen Senior	Director	SCS	Finance and Resource Management
Mr. Michael Shanks	Business Communications Advisor	R10	Business Relations 1
Mr. Garth Shephard	Assistant Director	R10	Office of Science and Technology International
Mr. Gordon Stevenson	Investigator	R9	Corporate Law and Governance
Mr. Risto Talas	Export Promoter	R10	UK Trade and Investment
Mr. David Talbot	Senior Policy Advisor	R9	Office of Science and Technology International
Mr. Charlie Villar	Assistant Director	SCS	Shareholder Executive
Mr. Neil Viner	Assistant Director	R10	Science and Engineering Base
Mr. John von Speyr	Export Promoter	R10	UK Trade and Investment
Dr. Sarah Webb	Assistant Director	R10	Science and Engineering Base
Mr. Jeremy Webb	Assistant Director	RII	Shareholder Executive
Ms Barbara Wilson	Export Promoter	RII	UK Trade and Investment
Mr. John Wright	Export Promoter	R10	UK Trade and Investment

Domestic Electricity Charges

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the cost of electricity to customers was in England in each of the last five years. [33792]

Malcolm Wicks: Estimates of average annual domestic electricity bills in England and Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland are published in Table 2.2.2 in the DTI's "Quarterly Energy Prices", which can be found on the following website: www.dti.gov.uk/energy/inform/energy prices/index.shtml.

Electricity Supplies

Mr. Meale: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what contingency plans his Department has developed for providing power this winter to homes and businesses heated solely by electricity in the event of electricity shortages. [30905]

Malcolm Wicks: National Grid's Winter Outlook report shows that under normal weather conditions there are sufficient gas supplies for electricity generation to meet demand. Under much worse than normal winter weather, however, it may be necessary for large industrial users to restrain demand—a perfectly normal market response. Much of this demand reduction can be done through the electricity generating industry switching to coal or other fuels.—Under all credible scenarios, however, the market will be able to deliver energy supplies to domestic consumers.

Concerning contingency arrangements in the unlikely event of shortages, in the first instance, we expect a commercial response from the market to price signals indicating tightness in the supply-demand balance. National Grid's Winter Outlook report contains a detailed assessment of the extent to which this sector would be able to reduce demand for gas in this way while continuing to meet demand.

Only if the market fails to balance itself might it be necessary to take contingency measures. The Government has detailed emergency plans in place which have been developed and well rehearsed in close co-operation with industry. Our legislative powers to deal with gas emergencies date back to 1976. We are obviously updating operational response plans on a regular basis and our current plans, which have been thoroughly tested and developed in partnership with

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industry have been in place for the last three years. However, we would not expect such an eventuality to arise merely as a result of colder than average weather.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made following the National Grid winter outlook report of what reduction in electricity demand would be required over what period of days to keep electricity supplies in balance. [31727]

Malcolm Wicks: This is a matter for National Grid, as system operator.

National Grid, in its Winter Outlook Report 2005–06, published in October, considers the potential for demand-side response (sections A and C). The Winter Outlook can be found at: http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/temp/ofgem/cache/cmsattach/12493_214_05.pdf

Energy Definitions

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what definition he uses of *(a)* fuel poverty and *(b)* net importation of energy. [31549]

Malcolm Wicks: Fuel poverty is defined as the need for a household to spend more than 10 per cent. of its income on all fuel use and to heat its home to an adequate standard of warmth (21C in the living room and 18C in other occupied rooms). There are some minor differences in definition used across the devolved Administrations, and these are set out in "The UK Fuel Poverty Strategy of November 2001".

Net trade in energy is defined as the total quantity of fuels exported less total quantity of fuels imported. There is a net importation of energy when the total quantity imported exceeds the total quantity exported.

The units of energy used by the Department are expressed in million tonnes of oil equivalent which is a measure of the energy content of the individual fuels. The conversion allows different energy sources to be compared and combined. Quantities of imports and exports are converted from their original units of measurement to tonnes of oil equivalent using weighted gross calorific values and standard conversion factors appropriate to the individual fuel.

Energy Review

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the terms of reference are of the recently announced Energy Review. [32940]

Malcolm Wicks: The terms of reference for the Energy Review are set out as follows:

The Government will review the UK's progress against the medium and long-term Energy White Paper goals and the options for further steps to achieve them. The aim will be to bring forward proposals on energy policy next year.

The Review will be informed by analysis and options drawn up by a Review team led by myself. This will be a team of Officials drawn from key relevant Departments and my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit. In drawing up the analysis and options, I will undertake extensive public and stakeholder consultation.

The Review will be taken forward in the context of the Government's commitment to sound public finances and will take account of all short-term, medium-term and long-term costs and liabilities both to the taxpayer and energy user. The Review team will report to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in early summer.

Copies of the terms of reference have also been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Energy Supplies (Wales)

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate his Department has made of the total cost of *(a)* decommissioning nuclear capabilities in Wales and *(b)* final disposal of their nuclear waste; and if he will make a statement. [33525]

Malcolm Wicks: The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority (NDA) assumed responsibility for the decommissioning and clean up of the UK's civil nuclear legacy on 1 April 2005. The NDA has set out its plans for the decommissioning and clean up of its sites in its draft strategy. The draft strategy indicates that the most recent life cycle baseline costs (which set out the scope, schedule, and cost of work at each site over its life time) in respect of the Magnox nuclear power stations at Trawsfynydd and Wylfa is as follows:

Trawsfynydd—£1.1 billion;

Wylfa—£1.7 billion.

Further details are available in the NDA draft Strategy which can be found at www.nda.gov.uk.

Options for the long term management of radioactive wastes are subject to consideration and evaluation by the independent Committee on Radioactive Waste Management (CoRWM) who are due to make a recommendation to Government in July 2006.

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment his Department has made of the potential for nuclear fission power stations in Wales; what estimate his Department has made of the total life cycle costs of such facilities including full decommissioning and final disposal of waste; and if he will make a statement. [33527]

Malcolm Wicks: The role of nuclear power in meeting the UK's future electricity generating needs will be examined in the recently announced Energy Review, alongside all other options to ensure the UK remains on track to meet our medium and long-term energy policy goals. Review will need to analyse the costs of all options, including new nuclear, as part of weighing up costs and benefits before a decision can be taken.

Export Support

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what export support for UK manufacturers has been introduced since 1997. [29435]

Alun Michael: UK Trade and Investment (UKTI), formerly British Trade International, is a joint DTI and FCO operation created in 1999. One of UKTI's key aims is to strengthen the provision of support to exporters, including manufacturers. UKTI provides a range of information, advice and support to potential and existing

exporters. Support is tailored specifically to individual company needs. Full detail of the export support available to all companies, including manufacturers, can be found at www.uktrdeinvest.gov.uk.

Gas

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the average beach gas availability from the UK continental shelf for winter *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07 and *(c)* 2007–08. [32364]

Malcolm Wicks: There are currently no publicly available figures estimating UKCS availability for the years 2006–07 and 2007–08. An estimate of beach gas availability for this winter (2005–06) by National Grid, the network operator, can be found at: http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/temp/ofgem/cache/cmsattach/12493_21405.pdf.

Uncertainties regarding facility and equipment reliability, reservoir performance and the weather make availability of beach gas estimates highly complex, and subject to variation.

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment his Department has made of the availability of gas supplies in the event of a failure of the continental gas interconnector this winter. [30534]

Malcolm Wicks: National Grid, in its Winter Outlook report 2005–06, published in October, considers various gas supply assumptions (table 3). The Winter Outlook can be found at: http://www.ofgem.gov.uk/temp/ofgem/cache/cmsattach/12493_214_05.pdf

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the estimated gas production from the UK's own resources is for each quarter from Q1 2006 to Q4 2008. [31496]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department does not make projections of gas production on a quarterly basis. It does publish projections of annual production from the UK continental shelf, in the form of ranges, at http://www.og.dti.gov.uk/information/bb_updates/chapters/Section4_17.htm. For 2006 to 2008 the latest projections of production available for sale (i.e. net of producers' own use) are 85–95 billion cubic metres (bcm) in 2006, 80–90 bcm in 2007 and 75–85 bcm in 2008. By comparison, net production in 2004 was 94.5 bcm and is likely to be around 89 bcm in 2005.

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when his Department first provided information to *(a)* Ofgem and *(b)* the national grid about gas production problems in the North Sea to enable gas supply forecasting. [33564]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department provides information to Ofgem on unplanned, offshore and gas terminal outages that may have a significant impact on the volumes of gas produced into the National Transmission System. This information has been provided routinely since summer 2004.

The offshore industry provides national grid with information about significant gas production problems under the terms of an agreement that came into effect in autumn 2003.

Law Firms (Service Claims)

Mr. David Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if he will break down by law firm the number of service claims made *(a)* as a total for each firm and *(b)* as a percentage of their case holding; [30797]

(2) if he will break down by law firm the number of group three denials that have been overturned *(a)* as a total for each firm and *(b)* as a percentage of their case holding. [30798]

Malcolm Wicks: A table containing the information requested in *(a)* and *(b)* has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Miners Compensation

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average hearing loss settlement made to miners has been in claims submitted by Vendside Ltd. [31339]

Malcolm Wicks: Vendside Ltd have not submitted any hearing loss claims. The average settlement in claims submitted by the Union of Democratic Mineworkers is £2,707.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been paid to Vendside Ltd *(a)* in total and *(b)* per average claim for miners' hearing loss compensation since 1997. [31340]

Malcolm Wicks: Vendside Ltd have not submitted any miners' hearing loss claims. The Union of Democratic Mineworkers has been paid £23.7 million in damages for those claimants it represented at an average of £2,707 per claim.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on what date the first claim for *(a)* hearing loss, *(b)* beat knee and *(c)* industrial accident was registered with his Department by (i) Vendside Ltd and (ii) the Union of Democratic Mineworkers. [31341]

Malcolm Wicks: The UDM first registered a hearing loss claim on 3 June 1997 and a beat knee claim on 9 January 2003. The UDM have not submitted any industrial accident claims and Vendside Ltd have not submitted any claims for any of these types.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average hearing loss settlement paid to miners has been since 1997 in claims submitted by the 20 solicitors' firms which have submitted most claims; what percentage this represented of the total claims submitted; and what the average amount of fees paid in costs has been. [31364]

Malcolm Wicks: Claims from the 20 solicitors' firms who have submitted the most hearing loss claims represent 81 per cent. of the total number submitted. The average settlement in claims handled by these firms is £2,377 and the average cost is £794.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which 20 solicitors' firms or others have registered the greatest numbers of miners' hearing loss claims with his Department; and how many claims each has registered. [31337]

Malcolm Wicks: The 20 firms with the largest number of miners' hearing loss claims and how many each has registered since 1998 is set out in the table:

Firm	*Number of claims*
Union of Democratic Mineworkers	10,166
Beresfords Solicitors	3,350
Graysons Solicitors	3,118
Moss Solicitors	2,268
Browell Smith and Co	1,904
Thompsons Solicitors	1,600
Hugh James	1,111
Ashton Morton Slack Solicitors	881
Kidd and Spoor Harper Solicitors	827
O. H. Parsons and Partners Solicitors	743
Corries Solicitors	665
Irwin Mitchell Solicitors	625
Towells Solicitors	581
Watson Burton LLP	470
Meloy Whittle Robinson	469
Endlars Solicitors	420
Morisons Solicitors	415
Mortons Solicitors	408
Latham and Company Solicitors	403
Heptonstalls Solicitors	396

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many hearing loss claims paid out by his Department since 1997 have required two separate medical tests. [31338]

Malcolm Wicks: Of the 28,562 hearing loss claims settled as of 31 October 2005, 553 have required a second medical test.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many common law claims have been registered with his Department since 1998 by the Union of Democratic Mineworkers, excluding those registered by Vendside Ltd. [31342]

Malcolm Wicks: Since 1998, the Union of Democratic Mineworkers have submitted 22,757 common law claims.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many hearing loss claims paid out by his Department have included a payment involving Melex Ltd. [31356]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department makes payments to claimants' representatives in hearing loss claims, including, where appropriate, payment for arranging hearing loss tests. The extent to which those representatives use parties such as Melex Ltd. is a matter for them. The Department has had no direct dealings with Melex Ltd. at any time.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what hourly rate is paid to Vendside Ltd for work on claims for *(a)* vibration white finger, *(b)* chronic obstructive pulmonary disease and *(c)* hearing loss. [31357]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department do not pay Vendside Ltd an hourly rate for handling claims. Claim handling costs for successful claims are met according to handling agreements for vibration white finger and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. Vendside Ltd have not submitted any claims for hearing loss.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what evidence of insurance indemnity has been provided to *(a)* his Department and *(b)* its insurers by (i) the Union of Democratic Mineworkers and (ii) Vendside Ltd for (A) beat knee, (B) industrial accident claims and (C) hearing loss claims in the mining industry. [31358]

Malcolm Wicks: This is a matter for claimants. The Department does not hold such information.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many miners hearing loss claims submitted by *(a)* Vendside and *(b)* others since 1997 have required a second medical examination. [31360]

Malcolm Wicks: Vendside have not submitted any miners hearing loss claims. Since 1997, 758 claimants have required a second medical examination, of which 40 were represented by the Union of Democratic Mineworkers.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many hearing loss claims from the mining industry have been registered with his Department since 1997. [31361]

Malcolm Wicks: As at 31 October 2005, 38,244 miners hearing loss claims have been registered.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the claims handlers officials in his Department have met since 1997 to discuss mining hearing loss and knee claims. [31363]

Malcolm Wicks: No meetings have been held with officials, although the Department's contractors have met representatives from solicitors firms and the Union of Democratic Mineworkers to discuss hearing loss and knee injury claims.

National Grid

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much electricity in megawatts was lost to heat from the national grid in each year since 2000. [32643]

Malcolm Wicks: Heat is energy and may be expressed in watt-hours, rather than in megawatts, which are units of power.

The amount of generated energy lost to heat in the national grid transmission system in each year was as follows. The figures are expressed in megawatt-hours (i.e. MWh):

	MWh
2000–01	4,750,000
2001–02	4,370,000
2002–03	4,330,000
2003–04	4,510,000
2004–05	4,450,000

National Minimum Wage

Ms Katy Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many employees in his Department were affected by the rise in the national minimum wage on 1 October. [28976]

Alan Johnson: In the Department of Trade and Industry there were no employees affected by the increase in the national minimum wage on 1 October 2005.

New Power Stations

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total generating capacity is of proposals for new power stations being considered by his Department. [33638]

Malcolm Wicks: 7,667 megawatts.

Nuclear Power

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what evidence he is taking into account when reviewing the future role of nuclear energy in the United Kingdom. [31713]

Malcolm Wicks: The forthcoming Energy Review will undertake an extensive analysis of evidence relating to a wide range of different energy technologies.

The terms of reference for the Energy Review have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received advocating renewed provision of nuclear power. [31717]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department receives many representations from the public and commercial companies, which both advocate and oppose the renewal of nuclear power.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much public money has been earmarked for investment in future nuclear fission development; and how much of that money is expected to be spent on the Generation IV Scheme. [33699]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 1 December 2005]:* DTI has allocated £10 million, £5 million in 2006–07 and £5 million in 2007–08, to support UK involvement in international research on advanced nuclear energy systems. Much of this is expected to fund UK research on Generation IV systems for potential international deployment from around 2030; the exact amount will depend on the mix of research proposals that are submitted. The initiative will support UK skills needed to keep open the nuclear energy option and our capability to keep abreast of international developments and inform UK policy development.

The Research Councils have allocated £6 million to a consortium for research to "Keep the Nuclear Option Open" which commenced in October 2005 for four years (of which a small element will focus on Generation IV technologies). EPSRC intends to award up to £5 million to support an Engineering Doctorate Centre in Nuclear Skills, which will have a first intake of students in autumn 2006, and in May 2005 awarded £1 million for a masters level training package—the Nuclear Technology Education Consortium (NTEC).

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what *(a)* safety and *(b)* financial tests will be used to determine whether the building of further nuclear power stations will be approved. [32441]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is as follows:

(a) An operator may not begin construction of a new nuclear power station until a licence has been granted by the Health and Safety Executive. Before granting that licence HSE will need to be assured that the plant is robustly designed to ensure high levels of safety throughout its operation and eventual decommissioning. HSE has published its Safety Assessment Principles which guide its assessment of a prospective licensees safety submissions.

(b) The Energy Review will need to analyse costs of new nuclear power, alongside other technologies, as part of weighing up costs and benefits before a decision can be taken.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment the Department has made of the potential for nuclear power to increase its share of the national grid's electricity supply over the next 50 years. [32442]

Malcolm Wicks: The role of nuclear power in meeting the UK's future electricity generating needs will be examined in the recently announced Energy Review, alongside all other options to ensure the UK remains on track to meet our medium and long-term energy policy goals.

Overhead Power Cables

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the estimated cost of repairs to overhead power cables was in each month since January 2000. [32644]

Malcolm Wicks: Expenditure to repair distribution overhead power lines was £47.1 million in 2000–01, £46.2 million in 2001–02, £71.8 million in 2002–03, £53.7million in 2003–04 and £53.1 million in 2004–05.

These figures are taken from data provided by the network operators to Ofgem.

Ofgem does not require the network companies to provide information on a monthly basis—to do so would place an unduly onerous burden on them.

Overseas Trade

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total value of UK trade with *(a)* India, *(b)* China, *(c)* the EU, *(d)* the USA and *(e)* Russia and the former Eastern bloc countries was in each year since 1995. [33233]

Ian Pearson: The figures requested are shown in the following tables.

Exports of goods and services

£ billion

	India	China	EU25 [1]	USA	Russia
1995	2.1	1.0	111.2	28.5	1.2
1996	2.1	1.0	120.3	33.1	1.3
1997	2.1	1.1	121.9	35.2	1.6
1998	1.7	1.2	124.7	36.3	1.4
1999	2.0	1.7	130.5	41.5	0.8
2000	2.6	1.9	144.5	48.2	1.1
2001	2.5	2.3	148.6	48.0	1.3
2002	2.4	2.2	149.8	49.9	1.5
2003	3.0	2.8	148.6	50.9	2.1
2004	3.0	3.4	150.8	51.3	2.3

Imports of goods and services

£ billion

	India	China	EU25 [1]	USA	Russia
1995	1.7	2.0	115.4	28.4	1.2
1996	2.0	2.3	125.0	32.6	1.4
1997	2.0	2.5	125.8	34.4	1.6
1998	1.9	3.0	130.4	36.2	1.6
1999	2.1	3.7	141.0	36.9	1.5
2000	2.3	5.1	151.8	41.4	1.7
2001	2.6	6.2	162.9	42.9	2.3
2002	2.6	7.2	174.8	38.2	2.2
2003	2.9	8.8	178.3	36.2	2.7
2004	3.3	10.9	182.6	35.6	3.9

[1] European Union figures cover current member states, except that 1995–98 figures exclude Cyprus and Malta.

Notes:

1. Since some of the former Eastern bloc countries are now in the European Union, the final column only gives figures for Russia.
2. Figures are shown on a balance of payments basis at current prices.

Source:

UK Balance of Payments "Pink Book" 2005, Table 9.3

Postcodes

David Mundell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether there are plans to remove responsibility for management of postcodes from the Royal Mail. [32820]

Barry Gardiner: No.

Power Stations

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many applications for the building of new power stations he is considering; and how many of these are for power stations in Wales. [32937]

Malcolm Wicks: There are currently 12 applications under section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 for consent to construct new power stations, three of which are in Wales.

Protection of Trading Interests Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the operation of the Protection of Trading Interests Act 1980. [28269]

Ian Pearson: The Protection of Trading Interests Act (PTIA) was enacted in 1980 to counter US assertions of extraterritorial jurisdiction in the late 1970s. The PTIA was modified in 1996 by an order under section 2(2) of the European Communities Act 1972 in order to give effect to Council Regulation (EC) 22717 96, otherwise known as the EU Blocking Statute, which prohibits compliance with the US embargo on Cuba. Although the PTIA was introduced as a defence against US extraterritorial attempts to assert its jurisdiction, the Act does not relate specifically to the US and can be invoked against any third country attempting to assert extraterritorial jurisdiction in the UK.

Three orders have been made under section 1 of the PTIA:

Protection of Trading Interests (US Re-export Control) Order 1982 (SI 1982/885);

Protection of Trading Interests (US Antitrust Measures) Order 1983 (SI 1983/900);

Protection of Trading Interests (US Cuban Assets Control Regulations) Order 1992(811992/2449).

There has also been one order made under section 5, the Protection of Trading Interests (Australian Trade Practices) Order 1988 (SI 1988/569).

However, its terms have not been invoked since the introduction of the EU Blocking Statue in 1996, and in recent years the role of the PTIA has shifted from a means of enforcement to that of a deterrent.

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the data required to measure 2004 public service agreement target 2 are published. [30324]

Alan Johnson: The indicators used to measure PSA 2 are set out in the technical note for that target. This is available on the DTI website at http://www.dti.gov.uk/pdfs/psa_2.pdf. The technical note also provides detail of the data sources used for each indicator.

The Department reports twice a year on progress towards achieving PSA targets—in the autumn performance report and the spring departmental report. This includes the most recent available data for all PSA 2 indicators. The first assessment of progress towards the PSA targets set out in the 2004 spending review will be in the forthcoming autumn performance report 2005, which will be laid before Parliament in mid-December.

Redundancy/Early Retirement

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he plans to introduce *(a)* voluntary redundancy and *(b)* early retirement schemes within his Department during the next two years; and if he will make a statement. [28275]

Alan Johnson: The Department is currently running a small scale early severance scheme as one of a package of measures to redeploy staff displaced as a result of headcount reductions. My Department may run small scale schemes during the next two years to deal with areas where staff cannot be redeployed by alternative means. A large number of staff have already left the Department under early severance schemes run during 2004 and 2005.

Renewable Energy

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research he has evaluated on the efficiency of *(a)* wind turbines and *(b)* wave and tidal power sources. [31550]

Malcolm Wicks: For conventional generators, efficiency is the delivered energy expressed as percentage of the fuel input to the generator. However, given that the fuel source for wind, wave and tidal power is limitless and free, its efficiency does not have the same meaning as conventional power stations.

The capacity factor (or load factor) of an electricity generator is a relative measure of the output of the device. The capacity factor expresses the output of the generator over a given time period (typically one year) as a percentage of the theoretical maximum output of the generator over the same time.

A paper by the Environmental Change Institute on Wind Power and the UK Wind Resource, suggest that the annual capacity factor for wind power in the UK (long-term average of over 27 per cent.) compares favourably to that of Denmark (around 2 per cent.) and Germany (around 15 per cent.). The expansion of wind power to higher wind speed locations, including offshore, may result in capacity factor increasing in the future.

A similar paper by the Environmental Change Institute on the Variability of UK Marine Resources also includes information on wave and tidal capacity. A copy of both reports are available from their website http://www.eci.ox.ac.uk/

Royal Mail Services

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the Home Secretary's answer of 24 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 2319–20W, on passports, if he will instruct Royal Mail to investigate *(a)* how the passport of Mrs. Valerie Veale of Winchester (Royal Mail ref 1–1601472618) was lost in the post, *(b)* why it was sent to the South Kensington sorting office and *(c)* why it was delivered to the Natural History Museum. [33443]

Barry Gardiner: This is an operational matter for Royal Mail. The chief executive has been asked to reply direct to the hon. Member.

Senior Appointments (Departmental Agencies)

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on how many occasions, in respect of senior appointments for agencies administered by his Department, the appointed candidate was not the highest-score candidate at interview for each year since 1997; and what *(a)* the sex of the person appointed and *(b)* the sex of the highest-scoring candidate was in each case. [28495]

Alan Johnson: This information is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Solar Photovoltaics

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what his Department's estimate is of the amount of capital grant support required to deliver the Government's White Paper commitments to a 10 year solar photovoltaics programme in line with Germany and Japan. [30946]

Malcolm Wicks: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to his question number 29979.

Staff Discipline

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many employees have been dismissed by his Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [29134]

Alan Johnson: The number of employees dismissed from the Department in each year since 2001 is as set out on the following table.

	Number of employees dismissed
2001	3
2002	5
2003	15
2004	16
2005 to date	18

The Department has procedures in place to deal with misconduct, unsatisfactory performance and poor attendance. These are developed in consultation with the trade unions and are available to all staff on the Department's intranet or in hard copy.

UK Trade and Investment

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to his answer of 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 864–65W, on UK trade and investment, how many employees within UK trade and investment *(a)* are locally employed in overseas jurisdictions and *(b)* are seconded from the UK. [28938]

Ian Pearson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given today to his question number 21617.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* employees and *(b)* consultants working for (i) UK Trade and Investment and (ii) each regional development agency are working overseas, broken down by (A) city and (B) country. [21671]

Ian Pearson: I have placed a table in the Libraries of the House that sets out information on people working for UK Trade and Investment overseas using Foreign and Commonwealth Office figures for the current financial year. In this table UK Trade and Investment's operations are shown broken down by market—normally an individual country—and by the location of the individual posts within the market concerned. As regards personnel, UK Trade and Investment is a joint Department of Trade and Industry and Foreign and Commonwealth Office organisation, and is not an employer in its own right. Consequently it has no employees of its own. The majority of people deployed on its overseas operations are either staff of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, who are sent abroad on diplomatic terms and conditions (and referred to in the tables which follow as "UK-based"), or locally-engaged

employees of the embassy, high commission or consulate general in question (referred to in the tables which follow as "LE"). There is no centrally held data on consultants engaged overseas, and acquiring it separately from each FCO Post overseas would involve disproportionate cost.

Regional Development Agencies

Advantage West Midlands

Country	*Town*	*Staff/consultants (FTE)*
Australia	Melbourne	0.5 (Consultant)
Belgium		1
France		1
Germany		1
India		0.25 (consultant)
Japan		1
North America		British Midlands
Corporation		Development employees
	Boston	1
	San Jose	1
	Washington DC	1
	Chicago	1 1/5
Sweden		1 (consultant)

Note:
FTE = Full-time equivalent

East of England Development Agency (EEDA)

The East of England Developments Agency EEDA has an inward investment office in San Jose (Silicon Valley) a joint project between EEDA and Invest East of England. There are no representatives as the office is co-ordinated by the vice-president for business development at Invest East of England.

EEDA also subscribes to the East of England partnership office in Brussels and the Essex and East of England International Trade office in Jiangsu Province China (but does not have offices or representatives).

East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA)

Country	*Town*	*Staff (FTE)*
Australia	Sydney	1 (shared with AWM)
Germany	Munich	1 part-time consultant
India		1 shared with AWM
Japan		2 shared with AWM
North America		7 shared with AWM (see town list above)
Sweden		1 part-time consultant

Note:
FTE = Full-time equivalent

London Development Agency (LDA)

LDA has no overseas offices.

North West Development Agency (NMDA)

The North West Development Agency has an office with two members of staff (one full time and one part time) in Japan.

As part of a North of England collaboration (a joint venture with One NorthEast and Yorkshire Forward) there are offices in Australia (Sydney) (one person—consultant on three year contract) and North America: Chicago (six people). Boston (two people), Atlanta (two person) and Los Angeles: (two person full time and one person part time).

The NWDA with the North West Regional Assembly (NWRA) jointly fund an office and two members of staff in Brussels.

One NorthEast

Country	*Town*	*Staff (FTE)*
Japan	Tokyo/Osaka	2.5
China	Shanghai	3
South Korea	Seoul	0.5

South East England Development Agency

Country	*Town*	*Staff (FTE)*
Japan	Osaka	1
	Tokyo	1
South Korea	Seoul	1
China	Shanghai	1
USA	Boston	1
	Orange County	1
Australia	Sydney	1
Belgium	Brussels	2.6

South West of England Regional Development Agency (SWRDA)

Country	*Town*	*Staff (FTE)*
Japan	Tokyo	2 staff and 2 consultants
China	Shenzhen	2 consultants
Australia	Melbourne	1 consultant
USA	Boston	1 staff member
USA	San Francisco	1 staff member

Yorkshire Forward

Country	*Town*	*Staff*
China	Hangzhou	2
Japan	Tokyo	4
USA	Chicago/Atlanta/Boston/LA	12
Australia	Sydney	1 consultant

Note:
FTE = Full-time equivalent

The staff in Japan/USA and Australia all represent the North of England, not just Yorkshire Forward.

Wind-generated Electricity

Paddy Tipping: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what contribution *(a)* onshore and *(b)* offshore wind-generated electricity made to the UK's electricity supply system on each day from 16 November to 23 November; and what capacity factors were recorded by individual wind farms on each day during this period. [33557]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government do not collect information on the contribution of onshore or offshore wind generated electricity to the UK's electricity supply, or the capacity factor of individual wind farms, on a daily basis.

Information on the annual contribution of onshore and offshore wind generated electricity is published in the Digest of UK Energy Statistics (DUKES). A copy of DUKES is available from the Libraries of the House. Information on load factors is also published on an annual basis and available from the DTI's website http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy.

A paper by the Environmental Change Institute on Wind Power and the UK Wind Resource, suggests that the annual capacity factor for wind power in the UK

(long term average of over 27 per cent.) compares favourably to that of Denmark (around 20 per cent.) and Germany (around 15 per cent.). The expansion of wind power to higher wind speed locations, including offshore, may result in capacity factor increasing in the future.

World Trade

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on progress in the current round of international trade negotiations. [32418]

Ian Pearson: The draft text for the Hong Kong Ministerial was issued on 26 November by Pascal Lamy, Director General of the World Trade Organisation (WTO). Lamy will now consult further with Members before the General Council meeting on 1–2 December, which will submit the text for discussion by Ministers in Hong Kong.

All WTO members need to come to Hong Kong ready to make tough political decisions that will secure a pro-development outcome and enable the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) to be concluded by 2006.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the Government's priorities are for the World Trade Organisation talks in December. [32477]

Ian Pearson: The UK Government's priority for the Hong Kong ministerial conference is to secure agreement to a package that is pro-development, helps build a more competitive European economy and allows a conclusion to the round by the end of 2006.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what changes he is seeking to make to the EU's negotiating position in advance of the World Trade Organisation's ministerial conference in Hong Kong; and if he will make a statement on the United Kingdom's objectives for this conference. [32691]

Ian Pearson: The UK Government's priority for the Hong Kong ministerial conference is to secure agreement to a package that is pro-development, helps build a more competitive European economy and allows a conclusion to the round by the end of 2006.

As presidency, the UK's main role during the ministerial conference will be to support the European Commission in its role as negotiator, liaising with member states to develop a flexible EU position that will help progress negotiations. The UK has every confidence in the Commission's grasp and understanding of its negotiating mandate.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department is taking to reflect the needs and interests of developing countries at current World Trade negotiations on agriculture. [32773]

Ian Pearson: The needs and interests of developing countries are at the heart of the current World Trade negotiations. The Department of Trade and Industry works closely with other relevant Government Departments, in particular the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Department for International Development, to design UK trade policy and influence the EU trade policy position.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will publish the data that were used as a basis for UK support for the non-agricultural market access negotiations at the World Trade Organisation. [32774]

Ian Pearson: There is a wide range of analysis, including by international organisations such as UNCTAD (United National Conference on Trade and Development), World Bank and (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) OECD, which has been used to inform UK policy on NAMA. These analyses draw on published trade and tariff data collected by the above organisations.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department will take to deliver fair and free trade at the forthcoming World Trade Organisation ministerial in December. [32865]

Ian Pearson: The Government are committed to achieving an ambitious, pro-development package at the WTO ministerial conference in Hong Kong in December, which will allow a successful conclusion to the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) by the end of 2006.

The DDA has the potential to deliver a freer and fairer trading system, through substantially increased market access for developing countries and the dismantling of trade-distorting subsidies by industrialised countries, with poor countries given the flexibility to decide, plan and sequence trade reforms. The Department is pressing for as much progress as possible towards a deal at the Hong Kong ministerial.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will support measures to allow developing countries to set their level of tariff reductions in accordance with their development needs at the World Trade Organisation Hong Kong ministerial meeting. [33092]

Ian Pearson: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Winchester (Mr. Oaten) on 7 November, *Official Report*, column 57W.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department is taking to implement the UK's commitments to ensure that developing countries are not obliged to open up their markets through international trade agreements. [33093]

Ian Pearson: We are working closely with relevant Government Departments, particularly the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs and the Department for International Development, to influence the EU trade policy position and achieve an ambitious, pro-development outcome at Hong Kong in line with the UK's objectives.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he will take to ensure full account is taken of the interests of developing countries during the World Trade Organisation negotiations in Hong Kong in December. [33094]

Ian Pearson: The needs and interests of developing countries are at the heart of the current World Trade negotiations. The Department of Trade and Industry works closely with other Government Departments including the Department for International Development and The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to design UK trade policy and influence the EU trade policy position.

The UK is supporting meaningful special and differential treatment for developing countries in every part of the negotiation. The UK is supporting the right of developing countries to plan and sequence reforms in line with national poverty reduction strategies and the right for LDCs to make no new commitments at all. The UK is also working to encourage other WTO members to offer full duty and quota free market access to least developed countries as the EU already does.

Outside of the WTO, the UK has agreed to treble our trade related assistance to help the poorest countries build their supply side capacity to trade to £100 million per annum by 2010. As a donor we are also actively engaged in discussions to design the World Bank enhanced integrated framework on 'Aid for Trade'.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what his targets are for the Doha development round at the Hong Kong ministerial meeting in December; what assessment he has made of the implications of failing to reach an agreement in Hong Kong; and if he will make a statement. [33095]

Ian Pearson: The UK Government's target for the Hong Kong ministerial conference is to secure agreement to a package that is pro-development, helps build a more competitive European economy and allows a conclusion to the round by the end of 2006.

Many issues remain to be resolved in the negotiations and reaching agreement on as many of these as possible in Hong Kong will be critical to meeting the 2006 deadline. This deadline, which is widely accepted, stems from the expiry of the US Trade Promotion Authority in 2007.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 5 December 2005

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Residential Housing Units

Kate Hoey: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners what steps the Commissioners are taking to ensure that their non-fair rent tenants are not adversely affected by the introduction of market rents by new owners of properties sold by the Commissioners. [33409]

Sir Stuart Bell: Sales are, generally, of the freeholds only; existing tenancy arrangements are not changed. Future tenancy arrangements and rental policies are for new owners to determine.

Kate Hoey: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners if he will list the names and addresses of the estates on which the Commissioners have owned residential housing units over the past five years, excluding those used by the clergy for homes. [33410]

Sir Stuart Bell: The Commissioners have owned residential housing units over the past five years, excluding those used by the clergy for homes, on their rural estates in the following areas:

Alston, Lancashire
Ashford, Kent
Bishop Auckland, Durham
Bishopstone, Wiltshire
Canterbury, Kent
Carlisle, Cumbria
Central Durham, Durham
Chelsea, London
Chester, Cheshire
Chichester, West Sussex
Dissington, Northumberland
East Lincs, Lincolnshire
East Riding, Yorkshire
Eccleshall, Staffordshire
Ely, Cambridgeshire
Exeter, Devon
Foremarke, Derbyshire
Great Easton, Leicestershire
Halsall, Lancashire
Hereford, Herefordshire
Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire
Hyde Park, London
Islip, Oxfordshire
Kelmscott, Oxfordshire
Kings Lynn, Norfolk
Leicester, Leicestershire
Maida Vale, London
Navestock, Essex
Newbiggin, Cumbria
North Lincs, Lincolnshire
North Riding, Yorkshire
Northallerton, Yorkshire
Norwich, Norfolk
Peterborough, Cambridgeshire
Pimlico, London
Rainford, Lancashire
Ripon, Yorkshire
Rochester, Kent
South Durham, Durham
South Lincs, Lincolnshire
Staverton, Devon
Stoke Newington, London
Tyneside, Tyne and Wear
Vauxhall, London
Walworth, London
Warkworth, Northumberland
Waterloo, London
Wells, Somerset
Winchester, Hampshire
Winchester Park, London
Wisbech, Cambridgeshire
Wollaston, Northamptonshire
Worcester, Worcestershire
Wybunbury, Cheshire
Yeovil, Somerset
York, Yorkshire

Many of these are farmed rural estates including smaller amounts of ancillary housing; the ownership of substantial blocks of largely residential accommodation has been and is focused in London.

Kate Hoey: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners if he will break down the residential housing units sold by the Commissioners since 2001 by number of bedrooms per unit. [33411]

Sir Stuart Bell: This information cannot be provided without consulting a wide range of sources (as demonstrated by my answer to question 33410) thus involving a disproportionate amount of staff time.

Kate Hoey: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners what personal information on Church Commissioners' tenants is passed to the buyers of Church Commissioners' residential properties; and what measures are taken to ensure that the information is correct. [33450]

Sir Stuart Bell: Hard copy and computer tenancy files containing customary business information are passed to new owners to enable them to continue to manage the properties sold. This information will often have been supplied by the residents themselves.

The accuracy of these data is verified and controlled in the course of ongoing business management.

TREASURY

£5 Notes

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many £5 notes were in circulation in each of the last 10 years; [34436]

(2) what assessment his Department has made of the merits of replacing the £5 note with a *(a)* plastic coated note and *(b)* £5 coin; and if he will make a statement. [34437]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The following table provides information on the value of £5 notes in circulation as at end-February in each year over the last ten years and as published in the Bank of England's Annual Report and Accounts.

Value of £5 notes in circulation

	£ billion
2005	1.055
2004	1.025
2003	1.051
2002	1.044
2001	1.041
2000	1.045
1999	1.111
1998	1.034
1997	1.047
1996	1.067

The current £5 note in issue (featuring Elizabeth Fry) is printed on heavier weight paper than the previous £5 note design and is also the first Bank of England note to be coated with a varnish. This was done to improve the durability of the £5 note, recognising that it is subject to more wear and tear than other denominations.

The Bank of England is continually investigating ways to improve the quality and quantity of £5 notes in circulation. One option could be to introduce a £5 note printed on a more durable substrate, such as polymer (a type of plastic). A number of factors need to be considered in the selection of an alternative substrate, in particular that it provides acceptable protection against current and likely future counterfeiting threats. At present, the Bank has no plans to change the substrate.

The Royal Mint, which is responsible for producing and issuing UK coins on behalf of HM Treasury, reviews from time to time the structure of the UK coinage. At present, there is little evidence of any significant public interest for introducing a new £5 circulating coin.

100 Parliament Street

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the disposal of antique fixtures and fittings in 100 Parliament street. [34348]

Dawn Primarolo: In accordance with standard Government procedures, a comprehensive asset register is maintained which includes any antique fixtures and fittings.

Following the successful refurbishment of 100 Parliament street an audit has been undertaken to reconcile the asset register to the items that have been reinstated in the newly refurbished premises. Most of the antique fixtures and fittings have been reinstalled in the building. Some items on the asset register have been disposed of following discussions with English Heritage. Other low value loose items have been disposed of as these were inappropriate for the refurbished building. No items remain in store at 100 Parliament street.

Air Passenger Duty

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he plans to reduce air passenger duty. [34589]

Dawn Primarolo: The Chancellor considers relevant social, economic and environmental factors when deciding taxation policy. Any changes are announced in the context of the Budget.

Alcohol-related Deaths

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many deaths in *(a)* Tamworth and *(b)* Staffordshire were primarily caused by alcohol in each of the last five years. [33808]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 5 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many deaths in *(a)* Tamworth and *(b)* Staffordshire were primarily caused by alcohol. (33808)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2004. The table below shows the numbers of deaths among residents of Tamworth local authority and the current county of Staffordshire where the underlying cause of death indicated a condition directly related to alcohol use in the years 2000 to 2004.

Alcohol-related deaths[1] to usual residents of Tamworth local authority and the current county of Staffordshire[2], registered 2000–04

Number of deaths

	Tamworth	Staffordshire
2000	5	80
2001	4	87
2002	9	104
2003	6	106
2004	9	111

[1] For the year 2000 the cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9). The codes used by ONS to define alcohol-related deaths are listed below:
291—Alcoholic psychoses
303—Alcohol dependence syndrome
305.0—Non-dependent abuse of alcohol
425.5—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy
571—Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis
E860—Accidental poisoning by alcohol
For the years 2001–04 the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) was used. To maintain comparability with earlier years the following codes were used:
F10—Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol
142.6—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy
K70—Alcoholic liver disease
K73—Chronic hepatitis, not elsewhere classified
K74—Fibrosis and cirrhosis of liver
X45—Accidental poisoning by and exposure to alcohol
Deaths were selected using the original underlying cause.

The selection of codes to define alcohol-related deaths is described in: Baker A and Rooney C (2003). Recent trends in alcohol-related mortality, and the impact of ICD-10 on the monitoring of these deaths in England and Wales. Health Statistics Quarterly 17, pp 5–14.

[2] Data for the county of Staffordshire excludes figures for the unitary authority of Stoke-on-Trent.

Annual Death Rate (Gravesham)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in the Gravesham constituency between the ages of *(a)* 65 to 67, *(b)* 67 to 70, *(c)* 70 to 75, *(d)* 75 to 80 and *(e)* 80 or above died in each year since 1997. [33606]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 5 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many people in the Gravesham Parliamentary Constituency between the ages of *(a)* 65 to 67, *(b)* 67 to 70, *(c)* 70 to 75, *(d)* 75 to 80 and *(e)* 80 or above died in each year since 1997. (33606)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2004. The table below shows the numbers of deaths by age, at ages 65 and over, of usual residents of Gravesham Parliamentary Constituency in the years 1997 to 2004.

Deaths of usual residents of Gravesham Parliamentary Constituency by age at death, 1997 to 2004[1]

Number of deaths

Age at death	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
65 to 66	23	32	39	23	27	17	30	25
67 to 69	61	55	49	44	44	50	42	41
70 to 74	113	115	114	117	92	113	111	87
75 to 79	162	150	151	148	137	158	128	133
80 plus	384	420	410	398	365	420	443	409

[1] Deaths occurring in each calendar year.

Average Wage

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average wage in Beverley and Holderness was for *(a)* men and *(b)* women in the last period for which figures are available. [33457]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 5 December 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning what the average wage in Beverley and Holderness was for *(a)* men *(b)* women in the last period for which figures are available. (33457)

Currently average earnings are estimated from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), and are provided for full time employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey period was not affected by absence. This is the standard definition used for ASHE. The ASHE does not collect data on the self employed and people who do unpaid work.

I attach a table showing the Average Gross Weekly Earnings for full time employees in the parliamentary constituency of Beverley and Holderness for 2005. These statistics are also available on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=13101.

The ASHE, carried out in April of each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in the United Kingdom. It is a one per cent sample of all employees who are members of pay-as-you-earn (PAYE) schemes.

Gross weekly pay for full-time employee jobs[1] *by place of work*

£

	Men		*Women*	
Beverley and Holderness	*Median*	*Mean*	*Median*	*Mean*
2004	403.7	473.6	[2]—	357.9
2005	454.2	473.5	268.0	357.7

[1] Employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay-period was not affected by absence.

[2] Data is suppressed on quality grounds.

Source:

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics.

Gross weekly pay for full-time employee jobs[1] *by place of residence*

£

	Men		*Women*	
Beverley and Holderness	*Median*	*Mean*	*Median*	*Mean*
2004	484.5	516.5	399.5	434.2

[1] Employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay-period was not affected by absence.

Source:

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics.

Background Note:

(a) The Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, (ASHE), carried out in April of each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in the United Kingdom. It is a 1 per cent. sample of all employees.

(b) Average gross weekly earnings for adult full-time employees whose pay for the survey period was not affected by absence.

(c) The median replaces the mean as the headline statistic. The weighted mean is the sum of the weighted values divided by the sum of the weights. The median is the value below which 50 per cent. of employees fall. It is preferred over the mean for earnings data as it is influenced less by extreme values and because of the skewed distribution of earnings data.

CDs and DVDs

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the level of UK VAT on the volume of *(a)* compact disks and *(b)* digital versatile disks sold online and delivered within the UK by UK-listed trading entities; [34568]

(2) what assessment his Department has made of the impact of the level of UK VAT on the volume of *(a)* compact disks and *(b)* digital versatile disks smuggled into the UK. [34570]

Dawn Primarolo: No assessment has been made.

Centenarians

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many centenarians live in *(a)* Southend, *(b)* Essex, *(c)* Hertfordshire, *(d)* Greater London and *(e)* England and Wales. [33653]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 5 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many centenarians live in *(a)* Southend, *(b)* Essex, *(c)* Hertfordshire, *(d)* Greater London and *(e)* England and Wales (33653)

Figures on the number of people aged 100 or over on Census day (29 April 2001) in the requested geographical areas are available in table S001 on the CD supplement to the Census 2001 National Report for England and Wales pt 1, which is available in the House of Commons Library. Alternatively the data is available on-line at: http://www.nomisweb.co.uk/home/census2001.asp

Child Benefit

Helen Goodman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the cost would be of raising the rate of child benefit for *(a)* the second and *(b)* the third child from £11.40 per week to £17.00 per week; and how many children would benefit in each case; [34573]

(2) what the cost would be of raising child benefit to £20 per week for all children. [34574]

Dawn Primarolo: The cost of raising the rate of child benefit for the second and third child from £11.40 per week to £17.00 per week is shown in the following table, in addition to the number of children benefiting in each case.

Position of child in family	*Annual difference in cost if child benefit increased to £17.00 per week (£ million)*	*Number of children benefiting (million)*
Second	1,200	4.1
Third	360	1.2
Total for second and third child	1,566	5.3

Note:
Based on a 5 per cent. sample of administrative data on child benefit recipients at 31 August 2005

The annual cost of raising child benefit to £20.00 for all children is around £3.7 billion. This would benefit around 13.2 million children.

Code of Practice 26

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) when a new version of Code of Practice 26 will become available; [18640]

(2) whether HM Customs and Revenue has completed its review of Code of Practice 26; and whether he plans to introduce a statutory test for the recovery of overpayments with a right of independent appeal. [19298]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer to my evidence to the Treasury Sub-Committee on 26 October in which I stated that HMRC will be discussing Code of Practice 26 with the voluntary sector and other interested parties with a view to introducing a new version by the end of this year.

Death Duties

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list assets accepted in lieu of death duties since 1997. [34371]

Dawn Primarolo: Acceptances up to 31 March 2005 are shown in the Acceptance in Lieu Reports published by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council and available at http://www.mla.gov.uk/action/cp/00ail.asp. Details of acceptances since then are given in press releases issued by the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council on 2 September (http://www.mla.gov.uk/news/press_article.asp?articleid=844) and 13 October (http://www.mla.gov.uk/news/press_article.asp?articleid=860); by the Scottish Executive on 13 July (http://www.scotland.gov.uk/News/Releases/2005/07/13125910); and by the Welsh Executive on 31 October (http://www.wales.gov.uk/servlet/PressReleaseBySubject?area_code:140COB).

Enterprise Education

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the evidential basis is for his statement of 14 November in the Financial Times that half of all schools now offer enterprise education and that every school will do so by 2006. [34695]

John Healey: Responding to the 2002 Howard Davies report and following an evaluated pathfinder round in 2003–04 and 2004–05, new Department for Education and Skills funding of £60 million a year was rolled out in September 2005, which will support a new focus on "enterprise education in every school" for all key stage 4 pupils. This includes the equivalent of five days' enterprise activity for every pupil (such as running a real, or realistic, business) alongside existing work-related activities like work experience.

This new funding builds on funding for a third year of the Enterprise Advisors service. Adding the Pathfinder schools of 2003–04 and 2004–05, this means that less than two years since the Davies report, more than 50 per cent. of English secondary schools had Department for Education and Skills or Learning and Skills Council funded interventions on enterprise, preparing for national roll-out in September 2005.

Financial Statistics (South East England)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the South East's percentage share of *(a)* UK public expenditure, *(b)* UK population and *(c)* UK gross domestic product was in each year between 1995 and 2005. [33714]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the national statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 5 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about public expenditure, population and gross domestic product for the South East compared to the total for the UK. (33714)

The tables below show the South East Government Office Region per cent share of UK public expenditure, population, and Gross Value Added (GVA)[1]. Comparable data is shown for all available years from 1995.

Table A: South East percentage of identifiable UK public expenditure[2]

	Percentage
1998–99	11
1999–2000	11
2000/01	11
2001–02	11
2002–03	11
2003–04	11

Estimates in Table A are based on Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (PESA), and are available in table 8.1 on the HM Treasury website at: http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/economic_data_and_tools/finance_spending_statistics/pes_publications/pespub_pesa05.cfm

Identifiable expenditure (approximately 85% of Total Managed Expenditure) is that which can be recognised as having been incurred for the benefit of individuals, enterprises, or communities within particular regions.

Non-identifiable expenditure is that which is deemed to be incurred on behalf of the UK as a whole, e.g. defence expenditure.

Table B: South East percentage of UK population

	Percentage
1995	13.4
1996	13.4
1997	13.5
1998	13.5
1999	13.6
2000	13.6
2001	13.6
2002	13.6
2003	13.6
2004	13.6

Estimates in Table B are based on mid year population estimates, available on the National Statistics website at: www.statistics.gov.uk/popest

Table C: South East percentage of UK GVA[1]

	Percentage
1995	14.9
1996	15.0
1997	15.2
1998	15.4
1999	15.5
2000	15.7
2001	15.7
2002	15.6
2003[3]	15.6

The estimates in Table C are based on the regional Gross Value Added[1] (GVA) estimates published in December 2004. These are available on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=7359

[1] Gross Value Added (GVA) is Gross Domestic Product (GDP) less taxes (plus subsidies) on products.

[2] Public Expenditure estimates are only available on a comparable basis from 1998–99.

[3] Provisional.

Lord Turner Letter

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer which official is leading the investigation into the leak of his letter to Lord Turner, Chairman of the Pensions Commission; and if he will make a statement. [33700]

John Healey: The Chancellor has asked Nicholas Macpherson, Permanent Secretary to the Treasury, to lead an inquiry into the leaking of the letter sent to Lord Turner and its reply.

Solar Photovoltaics Programme

Alan Simpson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the benefits to the UK economy of a 10 year solar voltaics programme in line with that of Germany and Japan. [29979]

Malcolm Wicks: I have been asked to reply.

The Department has supported photovoltaics since 2000 through the PV Field Trials Programme and also through the £31 million Major Photovoltaics Demonstration Programme. These programmes have contributed to the development of the microgeneration industry in the UK, including an installer base. We plan to continue support for photovoltaics and other building scale renewables through a low carbon buildings programme, which is currently under development. This was recommended in the Renewables Innovation Review (February 2004), which looked at the viability of photovoltaics and other renewable technologies. It suggested that the environmental benefits in buildings could be maximised by developing an appropriate mix of building integrated renewables and energy efficiency. The new programme will have a budget of £30 million over three years and will start in April 2006 subject to EU state aids clearance.

The new programme and the wider microgeneration strategy currently under development will aim to introduce further measures to help develop a sustainable market for all the buildings renewable technologies. In addition PV installations are eligible for support under the renewables obligation. The current renewables obligation review is looking to simplify the way in which small-scale generators can claim renewable obligation certificates. International reports on photovoltaics, including developments in Japan and Germany, are undertaken by the International Energy Agency, www.iea.org.

Statutory Instruments

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many statutory instruments introduced by his Department had to be *(a)* withdrawn, *(b)* amended by a further statutory instrument and *(c)* reprinted because of defective drafting in each session since 1997; and what steps he (i) is taking and (ii) plans to take to prevent further such instances. [33649]

John Healey: Information in relation to instruments which have been amended, replaced and reprinted is restricted to those instruments which have been reported on for defective drafting by the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments.

Information on statutory instruments withdrawn or reprinted before publication is not held centrally and information in relation to any such instruments for which the Treasury were responsible can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

25 Treasury and HMRC (previously Customs and Inland Revenue) statutory instruments have been reported on by the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments since 1997, although figures from Customs and Inland Revenue relate only to the period beginning 2000. 12 instruments were produced directly in response to a JCSI report and were issued free-of-charge to purchasers of the original instrument. Of the remaining 13 instruments, most were corrected by a later instrument, and others did not require amendment once an explanation had been provided.

The Treasury have arrangements in place to prevent instances of defective drafting. Draft statutory instruments are checked by policy officials and at least one lawyer in addition to the draftsman before they are made. These arrangements are kept under review. In addition, training and guidance are provided for all lawyers who draft statutory instruments.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what training is given to *(a)* policy officials and *(b)* lawyers in his Department responsible for drafting statutory instruments; and if he will make a statement. [33650]

John Healey: All Treasury statutory instruments are drafted by lawyers. Formal training courses, written guidance and on the job training are provided for all lawyers who draft statutory instruments. Draft statutory instruments are checked by at least one lawyer in addition to the draftsman before they are made. Policy officials do not draft Treasury statutory instruments. Training in turning policy into law is provided for policy officials as well as written guidance.

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what action he is taking to address the recent criticism from the parliamentary ombudsman that the tax credit system is suffering from "systemic maladministration"; and if he will make a statement. [22180]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* I refer to my letter to the ombudsman on 29 July, a copy of which can be found on the ombudsman's website. On 26 October, I gave an update to the Treasury Sub-Committee on the improvements that HMRC is making.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) on what dates in 2005 new instructions on tax credit *(a)* overpayments and *(b)* administration were given to HM Revenue and Customs; what the changes were in each case; and if he will make a statement; [8568]

(2) when the new streamlined procedures for the determination of tax credit overpayment disputes were introduced; what these procedures are; and if he will make a statement. [18642]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Stroud (Mr. Drew) on 6 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 298W.

Instructions were issued to TCO staff prior to the introduction of the procedures.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what happens to the *(a)* level of an award and *(b)* rate of recovery when a tax credit overpayment is disputed; what will happen when the interim IT solution is introduced to suspend an overpayment; and if he will make a statement; [19718]

(2) whether when a tax credit overpayment is suspended the award continues *(a)* at the same level it was before the overpayment was identified and *(b)* at a new rate; and if he will give an illustration. [25251]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Leeds, East (Mr. Mudie) on 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 368–69W.

From 5–6 November, HMRC has been suspending recovery of an overpayment where a claimant disputes that recovery.

An example of the suspending recovery function is:

A couple with one child, working 30 hours a week and earning an annual income of £15,000 informs HMRC of a change in income that will increase their income for the 2005–06 tax year to £19,500 (of which £2,500 is disregarded). The change in income happens after six months and the family reports the change immediately.

Before the change the family would be entitled to an annual tax credit award of £2,495 or £47 per week. The change in income implies that new annual tax credit entitlement is £1,755 or £33 per week. So, for the first 26 weeks the family has been paid £370 more than they were entitled to. This amount will be deducted from tax credit payments for the remainder of the year, reducing weekly payments to £19.

If in-year recovery was suspended, then the family would be paid their entitlement for the rest of the year. Given their new income, this would be £33 per week.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many tax credit award notices have been *(a)* issued, *(b)* printed and *(c)* delivered to tax credit claimants in each month since April 2003. [31523]

Dawn Primarolo: Award notices are issued at the following points in the tax credits cycle:

an initial award notice, following a successful claim,

an amended award notice, when a claimant notifies HMRC of a change of circumstances or income during the year,

a finalised award notice, following the completion of the renewal process.

Award notices issued each month since April 2003 are as follows:

	Notices issued
2003	
April	2,400,000
May	3,000,000
June	2,000,000
July	2,000,000
August	1,000,000
September	1,500,000
October	1,600,000
November	1,100,000
December	1,000,000

	Notices issued
2004	
January	1,300,000
February	1,100,000
March	2,100,000
April	1,500,000
May	4,100,000
June	5,000,000
July	4,000,000
August	3,500,000
September	3,500,000
October	4,000,000
November	2,000,000
December	1,000,000
2005	
January	1,500,000
February	1,500,000
March	3,000,000
April	3,300,000
May	3,600,000
June	4,500,000
July	3,400,000
August	3,700,000
September	4,300,000
October	3,400,000

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when he will answer questions 23572, 19290, 19286, 19288 and 19299 on tax credits from the hon. Member for Yeovil. [33950]

Dawn Primarolo: I have done so.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will revise the rules governing the assessment of self-employed income for evaluating eligibility for tax credits to take into account actual income in the preceding year. [34112]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* No. The income assessment for the child and working tax credits is already based on income of the previous tax year which is chargeable to income tax. This includes any taxable profits from self-employment. Tax credit awards are finalised after the end of the year of award on the basis of that year's income.

Tax Relief

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of all tax relief was received by persons in the top tax bracket in the last year for which figures are available. [34786]

Dawn Primarolo: Information on the proportion of all tax reliefs received by higher rate taxpayers is not available.

Treasury Silver

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the estimated value is of the Treasury silver; and what additions have been made to that silver since May 1997. [33740]

John Healey: The value of the Treasury silver is £1,320,650. This was valued by Bonhams auctioneers at 31 March 2005 and is reported in HM Treasury's Resource Accounts 2004–05. No additions have been made to this silver since May 1997. The silver items are either stored at the Bank of England for safekeeping, or on display at 10 Downing street and the Cabinet Office.

Unemployment (Tamworth)

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of the registered unemployed in Tamworth constituency were *(a)* 25 years and under, *(b)* 26 to 35 years, *(c)* 36 to 45 years, *(d)* 46 to 55 years and *(e)* over 55 years of age on the latest dates for which figures are available. [33809]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 5 December 2005:

As National Statistician; I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about unemployment. (33809)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) compiles unemployment statistics for small areas from the Annual Population Survey following International Labour Organisation definitions.

Table 1 shows the percentage of unemployed, by specified age groups, who were resident in the Tamworth Parliamentary Constituency for the 12 month period ending in March 2005. These estimates, as with any from sample surveys, are subject to sampling variability.

ONS also compiles statistics for local areas of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). Table 2 shows the percentage of JSA claimants, by age bands, resident in the Tamworth constituency for October 2005.

Table 1: Percentage of unemployed by age bands resident in the Tamworth constituency: 12 months ending March 2005

Age band	Percentage
25 and under	56.4
26 to 35	[1]—
36 to 45	[1]—
46 to 55	22.8
Over 55	[1]—
Total unemployed	1,500

[1] Estimate not available, sample size less than three could be disclosive.

Source:
Annual Population Survey

Table 2: Percentage of claimants of jobseekers' allowance by age bands resident in the Tamworth constituency: October 2005

Age band	Percentage
25 and under	35.6
26 to 35	21.5
36 to 45	18.1
46 to 55	15.1
Over 55	9.7
Total JSA claimants	1,085

Source:
Jobcentre Plus Administrative system

Work Force Statistics

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total estimated work force was in *(a)* Southend, *(b)* Essex, *(c)* Hertfordshire, *(d)* Greater London and *(e)* England and Wales in each of the last 10 years. [33654]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 5 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about employment. (33654)

The attached table shows, for the last 10 years, the estimated numbers of persons aged 16 and over in employment who were resident in Southend-on-Sea Unitary Authority, Essex (excluding Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock unitary authorities), Hertfordshire, Greater London and England and Wales. These estimates, as with any from sample surveys, are subject to sampling variability.

Number of people aged 16 and over in employment by area of residence

Thousand

12 months ending	*Southend-on-Sea UA*	*Essex*[1]	*Hertfordshire*	*London*	*England and Wales*
February					
1996	64	578	501	3,008	22,826
1997	67	596	509	3,052	23,102
1998	74	614	501	3,133	23,406
1999	73	612	520	3,200	23,696
2000	76	618	513	3,291	23,938
2001	71	640	535	3,296	24,158
2002	72	650	530	3,380	24,394
2003	73	631	533	3,383	24,491
2004	77	649	539	3,397	24,696
March					
2005	79	654	537	3,424	24,894

[1] Note that Essex excludes Southend-on-Sea and Thurrock unitary authorities.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agricultural Levy Board

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many people are employed, by full-time equivalents, by each agricultural levy board. [32304]

Mr. Bradshaw: The number of people employed, by full-time equivalent, for the five statutory agriculture and horticultural levy boards are: 51 in the British Potato Council; 61 in the Home-Grown Cereals Authority; 15 in the Horticultural Development Council; 47 in the Milk Development Council; and 565 (of which 115 are funded by the statutory levy) in the Meat and Livestock Commission.

Animal Exhibitions

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1830W, on animal exhibitions, how many applications were *(a)* applied for, *(b)* granted and *(c)* refused in the most recent year for which figures are available. [33752]

Jim Knight: Exemptions from the provisions of the Zoo Licensing Act 1981 (as amended), and hence from Directive 1999/22/EC, may be granted under section 14(1)*(a)* of the 1981 Act. Figures on applications to the Department for such exemptions are provided below for the most recent 12 month period for which they are available (1 November 2004 to 31 October 2005).

In answer to point *(a)*, nine applications for exemptions under section 14(1)*(a)* of the 1981 Act have been determined. A further eight such applications have been received and are in the process of being determined.

In answer to point *(b)*, five exemptions were granted.

In answer to point *(c)*, four applications for exemptions were refused. Of these, the Department has recommended that three are suitable for a section 14(2) dispensation and one is suitable for a section 14(1)*(b)* dispensation. These dispensation provisions retain the requirement for the establishment concerned to be licensed under the 1981 Act but provide for reduced regulatory requirements.

Animal Welfare Bill

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will redefine *(a)* decapod crustaceans and *(b)* cephalopods as animals to be included in the provisions of the Animal Welfare Bill. [30913]

Mr. Bradshaw: The definition of an animal for the purposes of the Animal Welfare Bill is limited to non-human vertebrates. This restriction to vertebrates is made on the basis that there is currently insufficient evidence to show conclusively that other types of animals, such as "lobsters/crabs/squids", have the capacity for conscious awareness: a prerequisite for experiencing pain and suffering. However, there are powers within the Bill to extend the definition if future scientific evidence demonstrated that such animals can in fact experience pain and suffering.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the likely effect of the Animal Welfare Bill on the licensing of pet fairs and markets. [33628]

Mr. Bradshaw: Our assessment on the effect of our proposal to license pet fairs is detailed in the regulatory impact assessment (RIA), which was published alongside the Animal Welfare Bill. The RIA was informed by a public consultation on our animal welfare legislation and meetings with a wide range of organisations with an interest in animal welfare. We have also recently been in contact with interested parties, both for and against the licensing of pet fairs, in order to assist in the preparation of our proposals on these events. Once the Bill has been enacted, we plan to draw up regulations on pet vending, including pet fairs, and these proposed regulations will be subject to full public consultation.

Avian Influenza

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of bio-security on poultry farms in England. [24644]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government consider that poultry farmers, in common with all animal owners, have a responsibility to maintain good biosecurity practices.

There has been no assessment of current bio-security on poultry farms. However, the Government are working with the poultry industry to ensure that

biosecurity practices are consistent and to the required standard. Defra has distributed guidance materials on avian influenza to a range of industry groups—including the British Poultry Council, the British Egg Industry Council and the National Farmers Union—who are helping to distribute this material to their members, who cover the majority of birds. A simple one- page leaflet on biosecurity and surveillance for smaller concerns and back yard keepers has also been produced and is being distributed widely including to all veterinary practices and placed in trade and specialist press targeting the same audience. All this information is available on my Department's website.

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the total capacity is of existing bird quarantine facilities in the UK. [24647]

Mr. Bradshaw: Licences for quarantine premises do not specify the maximum capacity of the centre or facility. This is due to the fact that the capacity of a quarantine premises will vary depending on the type and size of the birds and the behavioural characteristics of different species. Certain species enjoy 'clumping' in dense groups, whereas other species are uncomfortable in close proximity to each other. Judgments about the welfare of the birds in quarantine will be a matter for clinical and professional veterinary judgment.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the effects of using ring-vaccination of poultry to combat an outbreak of avian influenza. [25043]

Mr. Bradshaw: Our experience has been that with early reporting of suspect disease, swift action to humanely slaughter infected flocks/movement controls and good biosecurity on the part of keepers, the disease can be quickly contained and eliminated without recourse to vaccination.

However Defra will continue to explore the situation regarding vaccination. Should there be advances in vaccination technology—particularly improving its effectiveness—then this would of course need to be taken into account.

Mr. Pickles: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her oral statement of 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 312, on avian influenza, whether smuggling birds to avoid quarantine requirements comes within her definition of offences related to the keeping of birds. [25676]

Mr. Bradshaw: The import of captive birds into the EU from third countries must comply with the rules set out in Commission Decision 2000/666/EC. Smuggling of captive birds is an offence under the Animal Health Act 1981 and the Importation of Birds, Poultry and Hatching Eggs Order 1979.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the clade type was of the H5N1 isolate recovered from *(a)* the parrot/mesia pooled sample and *(b)* the mesia-only sample in Essex; and whether each clade type was within the same sub-grouping associated with the disease in humans. [30750]

Mr. Bradshaw: The H5N1 isolates from the pooled parrot/mesia sample and from the mesia only samples may be classified as clade 2 by some authorities. While the Department uses advance molecular techniques to determine the linage and, by inference, the origin of avian influenza viruses, the classification by clade is unhelpful when considering the potential these viruses may have for human infection. On a precautionary principle any isolate of highly pathogenic Avian influenza should be considered as having a potential to infect man and appropriate precautions should be taken in every case.

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether eggs would be destroyed as part of the measures to deal with an outbreak of Avian influenza; and what assessment has been made of the likely impact on *(a)* pharmaceutical and *(b)* other industries of reduced availability of eggs as a result of Avian influenza. [30752]

Mr. Bradshaw: Eggs will usually only be destroyed on infected premises and premises with a link to infected premises which are therefore considered to have disease.

Egg movements in areas subject to movement restrictions should continue to move under licence and subject to biosecurity controls. We do not therefore envisage a significant impact on industries using eggs or the supply of table eggs as a result of an outbreak of Avian influenza.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs from what countries mesia species are imported into the UK; and what measures her Department has taken to ascertain the source of the mesias sampled at the quarantine facility in Essex, in whose samples the Avian influenza virus H5N1 was isolated. [31062]

Mr. Bradshaw: The EU-wide computer system used to record imports of animals and their products, known as TRACES, gives all captive birds the same code and therefore it is not possible to specifically identify consignments of mesia species.

The mesias were documented as originating from a Taiwanese farm on which mesias are bred in captivity.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the *(a)* significance, and *(b)* implications of the inconsistency in recorded numbers of the mesia birds batch in which avian influenza was identified, for the effectiveness of the import and quarantine system. [32080]

Mr. Bradshaw: Where there are relatively large consignments of small birds it can be difficult to count the numbers exactly. This means that sometimes small inconsistencies occur. An independent review has been set up to look at avian influenza quarantine procedures and a report on their effectiveness is expected in early December.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on her Department's contingency plan in case of an outbreak of avian influenza. [33704]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government have in place an Exotic Animal Disease Generic Contingency Plan, which includes a section dealing specifically with an outbreak of avian influenza. A copy of the contingency plan can be found on the DEFRA website.

http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/notifiable/disease/avianinfluenza-contplan.htm

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 7W, on avian influenza, what funding is available from her Department in the event of an avian influenza outbreak. [34306]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department is planning to spend over £8 million to enhance preparedness for avian flu in the current financial year. However in the event of an outbreak, the Department will need to assess the financial impact and if deemed necessary, will put forward proposals to the Treasury to consider additional funding from the contingency reserve.

Beef

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment she has made of the impact on beef products in England of the import of South American beef products. [28106]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* Imports of beef and beef products from South America into the UK for 2003—August 2005 are shown in the following table. Imports into England are not separately available. The final row in the table shows that these represented 29 per cent. (by value) of total beef and beef product imports into the UK for the period January to August 2005.

		2003		2004		January to August 2005	
Type	*Countries*	*£000*	*Tonnes*	*£000*	*Tonnes*	*£000*	*Tonnes*
Prepared or preserved	Brazil	57,616	53,541	72,984	58,677	57,097	42,703
	Argentina	7,139	5,881	11,259	8,931	7,926	5,986
	Uruguay	4,264	4,379	4,604	4,233	4,526	3,606
Frozen	Brazil	21,272	19,555	26,836	21,088	19,996	15,265
	Argentina	4,019	3,907	3,559	2,700	3,172	2,154
	Uruguay	3,051	2,278	2,898	1,099	1,575	796
	Paraguay	78	112	12	11	—	—
	Chile	—	—	50	11	—	—
Fresh or chilled	Brazil	31,629	12,568	34,293	13,854	29,357	11,895
	Argentina	17,905	5,592	20,793	6,110	18,765	5,271
	Uruguay	13,411	4,001	15,994	4,472	14,228	4,224
	Chile	113	33	363	135	2,085	702
	Paraguay	23	11	—	—	—	—
Salted, in brine, dried or smoked	Brazil	—	—	—	—	—	—
South America total		160,519	111,858	192,846	121,321	158,727	92,601
Percentage of total UK imports		22	27	24	28	29	33

Note:
2005 data is subject to amendments.
Sources:
H M Revenue and Customs.
Data prepared by Trade statistics, Food Chain Analysis 3, DEFRA

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what timetable she expects for ending the US ban on British beef; and if she will make a statement. [32620]

Mr. Bradshaw: Once the EU embargo is lifted for beef from UK cattle born after July 1996 we will look to trading partners outside the EU to remove their restrictions on our beef exports in line with international OIE guidelines. Officials are in contact with their opposite numbers in the US to explore the best way to proceed on this issue.

Bovine TB

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many animals have been ordered to be slaughtered to prevent the spread of bovine tuberculosis in each month in 2005. [34186]

Mr. Bradshaw: The number of infected cattle slaughtered in Great Britain for the first nine months of 2005 is given in the following table:

	2005
Month[1]	*Number of cattle slaughtered in GB*[2]
January	2,669
February	3077
March	3,396
April	2,753
May	2,057
June	2,415
July	1,865
August	2,210
September	2,106
Total	22,548

[1] Provisional data downloaded from the State Veterinary Service Data Warehouse on 24 October 2005. Subject to change as more data becomes available.
[2] Bovine tuberculosis reactors plus direct contacts.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many complaints the Department has received about the conduct of its officials with regard to bovine tuberculosis in each month since 2001; and if she will make a statement. [34190]

Mr. Bradshaw: The information is not correlated in the format requested, and can be derived only at disproportionate cost.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many tests for bovine tuberculosis her Department undertook in each month since 2001. [34193]

Mr. Bradshaw: The number of tests for bovine tuberculosis undertaken since 2001 broken down by month are given in the following five tables.

Table 1

Month (2001)[1]	*Total herd tests*[1]
January	4,209
February	3,392
March	233
April	233
May	245
June	185
July	302
August	232
September	303
October	415
November	680
December	973
Total	11,402

Table 2

Month (2002)[1]	*Total herd tests*[2]
January	3,072
February	4,601
March	4,698
April	5,745
May	3,664
June	2,067
July	2,681
August	1,750
September	2,418
October	3,521
November	5,363
December	4,551
Total	44,131

Table 3

Month (2003)	*Total herd tests*[2]
January	6,093
February	5,555
March	5,699
April	4,515
May	3,007
June	2,769
July	2,553
August	1,800
September	2,914
October	2,872
November	3,762
December	3,581
Total	45,120

Table 4

Month (2004)	*Total herd tests*[1]
January	5,232
February	5,226
March	5,821
April	4,218
May	3,299
June	2,905
July	2,196
August	2,156
September	2,242
October	2,961
November	5,309
December	3,222
Total	44,787

Table 5

Month (2005)	*Total herd tests*[1]
January	5,336
February	5,510
March	4,541
April	4,175
May	3,083
June	2,272
July	2,026
August	2,118
September	2,483
Total	31,544
2001–05 total	176,984

[1] In 2001, the TB testing and control programme was largely suspended due to the foot and mouth disease (FMD) outbreak. When testing resumed in 2002, resources were concentrated on herds with overdue TB tests which would have had a longer period in which to contract the disease. Also the proportion of high risk herds tested immediately after the FMD outbreak was greater than that prior to the outbreak. As a result, data for 2001 and 2002 are not comparable with other years.

[2] Provisional data downloaded from the State Veterinary Service Data Warehouse on 1 December 2005. Subject to change as more data become available.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her latest estimate is of the number of animals infected by bovine tuberculosis. [34279]

Mr. Bradshaw: Our latest assessment shows that bovine TB restrictions, applied as result of a TB incident, affected approximately 5.2 per cent. of cattle herds in Great Britain between January and September 2005, compared with approximately 4.7 per cent. for the same period in 2004.

In Great Britain there were 2,721 new TB incidents in the first nine months of 2005—an increase of 222 on 2004. The long-term trend has been an 18 per cent. annual increase in new herd incidents.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures she is planning to introduce to prevent the spread of bovine tuberculosis; and if she will make a statement. [34280]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government expect to make an announcement shortly detailing future plans for dealing with bovine TB.

Carbon Dioxide Emisions

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact on carbon dioxide levels of the removal of existing nuclear power stations as each is closed down. [33812]

Malcolm Wicks: I have been asked to reply.

I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for North Essex on 10 October, *Official Report*, column 23W and our published projections at http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/uep2004.pdf and http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/uep_addendum.pdf.

The published projections of nuclear generation reflect company views at the time and do not allow for additional life extension potential. Updated energy projections will be made available in due course.

Cetacean By-catch

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1053W, when the findings of the European Commission Observer Programme are expected to be published; and whether they will be published on a regular basis. [34846]

Mr. Bradshaw: We will be supplying the required information by 1 June 2006. As the Commission want to address the issue as a matter of urgency, I anticipate that a report will be available soon after.

Council Regulation (EC) 812/2004 provides for the Commission to make a report to the Council and the European Parliament after the second and fourth annual reports.

Christmas Card Recycling

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the number of *(a)* Christmas cards and *(b)* Christmas trees that were recycled in each year since 1990; what support she provides to local authorities with regard to the recycling of Christmas cards; and if she will make a statement. [33663]

Mr. Bradshaw: Christmas card and tree recycling schemes are run by the Woodland Trust and local authorities respectively. As such DEFRA has no record of the amounts collected and recycled. However, in 2005 over 50 million cards were collected through the Woodland Trust scheme.

Support for local authorities who wish to run an awareness campaign at Christmas, including the recycling of Christmas cards, can be provided by WRAP'S 'Recycle Now' programme. The support includes the use of artwork, advertising templates and PR materials.

Civil Nuclear Facilities

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the possible impact of climate change upon civil nuclear facilities in the UK. [33666]

Malcolm Wicks: Safety at nuclear facilities is regulated by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NIL). By virtue of the conditions attached to licences granted by the HSE, nuclear site licensees are required to maintain up-to-date safety cases for their sites, which take into account any changes to assumptions made about external hazards, such as the frequency, duration and severity of flooding, extreme temperatures, high winds and other climate change impacts.

As sites move into decommissioning and periods of care and maintenance which may extend over several decades, HSE will expect licensees to continue to consider the possible impacts of climate change and to identify any actions which they might need to take to ensure the continued safety of their sites.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her assessment is of the possible impact of climate change on the nuclear facilities at *(a)* Chapelcross, *(b)* Hartlepool, *(c)* Heysham and *(d)* Torness. [33667]

Malcolm Wicks: The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) Nuclear Installations Inspectorate (NIL) regulates the safety of all nuclear power stations in the UK, including those at Chapelcross, Hartlepool, Heysham and Torness. The NIL requires the operators of these facilities to have an up to date written demonstration of safety, the safety case, for each facility, which takes into consideration external hazards such as climate change impacts. The NIL assesses the adequacy of operators' safety cases against its published Safety Assessment Principles (SAPs), which require that the risks posed to the safety of the nuclear plant by reasonably foreseeable external events, remain demonstrably low.

Cockle Fishing

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if the Government will implement a secure permit system for cockle fishing requiring *(a)* the observation of health and safety regulations, *(b)* that the coastguard be informed of any cockling activity, *(c)* a responsible person to be on shore at all times and to be informed of all active participants at any time, *(d)* the enforcement of risk assessment procedures and *(e)* a proper check of all vehicles and equipment. [33536]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 1 December 2005]:* The 12 Sea Fisheries Committees in England and Wales have powers under the Sea Fisheries Regulation Act 1996 to introduce byelaws to meet local fisheries management requirements (for example, to regulate cockle fishing by permit requirement). Other authorities have primary responsibility for such matters as health and safety regulation and the safety of vehicles, and relevant legal requirements and enforcement arrangements are in place. I will be considering whether additional provision for effective inshore fisheries management needs to be made in the Government's planned Marine Bill.

Crematoria

Mr. Olner: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if the Government

will provide the Crematorium Authority Mercury Abatement Organisation with powers enabling it to co-ordinate implementation measures with regards to the installation of mercury-abatement equipment and emissions burden-sharing in crematoria. [31843]

Mr. Bradshaw: We have made provision for the mercury reductions required from crematoria to be delivered through burden sharing, in response to concerns raised by some cremation organisations over alternative approaches, and have been pleased to assist the cremation sector to the extent possible in their development of suitable arrangements. This is a novel approach and is an alternative to the conventional method of identifying installations above a given size to take pollution control measures.

It would not be appropriate for the Government to intervene in order to dictate that one particular burden sharing approach—such as that of the Crematorium Authority Mercury Abatement Organisation—be taken up by all crematoria. I have, however, extended the deadline until 1 June 2006 by when we wish to see evidence that the burden sharing approach will deliver the 50 per cent. reduction we have specified.

Endemic Species

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list in descending order the number of endemic species of *(a)* insects and *(b)* plants in each of the world's islands, countries and territories. [34049]

Jim Knight: It is not in the public interest for the Secretary of State to hold such a list. However, information on endemic species is available from the following sources:

Groombridge, B & Jenkins, M. 2002. World atlas of biodiversity. University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles and London

Groombridge B (Ed) 1992. Global biodiversity—status of the earth's living resources. Chapman and Hall, London, Tokyo

UNEP—World Conservation Monitoring Centre Species Database at http://www.unep-wcmc.org.

You may also be interested to know about the UK's ongoing support for the Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF), an organisation committed to efforts to make biodiversity information available to the public via the internet (www.gbif.org).

Farming

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost of animal feeds was to farmers in England in the 2004–05 financial year. [33794]

Mr. Bradshaw: Data are not available for the 2004–05 financial year. However the cost of animal feed to farmers in England for the 2004 calendar year was £1.649 billion. This includes compound feed, straight concentrates and non-concentrates and also feed purchased from other farms.

Fixed Penalty Notices

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many fixed penalty notices have been issued by *(a)* community support officers and *(b)* police officers for dog fouling under paragraph 1(2)*(c)* of Schedule 4 to the Police Reform Act 2002 in each of the last four years, broken down by police authority. [29346]

Mr. Bradshaw: The figures for fixed penalty notices we collect annually makes no distinction between those fixed penalties issued by local authority officers and police community support officers.

Foot and Mouth (Brazil)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to house imports of meat from Brazil following the outbreak of foot and mouth disease there. [32302]

Mr. Bradshaw: Following outbreaks of foot and mouth disease in Brazil, action was taken to ban imports of meat from the affected areas which may present a risk.

All meat imported into the EU from third countries must enter at designated Border Inspection Posts (BIPs) where it is subject to veterinary inspections. All consignments are subject to documentary and identity checks and at least 20 per cent. of consignments undergo physical checks. These ensure import conditions are met and that the products remain in a satisfactory condition during transport.

Any consignment that does not meet EU requirements, including that which may have been affected by the ban would be rejected and re-exported or destroyed.

Identity Cards

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the *(a)* total and *(b)* net cost of (i) integrating the proposed identity card scheme into her Department's IT systems and (ii) the ongoing operation of the scheme within her Department. [31108]

Jim Knight: The Department has not finalised current best estimates of the cost of using the ID cards scheme to support the services which it oversees.

Landfill

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 16W, on landfill, what percentage of glass and plastic bottles were recycled in the last period for which figures are available. [33856]

Mr. Bradshaw: Results for 2004 from the trade organisations of British Glass and British Plastics Federation estimate 35 per cent. of glass and 8 per cent. of plastic bottles are recycled.

Live Animal Imports

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the extent to which live animals exported from Brazil are subsequently imported as meat products into the UK. [28112]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* The trade in individual animals can not be traced through overseas trade statistics.

The following table shows the total exports of live animals from Brazil split by country for 2004.

	Value (1000$)	*Weight (Tonnes)*
Bovine	7,339	6,941
Lebanon	3,855	5,029
Venezuela	3,011	1,381
Paraguay	237	432
Benin	172	40
Senegal	25	13
Cote d'Ivoire	25	5
Bolivia	14	40
Swine	178	38
Argentina	121	22
Paraguay	57	16
Poultry	8,997	357
Peru	2,483	14
Paraguay	1,862	297
Argentina	1,611	9
Venezuela	983	5
Bolivia	943	19
Colombia	653	3
Chile	294	3
Spain	76	4
Ecuador	71	1
Senegal	14	2
France	7	0
Sheep	0	0

Information on the subsequent processing and destination of these live animal exports from Brazil is not readily available. However the following table gives details of the total imports of meat and meat products into the UK in 2004 from those countries to which Brazil has exported live animals in 2004:

Type	*Description*	*£000*	*Tonnes*
Beef	Paraguay	12	11
Poultry	Argentina	1,545	1,344
	Chile	8,969	4,862
	France	123,922	58,807
	Spain	13,062	6,625
Grand total		315,099	186,993

Sources:
H M Revenue and Customs
Data prepared by Trade statistics, Food Chain Analysis 3, DEFRA

Livery Yards

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she will publish the arrangements for licensing of livery yards. [30829]

Mr. Bradshaw: Proposals for the licensing of livery yards were published on 14 October in the Regulatory Impact Assessment along with the Animal Welfare Bill. It is proposed that local authorities would be responsible for issuing licenses, which would be of three years duration and would have powers of entry and inspection. A code of practice will provide guidance to the livery yard owner on minimum welfare standards.

No decisions have been made as to the definition of a livery yard. A full consultation will be undertaken when our proposals have been finalised.

Marine Management Organisation

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the *(a)* remit and *(b)* responsibilities are of the proposed Marine Management Organisation; and which bodies are presently responsible for discharging each such responsibility. [31878]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* The establishment of a new public body, currently referred to as the Marine Management Organisation, is one option that is being considered as part of proposals for a Marine Bill.

A Bill may create new marine functions, delivery of some or all of which may best be carried out by a new public body. In such circumstances that new public body may also be well placed to deliver other functions that are presently delivered by, or on behalf of, Government in the marine area.

However, at this stage no decision has yet been made as to the need for such a public body. Correspondingly, no decisions have been made as to what its remit might be, or what responsibilities it might discharge.

The Government have taken a very open approach to its consideration of what a new public body might deliver, engaging stakeholders at the very earliest stage in policy development. This has been achieved through a stakeholder forum (26 September) and a series of bilateral meetings with key stakeholders.

A public consultation exercise in early 2006 will be an opportunity for the Government to offer more information on what role such a new public body might play, and for stakeholders to contribute to the policy development process on this and other elements of the Marine Bill.

National Register of Poultry Businesses

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs in what circumstances those who have released *(a)* poultry and *(b)* gamebirds into the wild will be required to register on the National Register of Poultry Businesses. [32004]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is a legal requirement for all commercial premises with 50 or more poultry to register. This applies whether the 50 poultry are of a single species or a combination of species, which include pheasants and partridge. For game bird premises, which are included under this requirement, the information supplied should only relate to captive birds and those still under the control of the keeper, and not to birds that may remain on the premises (for example, in a woodland area on the premises) after release. If production is seasonal, as with partridges and pheasants, only the usual number of birds when production/stock is at peak capacity should be recorded.

Organic Food

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with supermarkets and other retailers regarding sourcing organic food from home suppliers. [32303]

Mr. Bradshaw: I have had discussions with ASDA, Tesco and Morrisons on organic issues, including sourcing organic food from home supplies. My noble Friend, the Minister for Farming and Food (The Lord Bach), who is now the Minister responsible for organic issues in the Department has recently met Sir Ken Morrison. My officials also have regular contact with representatives from supermarkets and retailers.

Pet Travel Scheme

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what controls against rabies form part of the pet travel scheme. [33789]

Mr. Bradshaw: The controls against rabies relating to dogs and cats entering the UK are as follows. They must first be fitted with a microchip, then vaccinated against rabies, but not before they are three months old, and then have a blood test carried out at a laboratory approved by the European Union to ensure the vaccination was satisfactory.

They must be issued with an EU pet passport or third country certificate. They may not enter or return to the UK until six calendar months have passed from the date the blood sample was taken that provided a satisfactory test result. They must enter the UK using an approved transport company on an authorised route which ensures they will have their microchip read and documentation checked before entering the country. In the six months before entering or returning to the UK they must not have travelled to countries other than those listed under EU Regulation 998/2003 on the movement of pet animals.

Ferrets are subject to broadly similar but not identical controls.

Dogs, cats and ferrets which do not comply with these rules can only enter this country if they spend up to six months in UK quarantine.

Quarantine

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether *(a)* criminal convictions and *(b)* a history of breaching quarantine procedures are taken into consideration before a licence to quarantine birds is granted to an individual; and whether a (i) criminal conviction for fraud and (ii) a history of breaching quarantine procedures precludes the attainment of a licence to quarantine birds. [28719]

Mr. Bradshaw: Checks are not carried out on individuals submitting applications for approval of quarantine premises.

The conditions for approving quarantine premises are laid down in Commission Decision 2000/666/EC. In addition to the prescribed standards which the premises themselves must meet, such as location and structure, to obtain approval for the centre or facility, the applicant has to demonstrate that the centre or facility meets the management requirements imposed by the Commission Decision, as well as welfare standards. Recommendations for approval or non-approval following a veterinary visit can take into account other known, relevant information.

Approvals are effective for one year and are dependent on all the laid-down conditions being met. Approvals may be withdrawn at any time should the approval requirements of the Commission Decision not be met.

Race Equality Impact Assessments

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many race equality impact assessments her Department completed between *(a)* April 2004 and March 2005 and *(b)* April 2005 and November 2005; and how many assessments in each period resulted in a change of policy. [32837]

Jim Knight: From April 2004 to March 2005, Defra completed nine race equality impact assessments (REIAs), eight of which resulted in policy changes.

From April 2005 to November 2005 Defra completed 10 REIAs, two of which resulted in policy changes.

It should be noted that while this was the formal number of REIAs notified to the Home Office, which monitors this area of work across Government, it is not possible to give a precise number. In Defra, multiple assessments have been carried out in a single policy area with the results being published under a single heading. Defra's Diversity Strategy is seeking to embed diversity into the business ensuring that impact assessments are intrinsic to business management, therefore, in some areas the impact assessment process is so embedded that they are not recorded separately. Therefore the numbers provided are lower than actually took place.

Refrigerators

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she plans to update the guidance on the recovery and disposal of controlled substances contained in refrigerators and freezers. [25005]

Mr. Bradshaw: This guidance was produced by the Environment Agency. It plans to review the guidance to coincide with the implementation of the treatment requirements of the waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) directive.

Rights of Way

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of how many kilometres of additional rights of way on foot there would be if the public were to have access to all of the coastline of England. [33590]

Jim Knight: I cannot currently provide a reliable estimate.

In line with Defra five year strategy we are looking at ways to improve access to the coast. We have asked the Countryside Agency, working together with its Natural England confederation partners English Nature and the

Rural Development Service, to undertake research and analysis to identify possible options to improve access to the coast. One of the options to be investigated will include possible improvements to the rights of way network using existing rights of way legislation.

As part of this work, the Natural England confederation partners are undertaking an information gathering exercise to collect data on a national basis to gain a comprehensive picture of the coast and existing access provision. They will report on their findings in 2006 in advance of a public consultation document which we aim to issue in October 2006. At that stage I will be in a better position to estimate the extent to which public rights of way would need to increase, if that was the option chosen as the best way to improve access to the coast.

Waste Disposal

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the environmental effects of using incinerators to dispose of waste. [26495]

Mr. Bradshaw: Waste incineration with energy recovery offers a substantial climate change benefit compared to the alternative of landfill. This is a result of displaced fossil fuel from conventional power generation, reduced methane emissions from landfill and additional recovery of metals for recycling.

Defra has published an independent study, 'Review of the Environmental and Health Effects of Waste Management', which concluded that on the evidence from studies so far, the treatment of municipal solid waste—including by incineration—has at most a minor effect on human health and the environment. The report is available on Defra's website at: www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/research/health/index.htm.

Wildlife and Countryside Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many convictions for possession of birds listed on Schedule 4 to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 which have relied on DNA samples as evidence have been successful; and in how many such cases her Department provided to the police registration details maintained under section 7 of the Act. [33555]

Jim Knight: The Department does not keep a record of the specific evidence used in prosecutions.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adoption

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what average time adults have waited from application to completion of adoption proceedings of a child in *(a)* Southend, *(b)* Essex, *(c)* Greater London and *(d)* England and Wales in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [34294]

Ms Harman: I have been asked to reply.

Figures relating to adoptions dealt with in the county courts to the questions can be found in the following tables.

County Courts
England & Wales

	Step parent adoptions			*Placements*			*Foreign adoptions*			*All*		
	Orders made	*Average waiting time (weeks)*	*% ⩽20 weeks*	*Orders made*	*Average waiting time (weeks)*	*% ⩽20 weeks*	*Orders made*	*Average waiting time (weeks)*	*% ⩽20 weeks*	*Orders made*	*Average waiting time (weeks)*	*% ⩽20 weeks*
2000–01	728	29.8	80.4	2,029	20.0	91.6	24	21.3	87.5	2,781	22.5	88.6
2001–02	792	34.0	68.4	2,645	22.3	85.7	54	27.7	70.4	3,491	25.0	81.5
2002–03	676	34.4	73.4	2,830	21.1	89.4	58	31.9	77.6	3,564	23.8	86.2
2003–04	737	40.1	72.5	3,398	23.6	88.1	69	64.7	69.6	4,204	27.1	85.1
2004–05	551	28.0	83.5	3,092	18.7	92.9	33	29.6	90.9	3,676	20.2	91.4

London

	Step parent adoptions			*Placements*			*Foreign adoptions*			*All*		
	Orders made	*Average waiting time (weeks)*	*% ⩽20 weeks*	*Orders made*	*Average waiting time (weeks)*	*% ⩽20 weeks*	*Orders made*	*Average waiting time (weeks)*	*% ⩽20 weeks*	*Orders made*	*Average waiting time (weeks)*	*% ⩽20 weeks*
2000–01	29	23.2	89.7	133	25.7	83.5	3	30.0	66.7	165	25.4	84.2
2001–02	42	32.8	71.4	147	31.0	72.1	4	34.1	75.0	193	31.5	72.0
2002–03	27	38.5	66.7	159	29.4	75.5	7	49.6	57.1	193	31.4	73.6
2003–04	48	49.6	60.4	427	32.8	81.5	15	56.4	73.3	490	35.1	79.2
2004–05	29	32.2	75.9	349	27.7	84.5	4	26.0	100.0	382	28.0	84.0

Essex area

	Step parent adoptions			*Placements*			*Foreign adoptions*			*All*		
	Orders made	*Average waiting time (weeks)*	*% ⩽20 weeks*	*Orders made*	*Average waiting time (weeks)*	*% ⩽20 weeks*	*Orders made*	*Average waiting time (weeks)*	*% ⩽20 weeks*	*Orders made*	*Average waiting time (weeks)*	*% ⩽20 weeks*
2000–01	5	14.2	100.0	77	20.6	96.1	0	0.0	0.0	82	20.2	96.3
2001–02	8	15.4	100.0	115	21.0	89.6	1	4.4	100.0	124	20.5	90.3
2002–03	13	31.3	84.6	109	18.0	97.2	1	6.9	100.0	123	19.3	95.9
2003–04	15	33.6	86.7	109	21.6	89.0	0	0.0	0.0	124	23.0	88.7
2004–05	10	23.7	90.0	108	18.5	90.7	0	0.0	0.0	118	18.9	90.7

Southend

	Step parent adoptions			*Placements*			*All*		
	Orders made	*Average waiting time (weeks)*	*% ⩽20 weeks*	*Orders made*	*Average waiting time (weeks)*	*% ⩽20 weeks*	*Orders made*	*Average waiting time (weeks)*	*% ⩽20 weeks*
2000–01	4	14.1	100.0	10	14.6	100.0	14	14.5	100.0
2001–02	2	9.4	100.0	3	32.6	100.0	5	23.3	100.0
2002–03	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2003–04	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2004–05	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

After-school Clubs

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action she *(a)* is taking, and *(b)* plans to take to allow schools to run after-school clubs on their premises; and if she will make a statement. [34218]

Beverley Hughes: Many schools already provide a good range of after school clubs on their premises. The Education Act 2002 gave school governing bodies the power to provide community facilities on school premises which will enable those clubs to develop into formal child care offers where there is parental demand for those services.

The Government want all schools to provide access to extended services, including child care, a varied menu of study support, and before and after school clubs, by 2010, with half of all primaries and a third of all secondaries doing so by 2008.

To support schools in setting up and embedding extended services, we have committed £840 million up to 2008. These funds can be used flexibly to help address any practical issues that schools may be facing to develop extended services.

We have also asked the National Remodelling Team (NRT) within the Teacher Development Agency, working with voluntary sector partners such as Continyou and 4Children to support LAs and schools nationally as they implement extended services.

Autism (Funding)

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether guidelines will be published for local education authorities on funding for pupils with autism through *(a)* elective home learning, *(b)* dedicated autism-specific units within special schools and *(c)* adapted general provision within special schools. [34147]

Maria Eagle: We have no plans to publish such guidelines.

It is for local authorities to decide how to deploy the funds available to them to meet the needs of children with special educational needs (SEN), including those children with autistic spectrum disorders (ASDs). Budgeted expenditure by local authorities on meeting children's SEN in 2005–06 is £4.1 billion, some 13 per cent. of all education spending. In 2004 the Department published guidance "The management of SEN expenditure" providing information and suggested approaches to managing this expenditure. In 2002 the Department, with the Department of Health, published Good Practice Guidance on ASDs which gave pointers to good practice, including pointers on funding and home-based provision.

Local authorities have a duty to keep their arrangements for special educational provision under review and it is for them to take decisions about SEN provision in their schools, in consultation with the schools including special schools, and fund that provision appropriately. Funding for individual pupils with autism in special schools is through their SEN statements, which set out their needs and the provision required to meet those needs.

Bookstart (Kettering)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children have participated in the Bookstart scheme in Kettering constituency, broken down by location; and how many books have been distributed. [34110]

Beverley Hughes: This is essentially a matter for Book trust. The total number of Bookstart packs issued in Kettering from 2002 to October 2005 is 6,206. This information cannot be further broken down by location.

Childcare Bill

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what financial provision her Department expects to make to *(a)* English and *(b)* Hertfordshire local authorities to enable them to fulfil their statutory duties in part 1 of the Childcare Bill. [33516]

Beverley Hughes: The Government have invested well over £17 billion on early years and child care services since 1997.

The new duties described in the Childcare Bill will be funded through their General Sure Start Grant (GSSG) allocations. An announcement of GSSG funding for 2006–07 and 2007–08 is due to be made shortly.

The substantial additional funding agreed in the spending review 2004, and pre-Budget report (PBR) for 2004, will enable governmental spending on Sure Start to reach £1.8 billion in 2007–08, around double the 2004–05 figure. This represents an average real annual increase of 24 per cent.

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list departmental projects conducted by consultants in each year since 2000; what the cost was in each case; and what the total cost of employing consultants was in each year. [29103]

Maria Eagle: No projects have been conducted by consultants for the Department for Education and skills in the years since 2000.

With regard to the total cost of employing consultants in the years since 2000, I refer the hon. Member to the answers given by the Minister of State for Lifelong Learning, Further and Higher Education on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 2057W, and Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children, Young People and Families on 23 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 1168W.

Dental Schools

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1310W, on dental schools, how many of the temporary allocation places are the subject of bids to make them permanent; and at which schools the places are. [32158]

Bill Rammell: Due to the competitive nature of the bidding process, we are unable to release details about the bids from individual dental schools. However, all the dental schools that received a temporary allocation of dental student numbers have submitted bids for permanent places. In total, an increase of 142 dental student places is being sought by the existing dental schools.

The bids from existing dental schools, together with the bids to support new dental schools, will be considered by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)/Department of Health Dental Joint Implementation Group (JIG) on 9 December. Recommendations from the JIG will be put to the HEFCE board in January 2006.

Departmental Estate

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which buildings and sites used by her Department and related agencies *(a)* have ceased to be used in the last year and *(b)* will be closed under plans for relocation. [31773]

Bill Rammell: The Department for Education and Skills have not ceased to use any buildings and sites in the last year or have buildings and sites that will be closed under current plans for relocation.

Departmental Expenditure

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much the Department and its agencies have spent on *(a)* the design and production of new logos and *(b)* employing external (i) public relations and (ii) graphic design agencies in each year since 2000, broken down by project. [33216]

Bill Rammell: It would only be possible to provide details of expenditure on design and production of new logos at disproportionate cost.

Expenditure by year, on external public relations for my Department is listed in the following table. The detailed breakdown of expenditure by project (from January 2001) has been placed in the Library for reference.

Financial year	*Expenditure on Public Relations (£ million)*
2000–01	0.8
2001–02	1.7
2002–03	2.4
2003–04	1.9
2004–05	0.9
2005–06 (Expenditure to date for 2005–06)	0.3

Expenditure on graphic designs agencies is not identified separately from other design costs and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Report

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the programmes aggregated as Other Miscellaneous programmes in each section of table 12.2 of her Department's 2005 departmental report. [33147]

Bill Rammell: The Miscellaneous Programmes in table 12.2 of the Department for Education and Skills 2005 departmental report are listed in more details as follows.

Schools

Physical Education and Sport
City Technology Colleges
Targeted Improvement Grant/Excellence in Cities
School Enterprise Initiative
Education Action Zones
Key Stage Central Departmental Initiatives
Other Programmes to Support Secondary Education
Teaching and learning/Gifted and Talented Pupils
Modern Foreign Languages

Inclusion Programmes (including Behaviour and Aim Higher)
Music and Ballet Scheme
British Education Communications and Technology Agency
Premature Retirement Compensation for Teachers in Voluntary Colleges
Innovations Fund
Teachers Pensions—Contractual Costs
Licensing for School Activities, School Performance and Accountability—Assessment team
Assisted Places Scheme
Research on School Performance
Energy Savings Trust and Learning Through Landscapes
ICT Development and Evaluation
Teachers' Medical Fees

Higher Education
Student Support Contingency Reserve
Aim Higher
Foundation Degree Marketing
European University—Initiative Subscription
European International Services
College of Europe Bologna Centre
European University Institute Bursaries
Student Loans Debt Sale Adjustment

Support for Children, Young People and Families
Extended Schools
Vulnerable Children Grant
Parenting Fund and Activities Supporting Parenting
Family Fund Trust
Youth Related Activities
Special Educational Needs including support for Early Years, Communities Aid Project, Disability Tribunal and Non-maintained Special Schools
Change Fund
Teenage Pregnancy
Information Sharing and Assessment
Disabled Access: Youth Service
Communication Unit
Local Authority Capacity and Intervention
DirectGov
Section 64 Grant to Voluntary Sector
Children's Commissioner
Publicity
Participation Fund
Adoption Services
Invest to Save Funded Children's Agenda Programmes
Child Contract Centres
Child Protection Co-ordinators
Quality Protects Regional Development Fund

Further Education, Adult Learning, Skills and Lifelong Learning
FE Teach Learn Train Bursary
Student Support
International Education Programmes
International Labour Organisation Subscription
Management Information Across Partners
Bridging Allowance for 16 to 19-year-olds

Activities to Support all Functions
E-portals

Departmental Staff

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) who the Director of Human Resources is in her Department; what relevant specialist qualifications he or she holds; and what the details are of his or her career to date; [26324]

(2) who is responsible for managing the Estate of her Department; what relevant specialist qualification he or she holds; and what the details are of his or her career to date; [26325]

(3) who the Director General of Finance and Analytical Services is in her Department; what specialist finance qualifications he or she holds; and what the details are of his or her career to date; [26326]

(4) when she will answer questions *(a)* 26324, *(b)* 26325 and *(c)* 26326 tabled by the hon. Member for Stratford-on-Avon on 3 November 2005. [33010]

Maria Eagle: In response to the hon. Members question 33010 the replies are as follows:

The Director General: Finance, Analysis and Strategy is Peter Makeham, who holds a BA(Hons) in Economics and Economic History and an MA in Labour Economics. His experience in the civil service includes spells in the treasury and the Department for Trade and Industry, and a secondment during the early part of his career to Unilever.

The Director General: Corporate Services and Development is Susan Thomas, who holds a BA(Hons) in Political Science and is a Fellow of the Chartered Institute of Personnel Development. Her background is in local government and the further education sector. The remit of her post includes overall responsibility for both human resources and facilities management.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many staff in her Department have been relocated into London and the South East in each of the last five years for which records are available. [31774]

Maria Eagle: My Department and sponsored organisations are implementing the Lyons Review recommendations to relocate around 800 posts from the Department and its non-departmental public bodies out of London and the South East by 2010.

There have been no relocations of posts in my Department into London and the South East since we began to implement the Lyons Review in 2004. There are no figures available for relocations before that time.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to relocate staff in her Department and related agencies into London and the south-east. [31775]

Maria Eagle: My Department and sponsored organisations have no plans to relocate staff into London and the south-east.

Direct Grants

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the voluntary and private organisations which have received *(a)* up to £5,000 and *(b)* over £5,000 in direct grants from her Department in the 2005–06 financial year; and if she will make a statement. [33146]

Bill Rammell: The Department's accounting system does not separately identify private organisations who receive grant and the information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost. A list of bodies identified as in the voluntary sector which have received *(a)* under £5,000 and *(b)* over £5,000 in direct grants to date in 2005–06 are as follows.

Voluntary organisations receiving under £5,000 to date in 2005–06

Forum on Prisoner Education
National Autistic Society
NCH
One Plus One
Parent Education Support Forum

Voluntary organisations receiving over £5,000 to date in 2005–06

Action for Prisoners Families
Advisory Centre for Education
Agency for Culture and Change Management
Anyadwe Children and Family Welfare Association
Calderdale Womens Centre
Change
Children's Legal Centre
Circles Network
Eating Disorders Association
Families Need Fathers
Family Matters Institute
Family Rights Group
FILM IT
Good Shepherd Charities for Children
Learning Partnerships
Local NE Community Foundation
Lubavitch Youth
Mancroft Advice Project
National Association of Child Contact Centres
NACRO (Sheffield)
National Black Boys Can Association
National Deaf Children's Society
National Tenants' Resource Centre
NCH South West
National Council of One Parent Families
National Council of Voluntary Child Care Organisations
New Forest and Romsey Mobile Community Project
National Family and Planning Institute
Parentline Plus
Positive Parenting Publications
Princess Royal Trust for Carers
Race Equality Unit
Royal National Institute for the Blind
Scope
South London Tamil Welfare Group
Springboard Family Project
Student Force for Sustainability
Trust for the Study of Adolescence
Wai Yin Chinese Women Society
YMCA England
Young Minds

Extended Services

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the number of schools in *(a)* Northamptonshire and *(b)* Kettering constituency that will be delivering extended services in (i) 2006, (ii) 2007 and (iii) 2008; and to how many children and parents she expects such provision will be available. [34108]

Beverley Hughes: This Government wants all schools to provide access to a core offer of extended services by 2010, with half of all primary and a third of all secondary schools doing so by 2008. We want to see at least 2,500 schools providing access to the core offer by September 2006. The core offer, which should be available to all parents and pupils of the school, comprises: high quality childcare; a varied menu of study support activities; parenting support programmes; swift and easy referral to a wide range of specialised support services; and wider community access. It will be for individual local authorities, in discussion with all schools in their area, to take a strategic approach to developing access to the core offer through schools. This will include determining how many primary and secondary schools develop access to the core offer in each year. On 29 September 2005 my Department published its report on the baseline survey of extended services in schools which it commissioned earlier in the year. The survey showed that nationally the vast majority of schools were providing access to some form of extended activity. The survey did not provide figures at local authority level.

Further Education

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 817–8W, on further education, how the categories and figures given relate to the categories and figures in Annex B of the Learning and Skills Council Grant letter for funded institutions. [31267]

Bill Rammell: In the LSC Grant letter for 2006–07 the resources for (i) the Learner Support Fund, (ii) Care to Learn, (iii) Dance and Drama Awards, (iv) Adult Learning Grant and (v) Career Development Loans are all included in the Learner Support Funds line of Block B. The education maintenance allowance resources make up Block E.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans her Department has to review the levels of funding allocated to further education against demand for places in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* England. [34124]

Bill Rammell: Our 14–19 and Skills White Papers clearly articulate our priorities for post-14 education and training. Higher participation among young people must have the highest priority, alongside helping disadvantaged adults gain basic and Level 2 skills for

employability and progression to Level 3. Starting from these strategic objectives we have reviewed the SR2004 settlement announced in April 2004 and we have agreed a funding strategy with the LSC for the next two years that is driven by policy priorities and the successes of the sector.

On the 21 October, I made an announcement, setting out the Government's strategic direction for the learning and skills sector for the coming period. My main purpose for doing so was to ensure the 2006/07 funding allocations process began with a clear and concise message on the principles that will underpin funding over the next two years.

In addition, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) published 'Priorities for Success'-a document that sets out the funding strategy for the next two years in more detail. This document is available on the LSC's website.

Although more funding will be going into the sector, we will focus funding even more strongly on key priorities of raising participation and achievement 14–19 and driving down the skills deficit in the adult workforce. This will mean that less provision outside these priority areas can be supported at previous levels, and that there has to be a new balance of responsibilities between government, employers and learners to achieve this.

We confirmed our overall funding to the LSC for 2006–07 in our grant letter of 30 October 2005 and the LSC published its annual statement of priorities in November. The LSC as part of its business cycle conducts an annual stock-take of learning and skills in England and at regional level, working with Regional Skills Partnerships, identifies regional skills needs. Building on this national and regional activity, local LSC teams analyse anticipated demand and prepare local plans which are then reviewed at regional and national level before budgets are confirmed.

These processes ensure that within our available funding we address the needs of learners, employers and partners in a framework that meets our strategic objectives.

Higher Education

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what was the proportion of students on higher education courses from social groups *(a)* D and *(b)* E in each year since 1997. [24545]

Bill Rammell: The latest available figures on the social background of students entering higher education are given in the following tables. The categories used to measure social background were revised in 2002/03: the socio-economic group classification was introduced to replace the social class groupings, but the two classifications are not directly comparable.

UK domiciled students accepted to full-time undergraduate courses by UK institutions, by social class

	1997/98	*1998/99*	*1999/2000*	*2000/01*	*2001/02*
Total acceptances	303,320	298,220	303,070	308,720	325,470
Of which, proportion1 whose social background was:					
I Professional	14.8	14.7	14.7	14.5	14.4
II Intermediate	43.7	44.1	43.8	43.8	43.7
IIIN Skilled non-manual	13.9	13.6	13.7	14.1	14.0
IIIM Skilled manual	16.7	16.9	16.9	16.5	17.5
IV Partly skilled	8.8	8.7	8.8	9.0	8.4
V Unskilled	2.1	2.0	2.1	2.1	2.0
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

[1] Based on those students who provided details of their social background. In each of these years, around 15 per cent. of students did not provide details of their background.

Source:

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). Components may not sum to totals because of rounding.

UK domiciled students accepted to full-time undergraduate courses by UK institutions, by socio-economic group

	2002/03	*2003/04*	*2004/05*
Total acceptances	331,730	333,940	334,300
Of which, proportion1 whose social background was:			
Higher managerial and professional	22.7	22.3	22.2
Lower managerial and professional	30.9	31.1	31.5
Intermediate occupations	15.6	15.2	15.2
Small employers	7.4	7.5	7.4
Lower supervisory/technical	4.7	5.0	4.9
Semi-routine	12.8	13.2	13.2
Routine	5.9	5.7	5.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

[1] Based on those students who provided details of their social background. In each of these years, around 20 per cent. of students did not provide details of their background.

Source:

The Universities and Colleges Admissions Service (UCAS). Components may not sum to totals because of rounding.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of the new funding that will be provided for higher education in September 2006 she expects will be spent on staff salaries. [32759]

Bill Rammell: Universities are autonomous and responsible for determining their own academic and administrative affairs, including deciding what to pay their own staff. Pay and conditions of service are subject to negotiations between employers, their staff and their representative trade union bodies. The Government play no part in this.

There are many reasons underlying our higher education reforms, of which the variable fees policy forms a part: one is to provide institutions with a secure income stream, which is under their own control. The Government are not in the business of micro-managing how institutions' fee income is spent; institutions are best placed to make these decisions—including, for

example, how much to put into student bursaries, to enable more students to participate in HE, and how much to put into staff pay and conditions. They will also want to consider how best to invest in their infrastructure to meet the needs of today's and tomorrow's learners. Only institutions can sensibly decide on the balance between different priorities, in the light of their individual circumstances.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what targets she has set for participation rates in *(a)* higher education and *(b)* first degree courses for each year to 2015. [34232]

Bill Rammell: The participation target we have set is to make progress towards 50 per cent. of 18–30 year olds having had experience of higher education by 2010.

We report regularly on progress against this target, but we do not have interim targets for the years leading up to 2010. We do not have a target for participation rates for later years.

Learning and Skills Council

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills under which category in band B of the Learning and Skills Council budget the Union Learning Fund comes. [31261]

Bill Rammell: The £12.5 million funds for the Union Learning Fund are included in the overall £76.744 million Capacity and Infrastructure line of Block B of the LSC Grant letter for 2006–07.

Maladministration

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many payments for maladministration have been made by *(a)* her Department, *(b)* its agencies, *(c)* its non-departmental public bodies and *(d)* other bodies for which her Department has responsibility in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [32243]

Bill Rammell: It is the policy of the Department for Education and Skills, its non-departmental public bodies and its sponsored organisations to make financial redress in accordance with the guidance set out in Chapter 18.7 and Annexes 18.1 and 18.2 of "Government Accounting."

However, the information you requested is not held centrally by the Department and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Non-departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list her Department's advisory non-departmental public bodies which the Government are required *(a)* to consult prior to legislative proposals and *(b)* to publish any response to advice received from such bodies. [20143]

Bill Rammell: My Department sponsors three advisory non-departmental public bodies: the Independent Advisory Group on Teenage Pregnancy (IAGTP), the School Teachers Review Body (STRB) and the Teachers' TV Board of Governors. The Government are not required to consult any of them prior to legislative proposals. The Government are not required to but does respond to advice from the IAGTP and STRB. It is also expected that the Teachers' TV Board of Governors will publish the response to its advice following the publication of its first annual report at the end of 2005.

Science Graduates

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many students have graduated in *(a)* chemistry, *(b)* physics and *(c)* mathematics or further mathematics in each year since 1990; [32624]

(2) what assessment she has made of the impact of trends in the numbers of physics and chemistry graduates on *(a)* science and technology industries and *(b)* the teaching profession. [32626]

Bill Rammell: The table shows the annual number of first degree qualifiers in the Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics from 1989/90 to the latest available data. Please note discontinuities in the time-series at 2000/01 and 2002/03, as explained in the table notes.

First degree qualifiers in Physics, Chemistry and Mathematics from UK HE institutions[1]

Academic year	*Physics*	*Chemistry*	*Mathematics*
1989/90	2,200	2,620	2,450
1990/91	2,320	2,880	2,515
1991/92	2,215	3,075	2,815
1992/93	2,275	3,240	3,085
1993/94	2,410	3,370	3,070
1994/95	2,480	4,110	3,435
1995/96	2,000	4,145	3,385
1996/97	2,440	3,755	3,115
1997/98	2,320	3,395	3,370
1998/99	2,320	3,625	3,640
1999/2000	2,300	3,425	3,545
2000/01[2]	2,450	3,285	3,720
2001/02	2,210	3,275	3,725
2002/03[3]	2,205	2,955	4,390
2003/04	2,180	2,735	4,655

[1] Figures up to and including 1993/94 cover full-time and sandwich qualifiers at English and Welsh polytechnics (1993/94 covers English polytechnics only) and qualifiers from universities in Great Britain. Figures for 1994/95 onwards cover all UK HE institutions.

[2] Figures from 1994/95 to 1999/2000 exclude qualifications obtained from students studying on dormant modes of study. Figures for 2000/01 onwards include these students.

[3] Figures for 2001/02 and earlier are based upon the major subject of the qualification. For 2002/03 onwards, figures by subject are apportioned between the subjects studied.

Source:
Universities Statistical record (USR), AGCAS Polytechnic Statistics Working group and Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record. Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

A review by Sir Gareth Roberts[1] demonstrated skill shortages within the science and technology industries and in response we have launched the 10-year science and innovation investment framework with the specific aim of attracting more students into science and engineering. The first annual report was published in July.

Falling numbers of chemistry and physics graduates may also have contributed to higher-than-average vacancy rates for science teachers[2]. In response, science graduates studying for Postgraduate Certificates of Education are now eligible for training bursaries of £7,000 starting courses in 2005, which will rise to £9,000 for those starting in 2006. If they go on to teach science in a maintained school they become eligible after completing their induction for a 'golden hello' of £5,000.

As stated at the recent evidence session on strategic science provision, we have noted HEFCE's advice that university science departments are not in crisis. In fact provisional UCAS data on 2005/06 entry indicates that there is a higher than average increase of 10 per cent. + in the number of students entering science (including physics and chemistry), technology, engineering and mathematics. However, we are not complacent and we will keep this under review to see if more action is needed.

[1] SET for success, published in April 2002. [2] DfES Statistical First Release 41.

Special Educational Needs

Mr. Cameron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will publish the letter sent recently to all local education authorities setting out the statutory duties under the Education Act 1996 regarding special educational needs. [33933]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Education and Skills writes to Chief Education Officers from time to time about issues concerning the special educational needs legislation. The letter to Chief Education Officers and Directors of Children's Services dated 15 November 2005 is the most recent of such letters. It will be published on the Teachernet website www.teachernet.gov.uk/sen.

Student Loans

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many settlement figures were issued to borrowers by the Student Loans Company Ltd. in 2003–04 *(a)* on the basis of payslips sent in by the borrower showing evidence of payments and *(b)* on the basis of other information. [32555]

Bill Rammell: It is not possible to report on the basis of the two categories requested as borrowers can ask for settlement quotations without providing any evidence. In the financial year 2003–04 there were 61,005 settlement quotations issued to 39,729 customers.

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost to public funds was on the latest date for which figures are available per *(a)* loan and *(b)* borrower of calculating settlement figures for borrowers wishing to pay off their loan with the Student Loans Company Ltd. in one payment. [32596]

Bill Rammell: Full costs for this work are not available.

Martin Linton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what advice she has given the Student Loans Company Ltd. about helping borrowers to pay off their loans with the company in a lump sum; and if she will make a statement. [32557]

Bill Rammell: Borrowers can repay their income contingent student loans at any time. The Student Loans Company has provided an online calculator to assist borrowers in assessing their loan balance at any time between the annual statements SLC sends borrowers based on reconciliation by Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs of employers' annual returns of loan repayments.

Sure Start

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children living in disadvantaged areas of *(a)* Staffordshire and *(b)* Tamworth constituency are participating in Sure Start schemes. [33732]

Beverley Hughes: There are approximately 8,400 disadvantaged children aged 0–4 living in Staffordshire. At present around 4,750 children under the age of five are within reach of a Sure Start local programme or a Sure Start children's centre in Staffordshire. In addition, 425 new full day care places have been created through the Neighbourhood Nursery Initiative.

Tamworth Sure Start local programme currently delivers services to almost 450 children aged 0–3. The programme is expected to develop into a Sure Start children's centre in Phase 2 of the children's centre programme between 2006–08. The Manna House Neighbourhood Nursery in Tamworth offers 28 full day care places for children from birth to school age.

All disadvantaged children living in Staffordshire will have access to a Sure Start children's centre by March 2008.

Teacher Vacancies

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time teacher vacancies there are in (i) secondary, (ii) primary and (iii) special schools in Southend; and if she will make a statement. [34131]

Ruth Kelly: The following table provides the number of full and part-time teacher vacancies in nursery, primary, secondary and special schools in Southend local authority in January 2005, the latest information available.

Number of full-time and part-time vacancies[1] in maintained nursery and primary, secondary and special schools in Southend, January 2005

	Full-time	Part-time
Nursery/primary	7	0
Secondary	11	5
Special	0	0

[1] Advertised vacancies for full and part-time permanent appointments (or appointments of a least one term's duration). Excludes vacancies filled by a teacher on a contract of a term or more.

Source:

DfES annual survey of teachers in service and teacher vacancies (Form 618G).

The hon. Member may wish to know that I am today publishing my response to the fifteenth report of the School Teachers' Review Body (STRB). Copies are available in the Vote Office and in the Library of the House of Lords and at http://www.teachernet.gov.uk.

In making its recommendations, the STRB was required to have regard to the matters set out in the remit letter of 10 March 2005, which included, among other matters, the need to have regard to the enhancement of recruitment and retention. The fifteenth STRB report deals with some very important matters affecting teachers' pay, including the pay award from 2006–08, and I am most grateful for the careful and detailed attention the STRB has given to these matters. The STRB recommendations are set out followed in each case by my response.

I am seeking consultation comments on the report and my response by 10 January 2006.

Pay Award

The STRB has recommended the following:

We recommend:

an increase of 2.5 per cent. from September 2006 and a further increase of 2.5 per cent. from September 2007 in the values of the leadership group pay scale;

an increase of 2.5 per cent. from September 2006 and a further increase of 2.5 per cent. from September 2007 in the values of the main pay scale and upper pay scale for qualified teachers, the pay scale for unqualified teachers and the new 18 point pay scale for Advanced Skills Teachers;

a slightly enhanced pay increase for certain points on the main pay scale in bands A and B, as outlined in Appendix C; and

that should the average rate of headline inflation for the 12 months preceding April 2007 (i.e. April 2006 to March 2007) or April 2008 (i.e. April 2007 to March 2008) fall below 1.75 per cent. or exceed 3.25 per cent., any of the consultees can ask the STRB to consider the case for seeking a remit from the Secretary of State of State to review teachers' pay.

This is a central recommendation, which is key in terms of recruitment to and retention in the teaching profession as well as its impact on schools' budgets. It is of crucial importance that the significant investment this Government has made in public sector pay in general and in the pay of teachers in particular continues to produce dividends. We must be confident that any further increases can be justified and afforded.

An award of 2.5 per cent. could not be considered acceptable on the basis that it represented anticipated inflation over the period to which the pay award relates, or that an award at this level is necessary to protect teachers from a real terms pay cut. In its latest Inflation Report, the Bank of England forecasts CPI inflation to fall to just below the 2 per cent. target next year and then to be close to the 2 per cent. target in subsequent years.

However, it is clear from the report that the STRB has given close consideration to a range of evidence relating to the overall labour market position of teachers and has reached a balanced judgment as to a suitable level of award for the next period, taking into account both appropriateness and affordability. In particular, the STRB has noted its concerns about the need to ensure a continuing supply of high quality teachers, consolidating the improvements made in recruiting and retaining good teachers at a time of change, and some emerging evidence of recruitment and retention issues in relation to specific groups of teachers.

In the light of this analysis, I propose to accept the recommendation for teachers, including the slightly enhanced increase for teachers at certain points on the main scale in Inner and Outer London. I also accept the STRB's argument regarding leadership group pay and agree that the same rise for this group is appropriate.

I also accept the basis of the review mechanism as set out above.

Leadership Group

The STRB has recommended the following:

We recommend:

that the Secretary of State remit us to look fundamentally at the leadership group and how its changing role and responsibilities should be reflected in its future pay structure;

to provide a sound evidence base for that remit, that a comprehensive independent study be carried out by December 2006 on the roles, responsibilities, structures and reward systems for the leadership group, looking at both current practice and likely future developments, and including at least the following issues:

new models of headship;

the role and functions of deputy and assistant heads;

administrative support;

recruitment planning;

type of contract; and

reward.

I very much welcome the STRB's recommendation for an independent study into the developing roles and responsibilities of the leadership group. This is very timely given the need for schools to respond effectively to Government priorities in England such as greater personalisation, extended schools, Every Child Matters and the 14 to 19 agenda, and to initiatives in these and other areas in Wales. Schools will need to become more outward facing, more flexible and, as we have set out in the Schools White Paper for England, work far more collaboratively with others, including parents, if we are to make the next step change in raising attainment and opening opportunities. I want to make sure that we can support our leadership teams effectively and have the right people in place to take forward these changes. For this reason I will wish to explore with partners the extent to which the terms of reference for such a review should not only encompass but also go further than those outlined by the STRB. I will also wish to consider the arrangements for handling the review, including whether the proposed timetable is appropriate, or whether it should be run in parallel with a general review of teachers' duties.

Excellent Teacher Scheme (ETS)

The STRB has recommended the following:

We recommend that:

the Excellent Teacher Scheme be reviewed by December 2008 at the latest and that the results of the review be remitted to this Review Body for appropriate consideration and recommendation;

the salary for the ETS to be a spot salary, as previously recommended;

the spot salary be determined by individual schools and services within an ETS salary range;

the ETS salary range from September 2006 be £35,000 to £45,000 in pay bands B to D, and extend additionally to £50,000 in pay band A;

the minimum and maximum of the ETS salary range and ETS spot salaries determined prior to September 2007 be increased by 2.5 per cent. in September 2007.

The remit to the STRB invited it to make recommendations on what the appropriate spot salary for Excellent Teachers should be in the respective pay regions, following the recommendations in its Fourteenth Report. I am grateful to the STRB for its advice.

The Excellent Teacher Scheme is a welcome career pathway for teachers who are excellent classroom practitioners and is an important addition to the teacher's career structure, to which I remain committed. The STRB has suggested that the Excellent Teacher scheme should be reviewed by December 2008. I believe it would be helpful to keep the scheme under review but that it would be most helpful to do so in the context of our wider plans for a new teacher professionalism and the development of the career structure of the profession as a whole. I will give further thought to the arrangements and timing.

The STRB has made a number of recommendations about the salary for Excellent Teachers. The first Excellent Teachers will be appointed from September 2006 and schools are already considering whether to include Excellent Teacher posts in their staffing structures and how many Excellent Teacher posts they need. It is important that schools have a clear understanding about the potential salary implications of Excellent Teacher posts so they can plan effectively; that the arrangements for determining Excellent Teacher salaries are unambiguous and can be implemented effectively; and that the approach to Excellent Teacher salaries is consistent with our approach to teachers' pay more generally.

In the light of these considerations, I propose to defer introduction of the salary ranges proposed by the STRB until September 2008. I propose that in the interim there should be a single salary rate for each pay region for those holding excellent teacher posts. The level of these salaries should be those proposed by the STRB in its Fourteenth Report, increased in line with the general increases to teachers' pay scales. I believe that this approach will give schools the early clarity they will need to help with the introduction of ETS posts. It will also allow us the opportunity to develop the guidance they will need to help introduce the greater flexibility which the STRB proposes—and which in principle I welcome—in the light of our ongoing review of the operation of the scheme and of further work to be done on standards and duties for the profession as a whole.

Teaching and Learning Responsibility (TLR) Payments

The STRB has recommended the following:

We recommend:

an increase of 2.5 per cent. from September 2006 and a further increase of 2.5 per cent. from September 2007 in the minimum and maximum of the two TLR ranges;

an increase of 2.5 per cent. from September 2006 and a further increase of 2.5 per cent. from September 2007 in the value of individual teachers' TLR payments.

I welcome these recommendations, which will enable all those receiving TLRs over this period, at whatever level in the relevant ranges those TLRs have been set locally, to receive the same percentage uplift.

Special Educational Needs (SEN) Allowances

The STRB has recommended the following:

We recommend:

an increase of 2.5 per cent. from September 2006 and a further increase of 2.5 per cent. from September 2007 in the value of SEN allowances;

that the Department draw up guidance, in consultation with all interested parties, including BATOD, on how the payment of higher-level SEN allowances might take account of the enhancement of the teaching of SEN pupils brought about by specialist qualifications.

I welcome the recommended application of the same percentage uplift to SEN allowances as to the other parts of the pay system. I note that the STRB has repeated its recommendation about guidance on specialist qualifications, which was made in 2004 and which was put on hold pending the review of the management allowance system. I am content that this matter should now be discussed with relevant parties.

Unattached Teachers

We recommend that:

the Department investigate the pay and conditions of unattached teachers (including such teachers in the leadership group) in comparison with other teachers. The investigation should be completed in time to inform our next review of teachers' pay.

The STRB has taken the view that that the pay and conditions of unattached teachers need investigation, because of concerns that unattached teachers do not progress as quickly as other teachers. I recognise this concern and agree that an investigation would be helpful. I propose therefore to arrange such an investigation in the course of 2006.

Part Time Teachers

The STRB has recommended the following:

We recommend that:

the Department undertake further work in association with interested parties to consider the issues in standardising pay and conditions for part time teachers and identify possible solutions;

the conclusions of this work come back to this Review Body for consideration and recommendation.

I welcome the STRB's consideration of the issues facing part time teachers; and note its recommendation that further work should be undertaken on this. I will want to consider, with partners, the most effective way of undertaking this work.

Teachers' Professional Development and Pay Progression

The STRB has recommended the following:

We recommend that:

the outcomes of teachers' CPD and, if appropriate, their contribution to others' development, be taken into account as part of a range of evidence when schools assess performance for pay progression purposes; and

the Department require schools and services to include details in their pay policy about how performance is assessed for pay purposes and how different factors, including the outcomes of CPD and contribution to others' development, are taken into account.

I welcome the STRB's recommendation that the outcomes of teachers' CPD should be taken into account as part of a range of evidence when schools assess performance for pay progression purposes. I want all teachers to be engaged in effective, sustained and relevant professional development throughout their careers. CPD should not be a "bolt-on", short-term experience or narrowly defined as "going on courses" but a continuous planned series of activities designed to improved a teacher's knowledge and skills. Some of the most effective professional development is teachers learning from other teachers in the classroom and I want all teachers to be able to benefit from and contribute to coaching and mentoring as they progress in their careers as part of their professional development. I believe the approach recommended by the STRB will help to incentivise, recognise and reward teachers' participation in effective CPD and help to ensure that the professional development activities are planned and evaluated in schools.

It is important that the arrangements for reflecting assessments of performance in decisions about pay are fair and transparent and can operate effectively at school level without being onerous. I strongly agree that details about how schools and services will assess performance for pay purposes should be included in their pay policy, though I have reservations about introducing a requirement. I will therefore want to give further thought to how best to support this, and invite further views.

Teachers' Professional Responsibilities

The STRB has recommended the following:

We recommend that:

consultees consider the fundamental question of whether a description of teachers' professional role and responsibilities is needed (specifically whether it is needed in the STPCD), and present us with their written evidence and views by the end of August 2006.

I am grateful to the STRB for its advice. I accept the STRB's recommendation that consultees should consider the fundamental question of whether a description of teachers' professional role and responsibilities is needed. The current approach of describing professional duties in the STPCD is intended to provide a national framework for local decision-making and to help to clarify the range of responsibilities that are appropriate to different roles. I invite comments on whether it is appropriate to move away from the current approach of describing professional duties in the STPCD at this stage.

I also believe that there is a need to review the description of teachers' professional duties provided in the STPCD to reflect the recent changes in school and the role of the profession in the 21st century and that further thought should be given to this. I intend to discuss how this can be taken forward with partners.

Pay of Advanced Skills Teachers in Mathematics and Science in Secondary Schools

I note that the STRB has not made any recommendation in relation to the remit request that they consider if any changes should be made to the pay of mathematics and science ASTs in secondary schools. However, in noting this I maintain that there are very strong reasons for continuing to pursue the objective behind the remit which was to raise both the quantity and the quality of graduates in these subjects entering and remaining in the teaching profession. Also, I would not wish this to constrain the use of such a focused approach to the determination of pay in the future in appropriate circumstances.

Pay arrangements for Fast Track teachers

I note that the STRB has not made any recommendation in relation to the remit request to recommend whether any modifications are required to the pay arrangements of Fast Track teachers. I agree with the suggestion that we continue to encourage Fast Track teachers to undertake at least one post in a challenging school, but how to recognise the leadership impact of Fast Track teachers, and the way in which this can help to raise standards in our schools, remains an important objective for us.

Pay of Teachers in Challenging Schools

Finally, I note that the STRB has not made any recommendation in relation to the remit request that they consider other factors which should be taken into account in determining career and pay progression, specifically accelerated pay progression for teachers working in more challenging circumstances. The STRB highlighted the need for schools to make greater use of the flexibilities already in the pay system. This matter remains a significant concern and I will want to consider whether more can be done to raise awareness of the flexibilities provided by the current provisions and how they could be applied in this context.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Civil Service Relocation (Scotland)

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many departmental civil service jobs have been relocated to Scotland in each year since 2001. [32376]

Jim Fitzpatrick *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* The Office of Deputy Prime Minister only began monitoring relocation away from its London Headquarters in September 2003. In this time, there has been no reported relocation of departmental civil service jobs to Scotland.

Council Tax

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate the Valuation Office Agency has made of the value of a sea view from a coastal property for council tax purposes. [34142]

Mr. Woolas: None.

David Taylor: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much council tax must be paid by owners of dwellings that are empty after a year; and who sets that level. [34281]

Mr. Woolas: The council tax discount can be set on second homes at any point between 50 per cent. and 10 per cent. and on long-term empty homes at any point between 50 per cent. and zero. Second homes are homes which are furnished and no-one's main residence, while long-term empty homes are homes which are substantially unfurnished and in general have been unoccupied for at least six months (a substantially unfurnished unoccupied home is generally exempt from council tax for up to six months).

Local billing authorities are responsible for setting the council tax discount on second and long-term empty homes.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the council tax is for each band in *(a)* each London borough and *(b)* each local authority in Essex; and what it was in each of the last three years. [34318]

Mr. Woolas: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member on 11 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 795W.

Departmental Expenditure

Martin Horwood: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much his Office and its agencies have spent on *(a)* the design and production of new logos and *(b)* employing external (i) public relations and (ii) graphic design agencies in each year since 2000, broken down by project. [33202]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Finance

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the real terms percentage increase in allocated resources for his Department *(a)* was for the period 1997–98 to 2004–05 and *(b)* is estimated to be between 2005–06 and 2007–08 (i) for each period and (ii) for each year. [31034]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was established following the Machinery of Government changes on 29 May 2002. The following table sets out in real terms the percentage increase in expenditure from 2002–03 to 2004–05, the increase in allocated resources between 2005–06 and 2007–08 and the increases for each of those years.

The figures cover total resource and capital spending on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's main programmes and on local government.

Percentage

Period	*Increase in expenditure/allocation*[1]
2002–03 to 2004–05	28
2005–06 to 2007–08	15
2003–04	[2]18
2004–05	9
2005–06	10
2005–07	6
2007–08	8

[1] 2005–06 onwards.
[2] This increase was due in part to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister taking on full responsibility for the Supporting People programme of some £1.8 billion.

Departmental Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to relocate staff in his Department and related agencies into London and the South East. [31752]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has a general presumption against locating in London and the South East. However, as an exception to this, ODPM Central will on current planning assumptions relocate another nine posts to its existing Hastings office. A further four posts are expected to be relocated to the Government Office for London and two posts to the Government Office for the South East in order to undertake work closer to the communities involved. In addition, so as to make best use of their existing estate, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's non-departmental public bodies have plans to relocate another 33 posts within London and the South East.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many staff in his Department have been relocated into London and the South East in each of the last five years for which records are available. [31753]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of Deputy Prime Minister only began monitoring relocation away from its London Headquarters in September 2003. In this time, ODPM Central has relocated three posts to its existing Hastings office, on the grounds of Hastings' level of deprivation and regeneration areas status.

In line with the Office of Deputy Prime Minister's policies for improving regional performance, the majority of our moves to date have been to the Government Offices. This has allowed us to make use of existing ODPM estate and greatly reduce the costs of relocation. Where posts have been dispersed around all the regions in order to undertake work closer to the communities involved; some have moved to the Government Offices for London and the South East. Such dispersal accounts for the seven posts already relocated to the Government Office for London and five posts to the Government Office for the South East.

The relocation of the above posts is an exception to the Office of Deputy Prime Minister's presumption against locating in London and the South East.

Departmental Tendering Policy

Martin Horwood: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his policy is on including *(a)* ethical and *(b)* environmental factors in tenders for services. [33337]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister takes its responsibilities on environmental and ethical issues very seriously and the documentation it sends out with its invitations to tender make it known that the ODPM requires all of its potential suppliers to comply with key environmental and ethical issues and that these will in conjunction with other criteria be used in evaluating their tender response.

Deprivation (Tamworth)

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what funding streams are available to tackle areas of deprivation in Tamworth. [33810]

Mr. Woolas: Tamworth was in receipt of Single Regeneration Budget (up to 2005) to help address deprivation in the Glascote area of the town, the one super output area in Tamworth that is among England's 10 per cent. most deprived.

The Learning and Skills Council, Sure Start and Test-Bed Learning Communities all offer funding streams (via the Department for Education and Skills) that contribute to tackling deprivation in Tamworth. Staffordshire Learning and Skills Council (in partnership with others) is currently supporting the development of a new vocational skills centre in Glascote. This will help to re-engage local people.

Transitional ERDF Objective 2, ESF Objective 3 and aspects of Home Office funding streams also contribute to tackling deprivation in Tamworth.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what programmes the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund has funded in Tamworth. [33811]

Mr. Woolas: Tamworth is not in receipt of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF). Eligibility for NRF is determined by the Indices of Deprivation.

Local Government Finance

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of spending by *(a)* Northumberland county council, *(b)* Tynedale district council and *(c)* Castle Morpeth borough council has been financed from council tax in each year since 16 January 1996. [34023]

Mr. Woolas: The percentage of Revenue Expenditure by Northumberland county council, Tynedale district council and Castle Morpeth borough council that has been financed from council tax in each financial year since 1996–97 is tabled as follows.

Percentage

	Northumberland county council	*Tynedale district council*	*Castle Morpeth borough council*
1996–97	23.0	38.8	38.8
1997–98	25.0	44.4	43.7
1998–99	27.5	43.9	45.0
1999–2000	28.4	39.4	47.1
2000–01	28.7	45.3	46.2
2001–02	27.7	43.8	43.4
2002–03	29.2	44.8	54.0
2003–04	28.9	41.3	55.3
2004–05	29.7	48.3	57.6
2005–06	29.2	49.7	60.0

The data are as reported by local authorities and are taken from Revenue Summary (RS) returns for 1996–97 to 2003–04, and Revenue Account budget (RA) returns for 2004–05 and 2005–06.

The definition of council expenditure used here is that expenditure funded from Aggregate External Finance (AEF), council tax and authorities' reserves.

Comparisons across years may not be valid due to changes in the method of reporting the information. In particular, the outturn data for 1996–97 to 2002–03 have been calculated on a non-FRS (Financial Reporting Standard) 17 basis while the outturn data for 2003–04 has been calculated on an FRS 17 basis. The budget data for 2004–05 and 2005–06 are a mix of FRS 17 and non-FRS 17. This is because for their 2004–05 and 2005–06 budget forms local authorities, after consultation, were given the option to complete their forms either on a non-FRS 17 basis or on an FRS 17 basis. Hence, figures for different years may not be directly comparable.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of revenue spending by *(a)* Northamptonshire county council, *(b)* Kettering borough council and *(c)* Daventry district council has been financed from the council tax in each year since 1 January 1996. [34102]

Mr. Woolas: The percentage of Revenue Expenditure by Northamptonshire county council, Kettering borough council and Daventry district council that has been financed from council tax in each financial year since 1996–97 is in the following table.

Percentage

	Northamptonshire county council	*Kettering borough council*	*Daventry district council*
1996–97	23.2	29.8	30.5
1997–98	24.1	34.4	33.2
1998–99	24.5	35.4	26.0
1999–2000	25.1	33.6	21.2
2000–01	25.0	32.9	21.5
2001–02	24.9	36.1	44.1
2002–03	27.6	41.5	52.6
2003–04	26.8	37.2	42.6
2004–05	25.9	41.7	48.1
2005–06	25.8	42.2	45.8

The data are as reported by local authorities and are taken from Revenue Summary (RS) returns for 1996–97 to 2003–04, and Revenue Account budget (RA) returns for 2004–05 and 2005–06.

The definition of council expenditure used here is that expenditure funded from Aggregate External Finance (AEF), council tax and authorities' reserves.

Comparisons across years may not be valid due to changes in the method of reporting the information. In particular, the outturn data for 1996–97 to 2002–03 have been calculated on a non-FRS (Financial Reporting Standard) 17 basis whilst the outturn data for 2003–04 has been calculated on an FRS 17 basis. The budget data for 2004–05 and 2005–06 are a mix of FRS 17 and non-FRS 17. This is because for their 2004–05 and 2005–06 budget forms local authorities, after consultation, were given the option to complete their forms either on a non-FRS 17 basis or on an FRS 17 basis. Hence, figures for different years may not be directly comparable.

Neighbourhood Wardens

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what statutory powers community and neighbourhood wardens have to deal with incidents of crime and disorder. [33164]

Mr. Woolas: Warden schemes may use local authority powers to issue fixed penalty notices for offences such as dog fouling, littering and parking violations. These

powers are largely derived from the Environment Protection Act 1990, the Dogs Act 1996, and other local byelaws.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 and the Community Safety Accreditation Scheme provides powers to accredited persons, such as wardens. A list of these powers is as follows:

Powers that may be designated to accredited persons by a chief officer of police:

Power to require name and address

Power to deal with begging

Power to require name and address for antisocial behaviour

Power to require name and address for road traffic offences

Power to require persons drinking in designated places to surrender alcohol

Power to require persons aged under 18 to surrender alcohol

Power to seize tobacco from a person under 16

Power to remove abandoned vehicles

Power to stop vehicles for testing

Power to stop cycles

Power to direct traffic for purposes other than escorting an abnormal load

Power to direct traffic for the purpose of escorting abnormal loads

Powers to issue fixed penalty notices for:

Truancy

Cycling on a footpath

Graffiti and fly-posting

Littering

Power to issue Penalty Notices for Disorder under Chapter 1 Part 1 of the Criminal Justice and Police Act:

Sale of alcohol to a person under 18

Purchase of alcohol for a person under 18

Delivery of alcohol to a person under 18 or allowing such delivery

Breach of fireworks curfew

Possession of a category 4 firework

Possession by a person under 18 of an adult firework

Supply of excessively loud fireworks

Wasting police time, giving false report

Using public electronic communications network in order to cause annoyance, inconvenience or needless anxiety

Knowingly giving false alarm to a person acting on behalf of a fire and rescue authority

Causing harassment, alarm or distress

Throwing fireworks

Consumption of alcohol by a person under 18 or allowing such consumption

Trespassing on a railway

Throwing stones at a train

Drinking in a designated public area.

Peabody Trust

Simon Hughes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the effects of the change in the number of the Peabody Trust's social rented homes on *(a)* homelessness and *(b)* overcrowding in London. [33370]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not carry out analysis of homelessness or overcrowding data in relation to the stock holdings of individual registered social landlords (RSLs). Local authorities have a statutory responsibility for reviewing homelessness and the resources available to tackle it in their area, in consultation with RSLs and other agencies, in order to inform their homelessness strategies.

Race Equality Impact Assessments

Keith Vaz: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many Race Equality Impact Assessments his Office completed between *(a)* April 2004 and March 2005 and *(b)* April 2005 and November 2005; and how many assessments in each period resulted in a change of policy. [32834]

Mr. Woolas: Between April 2004 and March 2005 eight race equality impact assessments were carried out within the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (not including agencies). Between April and November 2005, two full and one partial race impact assessments were completed. No changes in policy occurred as a result of the assessments. In order to assist staff in carrying out these assessments, the Equality and Diversity Unit (EDU) ran a series of 32 workshops, which were attended by several hundred staff members. Guidance on how to complete the assessments has also been placed on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's intranet.

There are currently three race equality impact assessments under way in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, and the ODPM has agreed to conduct a series of 14 assessments across a wide range of the ODPM's existing policy and programme areas as part of an 18-month call-off contract. The contract's aim is both to conduct race equality impact assessments, and to build capacity in ODPM officials to carry them out subsequently.

Regeneration (Oldham)

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the effect on the regeneration of the local area of the sale by Legal and General of land at the Alexandra Retail Park in Oldham. [34615]

Mr. Woolas: The local authority is currently considering the options for the regeneration of the area. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is working with Oldham MBC to consider the best way forward. We shall be looking at the recently published inspector's report into the revised UDP and taking forward the Under-served Markets Project for which Oldham has been shortlisted.

Standards Board for England

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the work of the Standards Board for England; and if he will make a statement. [34341]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) monitors the progress of the Standards Board for England as part of its on-going sponsorship role for the board, and we are also currently considering the

recommendations of the Committee on Standards in Public Life and of the ODPM Select Committee on the board's work.

Valuation Office Agency

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the valuation of a domestic property by the Valuation Office Agency for council tax valuation or revaluation purposes would be affected by the presence of *(a)* television aerials, *(b)* showers, *(c)* fixtures, *(d)* fittings and *(e)* carpets. [33484]

Mr. Woolas: The statutory assumptions for valuation in respect of Council Tax are contained within Local Government and Finance Act 1992 and Local Government Act 2003.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many public conveniences were registered for business rates by the Valuation Office Agency in each government office region *(a)* in the most recent year for which figures are available and *(b)* in 1997. [33505]

Mr. Woolas: The information requested is as follows.

(a) As at July 2005, there were 5,377 public conveniences included in the 2005 Rating List.

Government region	*Number of public conveniences*
Eastern	547
East Midlands	390
London	414
North East	228
North West	489
South East	770
South West	980
West Midlands	409
Yorkshire and Humberside	479
Wales	671
Total	5,377

(b) 1997 figures are not available.

TRANSPORT

A21 Upgrade

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he plans to announce the findings of the South East of England Regional Development Agency's consultation on the proposed A21 upgrade. [34338]

Dr. Ladyman: I am not aware of any consultation being undertaken by the South East of England Regional Development Agency specifically into the A21. However, we expect to receive by the end of January 2006 the South East region's advice on which transport schemes should be given priority for funding, as part of the regional funding allocation process. The schemes they are considering as part of this process include several improvements to the A21.

Merseytravel

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on Merseytravel's record on project delivery across all forms of public transport. [33432]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 1 December 2005]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 146W.

Railways

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State's oral statement of 22 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 301WH, if he will meet hon. Members with constituencies in the west country to discuss the night-train and sleeper service between London and Penzance. [34416]

Derek Twigg: I have met a number of hon. Members from the west country to discuss the sleeper service between London and Penzance. I would be happy to meet the hon. Member to discuss this issue.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Human Rights (Iraq)

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Solicitor-General what correspondence the Attorney-General has had with Mr. Phil Shiner regarding human rights cases against British forces in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [33574]

The Solicitor-General: Mr. Phil Shiner has written to the Attorney-General raising a number of issues concerning British forces in Iraq. The Attorney-General's officials have replied to Mr. Shiner, advising him that if he has any evidence of potential criminal offences he should bring it to the attention of the prosecuting authorities, and that he should direct to the Ministry of Defence other issues he might have about the conduct and training of the armed forces.

SCOTLAND

Civil Service Relocation (Scotland)

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many departmental civil service jobs have been relocated to Scotland in each year since 2001. [32259]

David Cairns *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* Over two-thirds of the posts in the Scotland Office are already based in Scotland; the Office presently has a staff complement of 55, of whom three are based in Glasgow and 34 in Edinburgh. The remainder are based in London: this reflects the needs of the Office.

Race Equality Impact Assessments

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many Race Equality Impact Assessments his Department completed between *(a)* April 2004 to March 2005 and *(b)* April 2005 to November 2005; and how many assessments in each period resulted in a change of policy. [32838]

David Cairns: No Race Equality Impact Assessments have been undertaken during these periods. The Scotland Office's executive policy responsibilities are limited to the funding and conduct of elections and constitutional

matters affecting the devolution settlement. We do not therefore as a matter of routine carry out such assessments.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Alcohol Sales

Norman Baker: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission how many litres of alcoholic drinks have been purchased for sale *(a)* in bars of the House and *(b)* by the refreshment department at catering functions on the parliamentary estate in each year since 1975. [33660]

Nick Harvey: I refer the hon. Member to my predecessor's reply on 23 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 874W. I am now able to update that information and confirm that the volume of alcoholic drinks consumed in the bars of the House of Commons was 46,151 litres for the full year to March 2005, and has been 23,886 in the eight months from April 2005 to November 2005. Consumption at functions catered or supplied by the refreshment department was 32,334 litres in 2004–05 and 17,959 litres in the eight months from April 2005 to November 2005.

E-networks

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission what assessment the Commission has made of the level of security on the e-networks available to hon. Members and their staff *(a)* on the parliamentary estate and *(b)* in constituency offices. [34331]

Nick Harvey: It is not the Commission's practice to comment in detail on matters relating to security. The Parliamentary Communications Directorate (PCD) takes the security of the parliamentary network very seriously and uses appropriate tools and techniques in its design and management. These are subject to audit and external assessment. A similar approach is taken to facilities provided by the PCD in constituencies and other locations. The Commission has put in place governance arrangements to ensure these matters are periodically reviewed. This work is led by the Parliamentary Security Co-ordinator.

Portcullis House

Norman Baker: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission if he will list the *(a)* tree species and *(b)* country of origin of the wood used in the construction and maintenance of Portcullis House; and in what capacity the wood was used in each case. [33661]

Nick Harvey: The courtyard roof of Portcullis House is constructed of American White Oak, which is stronger and grows straighter than English Oak which is not stress graded in terms of strength.

English Oak was used for all the joinery-cabinets, cupboards, desks etc-as the structure of the grain is more decorative. The majority of English Oak used was from trees that fell during the storms of 1987.

Stationery

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission if the Commission will take steps to replace the plastic window in all stationery with environmentally friendly corn paper. [32673]

Nick Harvey: The material in the window envelopes is polystyrene. This is used because it is easily recycled and uses less resources in production and produces less solid waste than other materials. The polystyrene windows are compatible with mail sorting machinery, making them efficient as well as environmentally friendly. There are therefore no plans to replace the stationery. Hon. Members may purchase envelopes from outside the standard range and be reimbursed from the Incidental Expenses Provision.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Housing (Immigration)

5. **Mr. Lilley:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with the Deputy Prime Minister on the impact of the current level of net immigration on demand for housing. [33823]

Mr. McNulty: The Home Office works across Government to ensure that immigration policy works to the benefit of the United Kingdom. This has included discussions, both at ministerial and official level, with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Dangerous Driving

14. **Mrs. James:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his plans to change the law relating to the causing of death by bad driving. [33833]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government have tabled amendments to the current Road Safety Bill that take forward a number of proposals arising from the "Review of Road Traffic Offences involving Bad Driving" consultation exercise.

These proposals include a new offence of causing death by careless driving; a new offence where an unlicensed, disqualified or uninsured driver causes a fatal accident and provision for alternative verdicts where a manslaughter charge or culpable homicide charge has failed.

Community Support Officers

16. **Mr. McFadden:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what change in the number of police community support officers is planned between now and 2008; and if he will make a statement. [33836]

Hazel Blears: There were more than 6,300 police community support officers (PCSOs) in June 2005. We announced on 7 March 2005 plans to increase the number of PCSOs to 24,000 by March 2008.

We informed forces and police authorities on 7 November 2005 the details of the funding for additional PCSOs in 2006–07 and 2007–08. They have been invited to submit their proposals to meet the access criteria by 12 December 2005.

Women Trafficking

17. **Jim Sheridan:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to prevent the trafficking of women from eastern Europe. [33837]

Paul Goggins: The Government are committed to tackling trafficking in human beings and we are working closely with several eastern European source and transit countries to improve preventative measures and increase prosecutions. The new EU action plan on trafficking, drafted by the UK presidency and adopted last week, includes actions to prevent trafficking from outside and within the EU.

Anti-semitism

18. **John Mann:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate his Department has made of the number of offences involving anti-semitism in the last three years for which figures are available. [33838]

Paul Goggins: The total number of racially or religiously aggravated offences rose from 31,035 in 2002–03 to 35,022 in 2003–04. These figures cannot, however, be broken down by particular race or religion. We will continue to tackle racism and prejudice in all its forms and wherever it occurs.

Police

19. **Tim Loughton:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consultation he has carried out on proposals to merge Sussex police into a regional force. [33839]

Hazel Blears: Police forces and authorities have been asked to undertake consultation with relevant stakeholders in their areas including communities when developing their options for change. This should ensure that selected options reflect the views of as many stakeholders as possible. As part of developing options for change, I requested all forces and authorities including Sussex, to consult with local communities.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures he is taking to reduce the time it takes beat officers to return to the beat after making an arrest. [33835]

Paul Goggins: The use of designated support staff such as detention officers and investigating officers help minimise the time the arresting officer needs to spend at the police station in processing the suspect and investigating the offence. In addition, street bail allows the officer to determine when the arrested person is required to attend the police station to best meet the needs of the investigation, the custody suite and the officer's operational duties.

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* groups have been dispersed and *(b)* under-16s have been removed to their place of residence by (i) community support officers and (ii) police officers under paragraph 4A of Schedule 4 to the Police Reform Act 2002 in each of the last four years, broken down by police authority. [29363]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Section 30 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003 provides the police with a power to disperse groups and remove under 16s to their place of residence, within designated areas. The Act also inserted paragraph 4A into Schedule four to the Police Reform Act 2002 to allow designated community support officers to use these powers.

These powers came into force on 20 January 2004. From a Home Office data collection exercise, we estimate that 809 areas were designated between January 2004 and June 2005. Police officers and community support officer dispersed 14,375 people from the 293 areas where data was available. They also removed 520 young people under 16 to their place of residence from 236 areas where data was available. We do not hold the information on whether these powers were exercised by police officers or community support officers.

Sex Crimes (Victim Support)

21. **Barbara Keeley**: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps his Department is taking to support victims of rape and other sex crimes. [33841]

Paul Goggins: Over 2004–06 we have invested £4 million in the development of Sexual Assault Referral Centres and voluntary services for victims of sexual violence. A further £1.25 million will go to support voluntary sector sexual violence services in 2006–07. We have also improved the ways in which the police and the Crown Prosecution Service provide support and greater access to justice for victims of sexual violence.

False Vehicle Registration

22. **Andrew Selous:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the effect of the registration of false vehicle licence addresses on the ability of the police to combat multiple road traffic offences. [33842]

Paul Goggins: Vehicles which are registered with incorrect details or not registered at all are regularly used in criminal and antisocial activities. An accurate register is important for identification purposes, so that the police can take effective action against the perpetrators. It is an offence not to supply the relevant details for correct registration, and in the last two years we have strengthened the likelihood of accuracy by the introduction of continuous registration and by creating a new offence of using a vehicle that is incorrectly registered.

Community Courts

23. **Mr. Allen:** To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made in establishing community courts; and if he will make a statement. [33843]

Fiona Mactaggart: There are currently two Community Justice projects—the pilot Community Justice Centre, North Liverpool which was formally opened last month and the Salford Community Justice Initiative to be launched next week. It is early days for Community Justice in this country and these are both groundbreaking projects that will be fully evaluated.

Acceptable Behaviour Rules

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals are being held for breaching acceptable behaviour rules and are awaiting deportation to countries where he believes they could face, without appropriate memoranda of understanding being in place, a risk of torture, broken down by nationality. [24015]

Mr. McNulty: No individuals are currently being held awaiting deportation on grounds of unacceptable behaviour.

However, 20 people are in detention pending deportation for reasons of national security. Their eventual deportation is subject to the negotiation of memorandums of understandings (MoUs) which cover various issues regarding return to country of origin.

Asset Recovery Agency

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what role the Asset Recovery Agency will have in recovering the assets of foreign politically exposed persons which have been derived from corrupt activities or theft of state assets. [34012]

Paul Goggins: The Assets Recovery Agency operates the civil schemes of recovering assets, namely civil recovery and taxation. In domestic cases, they take cases on referral from law enforcement where they are satisfied that a criminal conviction of a person followed by a confiscation order is not appropriate or has failed.

The cases referred to them might include those involving politically exposed persons. In international co-operation cases, they will have powers to enforce overseas civil forfeiture orders over assets in the UK.

Asylum/Immigration

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many families subject to the pilot implementation of section 9 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants) Act 2004 have had their support re-instated by the National Asylum Support Service as a result of the identification of a potential human rights breach. [31186]

Mr. McNulty: Under the section 9 pilot, support is only withdrawn where a family has refused, without reasonable excuse, to take steps to return home. The National Asylum Support Service (NASS) only withdraw the family's support when this can be done without breaching any person's human rights. However, after support has been withdrawn, a family's circumstances can change in such a way that support needs to be reinstated to avoid a breach. This has happened in three cases.

Mr. Caton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will review the regulation that prevents asylum seekers from securing employment in the UK; [28905]

(2) what assessment he has made of the merits of allowing asylum seekers to take paid work in the UK. [28906]

Mr. McNulty: The Government keep their immigration and asylum policies under review. Our current assessment is that it would not be right to routinely allow asylum seekers access to paid employment. The immigration rules make clear that asylum seekers may seek permission to work if their claim for asylum remains outstanding for longer than 12 months without an initial decision being made on it and providing the reason for the delay cannot be attributed to the applicant.

We do encourage asylum seekers to undertake voluntary work while their claim for asylum is being assessed.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many failed asylum seekers were removed from the UK between 1 July and 30 September; and how many were removed in the equivalent period in 2004. [32814]

Mr. McNulty: Information on the number of failed asylum seekers removed from the UK is published quarterly in the Asylum Bulletin.

The quarterly Asylum Bulletin relating to the third quarter of 2005, contains the number of failed asylum seekers removed between 1 July and 30 September 2005, and that in the equivalent period in 2004.

This publication is available from the Home Office's Research Development and Statistics website: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the number of illegal immigrants living in the UK. [32817]

Mr. McNulty: Although it is impossible to determine accurately how many people are in the UK illegally, the Home Office published a report which included an estimate of the size of the illegal migrant population in the UK in 2001. A copy of the RDS On-line report 29/05 Sizing the unauthorised (illegal) migrant population in the United Kingdom in 2001 can be found at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/notes/june_summaries.html#rdsolr2905.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what average time appellants whose appeal against the decision to remove them from the United Kingdom had been allowed waited between the date that their appeal was allowed and grant of leave to remain, in the latest period for which figures are available. [33372]

Mr. McNulty: Information on allowed appeals is not currently available.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of hon. Members' correspondence to the Immigration and

Nationality Directorate was answered within 20 working days for the periods *(a)* January to March, *(b)* April to June and *(c)* July to September; and if he will make a statement. [33239]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The proportion of Members' correspondence answered by the Immigration and Nationality Directorate within 20 working days was: 28 per cent. for the period January to March; 49 per cent. for April to June; and 64 per cent. for July to September.

This improvement is encouraging but I am determined that it should be maintained until we reach the published target of replying to 95 per cent. of Members' letters within 20 days.

Year to date IND performance: 1 January to 31 October 2005

	Overall IND performance			Overall IND performance (excluding enforcement and removals)		
Correspondence type	*Total received*	*Total replied to within 20 days*	*Performance (percentage)*	*Total received*	*Total replied to within 20 days*	*Performance (percentage)*
Ministerial	12,491	7,041	56	7,988	5,233	66
Official reply	21,688	9,951	46	12,762	7,896	62
Combined	34,179	16,992	50	20,750	13,129	63

IND performance: 1 January to 31 March 2005

	Overall IND performance			Overall IND performance (excluding enforcement and removals)		
Correspondence type	*Total received*	*Total replied to within 20 days*	*Performance (percentage)*	*Total received*	*Total replied to within 20 days*	*Performance (percentage)*
Ministerial	3,722	1,067	28	2,554	754	29
Official reply	6,533	1,776	27	4,155	1,527	37
Combined	10,255	2,843	28	6,709	2,281	34

IND performance: 1 April to 30 June 2005

	Overall IND performance			Overall IND performance (excluding enforcement and removals)		
Correspondence type	*Total received*	*Total replied to within 20 days*	*Performance (percentage)*	*Total received*	*Total replied to within 20 days*	*Performance (percentage)*
Ministerial	3,290	1,903	58	2,049	1,404	69
Official reply	5,582	2,406	43	3,295	2,029	62
Combined	8,872	4,309	49	5,344	3,433	64

IND performance: 1 July to 30 September 2005

	Overall IND performance			Overall IND performance (excluding enforcement and removals)		
Correspondence type	*Total received*	*Total replied to within 20 days*	*Performance (percentage)*	*Total received*	*Total replied to within 20 days*	*Performance (percentage)*
Ministerial	4,149	3,072	74	2,552	2,300	90
Official reply	7,252	4,172	57	4,024	3,152	78
Combined	11,401	7,244	64	6,576	5,452	83

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average escorting contract price was for inter-detention estate transfers of immigration detainees in the last period for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [32901]

Mr. McNulty: The contract price for in country escorts is inclusive and covers all required escort movements for immigration detainees including inter-detention estate transfers.

Under the existing contract arrangement the average price of an escorted movement is £119.50.

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department to what extent immigration rules allow for the entry of foreign children to the United Kingdom for the purpose of fostering by *(a)* relatives and *(b)* non-relatives. [33129]

Mr. McNulty: There is no provision in the immigration rules to allow a child to enter or remain in the United Kingdom on the basis of a private fostering arrangement. It is open for a child who is the subject of a private fostering agreement to enter the United Kingdom under other provisions of the immigration rules, for example under the various adoption provisions, where they can meet the requirements.

Mrs. Maria Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are taken by immigration caseworkers to *(a)* monitor the welfare of foreign children who are fostered in the United Kingdom and *(b)* intervene where necessary. [33130]

Mr. McNulty: Whilst a child cannot enter or remain solely on the basis of a private fostering arrangement, where children who are in the United Kingdom under another provision of the immigration rules and are

covered by the definition of a privately fostered child in the Children Act 1989, the carer must advise their local authority social services of the child's presence. The local authority then has duties in respect of the child, including regular visits, so long as the arrangement lasts. The duty of care of a child lies with the relevant social services department. Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) staff are instructed to contact the local social services where they have any concerns about a child's welfare.

Breath Tests

John Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many drivers received a positive breath test in the Easington constituency in each of the last five years. [33274]

Paul Goggins: Information on positive/refused screening breath tests is collected centrally at police force area level only. Data for 2004 will be published early in 2006.

Conferences

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much the Department spent on *(a)* organising and *(b)* sponsoring conferences in each of the last five years. [10275]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Total costs incurred by the Department in respect of conferences for each of the last five years are given in the table.

	Total conference costs
2000	1,322,102.20
2001	2,170,463.31
2002	3,550,268.99
2003	4,958,414.59
2004	5,189,640.56

Correspondence

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of public correspondence to his Department was answered within 20 working days in the period *(a)* January to March, *(b)* April to June and *(c)* July to September; and if he will make a statement. [32796]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Department monitors centrally received correspondence from the public except that relating to immigration, *(a)* In the period January to March, 84 per cent. of the 6,777 letters and e-mails received from the public were answered within 20 working days. *(b)* In the period April to June, 89 per cent. of the 5,898 letters and e-mails received from the public were answered within 20 working days. *(c)* In the period July to September, 92 per cent. of the 7,222 letters and e-mails received from the public were answered within 20 working days.

Council Tax Valuation

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the current maximum fine levied by the magistrates court is for intentionally delaying or obstructing a Valuation Office Agency representative, who is conducting a council tax valuation inspection. [33152]

Mr. Woolas: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Brent East (Sarah Teather) on 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2066W.

Countryside and Rights of Way Act

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* (i) prosecutions and (ii) convictions have taken place and *(b)* orders have been made under section 14 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. [31839]

Paul Goggins: Information on prosecutions and convictions under section 14 of the Countryside and Right of Way Act 2000 is not available as this section was commenced in England on 19 September 2004 and in Wales on 28 May 2005. There were no prosecutions under the Act in 2004. Data for court proceedings for 2005 will be available in autumn 2006.

Custodial Sentences (Women)

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many women are in prison; and how many and what proportion of women in prison have children under *(a)* five and *(b)* 11 years of age for the most recent available date. [32315]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* As at 30 September 2005, there were 4,611 females in custody, 1,012 on remand, 3,539 sentenced and 60 non-criminal. There is no routinely collected data on the number of females in prison who are mothers but Home Office Research Study 208 found that 66 per cent. had dependent children under the age of 18. Of those with children, 34 per cent. had pre-school children aged under five and a further 40 per cent. had children aged from five to 10.

Cyclamen Programme

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made on the Cyclamen programme; what resources have been transferred from HM Revenue and Customs in connection with this programme; and for what purpose. [32417]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Programme Cyclamen is now operational at several ports and airports and remains on course to be completed by 31 March 2007. HM Revenue and Customs' (HMRC) on-going anti-smuggling activities have been expanded to include programme Cyclamen.

This has meant the employment of an additional 320 HMRC staff. Funding has been provided for the programme and this is managed jointly by HMRC and the Home Office.

Departmental Estate

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much has been spent on the

maintenance of the Home Office's Marsham Street office *(a)* gardens and *(b)* water features since relocation. [31798]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is the responsibility of the facilities sub-contractor to Annes Gate Property plc the PFI Service Provider. AGP are unable to confirm the precise amount that has been spent on maintenance of the gardens and water feature by the sub-contractor but as a guide have indicated it is probably in the region of £40,000 since 26 January 2005.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list parliamentary constituencies in which his Department *(a)* owns and *(b)* rents (i) land and (ii) property; what the land or property is in each case; and if he will make a statement. [32799]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This information is not held by reference to parliamentary constituency boundaries and could be researched only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Policies

Mrs. Hodgson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will set out, with statistical evidence relating as closely as possible to Gateshead East and Washington West constituency, the effects in Gateshead East and Washington West of changes to his Department's policies since 1997. [22285]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Government has put in place policies in the areas of crime reduction, antisocial behaviour, policing and active communities that are yielding considerable benefits for the constituency.

Between March 1997 and March 2005 the number of police officers in the Northumbria Police Force increased by 411 from 3,677 to 4,088. The Government's introduction of community support officers (CSOs) in 2002 has put 104 CSOs on Northumbria's streets to tackle crime and antisocial behaviour.

Northumbria Police will receive £232.2 million in general grants for 2005–06, an increase of 4.87 per cent. (£10.81 million) over last year. General grants funding to Northumbria has increased by 33.7 per cent. between 1997–98 and 2005–06. In addition to general grants, Northumbria will also receive around £20.36 million in specific grants funding for targeted initiatives and capital provision in 2005–06. The distribution of resources locally is a matter for the police authority and the chief constable.

The Crime Reduction Programme (CRP) was a £340 million intervention programme running for three years from April 1999. Figures are not available for constituency or local level. In Gateshead a total of 14 antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) have been issued and in Sunderland a total of 29 ASBOs have been issued as of 31 March 2005. (The latest figures available).

£

Scheme/area	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Small retailers in deprived areas					
Gateshead CDRP	27,845	24,000	24,000	—	—
Sunderland CDRP	35,856	35,000	35,000		
Communities against drugs					
Gateshead CDRP	189,400	189,400	—	—	—
Sunderland CDRP	278,600	278,600	—	—	—
Safer communities initiative					
Gateshead CDRP	—	72,362	—	—	—
Sunderland CDRP	—	102,884	—	—	—
Building safer communities fund[1]					
Gateshead CDRP	—	—	269,920	276,668	276,668
Sunderland CDRP	—	—	393,444	403,280	403,280
Basic command unit fund[2]					
Gateshead West	—	—	87,784	87,784	87,784
Gateshead East	—	—	127,177	127,177	127,177
Sunderland City	—	—	154,546	154,546	154,546
Sunderland West	—	—	83,776	83,776	83,776
Partnership development fund[3]					
North East Region	[4]1.235	[4]1.13	—	—	—
Home Office regional directors' allocation (HORDs)3					
North East Region	—	—	724,900	724,900	724,900

[1] In the years 2004–05 and 2005–06 the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships received an additional £25,000 for ASB coordinator.

[2] Figures for constituency level.

[3] Figures for NE Region, not available for CDRP or constituency.

[4] Million.

Table 1: number of offences recorded—1997[1]

	1997
Gateshead CDRP:	
Domestic burglary	n/a
Theft of a vehicle	n/a
Theft from a vehicle	n/a
Sunderland CDRP:	
Domestic burglary	n/a
Theft of a vehicle	n/a
Theft from a vehicle	n/a
Northumbria police force:	
Domestic burglary	17,113
Theft of a vehicle	13,703
Theft from a vehicle	18,635

[1] The data in this table is prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Table 2: number of offences recorded—1998–99 to 2001–02[1]

	1998–99[2]	1999–2000[3]	2000–01	2001–02
Gateshead CDRP:				
Domestic burglary	n/a	1,945	1,705	1,946
Theft of a vehicle	n/a	1,952	1,703	1,375
Theft from a vehicle	n/a	2,743	2,766	2,239
Sunderland CDRP:				
Domestic burglary	n/a	3,311	3,017	2,982
Theft of a vehicle	n/a	3,503	2,671	2,593
Theft from a vehicle	n/a	4,030	3,023	3,362
Northumbria police force:				
Domestic burglary	15,334	12,539	11,381	11,250
Theft of a vehicle	12,498	10,395	8,693	7,837
Theft from a vehicle	16,918	15,804	13,662	12,571

[1] The data in this table is prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

[2] The coverage was extended and counting rules revised from 1998–99. Figures from that date are not directly comparable with those for 1997.

[3] Recorded crime figures for CDRPs were collected for the first time for the 12 months to March 2000.

Table 3: number of offences recorded—2002–03 to 2004–05

Offence	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Gateshead CDRP:			
Domestic burglary	1,685	1,733	996
Theft of a vehicle	1,158	1,029	754
Theft from a vehicle	1,996	1,881	1,723
Sunderland CDRP:			
Domestic burglary	2,962	2,369	1,910
Theft of a vehicle	2,128	1,941	1,496
Theft from a vehicle	3,472	2,661	2,126
Northumbria police force:			
Domestic burglary	11,179	10,223	7,897
Theft of a vehicle	6,981	6,445	5,189
Theft from a vehicle	13,283	11,644	10,836

Note:

The data in this table takes account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Departmental Targets

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will publish details of the drug harm index required for the measurement of performance against 2004 Public Service Agreement target number 4. [29936]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Details of the Drug Harm Index and PSA baseline figure were published by the Home Office in March 2005 and can be found at www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs05/rdsolr2405.pdf

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to publish an assessment of progress against 2004 Public Service Agreement target number 7. [29940]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Performance against the element of Public Service Agreement (PSA) seven covering perceptions of racial discrimination by organisations and in the labour market was published on 24 November in a research publication on the Home Office website. Performance against PSA seven will also be included in the Home Office Autumn Performance Report to be published in December.

This will be a Command Paper and available on the Home Office website. The baseline for the community cohesion element of PSA seven is 2005, so an assessment of progress will not be available for this element until 2007, when the next survey is carried out.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects the first Voluntary and Community Activity Index data to be published, as required by 2004 Public Service Agreement number 6. [29941]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The State of the Sector Panel was introduced in the SR02 Public Service Agreement (PSA) set to measure progress against the then PSA8. The 2002–03 Baseline was published in the "Home Office Targets Autumn Performance Report 2004" Cm 6423 published in December 2004 and this is available on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/ho-targets-autumn-report-04?version=1

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the impact of asylum cases that go to appeal on performance against 2004 Public Service Agreement target number 5. [29942]

Mr. Charles Clarke: For PSA five the target is defined in the Public Service Agreement (PSA) technical notes (which can be found at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/psa-technical-note-SR04-jul-05) as reducing the number of cases that are unfounded.

An unfounded asylum claim is one where the applicant and dependents of the applicant have not been granted full refugee status (indefinite leave to remain) under the 1951 UN Convention, i.e. failed asylum seekers (applicants refused refugee status at the initial decision stage for which no appeal is received, and applicants whose appeal rights are exhausted).

Asylum cases that go to appeal and are unsuccessful therefore are included in the measurement of the target. As the technical notes indicate, performance data, for the year as a whole, will be published in the asylum statistics, on the Home Office website, as soon as possible after the end of the financial year (once the data is judged sufficiently reliable).The latest available data

will also be published in the Home Office Autumn Performance Report this December. This will be a Command Paper and available on the Home Office website.

Development Plus Programme

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1254W, on equality and diversity, what positive action development is expected to be provided for staff by his Department's Development Plus programme for under-represented groups. [28291]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Development Plus programme is a positive action learning and development programme for female, minority ethnic and disabled staff across the Home Office, at the levels where there is under-representation. The aim of the programme is to enable participants to increase their skills, address the barriers that prevent them from reaching their full potential and to help them compete more effectively for promotion. This will enable all staff to progress on merit.

DNA Database

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what percentage of the population of London the police hold a record on their DNA database, broken down by *(a)* black, *(b)* ethnic minority and *(c)* white people. [22132]

Andy Burnham *[holding answer 25 November 2005]:* The information requested is not currently available. The data held by the National DNA Database (NDNAD) are not directly comparable with the census 2001 population data.

The NDNAD does not hold self-reported ethnicity data on arrested persons who have a DNA sample taken, but on their 'ethnic appearance'. Nor does it hold data on sampled persons by area of residence, but by the police force area where the person was arrested and their DNA sample was taken; this may not be the area where they reside.

The sampling police officer completes a form with the sampled person's name, sex, date of birth, ethnic appearance and sampling force details. The ethnic appearance data is based on the judgment of the police officer and is recorded for police intelligence purposes to assist in subsequent identification. It uses seven broad ethnic categories whereas the Office for National Statistics population data from census 2001 is based on 16 ethnic groups self-reported by individuals when completing the census return.

Domestic Violence

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what provision is available in *(a)* West Yorkshire and *(b)* Normanton constituency to deal with domestic violence. [31563]

Fiona Mactaggart: The following table outlines the provisions that exist in each of the five areas within West Yorkshire, including Normanton to deal with domestic violence. The provisions cover both statutory and voluntary sector agencies and range from the police, domestic violence co-ordinators, refuge accommodation, outreach work and specialist support services for victims and children, as well as perpetrator programmes.

Domestic violence services for West Yorkshire

Area	*Provisions*
Bradford	Domestic abuse co-ordinator, monitoring officer and training co-ordinator Eight refuge accommodation facilities for women and children, including refuge for BME victims Nine outreach and support services , which includes a one-stop shop Two children's support services Three perpetrator programmes, including mandatory probation service programme. Three units covering police force areas and an Asian family liaison officer
Calderdale	Domestic violence co-ordinator Two refuge accommodation facilities for women and children, including refuge for BME victims Calderdale women's centre, which includes a helpline, support workers, legal caseworker, children's services, BME support services and housing support. Victim support for male and female victims of domestic violence. Police domestic violence unit
Kirklees	Domestic violence co-ordinator Four refuge accommodation facilities for women and children, including specialist support for BME victims Outreach and support and advice services for all victims of domestic violence. Domestic violence training for professionals Witness support group Mandatory probation service perpetrator programme and voluntary programme Police domestic violent unit
Leeds	Domestic violence co-ordinator Women's aid refuge accommodation facilities and Sahara black women's refuge Outreach workers within two hospitals and support for victims, including preventative action on homelessness and specialist support for BME victims HALT domestic violence service, providing support for women through civil and criminal justice system Domestic violence training for professionals Four police domestic violence units Voluntary perpetrator programmes Specialist domestic violence court-clusters

Domestic violence services for West Yorkshire

Area	*Provisions*
Wakefield[1]	Domestic violence co-ordinator Refuge accommodation facilities for women and children Two projects offering support to women and children affected by domestic violence; intercept project (also runs a perpetrator programme) and the wellwoman centre. Domestic violence training for professionals and an education pack for schools Police domestic violence unit

[1] The provisions are district wide and cover Normanton.

Drug Treatment and Testing Orders

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offenders have been subject to a drug treatment and testing order in each month since their inception; and if he will make a statement. [32788]

Fiona Mactaggart: The number of Drug Treatment and Testing Orders (DTTOs) made in each month since the roll-out of the order across England and Wales in October 2000 up to September 2005 is shown in the table. The DTTO has gradually been replaced by the Drug Rehabilitation Requirement (DRR) of the community order from April 2005. A column showing the number of DRRs made up to September 2005 is included in the table.

Month	*Number of DTTOs made*	*Number of DRRs made*
2000		
October	51	—
November	110	—
December	170	—
2001		
January	233	—
February	303	—
March	379	—
April	362	—
May	396	—
June	402	—
July	424	—
August	389	—
September	329	—
October	419	—
November	437	—
December	373	—
2002		
January	425	—
February	441	—
March	457	—
April	500	—
May	557j	—
June	413	—
July	513	—
August	487	—
September	482	—
October	466	—
November	551	—
December	452	—
2003		
January	541	—
February	562	—
March	621	—
April	607	—
May	609	—
June	659	—
July	748	—
August	665	—
September	695	—
October	774	—
November	697	—
December	713	—
2004		
January	673	—
February	762	—
March	917	—
April	809	—
May	769	—
June	818	—
July	815	—
August	817	—
September	852	—
October	899	—
November	966	—
December	842	—
2005		
January	867	—
February	891	—
March	978	—
April	951	43
May	730	250
June	627	522
July	468	596
August	343	702
September	292	843
Total	34,498	2,956

Dungavel Detention Centre

Anne Moffat: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the situation in Dungavel detention centre. [33834]

Fiona Mactaggart: Dungavel House Immigration Removal Centre was opened in September 2001 and holds those who have been detained under Immigration Act powers. The centre holds single males and females as well as families, including those with children. Families with children are not normally held at Dungavel beyond 72 hours. The centre is currently operating normally and there is no situation to report.

Environmental Sustainability

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures he has put in place to ensure that his Department meets the quick win targets set by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs to ensure that all *(a)* copying paper bought by the Department is 100 per cent. recycled with a minimum of 75 per cent. post-consumer waste content and *(b)* paper for printed publications bought by the Department is 60 per cent. recycled of which a minimum is 75 per cent. post-consumer waste. [16201]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The quick wins targets were introduced on 1 November 2003 by the inter-departmental Sustainable Procurement Group. From this date all government departments' contracts were expected to apply the minimum environmental standards when purchasing certain types of product and services including paper.

It has been recommended that the purchase of recycled paper products is phased in over a period of time and targets will be developed as part of the "Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate". The Home Office will work with its current suppliers in order to meet these targets. The department's current three-year stationery contract to supply paper and paper products as well as other stationery products was awarded prior to 1 November, in September 2003. This followed a competitive tender exercise in line with Home Office policy that the procurement of goods and services is based on value for money principles. The provision of recycled paper is part of the agreed contract with Office depot.

In June 2002 the Home Office mandated all offices within the Department to use A4 recycled paper which has an 80 per cent. unspecified recycled paper content in photocopiers, fax machines and printers, unless technical reasons precluded them from using this paper. The Prison Service mandated the use of the same A4 recycled paper from September 2003 and following successful trials are also procuring only A3 recycled paper.

The Home Office makes use of various stocks of paper/board in our publications. Most of our internal facing material is printed on recycled paper and all of these are at least 60 per cent. recycled with a content of 75 per cent. post-consumer waste. The majority of our external facing work is printed on totally chlorine free paper/board. Although this is not made from recycled pulp, this is 'environmentally friendly' because the pulp is bleached without the use of chlorine chemicals.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made *(a)* of the environmental impact and *(b)* against sustainable development criteria of the bids made for contracts awarded by his Department; who makes such an assessment; and whether these assessments are published. [16314]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Department does not hold this information centrally and it could only be obtained at disproportionate cost. Advice on the opportunities for integrating environmental and sustainability issues in assessment during procurement is published in OGC/DEFRA guidance "Environmental Issues in Purchasing" (www.ogc.gov.uk/index.asp?id=400'). Additional Home Office internal advice has been issued for use by procurement and project teams via procurement bulletins. Where appropriate assessments against both environmental impact and sustainable development criteria for bids made for contracts are carried out on a case by case basis. Environmental impact assessments and criteria for sustainable development are set and evaluated by the project team. These assessments are not published.

Equality and Diversity

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1254W, on equality and diversity, how many members of staff *(a)* are estimated to have to have taken part in Diversity Week events in each of the past three years and *(b)* in (i) his Department, (ii) the Immigration and Nationality Directorate and (iii) the Prison Service attended compulsory diversity awareness training in 2005. [28292]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The figures are as follows:

For the Diversity Week the Core Home Office attendance in 2005 was approximately 360. No records were kept for 2003–04. For the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) in 2005—approximately 1,950, 2004—approximately 1,680 and 2003—approximately 960. For Prison Service from 2003–05, Diversity Week was celebrated in a number of prison establishments, where events were attended by prison staff and prisoners. No records of the numbers of prison staff or prisoners involved were kept.

The Diversity Awareness training attendance up to November 2005 has been Core Home Office 663, IND 4920, Prison Service—approximately 9,820.

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1254W on equality and diversity, how much was spent on *(a)* compulsory diversity training in 2005, *(b)* launching the Development Plus programme, *(c)* testing for inappropriate behaviour during the 2005 senior management exercises, *(d)* Diversity week in each of the last three years and *(e)* networks supporting (i) black and ethnic minority, (ii) disabled, (iii) lesbian, gay and bisexual and (iv) transgendered and transsexual members of staff in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [28293]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The information requested is as follows:

(a) Expenditure on compulsory diversity training in 2005

	£
Core Home Office	198,871
IND	608,200
Prison Service	[1]

[1] This information is not centrally collected.

(b) No money was spent on launching the Development Plus programme.

(c) Testing for inappropriate behaviour during the 2005 senior management assessment centres—£12,915.

(d) Cost of Diversity week

	£
Core Home Office	
2005	8,489
2004	5,668
2003	2,686
IND	
2005	22,000
2004	5,000
2003	3,000

(d) Cost of Diversity week

	£
Prison Service	
2004–05	[1]—
2003	[2]33,593

[1] No records were kept.
[2] This covered events in central London and prison establishments. Staff from the Core Home Office and IND were also invited to attend.

(e) The Core Home Office funds three staff support networks: The Network (set up in 1999) which supports black and ethnic minority staff; HODS (set up in 2002) which supports disabled staff; and, SPECTRUM (set up in 2003) which supports lesbian, gay bisexual and transsexual and transgender staff. Details of the networks' expenditure since their formation is shown as follows:

Staff support networks expenditure

£000

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
The Network	275	420	291	418	476
HODS	—	—	—	62	192
SPECTRUM	—	—	—	14	99

The Prison Service RESECT staff support network for black and minority ethnic staff received £400,000, £453,000 and £394,000 in financial years 2002–03, 2003–04, 2004–05 respectively. The Prison Service GALIPS staff support network (established in July 2004) for lesbian, gay bisexual and transsexual and transgender staff received £145,000 of funding in financial years 2004–05 and 2005–06.

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1254W, on equality and diversity, how many *(a)* black and ethnic minority, *(b)* disabled, *(c)* lesbian, gay, bisexual and *(d)* transgendered and transsexual staff have been employed by (i) his Department, (ii) the Immigration and Nationality Directorate, (iii) HM Prison Service and (iv) the UK Passport Service in each of the last 20 years for which figures are available. [28295]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The following figures are taken from the Cabinet Office Mandate return for April in each of the years between 2000 and 2004. Data for years prior to 2000 are not readily available and data for 2005 have not yet been published.

The Home Office has not yet started to monitor the number of its staff by sexual orientation or gender identity, although we have recently introduced monitoring of our HR processes, including recruitment, promotion and training, against those diversity strands.

	Home Office main (inc IND)		*UK Passport Service*		*HM Prison Service*	
	Minority ethnic staff	*Disabled staff*	*Minority ethnic staff*	*Disabled staff*	*Minority ethnic staff*	*Disabled staff*
2000	1,110	290	110	40	1,220	130
2001	1,410	340	360	70	1,530	310
2002	1,010	370	480	150	1,340	480
2003	2,230	420	430	130	1,780	470
2004	3,080	460	450	130	2,110	500

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1254W, on equality and diversity, what *(a)* funding and *(b)* other support was made available for the support of staff on the Cabinet Office Pathways scheme for ethnic minorities in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [28296]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The following table shows funding the Home Office has provided for participants on the last three Cabinet Office Pathways development schemes for which we have financial data. These are two-year schemes for talented black and ethnic minority civil servants who show potential to reach the level of the senior civil service.

(a)

	£000
2002–04	42
2003–05	74
2004–06	100

(b) In addition to providing funding, the Home Office in liaison with the Cabinet Office, supported staff participation on the Pathways schemes by providing mentors and obtaining work placements outside the Home Office.

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1254W, on equality and diversity, how much his Department spent on positive action training for *(a)* women, *(b)* black and minority ethnic staff and *(c)* disabled staff in 2001; how many members of staff attended this training; and what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of (i) positive action training in 2001 and (ii) diversity awareness training in 2000–01. [28297]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The cost of positive action training in 2001–02 was approximately £60,000. This included research, design, development, course delivery and evaluation.

52 women, black and ethnic minority staff and disabled staff attended the programme.

The aim of positive action training was to increase the confidence and skills of under-represented groups to compete successfully for posts at the next level. Evaluation of feedback from 34 attendees 12 months on found that 12 had already been promoted and the majority had grown in confidence.

As part of a review of the diversity awareness training in 2000–01, 107 managers completed questionnaires and 96.2 per cent. agreed that as a result of attending the training they had a better understanding of the relevance and importance of diversity in effective team working.

Extradition

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the UK requests all related evidence from the relevant country as a matter of policy when an extradition request is received. [32155]

Andy Burnham: No, the UK does not and to the best of our knowledge has never, as a matter of either policy or law, requested all the available evidence when it receives an extradition request. This is consistent with our international obligations and our domestic law.

Female Prisoners (Literacy)

Barbara Follett: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he is planning to have with the Secretary of State for Education and Skills about improving the literacy of female prisoners. [33840]

Fiona Mactaggart: I discuss matters relating to learning and skills for all offenders on a regular basis with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Skills. Recently our discussions have focused on the matters to be set out in the forthcoming Green Paper "Reducing Re-offending through Skills and Employment", which will include material relating to the needs of female offenders delivered through our new Offender Learning and Skills Service.

Festivals

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures his Department took to celebrate and promote the events of *(a)* Ramadan, *(b)* Diwali and *(c)* Chinese New Year in 2005. [31163]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office hosted an Eid/Diwali celebration on 14 November 2005 which was attended by 200 guests from the Muslim, Hindu and Sikh communities as well as representatives from other faith groups. An internal staff event was held on 8 November. The Home Office also made staff aware of a number of external events including the Civil Service Islamic Society event for all civil servants "Dusk til Dawn" on 10 October and the Greater London Authority (GLA) Chinese New Year event held in Trafalgar Square, Leicester Square and Soho held on 13 February as well as other London China events during this period. Information on the celebrations of Ramadan and Diwali was also circulated to staff within the Immigration and Nationality Directorate.

Firearm Offences

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many firearms offences were recorded in each year since 1997 in *(a)* Northamptonshire and *(b)* England; and how many led to convictions. [23697]

Hazel Blears: The number of offences involving firearms, excluding air weapons, recorded by police is given in the table.

Convictions data for these offences are not collected centrally.

Number of offences involving firearms (excluding air weapons) recorded by police, 1997 to 2001–02

	Northamptonshire	*England*
1997	40	4,819
1997–98	46	4,808
1998–99[1]	54	5,109
1999–2000	48	6,749
2000–01	40	7,360
2001–02[2]	55	9,917

[1] There was a change in the counting rules for recorded crime on 1 April 1998.
[2] Figures for some crime categories may have been inflated by some police forces implementing the principles of the National Crime Recording Standard in advance of national implementation.
Note:
The National Crime Recording Standard was introduced on 1 April 2002. Figures after this date are not directly comparable.

Number of offences involving firearms (excluding air weapons) recorded by police, 2002–03 and 2003–04

	Northamptonshire	*England*
2002–03	107	10,087
2003–04	123	10,169

Note:
The National Crime Recording Standard was introduced on 1 April 2002. Figures before this date are not directly comparable.

Fixed-penalty Notices

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed-penalty notices have been issued by *(a)* community support officers and *(b)* police officers for littering under paragraph 1(2)*(d)* of Schedule 4 to the Police Reform Act 2002 in each of the last four years, broken down by police authority. [29344]

Mr. Charles Clarke: From 1 November 2004 littering became an offence for which a Penalty Notice for Disorder (PND) could be issued. The following table gives figures for the number of penalty notices issued for littering in 2004 by each police force, alongside provisional figures for January to July 2005.

Community support officers have the power to issue fixed-penalty notices for littering on behalf of local authorities. Information on these fixed-penalty notices is held by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Number of penalty notices for disorder issued for "littering" by police force area, England and Wales, 2004 and January to July 2005[1]

Police force area	*2004*[2]	*January to July 2005*[1]
Avon and Somerset	—	3
Bedfordshire	—	—
Cambridgeshire	2	2
Cheshire	—	3
City of London	—	—
Cleveland	—	1
Cumbria	—	—
Derbyshire	1	4
Devon and Cornwall	2	16
Dorset	—	3
Durham	—	—
Essex	3	19
Gloucestershire	—	—
Greater Manchester	1	6
Hampshire	7	18
Hertfordshire	—	0
Humberside	2	4
Kent	1	7

Number of penalty notices for disorder issued for "littering" by police force area, England and Wales, 2004 and January to July 2005 [1]

Police force area	*2004* [2]	*January to July 2005* [1]
Lancashire	5	41
Leicestershire	—	6
Lincolnshire	—	5
Merseyside	3	85
Metropolitan	7	33
Norfolk	—	—
North Yorkshire	—	—
Northamptonshire	—	7
Northumbria	2	14
Nottinghamshire	3	11
South Yorkshire	3	19
Staffordshire	1	5
Suffolk	—	2
Surrey	—	—
Sussex	—	—
Thames Valley	1	9
Warwickshire	1	5
West Mercia	—	5
West Midlands	—	7
West Yorkshire	3	14
Wiltshire	—	1
Dyfed Powys	—	3
Gwent	—	1
North Wales	3	21
South Wales	—	—
England and Wales	51	380

[1] Provisional data.

[2] Littering was introduced as a PND offence in November 2004.

Source:

RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform

Gershon Review

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who in the Department has been made responsible for achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon Review. [21311]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I am responsible for achieving my Department's value for money objectives. The permanent secretary is responsible for this work at official level.

Green Ministers

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what work his Department's Green Minister has undertaken in the last three months in an official capacity in that role; and what meetings that Minister has attended in the last 12 months. [16192]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Following the general election in May, the Cabinet Sub-Committee of Green Ministers (ENV(G)) was replaced by the Ministerial Sub-Committee on Sustainable Development in Government (EE(SD)) whose members are departmental Sustainable Development Ministers. Andy Burnham was appointed as our departmental Sustainable Development Minister in June 2005.

In July, the Minister attended a breakfast seminar for Sustainable Development Ministers to discuss the sustainable development strategy and Ministers' role in delivering it. He has also held met with officials to discuss the Department's contribution to sustainable development.

Identity Cards

Mr. Khan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the identity cards scheme in helping to tackle online fraud. [27473]

Andy Burnham: Through the use of remote authentication technologies, there is an opportunity for the identity card scheme to combat online fraud. Currently, the identity cards programme is looking at various alternatives that allow the implementation of secure remote authentication including use of one-time password technology. These technologies offer a mechanism to obtain greater assurance of the identity of individuals during internet transactions.

Work is continuing with representative groups from both private and public sectors to assess how these technologies might be used to supplement existing procedures in practice. However, no final decisions regarding these options have been taken. As a result, no quantifiable benefits connected with online fraud have, as yet, been claimed with the scheme's benefits case.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the likely effects of identity cards on card-not-present *(a)* credit card fraud in (i) on-line, (ii) telephone and (iii) mail order shopping and *(b)* internet banking fraud. [31507]

Andy Burnham: Through the use of remote authentication technologies, there is an opportunity for the identity card scheme to combat fraudulent card-not-present financial transactions. Currently, the identity cards programme is looking at various alternatives that allow the implementation of secure remote authentication including use of one-time password technology. These technologies offer a mechanism to obtain greater assurance of the identity of credit card or account holders when conducting transactions over the internet, telephone or post in the future.

Work is continuing with representative groups from both private and public sectors to assess how these technologies might be used to supplement existing procedures in practice. However, no final decisions regarding these options have been taken. As a result, no quantifiable benefits connected with reducing card-not-present fraud for online, telephone or mail-order shopping or banking have, as yet, been claimed within the scheme's benefits case to date.

IMPACT System

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the IMPACT system will be operational; and what assessment he has made of progress towards the target date of March 2007. [16027]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Government's Second Progress Report on implementing Sir Michael Richard's recommendations was released to Parliament on 7 November 2005. The IMPACT programme, set up to deliver many of the key recommendations, will

deliver incremental improvements in police information management and information sharing systems over the next five years.

The first application, a national index of names (the IMPACT Nominal Index) will be deployed into a Child Abuse Investigation Unit in every force in England and Wales by the end of 2005. This will enable police forces to check where information is held on individuals by other forces.

The next phase of development will provide police forces with a direct national link between their six core systems, including intelligence, by the end of 2007.

Internet (Voice Calls)

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the *(a)* police and *(b)* intelligence agencies are able (i) to intercept and (ii) to collect traffic data on voice calls made over the internet. [32894]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The lawful basis for both intercepting and accessing traffic data on internet calls is contained in the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000, which is designed to be technology neutral. We do not comment on specific capability, or lack of capability, in these areas, where to do so would undermine national security and the prevention and detection of crime.

Investigatory Powers Tribunal

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* staffing level and *(b)* cost of the Investigatory Powers Tribunal has been in each calendar year since its inception. [30560]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Investigatory Powers Tribunal was established on 2 October 2000. The tribunal's staff in post in each calendar year since then has been:

	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
President	1	1	1	1	1	1
Vice President	1	1	1	1	1	1
Registrar	n/a	1	1	1	1	1
Members	6	7	7	7	7	6
Tribunal office administration staff	2	3	3	3	3	3

The running costs of the tribunal in each financial year since its inception have been:

£

	Running costs
2000–01	55,470
2001–02	86,620
2002–03	114,540
2003–04	104,440
2004–05	173,280

Local Authority Secure Units

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the re-offending rates of those released from local authority secure units. [32889]

Fiona Mactaggart: These re-offending rates are not available. The following table shows reconviction rates, a commonly used proxy for re-offending rates, for juveniles released from custody. Local authority secure children's homes and secure training centres are included in the reconviction rate, but these cannot be distinguished from other juvenile custodial disposals.

Owing to the administrative costs of matching criminal histories, the results shown relate to the reconvictions for samples of offenders, those juveniles discharged in the first three months of the year. Reconviction rates should be used with caution as a number of different factors can influence them. Reconviction rates can be adjusted to take account of the changing characteristics of offenders and these adjusted rates are published annually on the Home Office's website (http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/index.htm). The most recent adjusted figures for the 2003 cohort show a reduction in reoffending of 2.4 per cent. against the 2000 baseline.

Reconviction rates—juvenile offenders, within one year of completing custodial sentence

	Reconviction rate
2003	69.4
2002	68.3
2001	70.4

Magistrates Courts

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of people appearing before each magistrates court were remanded to custody in each year from 2002 to 2005. [33096]

Fiona Mactaggart: The table shows the numbers and percentages of defendants proceeded against in England and Wales who were remanded in custody by magistrates courts, for the years 2002 to 2004.

The remand data received by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform is often incomplete and custodial remands are believed to be under-recorded. The figures felt to be most the most unreliable are not presented in the table. Due to the poor quality of the data we are unable to present figures for the individual magistrates courts. Figures for 2005 will be available in the autumn of 2006.

Numbers and percentages of defendants remanded in custody by magistrates courts in each police force area 2002–04—England and Wales

Defendants and percentages

	2002			2003		
	Remanded in custody[1]	*Prosecutions*	*Remanded in custody as a percentage of prosecutions*	*Remanded in custody*[1]	*Prosecutions*	*Remanded in custody as a percentage of prosecutions*
Avon and Somerset	2,859	55,037	5.2	2,626	62,282	4.2
Bedfordshire	743	18,474	4.0	716	21,472	3.3
Cambridgeshire	663	11,965	5.5	448	12,861	3.5
Cheshire	1,233	35,380	3.5	1,169	33,519	3.5
City of London	282	10,485	2.7	222	10,374	2.1
Cleveland	—	27,465	—	—	26,112	—
Cumbria	—	14,409	—	—	18,923	—
Derbyshire	1,302	34,295	3.8	1,364	33,625	4.1
Devon and Cornwall	1,582	46,827	3.4	1,552	50,205	3.1
Dorset	799	19,618	4.1	705	20,347	3.5
Durham	1,079	17,860	6.0	872	16,377	5.3
Essex	1,463	60,663	2.4	1,642	53,692	3.1
Gloucestershire	311	17,836	1.7	383	15,964	2.4
Greater Manchester	—	134,664	—	—	133,843	—
Hampshire	2,330	58,479	4.0	2,433	57,475	4.2
Hertfordshire	—	28,825	—	—	33,377	—
Humberside	2,016	31,555	6.4	2,159	36,141	6.0
Kent	1,078	44,454	2.4	1,334	53,523	2.5
Lancashire	2,934	67,919	4.3	2,538	73,935	3.4
Leicestershire	1,645	39,487	4.2	1,483	44,881	3.3
Lincolnshire	877	26,993	3.2	687	28,967	2.4
Merseyside	—	57,072	—	—	66,781	—
Metropolitan Police	12,519	255,733	4.9	10,727	250,449	4.3
Norfolk	435	21,802	2.0	455	25,329	1.8
North Yorkshire	625	19,170	3.3	786	18,925	4.2
Northamptonshire	397	14,534	2.7	—	25,116	—
Northumbria	3,011	66,327	4.5	2,774	68,132	4.1
Nottinghamshire	2,557	39,054	6.5	2,605	43,844	5.9
South Yorkshire	1,340	53,832	2.5	1,267	47,830	2.6
Staffordshire	606	26,136	2.3	512	29,160	1.8
Suffolk	715	23,151	3.1	790	24,029	3.3
Surrey	—	20,713	—	—	19,127	—
Sussex	1,769	38,925	4.5	1,358	38,794	3.5
Thames Valley	1,172	63,500	1.8	—	62,120	—
Warwickshire	230	13,935	1.7	216	13,448	1.6
West Mercia	1,298	35,708	3.6	1,318	33,573	3.9
West Midlands	4,535	131,683	3.4	3,332	134,611	2.5
West Yorkshire	8,857	93,022	9.5	7,410	98,844	7.5
Wiltshire	659	21,376	3.1	469	23,848	2.0
Dyfed-Powys	691	17,727	3.9	640	19,489	3.3
Gwent	881	25,702	3.4	865	28,062	3.1
North Wales	—	25,389	—	—	27,193	—
South Wales	998	57,645	1.7	1,394	64,221	2.2

	2004		
	Remanded in custody[1]	*Prosecutions*	*Remanded in custody as a percentage of prosecutions*
Avon and Somerset	2,030	60,156	3.4
Bedfordshire	660	20,774	3.2
Cambridgeshire	382	13,233	2.9
Cheshire	1,068	35,759	3.0
City of London	427	11,526	3.7
Cleveland	—	26,322	—
Cumbria	—	19,151	—
Derbyshire	1,106	33,004	3.4
Devon and Cornwall	1,305	45,601	2.9
Dorset	631	19,563	3.2
Durham	559	14,466	3.9
Essex	1,556	51,673	3.0
Gloucestershire	401	15,605	2.6
Greater Manchester	—	140,008	—
Hampshire	2,097	56,548	3.7
Hertfordshire	649	37,088	1.7
Humberside	1,636	34,820	4.7
Kent	—	54,819	—

	2004		
	Remanded in custody[1]	*Prosecutions*	*Remanded in custody as a percentage of prosecutions*
Lancashire	1,990	62,273	3.2
Leicestershire	1,426	41,274	3.5
Lincolnshire	706	28,997	2.4
Merseyside	—	65,486	—
Metropolitan Police	9,230	263,988	3.5
Norfolk	292	23,685	1.2
North Yorkshire	310	20,067	1.5
Northamptonshire	—	26,680	—
Northumbria	2,203	65,456	3.4
Nottinghamshire	2,111	42,238	5.0
South Yorkshire	996	48,621	2.0
Staffordshire	492	33,540	1.5
Suffolk	707	27,161	2.6
Surrey	—	20,104	—
Sussex	1,311	37,823	3.5
Thames Valley	—	66,201	—
Warwickshire	206	17,077	1.2
West Mercia	1,383	37,796	3.7

	2004		
	Remanded in custody[1]	*Prosecutions*	*Remanded in custody as a percentage of prosecutions*
West Midlands	3,177	136,365	2.3
West Yorkshire	6,639	103,855	6.4
Wiltshire	554	22,814	2.4
Dyfed-Powys	519	16,012	3.2
Gwent	933	25,147	3.7
North Wales	—	28,993	—
South Wales	2,537	70,834	3.6

'—' reliable remand data not available

[1] Includes those remanded for part of the time in custody and part on bail

Murdered Children

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list minors killed in the last 12 months by *(a)* parents and *(b)* carers in all cases where proceedings are complete; and what their relationship was to their murderer in each case. [33114]

Fiona Mactaggart: In 2003–04, for cases where proceedings are complete, 14 homicide victims aged less than 16 years were killed by their parents (includes adoptive parents). One victim under 16 years was killed by their step parent (includes children of suspect's cohabitant/lover). This is based on data as at 22 October 2004.

The relationship codes for homicide do not include a classification for 'carer' so data on homicides by carers are not available centrally.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many children have been killed by a non-resident parent in each of the last five years during *(a)* authorised contact and *(b)* unauthorised contact. [33115]

Fiona Mactaggart: This information is not collected centrally.

Non-departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which of the advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by his Department *(a)* hold public meetings, *(b)* conduct public consultation exercises, *(c)* conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests, *(d)* publish a register of Members' interests, *(e)* publish agendas for meetings and *(f)* publish the minutes of meetings; and whether it is under a statutory requirement in each case. [20098]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The reply is found in the following table.

Name of advisory NDPB	*(a) hold public meetings*	*(b) conduct public consultation exercises*	*(c) conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests*	*(d) publish a register of Members' interests*
Advisory Board on Naturalisation and Integration	No but does hold public events	No but may consult during evaluation work	No but may consult such in evaluation work	No
Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs	No but has to an invited audience	No but consults with key stakeholders[1]	No but consults with key stakeholders[1]	Members' interests are available on request
Advisory Panel on Country Information	No	One in 2003	No	No
Animal Procedures Committee	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
Correctional Services Accreditation Panel	No	No	No	No
Futurebuilders Advisory Panel	No	No	No	No
Immigration and Nationality Directorate Complaints Audit Committee	No	No	No	No
Victims Advisory Panel	No	No	No	No
Police Advisory Board for England and Wales	No	No	No	No
Police Negotiating Board	No	No	No	No
Prison Service Pay Review Body for England and Wales	No	No	No but it takes evidence	Yes on website www.ome.uk.com at the Office of Manpower Economics
Sentencing Advisory Panel	No	Yes	No	Yes
Sentencing Guidelines Council	No	Yes	No	Yes
Technical Advisory Body for the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000	No	No	No	No

Name of advisory NDPB	*(e) publish agendas for meetings*	*(f) publish the minutes of meetings*	*Is it under a statutory requirement in each case?*
Advisory Board on Naturalisation and Integration	Yes in accordance with Freedom of Information	Yes in accordance with Freedom of Information	No
Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs	Not routinely	Not routinely	No
Advisory Panel on Country Information	Yes—published after the meeting on website www.apci.org.uk	Yes on website www.apci.org.uk	No
Animal Procedures Committee	Yes	Yes	No
Correctional Services Accreditation Panel	No	No	No
Futurebuilders Advisory Panel	No	No	No

Name of advisory NDPB	*(e) publish agendas for meetings*	*(f) publish the minutes of meetings*	*Is it under a statutory requirement in each case?*
Immigration and Nationality Directorate Complaints Audit Committee	No	No	No
Victims Advisory Panel	No	No but have plans to do so in the future	No
Police Advisory Board for England and Wales	No	No	No
Police Negotiating Board	No	No	No
Prison Service Pay Review Body for England and Wales	No	No	Yes for *(c)*
Sentencing Advisory Panel	No	Yes on website www.sentencing-guidelines.gov.uk and click on the Sentencing Advisory Panel's logo	Yes for only *(b)*
Sentencing Guidelines Council	No	Yes on website: www.sentencing-guidelines.gov.uk	Yes for only *(b)*
Technical Advisory Body for the Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000	No	No	No

Operation Tarian

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of Operation Tarian mounted by the South Wales, Gwent and Avon and Somerset police forces. [32908]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office has commissioned a preliminary evaluation of the work of the Regional Task Force, which is the supply reduction component of Operation Tarian. It became fully operational in January 2004. The evaluation covers its first full year of operation and assess the feasibility of conducting a fuller evaluation at a later date. Findings will be published in 2006.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to answer question reference 23,300, tabled on 26 October 2005 by the hon. Member for Yeovil. [33705]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 28 November 2005, *Official Record*, column 31W.

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the question from the hon. Member for Sunderland, South, reference 18605, tabled on 13 October. [28747]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I replied to my hon. Friend on 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1730W.

Prisoners

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prisoners are being held beyond their automatic release date. [32892]

Fiona Mactaggart: The only prisoners who should not be released at their automatic release date are

(i) those held under Immigration Act powers; the number of these fluctuates but at any one time will be between 200 and 300.

(ii) those serving a disciplinary punishment of additional days; the number of these is not centrally recorded.

Regulatory Impact Assessments

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many regulatory impact assessments have been produced by his Department since August 2001; and if he will list *(a)* those produced following initial consultation with affected parties on the most appropriate methodology for assessing costs and other impacts and *(b)* those that set out full commercial impacts, including on profitability, employment, consumer prices and competitiveness, as recommended in Good Policy Making. [17005]

Mr. Charles Clarke: From August 2001 to the end of June 2005 the Department has produced 65 regulatory impact assessments (RIAs), published with legislation, broken down as follows: 2001 (August to December) 42002 82003 2004 92004 202005 (January to June) 24.

The increase from 2004 is a reflection of the change to the RIA process whereby we now complete RIAs in relation to the public sector as well as the private, voluntary and charitable sectors. In preparing RIAs, we follow the Better Regulation Executive (Cabinet Office) guidance in assessing costs and benefits and the economic, social, and environmental impacts of the proposal. RIA requirements have developed over the years since its introduction in 1998 but now also cover a wider range of issues including competition and impact on small firms. This information is recorded in the individual RIAs and generally includes comments on the consultation process, both formal and informal. We also routinely consult publicly on our proposals, with an accompanying Partial RIA, and publish a summary of the views received and our response. The 65 individual RIAs are listed in a regular Command Paper House prepared by Cabinet Office and laid before the House. Copies, together with related consultation documents, can be accessed on the Home Office website.

Road Safety

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will break down the number of sentences passed on persons convicted of the offence of causing death by dangerous driving in the last five years by *(a)* type of sentence and *(b)* duration of custodial sentence. [32947]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* The information requested in shown in the following table.

Persons sentenced for death by dangerous driving, 2000 to 2004—England and Wales

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Total sentenced	193	226	228	233	241
Absolute discharge	0	0	0	1	1
Conditional discharge	0	1	0	0	0
Fine	4	4	6	1	3
Community sentence	13	17	12	3	5
Fully suspended sentence	8	10	11	11	11
Immediate custody	166	193	199	217	221
Otherwise dealt with	2	1	0	0	0
Average custodial sentence length (months)	37.1	39	39.2	43	44.4

Source:
RDS—NOMS 29 November 2005

Schedule 1 Offenders

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of schedule 1 offenders who have attended a sex offenders treatment programme have subsequently reoffended; and what the rate of recidivism involving a similar offence of schedule 1 offenders who have not undergone a sex offenders treatment programme has been in each of the last two years. [32779]

Paul Goggins: The collection of reconviction data for sex offenders attending current treatment programmes is not yet available. Research on early versions of the current programmes found that 4.6 per cent. of offenders completing treatment on the Prison Service programme were reconvicted compared to 8.1 per cent. of sex offenders who did not attend the programme.

The early version of one of the community-based sex offender treatment programmes found that 3.2 per cent. of sex offenders who completed treatment were reconvicted compared to 10.6 per cent. of sex offenders who did not attend treatment. Both prison and community treatment programmes have been revised since this research. However, it is too soon to be able to collect reconviction data over a meaningful period.

Serious Organised Crime Agency

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the executive directors of the Serious Organised Crime Agency. [26650]

Paul Goggins: The Executive Directors of the Serious Organised Crime Agency are: David Bolt, Trevor Pearce, Paul Evans and Malcolm Cornberg.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the salary of the *(a)* chair, *(b)* director general designate and *(c)* each of the four executive directors of the Serious Organised Crime Agency is in 2005–06; what the recruitment costs for the *(a)* chair, *(b)* director general designate and *(c)* each of the four executive directors of the Serious Organised Crime Agency were; and if he will make a statement. [33600]

Paul Goggins: The chair of the Serious Organised Crime Agency was appointed in September 2004 to receive a remuneration of £120,000 p.a. (pro rata). The director general was recruited on a salary of up to £150,000 p.a. These figures were subject to a 2.5 per cent. increase in line with other senior civil servants' pay as at 1 April 2005.

The salaries of the executive directors are within the advertised pay range set out in the recruitment advertisement, which is between £100,000 and £120,000 for the Enforcement, Intelligence and Intervention Directors and £120,000 and £140,000 for the Director of Corporate Services.

The recruitment costs were in line with those published in the Cabinet Office Framework Agreement for Executive Search Firms in force at the time.

Sex Offenders

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of sex offenders are participating in home detention curfews. [21725]

Fiona Mactaggart: On 25 November 2005 there were 3,210 prisoners serving the remaining part of their sentence on the home detention curfew (HDC) scheme. According to the Prison Service IT system, none of those were prisoners subject to the registration requirements of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 or were serving sentences for sexual offences.

Special Advisers

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list *(a)* the special advisers in his Department, *(b)* their specific areas of expertise and *(c)* the total cost of employing them in the latest year for which figures are available. [8814]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to the hon. Member for Castle Point (Bob Spink) on 4 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 36W.

Tagging

Janet Anderson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received about tagging people who have been convicted under the Protection from Harassment Act 1997. [32517]

Fiona Mactaggart: I have received no representations about tagging people convicted under this Act.

Terrorism

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 17 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1436W, on terrorism, on how many occasions since 1997 he has suggested to Association of Chief Police Officers that chief constables contact hon. Members about a particular Government policy; and what the policies were. [32168]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* The Government's view is that it is to the benefit of both hon. Members and the police service for there to

be regular discussions between them on issues of topical interest which affect policing. That approach is reflected in the links between Home Office Ministers and officials and the police service. Precise details on all the occasions since 1997 when the police have been encouraged to contact hon. Members could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals were stopped under section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000 during *(a)* the Defence Systems and Equipment International trade fair 2005, *(b)* the Labour party conference 2005, *(c)* the Conservative party conference 2005 and *(d)* the Liberal Democrat party conference 2005. [32868]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Statistics showing the number of stop-searches in each police force area for England and Wales under section 44 of the Terrorism Act 2000 are published annually in the Home Office Statistical Bulletin and are available on the Research, Development and Statistics page of the Home Office website.

The Home Office Statistical Bulletin: 'Arrests for Notifiable Offences and the Operation of Certain Police Powers under PACE; England and Wales', details stops and searches under the Terrorism Act 2000, broken down by police force over financial years. The bulletin also shows subsequent arrests. The most recently available figures can be found on the Home Office website at: http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/hosbpubs1.html. Statistics are not collated below police force area, therefore the number of people stop-searched at specific events or locations is not available.

Young Offenders

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* 12, *(b)* 13, *(c)* 14, *(d)* 15 and *(e)* 16-year-olds have been held in custody under sentence in each of the last five years. [32890]

Fiona Mactaggart: The following table gives the requested information as at 30 June in each of the years concerned:

Young people aged 12 to 16 held in custody on 30 June

2005

Age	Boys	Girls	Total
12	12	0	12
13	35	7	42
14	126	23	149
15	367	36	403
16	759	72	831
Total	1,299	138	1,437

2004

Age	Boys	Girls	Total
12	11	1	12
13	42	5	47
14	111	11	122
15	389	39	428
16	707	42	749
Total	1,260	98	1,358

2003

Age	Boys	Girls	Total
12	6	1	7
13	34	9	43
14	136	25	161
15	343	33	376
16	723	48	771
Total	1,242	116	1,358

2002

Age	Boys	Girls	Total
12	8	0	8
13	48	10	58
14	160	18	178
15	396	46	442
16	802	63	865
Total	1,414	137	1,551

2001

Age	Boys	Girls	Total
12	12	2	14
13	38	2	40
14	151	12	163
15	401	30	431
16	735	39	774
Total	1,337	85	1,422

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

10 Victoria Street

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the future of his Department's 10 Victoria Street building. [33550]

Alan Johnson: 10 Victoria Street has been vacated by the Department and is surplus to DTI requirements. It is now being brought up to a condition suitable for reletting on the commercial market or reuse elsewhere within Government.

Arms Sales (Iraq)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which British companies were engaged in the sale of arms to Iraq between *(a)* 1980 and 1991 and *(b)* 1991 and 2003; what arms were exported in each case; and if he will make a statement. [31556]

Malcolm Wicks: The DTI holds information only on the export licence applications it has received. Information on which UK companies have applied for licences to export military list equipment to Iraq is commercially confidential and as such is exempt from disclosure. The Scott report does however contain some export licensing information, including on the applicant companies and the goods involved, relating to the period 1984–1990; the report is available from the Libraries of the House. The hon. Member will be aware that a full-scope UN arms embargo has been in place on Iraq since 1990 (UN Security Resolution 661).

Since 1997, the Government have published detailed information on THEIR export licensing decisions, including summaries of the goods licensed, in their annual report on Strategic Export Controls, available from the Libraries of the House.

Artists' Resale Levy

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what evidence led him to reconsider his Department's policy on excluding sales of below 3,000 euros from the artists' resale levy. [33772]

Alan Johnson *[holding answer 1 December 2005]:* No final decisions have been reached on the implementation of artist's resale right. We have consulted extensively with all interested parties and have met representatives from the art trade and artists. We have also commissioned and received independent evidence since the European Directive was originally negotiated.

The Government's decision will be based on ensuring the continuing success of the British art market and supporting British artists. We will announce a decision in this House in the very near future.

Broadband Provision

Chris Huhne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking on local loop unbundling to ensure that the UK continues to improve its broadband provision. [32533]

Alun Michael: The matter raised is the responsibility of the Office of Communications (Ofcom). Ofcom is the independent regulator for the communications sector, deriving its main powers and duties directly from statute rather than by delegation from the Secretary of State, and accountable to Parliament in its own right. Accordingly, the officials have asked the chief executive of Ofcom to respond directly to the hon. Member and to send me a copy of his response. Copies of the chief executive's letter will also be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Business Start-ups

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what grants are available from the Government and their agencies to assist business start-ups in Rochdale constituency. [33439]

Alun Michael: There is one grant specifically available to the Rochdale area and it is funded under the Single Regeneration Budget (SRB round 5). The Business Development Grant provides funding to both start ups and existing businesses which are setting up in, are located in, or are re-locating to, the inner Rochdale SRB5 area, provided they can demonstrate an element of job creation or job safeguarding.

Monies can be used towards the purchase of equipment, market research and feasibility studies, marketing and legal set up costs. Applicants can receive 70 per cent. of eligible costs up to a maximum of £3,000.

The Inner Rochdale SRB5 area stretches from Sparth to Cloverhall, and from Deeplish and Newbold to Lower Falinge and Hamer.

Rochdale also benefits from Selective Finance for Investment. There are currently eight companies in Rochdale benefiting from these funds, which focus on job creation and job safeguarding.

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many grants for job creation his Department awarded in Rochdale in each year from 1992; and what the value was in each case. [33461]

Alun Michael: The following awards were made to companies in Rochdale:

	Number of companies	*Offered*	*Capex*	*Jobs created*	*Jobs safeguarded*	*Programme*
1997–98	1	50,000	345,000	20	—	RSA
1998–99	12	914,500	6,762,960	192	84	RSA
1999–2000	6	879,000	8,733,376	111	283	RSA
2000–01	5	1,070,000	11,207,448	256	60	RSA
2001–02	4	430,000	3,742,650	88	28	RSA
2003–04	2	344,000	2,934,000	112	—	RSA
2004–05	8	596,000	5,118,700	426	32	RSA/SFI

Note:
Regional Selective Assistance (RSA)
Selective Finance Investment (SFI)

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what mechanisms are in place to assess the effectiveness of consultant-led projects in his Department; what sanctions are available to penalise consultants who run unsuccessful projects; how many projects conducted by consultants were assessed as unsuccessful in each year since 2000; and what sanctions were imposed. [29057]

Alan Johnson: Comprehensive guidance on the appointment and management of consultants by the Department is available to staff via the Department's intranet. This details necessary steps and considerations at all stages of the engagement of consultants, from justification of need in the business case through to submission of a Post-Completion Report by the Departmental project manager. This Post-Completion document should mirror the original business case and address among other things whether critical success factors were achieved, whether the project was carried out to schedule and to budget and an assessment of lessons learned about the consultant's performance and the management of the project.

The online guidance refers users to the requirements of the OGC Gateway process that provides assurance at critical stages of a programme or project's lifecycle.

Contracts should set out key performance measures via, for example, 'Service Level Agreements', which specify the deliverables and timescales to be met by the consultant. In the event of these targets not being met contracts may provide for the payment of liquidated damages by the contractor. This will be agreed on a case by case basis.

Further information is not available centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list departmental projects conducted by consultants in each year since 2000; what the cost was in each case; and what the total cost of employing consultants was in each year. [29059]

Alan Johnson: Central records indicate that the cost of employing consultants in each financial year has been as follows:

	£ million
2000-01	36
2001-02	64
2002-03	93
2003-04	112
2004-05	86

Further information is not available centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Damages

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list the 10 largest amounts of damages paid out by his Department in the last year for which figures are available, indicating in each case the nature of the claim. [27724]

Alan Johnson: There were seven claims for damages paid out by my Department in the last financial year (2004–05) as follows:

	£
Compensation for work related personal injury	8,500
Compensation for upheld complaint of bullying and harassment, including compensation for loss of earnings	6,812.49
Compensation for work related personal injury	6,500
Compensation for work related personal injury	4,100
Compensation for upheld complaint of disability discrimination	2,500
Compensation for upheld complaint of race discrimination	2,000
Compensation for upheld complaint of race discrimination	2,000

Departmental Estate

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what *(a)* land and *(b)* property his Department (i) owns and (ii) rents in each constituency; and if he will make a statement. [33252]

Alan Johnson: The following list shows properties owned/rented by the Department and the constituency in which each building is located.

Building/land	*Constituency*	*Tenure*
151 Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1W	Cities of London and Westminster	Rented
1 Victoria Street, London, SW1H	Cities of London and Westminster	Rented
Kingsgate House, London, SW1E	Cities of London and Westminster	Rented
Oxford House, London, W1D	Cities of London and Westminster	Rented
10 Victoria Street, London, SW1H	Cities of London and Westminster	Rented
Atholl House, Aberdeen, ABU	Aberdeen North	Rented
St. Mary's House, Sheffield, S2	Sheffield Central	Rented
Newtown House, Nottingham, NG1	Nottingham South	Rented
Westfield House, London, SW18	Putney	Rented
2A Ryland Street, Warrington, WA1	Warrington South	Rented
Tay House, Glasgow, G2	Glasgow Central	Rented
Amberley House, Gloucester, GL2	Gloucester	Rented
Queensway House, Billingham, TS23	Stockton North	Rented
National Physics Laboratory, Teddington, TW11	Twickenham	Owned
Wrest Park, Bedfordshire	Mid-Bedfordshire	Owned
Core Store, Edinburgh, EH17	Edinburgh South	Owned

Departmental Sponsorship

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the names of the awards are that have been sponsored by his Department in the last 12 months. [28679]

Alan Johnson: The information is as follows:

Asian Business Awards

Black Enterprise Business Awards

Best Factory Awards

British Building Maintenance Awards

British Computer Society (IT Developer of the Year Award)

British Construction Industry Awards

British Diversity Awards

E-commerce Awards

European Federation of Black Women Business Owner Awards

Everywoman Award

First Womens Awards

GRAFTAS

Handbags.com Business Awards

Manufacturing Excellence Awards

Schools Aerospace Challenge

Startups.co.uk Awards

Note:

The term 'sponsor' has been defined as business/industry awards programmes that have received a financial contribution from the Department of Trade and Industry.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many personnel were employed in his Department in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* civil servants, *(b)* contractors and *(c)* other staff. [27579]

Alan Johnson: The figures for the number of civil servants employed by the Department of Trade and Industry are published in Table C of the Civil Service Statistics which covers permanent staff numbers (on a full-time equivalent basis) in each Departments and Agency. The latest (2004) Civil Service Statistics are available in the Libraries of the House and on the Cabinet Office Statistics website at:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_of_the_civil_service/statistics/civil_service_statistics/index.asp

Specific data on the number of contractors and other staff in the Department and Agencies since 1997 is not held. The information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Websites

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will take steps to ensure the Department's websites attain the W3C AAA standard of accessibility for people with visual and other disabilities; and if he will set a target date for this standard to be achieved by. [30965]

Alan Johnson: DTI follows the Guidelines for UK Government Websites which mandate Level A of the W3C's Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. DTI aims to go beyond this by meeting the AA standard, along with those elements of AAA which are considered best practice. However, neither the Government Guidelines, e-Accessibility communications from the European Union or advice from the RNIB have ever suggested that government websites should attain and maintain the whole of Level AAA.

We do recognise importance of ensuring all of our web content is accessible to all our customers, regardless of disability, level of technology or other factors. We therefore strive to build accessibility and usability into all our websites, from commissioning the initial design to the ongoing maintenance.

Economic Performance Statistics

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to his oral statement of 19 May 2005, *Official Report*, column 283, what the source is for his reference to the UK as the fourth largest economy of the world; and when he expects such figures will next be updated. [33475]

Alan Johnson: The source was OECD statistics of comparative GDP of member states at current prices and exchange rates. The latest figures published by the OECD relate to 2004. Data for 2005 will be released towards the middle of 2006.

Energy Imports

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of the United Kingdom's energy requirements for the 2004–05 financial year was imported from France; and at what cost. [33422]

Malcolm Wicks: During the calendar year 2004, the United Kingdom imported 9,784GWh of electricity generated in France, which was valued at £347 million. In addition, small quantities of coal, manufactured solid fuels and petroleum products were also imported from France, but from records held centrally it is not possible to reliably identify whether these were produced in France or if French companies acted as intermediaries.

In total, imports from France accounted for around 2½ per cent. of energy imports, equating to around 1¼ per cent. of UK primary energy demand.

Energy Review

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry who will chair the Energy Review; when it will deliver its preliminary findings; whether they will be published; when he expects it will be completed; and when he expects its findings to be made public. [34181]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* I will lead the Energy Review.

The Review will report to my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in early summer. Details of the arrangements for the publication of the findings of the Review will be made available at that time.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will seek a cross-party consensus on the recommendations of the Energy Review before they are published. [34182]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State and I would welcome contributions throughout the Energy Review process from a wide range of stakeholders, which of course includes colleagues from all parties.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether his Department plans to publish a White Paper following completion of the Energy Review; how representations should be made to the Review; whether there will be public hearings; and whether the Review will consider the *(a)* operation of energy markets and *(b)* incentives for long-term investment in the energy sector. [34184]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* There are no plans to publish a White Paper at present.

A consultation document will be published early in the review process. Stakeholders will be invited to respond to the consultation document in writing. Throughout the review a programme of events will be held to engage with stakeholders and encourage an informed debate.

The Terms of Reference of the Review are broad in scope including aspects of both energy supply and demand and will focus on policy measures to help us deliver our objectives beyond 2010.

Energy Supplies (Wales)

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what projections his Department has made for carbon dioxide emissions in Wales based on *(a)* a continuation of the present mix of energy sources, *(b)* mixes of energy sources that include nuclear power and *(c)* mixes of energy sources that do not include nuclear power; and if he will make a statement; [33522]

(2) what projections his Department has made for a mix of energy sources to meet energy demand in Wales that *(a)* includes and *(b)* does not include nuclear power over the next (i) five, (ii) 10, (iii) 20 and (iv) 50 years; and if he will make a statement. [33526]

Malcolm Wicks: Official energy and emissions projections are not available for Wales. Projections for the UK as a whole were published in November 2004, and are available on the DTI website at http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/uep2004.pdf. An addendum was also published, which extended the projections to 2020, and can be found at http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/uep_addendum.pdf.

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment his Department has made of the potential for renewable energy to meet energy demand in Wales over the next *(a)* five, *(b)* 10, *(c)* 20 and *(d)* 50 years; and if he will make a statement. [33523]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government have a target of 10 per cent. of electricity coming from Renewable Obligation eligible sources of renewable energy by 2010, with an aspiration to double that by 2020.

The Department has made no assessment of the potential for renewable energy to meet energy demand by region. However, the Welsh Assembly Government have recently published Technical Advice Note 8:M (Tan 8) Planning for Renewable Energy, and is consulting on Route Map to a clean, low carbon and more competitive energy future for Wales. Copies are available from their website http://www.wales.gov.uk

Enterprise Grants

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many enterprise grants were made available to small and medium-sized enterprises in each year from 1997 until the scheme concluded; and what their total value was in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* each region and *(c)* each constituency. [33469]

Alun Michael: The Enterprise Grant scheme was launched on 1 January 2000 and closed to new applications on 31 March 2004. Scheme information relating to applications, offers and expenditure by region can be found in the Industrial Development Act Annual Report, published by the Stationery Office and placed in the Libraries of the House. Due to changes in data storage the information is not available by constituency.

EU Directive 2001/77/EC

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made in meeting the requirements of Article 6 of EU Directive 2001/77/EC; and if he will make a statement. [32746]

Malcolm Wicks: Article 6 of the EU Directive 2001/77/EC, on the promotion of electricity produced from renewable energy sources in the internal electricity market, refers to Administrative procedures and the need to:

reduce the regulatory and non-regulatory burden;

streamline and expediting procedures; and

ensure that the rules are objective, transparent and non-discriminatory.

The 2003 Energy White Paper 'Our energy future—creating a low carbon economy', reviewed Government's energy policy including renewables and also gave a commitment to review progress of the Renewables Obligation in 2005–06. The Government are currently consulting on the 2005–06 Review of the Renewables Obligation. The changes under consideration are limited and seek to maintain the stability of the Obligation while improving its effectiveness over time.

A copy of the consultation document is available from the Libraries of the House.

Freedom of Information

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many Freedom of Information applications his Department has received; how many have taken more than 20 days to process; and how many of these gave rise to complaints about the time taken. [31222]

Alan Johnson: Between 1 January and 30 June 2005 my Department received 533 requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 (the Act). 205 requests took longer than 20 working days to respond to, of which 52 were answered within an extended time as permitted by the Act. These figures were published in the Department for Constitutional Affair's FOI monitoring bulletins for the first and second quarters of 2005. The number of complaints about the time taken to respond to requests under the Act is not a figure which is required for central Government monitoring purposes and is therefore not held by my Department.

The Department for Constitutional Affairs is committed to publishing quarterly updates in relation to departmental performance under FOI, including information on both the volume and outcomes of requests. The bulletin for the second quarter was published on 30 September 2005 and can be found on the DCA website at http://www.foi.gov.uk/statsapr-jun05.htm and the bulletin for the first quarter can be found at http://www.foi.gov.uk/statsjan-mar05.htm. The bulletins are available in the Libraries of the House. The next bulletin will be published before Christmas, and an annual report will be published in early 2006.

Gas

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment his Department has made of the Gas Exporting Countries' Forum's long-term influence on global gas prices. [32268]

Malcolm Wicks: The evidence to date indicates that gas exporting countries are seeking to increase their supplies. The Gas Exporting Countries' Forum has said that it does not wish to become a 'gas OPEC'.

Microgeneration Energy

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research he has commissioned into the potential for microgeneration energy production across the waterways in *(a)* Leominster constituency, *(b)* each region of the United Kingdom and *(c)* the whole of the United Kingdom. [33489]

Malcolm Wicks: I have not commissioned research that focuses specifically on the potential for microgeneration across the waterways in Leominster constituency or on a regional basis. I did, however, commission a report looking into the costs and benefits of a range of microgeneration technologies including micro-hydro. I plan to publish this report shortly.

Miners' Compensation

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in how many miners' hearing loss claims his Department has paid for more than one medical examination. [34208]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* To date, the Department has met the cost of more than one medical examination in 665 miners' hearing loss claims out of 38,244 received.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been paid in medical costs under the miners' compensation scheme *(a)* in total and *(b)* in hearing loss claims; and in respect of how many claims in each case. [34209]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* The total paid for medical costs in the respiratory disease and Vibration White Finger schemes is £311 million. This is in respect of £403,000 settled claims. The figure for medical costs in hearing loss claims is not readily available as these are met in respect of individual claims rather than on a schemed basis.

Nuclear Power

Anne Moffat: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the *(a)* modification and *(b)* upgrading of nuclear power stations requires a planning application to be submitted. [34008]

Malcolm Wicks: Depending on the nature of the change, planning permission may be required.

Patent Office

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when the next quinquennial review of the Patent Office will take place. [30052]

Alan Johnson: A recommendation of "Better Government Services—Executive Agencies in the 21st Century" published by the Prime Minister's Office of Public Services Reform in July 2002 was that the central programme of quinquennial reviews of agencies such as the Patent Office, was abolished and replaced by business reviews of the end-to-end process in achieving specific outcomes. The methodology for such reviews and the cycle of them is integrated with the departments' business planning process and specific priorities for review agreed as part of Spending Review decisions.

A methodology has been adopted whereby the Patent Office Business Plan is agreed each year with the Department of Trade and Industry to ensure its objectives match departmental objectives and plans.

Post Office

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make it his policy to maintain the Post Office as a public utility; and if he will make a statement. [33589]

Barry Gardiner: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry made it clear at DTI oral questions on 21 July that the Government will not privatise Royal Mail. We will continue to pursue our ambition of a publicly owned Royal Mail Group, including Post Office Ltd., fully restored to good health and providing customers with an excellent service and its employees with rewarding employment.

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the feasibility of making international comparisons of consumer empowerment and support for the purposes of measuring achievement against public service agreement target 3. [30062]

Alan Johnson: In 2003, my Department published a comparative report on consumer policy regimes. The report can be found at http://www.dti.gov.uk/ccp/topics1/pdf1/benchmain.pdf. This was the result of work by DTI, OFT and HM Treasury officials looking at nine different consumer policy regimes across the OECD.

A DTI-led research programme under the OECD's Committee on Consumer Policy is now examining in more detail specific aspects of consumer policy regimes in OECD countries, with the aim of identifying the common features of effective regimes. As the research progresses, our understanding of what makes an effective consumer regime should improve and we will be able to compare aspects of our own regime against this.

Regional Assistance Grant

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total amount of regional assistance grant to industry was in *(a)* each constituency in the north west of England and *(b)* each region in England in 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [33444]

Alun Michael: The figures in the table include Regional Selective Assistance (RSA) and Selective Financial Investment (SFI) grants. RSA came to an end at the end of the financial year 2003–04 and was replaced by Selective Financial Investment (SFI). However some RSA grants received at the end of the financial year 2003–04 were processed in 2004–05.

RSA and SFI are aimed specifically at assisted areas (list as follows) which means that not all the constituencies in the North West are eligible for funding.

Constituency	Amount offered (£)	Capital expenditure (£)	New jobs	Safeguarded jobs
Barrow and Furness	3,850,000	38,674,500	23	836
Birkenhead	600,000	3,609,000	85	6
Blackburn	795,000	5,995,666	68	88
Bolton North East	328,000	3,432,000	28	51
Bolton South East	26,000	228,450	2	0
Bolton West	494,000	2,720,051	113	43
Bootle	85,000	478,800	14	0
Burnley	35,000	260,000	3	0
Crewe and Nantwich	109,000	566,000	25	1
Denton and Reddish	114,800	787,000	14	14
Eccles	259,000	1,849,000	3	158
Ellesmere Port and Neston	2,090,000	12,430,000	142	84
Halton	363,500	5,228,000	13	15
Heywood and Middleton	197,000	1,379,700	14	32
Hyndburn	172,000	1,159,500	31	24
Knowsley North and Sefton East	5,125,000	23,242,424	113	432
Knowsley South	6,250,000	126,693,000	139	742
Lancaster and Wyre	43,000	356,000	4	0
Leigh	2,192,000	16,173,000	130	281
Liverpool Garston	7,297,000	132,102,000	545	0
Liverpool Riverside	950,000	6,023,500	172	0
Liverpool Wavertree	190,000	1,196,000	38	51
Makerfield	2,547,000	10,597,550	424	33
Manchester Blackley	92,000	615,233	36	42
Manchester Central	2,211,000	10,889,000	375	160
Manchester Gorton	45,000	322,000	2	0
Oldham East and Saddlworth	72,000	654,000	0	0
Oldham West and Royton	292,000	2,640,000	65	—
Pendle	74,300	751,000	11	—
Penrith and The Border	23,000	259,000	4	—
Rochdale	327,000	3,085,000	412	—
Rossendale and Darwen	220,000	1,312,000	42	—
St. Helens North	585,000	2,986,000	83	11
St. Helens South	603,000	6,966,168	52	44
Salford	36,000	302,000	2	24
Southport	51,000	218,382	7	—
Stretford and Urmston	567,000	4,676,867	32	55
Wallasey	100,000	460,000	6	—
Weaver Vale	2,503,000	20,381,000	113	350
West Lancashire	256,000	1,028,400	30	—
Westermorland and Lonsdale	27,000	134,000	—	5
Wigan	1,020,000	13,966,800	63	139
Wirral South	330,000	1,588,500	92	—
Wirral West	25,000	102,847	1	—
Workington	440,000	2,511,000	30	82
Total	44,011,600	471,030,338	3,601	3,803

Renewable Energy

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress has been made in achieving an increase in electricity production from renewable energy sources in line with EU Directive 2001/77/EC; and if he will make a statement. [32745]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government have made significant progress in increasing electricity production from renewable energy sources in line with EU Directive 2001/77/EC, on the promotion of electricity produced from renewable energy sources in the internal electricity market.

In 2004, 4.39 per cent. of electricity was derived from renewable sources on a Renewables Directive basis, compared to just 2.85 per cent. in 2001. The details of which are published in the Digest of UK Energy Statistics (DUKES). A copy of DUKES is available from the Libraries of the House.

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research his Department has undertaken to assess the export potential of renewable energy technologies to developing countries. [33985]

Malcolm Wicks: The renewable sector trade promotion service is currently focussing its market visit and appraisal work on countries that have demonstrated the greatest market potential for the UK and is supporting companies to win business in those markets. The service has in the past carried out formal market appraisal work for some developing countries including India and Indonesia which were followed up with trade missions.

Small Business Service

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many inquiries the Small Business Service had from Southend West constituency in each of the last three years for which figures are available. [33547]

Alun Michael: Inquiries for small businesses are handled by the local Business Link. The hon. Member's constituency falls within the catchment area of Business Link for Essex. In 2002–03 Business Link received 12,717 inquiries; in 2003–04 16,014 and in 2004–05 18,657.

The Business Link for Essex does not collate data at constituency level. However, it holds the following records of inquiries for Southend by financial year:

	Number of inquiries
April 2003 to March 2004	936
April 2004 to March 2005	1,228
April 2005 to November 2005	1,623

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many businesses were started in Southend West constituency with the help of the Small Business Service in each of the last three years for which figures are available. [33548]

Alun Michael: DTI figures based solely on VAT registrations for Southend West parliamentary constituency are shown as follows for 2002 to 2004. Data for 2005 will be available in autumn 2006.

	DTI figures
2002	275
2003	265
2004	245

VAT registrations do not capture all start-up activity. Businesses are unlikely to be registered if they fall below the compulsory VAT threshold. Only 1.8 million out of 4.3 million enterprises were registered for VAT at the start of 2004.

Public funding for start-ups takes various forms, including support from Business Link. In relation to Business Link, data is not routinely captured at constituency level. However, Business Link for Essex holds the following records of inquiries for Southend by financial year:

	Number of inquiries
April 2003 to March 2004	936
April 2004 to March 2005	1,228
April 2005 to November 2005	1,623

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much funding was made available to companies by the Small Business Service in each of the last three years for which figures are available. [33549]

Alun Michael: The total programme expenditure for the Small Business Service, as reported in its Annual Report and Agency Accounts, was:

	£ million
	Amount
2002–03	357
2003–04	378
2004–05	386

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the Small Business Service in assisting the establishment of new companies. [33551]

Alun Michael: Since the Small Business Service was established in 2000, business start-ups have risen to record levels. The number of small businesses has risen by over 500,000, since 1997, to 4.3 million. In England the Business Link service is now supporting 170,000 pre-start ups each year. The Small Business Service's Public Sector Agreement target is to help to build an enterprise society in which small firms of all kinds thrive and achieve their potential with (i) an increase in the number of people considering going into business, (ii) an improvement in the overall productivity of small firms, and (iii) more enterprise in disadvantaged communities. Recent progress in achieving this target is available on the DTI website: www.dti.gov.uk/expenditureplan/report2005/pdfs/expenditure_plan_complete.pdf

Small/Medium Enterprises Employees

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many employees in the UK are employed *(a)* in (i) small and (ii) medium-sized enterprises and *(b)* in total; and if he will make a statement. [33446]

Alun Michael: In the UK, at the start of 2004, there were 6,470,000 employees employed in small enterprises (enterprises with 0 to 49 employees), 2,567,000 employed in medium-sized enterprises (enterprises with 50 to 249 employees), and 9,124,000 employed in large enterprises (enterprises with 250 or more employees).

This gives a total of 18,161,000 employees in the UK private sector at the start of 2004. This excludes 3,838,000 business owners and partners. This information is set out in tables available on the website of the Department of Trade and Industry's Small Business Service at www.sbs.gov.uk/smes.

Small businesses make a major contribution to the health of the economy, helping to boost productivity, increase competition and innovation, and generating employment, which is why the Government are committed to making the UK the best place in the world to start and grow a business. Since 1997, employment in small firms has risen by nearly 900,000.

Telephone Numbers

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 10 October 2005, *Official Report,* column 38W, on telephone numbers, when he expects Ofcom to reply to the hon. Member for Gordon. [31730]

Alun Michael: I have made inquiries and it appears that due to an administrative error the questions did not reach Ofcom as intended. This has now been rectified and the hon. Member should receive his replies very shortly.

Wind Farm, Gwynt y Mor

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what applications he has received in respect of the development of the proposed Gwynt y Mor wind farm off the coast of North Wales. [33878]

Malcolm Wicks: I can confirm that the Department has received an application under Sections 36 and 36A of the Electricity Act 1989 from npower renewables for the construction of a 750MW offshore electricity generating station at Gwynt y Mor.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Consolidated Resource Accounts

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the written-off bad debt referred to on page 58 of the Consolidated Resource Accounts 2004–05. [34350]

Mr. Lammy: The written off bad debt referred to on page 58 of the consolidated resource accounts 2004–05 issued by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport arose as a result a change in treatment of VAT on rental invoices to tenants following a Customs and Excise (now HMRC) determination that DCMS cannot opt to tax and therefore is not providing a supply to its tenants for the purposes of VAT. Hence DCMS cannot issue a VAT invoice.

Legal advice from the Treasury Solicitor confirmed HMRC advice that DCMS could not opt to tax.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the theft of works of art in Buenos Aires referred to on page 58 of the Consolidated Resource Accounts 2004–05. [34351]

Mr. Lammy: The works of art at Buenos Aires were stolen from the UK ambassador's temporary residence, Buenos Aires in August 2001. Details of the stolen works of art were immediately placed on the International Art Loss Register to try to identify any subsequent attempt to sell them on the International Art Market. However, as they have not been recovered, a decision was made to write them off as referred to on page 58 of the Consolidated Resource Accounts 2004–05.

Gaming Board

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) if she will make a statement on the proposals by the Gaming Board to increase prizes and stakes on gaming machines; [33968]

(2) what plans she has to implement the recommendations of the Gaming Board to increase prizes and stakes. [33969]

Mr. Caborn: While the triennial review of gaming machine stake and prize limits conducted by the Gaming Board (now replaced by the Gambling Commission) had become a matter of custom and practice, it had no statutory basis.

The Government decided last year that it would be inappropriate to a schedule of the stakes and prize limits that would apply on increase stake and prize limits just as Parliament was about to debate the Gambling Bill, and before any of the regulatory safeguards proposed in the Bill, now the Gambling Act 2005, could be put in place. Instead implementation of the Act was published alongside the draft Bill.

While I understand that many in the industry feel they are facing difficult trading conditions, I have seen no clear evidence that would lead the Government to reconsider this position.

Government Art Collection

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the 10 most expensive items of modern art purchased from Government funds in the last 12 months. [33738]

Mr. Lammy: The information you request is not available centrally. Individual Departments keep records of works of art bought or commissioned by them.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Hemel Hempstead (Mike Penning) of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1608W, on departmental assets, whether the Government Art Collection is insured. [34401]

Mr. Lammy: The Government Art Collection is not commercially insured. In general, the Government carry their own risk. However, there are a small number of exceptions of works of art in non-Government buildings which are commercially insured.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Hemel Hempstead (Mike Penning) of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1608W, on departmental assets, whether an estimate is made of the value of items in the Government Art Collection for *(a)* risk assessment and *(b)* insurance purposes when art is selected for Ministers' offices. [34403]

Mr. Lammy: The current monetary value of a work of art can only be accurately assessed at the time of its purchase or sale or by professional valuation. In the former case, the collection is not actively traded; in the latter, it would not be a justifiable expenditure of public funds to have the whole collection commercially valued.

The professional staff at the Government Art Collection assess each display location on a case by case basis. The works of art from the collection that are placed in Minister's offices are not commercially insured as in general the Government carry their own risk.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Hemel Hempstead (Mike Penning) of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1608W, on departmental assets, whether the assessors of the Government Art Collection have identified a particular cross-section of the whole as *(a)* possessing particular and exceptional merit, *(b)* as being of particular rarity and *(c)* in need of preservation. [34404]

Mr. Lammy: The professional curators of the Government Art Collection (GAC) assess the most important works within the collection and determine conservation treatment accordingly.

Licensing

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on representations received from the hospitality sector in Coventry, South on the Licensing Act 2003. [32325]

James Purnell *[holding answer 29 November 2005]:* I am not aware that the Government have received any representations from the hospitality sector in Coventry, South about the Licensing Act 2003.

I am confident that licensing reform will remove unnecessary regulatory burdens and enable the hospitality sector in Coventry and elsewhere to better respond to consumer demand. At the same time, licensing reform will help tackle alcohol-related problems by removing artificial and fixed closing times and providing new powers to tackle problem premises.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will place in the Library *(a)* the Regulatory Impact Assessments for the Licensing Act 2003 and *(b)* her Department's statutory guidance and subsequent secondary legislation. [32496]

James Purnell: All of the Regulatory Impact Assessments, the statutory guidance and secondary legislation have been deposited in the House Libraries on the dates set out in the following tables.

Regulatory Impact Assessments placed

Date placed in Libraries	*Title*
20 November 2002	RIA on the Alcohol and Entertainment Licensing Bill, November 2002
31 March 2003	Revised RIA on the Licensing Bill
13 January 2005	RIA the Licensing Act 2003 (Personal licences) Regulations 2005, the Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005, the Licensing Act 2003 (Premises licences and club premises certificates) Regulations 2005, the Licensing Act 2003 (Transitional Provisions) Regulations 2005, the Licensing Act 2003 (Licensing authority's register)(other information) Regulations 2005
20 January 2005	RIA the Licensing Act 2003 (Traditional conversion fees) Order 2005, the Licensing Act 2003 (Fees) Regulations 2005
20 October 2005	RIA the Licensing Act 2003 (Permitted Temporary Activities) (Notices) 2005

Statutory guidance placed

Date placed in Libraries	*Title*
7 July 2004	Guidance issued under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 and Guidance to police officers on the operation of closure powers in Part 8 of the Licensing Act 2003

The Stationary Office (TSO) routinely supply all secondary legislation to the House Libraries.

Secondary legislation deposited

Date placed in Libraries	*Title*
24 January 2002	SI 493 The Deregulation (Restaurant Licensing Hours) Order 2002
24 July 2002	SI 3205 The Regulatory Reform (Special Occasions Licensing) Order 2002
16 July 2003	SI 1911 (.78) Licensing Act 2003 (Commencement) Order 2003
11 August 2003	SI 2100 (C.86) The Licensing Act 2003 (Commencement No. 2) Order 2003
15 December 2003	SI 3222 (C 127) Licensing Act 2003 (Commencement No.3) Order 2003
8 July 2004	SI 1738 (C.69) Licensing Act 2003 (Commencement No.4) Order 2004
8 July 2004	SI 1739 Licensing Act 2003 (First appointed day and personal licences transitional period) Order 2004
13 September 2005	SI 2360 (C.101) Licensing Act 2003 (Commencement No.5) Order 2004
13 September 2005	SI 2362 The Licensing Act 2003 (Licensing statement period) Order 2004
17 January 2005	SI 40 The Licensing Act 2003 (Transitional provisions) Order 2005
17 January 2005	SI 44 The Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005
17 January 2005	SI 42 The Licensing Act 2003 (Premises Licensing and Club Premises Certificates) Regulations 2005
17 January 2005	SI 41 The Licensing Act 2003 (Personal licensing) Regulations 2005
17 January 2005	SI 43 The Licensing Act 2003 (Licensing Authority's Register) (Other Information) Regulations 2005
20 January 2005	SI 79 The Licensing Act 2003 (Fees) Regulations 2005
20 January 2005	SI 80 The Licensing Act 2003 (Transitional conversions fees) Order 2005
25 January 2005	SI 78 The Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) (Amendment) Regulations
22 February 2005	SI 357 The Licensing Act 2003 (Fees) (Amendment) Regulations
28 July 2005	SI 2090 (C.91) The Licensing Act 2003 (Commencement No.6) Act 2005
29 July 2005	SI 2091 The Licensing Act 2003 (Second appointed day) Order 2005
26 August 2005	SI 2366 The Licensing Act 2003 (Personal licence: relevant offences) (Amendment) Order 2005
20 October 2005	SI 2918 The Licensing Act 2003 (Permitted Temporary Activities) (Notices) Regulations 2005
1 November 2005	SI 3027 The Licensing Act 2003 (Amendment of the Gaming Act 1968) (Transfer of Gaming Machine Permits) Order 2005
1 November 2005	SI 3028 The Licensing Act 2003 (Amendment of the Lotteries and Amusements Act 1976) (Transfer of Amusements With Prizes Permits) Order 2005
2 November 2005	SI 3048 The Licensing Act 2003 (Consequential Amendments) Order 2005
3 November 2005	SI 3056 (C.131) The Licensing Act 2003 (Commencement No.7 and Transitional Provisions) Order 2005

London Olympics

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the opportunities for businesses in Gravesham arising from the 2012 London Olympic Games. [33637]

Mr. Caborn: There has been no specific assessment made of the benefits to Gravesham from hosting the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games. However, we expect the Games to offer significant opportunities for business across the whole of the UK with contracts on offer ranging from construction and land remediation through to the design and manufacture of staff uniforms and catering for visitors, athletes and officials.

We have established a Nations and Regions Group on which each region of England—including the South East of England—plus Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland are represented. We are asking each region to develop a plan for their area to maximise the benefits of hosting the Games in sporting, social and economic terms.

Private Finance Projects

Stephen Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer of 8 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 583W, to the hon. Member for Runnymede and Weybridge (Mr. Hammond), on private finance projects, what the *(a)* capital value and *(b)* total value is of the Royal Parks Agency's private finance initiative contract for Inn on the Park at St. James'; and what percentage of the contract is attributable to capital value. [27133]

Mr. Lammy: The Royal Parks Agency's contract with the catering concessionaire who runs the Inn the Park restaurant at St. James's Park is, according to HM Treasury guidelines, more properly classified as a public-private partnership than a private finance initiative.

The capital value of the investment made by the concessionaire to fit out the restaurant was £718,755. The Royal Parks invested £3,146,231 in the project. The total value of the agency's contract with the concessionaire includes an annual licence fee to the agency, which is set at a percentage of the restaurant's annual turnover.

The value of the licence fee and the percentage rate at which it is set are both matters of commercial confidentiality.

Tourism

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the cost has been of VisitBritain's Britain Welcomes China initiative. [25884]

Tessa Jowell: The cost to VisitBritain of the "Britain Welcomes China" campaign was £49,500. A further £16,500 was raised from VisitBritain's private sector partners. The campaign is part of broader work to ensure that Britain's tourism industry makes the most of this emerging market, which is increasingly important to the whole of the British economy. In 2004, UK exports of goods and services to China amounted to £3.4 billion, a rise of 55 per cent. over the figure for 2002.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what funding she makes available to local authorities to establish tourism officers. [34247]

James Purnell: The Government value the importance of local authorities in developing tourism, and believe that the appointment of dedicated tourism officers is one way of adding value by co-ordinating local marketing, infrastructure development, and other functions.

However, my Department is not responsible for the funding of local authorities, which are themselves best placed to make decisions on tourism funding from their general resources. In making such decisions on the basis of local need, the Government expect local authorities to work closely with the regional development agencies where appropriate, and with others including the private sector.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport which 10 tourist attractions in Lancashire received the highest visitor numbers in each of the last three years for which figures are available. [34066]

James Purnell: My Department does not keep a central record of the tourist attractions throughout the United Kingdom. VisitBritain who promote tourism in England and overseas, and England's Northwest Research Service produce Attractions Surveys, and it's from these source, that the visitor numbers to the top 10 tourist attractions in Lancashire in 2002 and 2004 have been collated and set out in the table.

Tourist attraction	*2004*	*2003*	*2002*
Pleasureland Theme Park	2,100,000	2,100,000	2,000,000
Blackpool Pleasure Beach	6,200,000	6,200,000	6,200,000
Oswaldtwistle Mills Shopping Village, Hyndburn	978,000	1,002,000	907,000
Blackpool Tower	617,389	575,000	641,000
Camelot Theme Park, Chorley	330,895	395,000	365,000
Guildhall, Preston	309,000	[1]—	310,000
Blackpool Zoo	300,000	[1]—	[2]295,000
Lancaster Leisure Park	[2]235,000	[1]—	[2]215,000
Sandcastle, Blackpool	233,922	[1]—	400,000
Beacon Fell Country Park, Preston	222,658	[1]—	[2]250,000

[1] No data held.

[2] Estimate

Wembley Project

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on progress of the Wembley project. [34246]

Mr. Caborn: We have been given assurances that the new Wembley Stadium will be completed in the spring of 2006.

The aim of both the Football Association and Wembley National Stadium Ltd. is to hold the 2006 Cup Final at Wembley.

This is an extremely complex project that will ensure that Wembley remains one of the world's great sporting venues and a fitting stadium for football in the 21st century.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Airspace (Extraordinary Rendition)

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether under the *(a)* US/UK bilateral Air Services Agreement and *(b)* Chicago Convention the US authorities would need to seek permission for the use of (i) UK airspace and (ii) UK overseas territories for the purpose of the extraordinary rendition of those accused of terrorist activities; and if he will make a statement. [33706]

Ian Pearson: Under the UK/USA Air Services Agreement and the Chicago Convention, the permission of the United Kingdom is required to operate scheduled and non-scheduled services between the United States and the United Kingdom or United Kingdom Overseas Territories. Under the Chicago Convention, permission is not needed for non-scheduled, non-commercial civil aircraft overflying or landing at civilian airports in the UK or its Overseas Territories.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 19 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1093–4W, on UK airspace, if he will list those countries *(a)* where there are substantial grounds to believe that a person deported would be subject to torture and *(b)* where there is a risk that the death penalty will be applied; and if he will make a statement. [33711]

Dr. Howells: It is not possible to list countries in the way suggested. The specific circumstances of an individual's case would determine whether there would be substantial grounds for believing that he or she would be subject to torture or face a real risk of the death penalty if deported.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether UK Government officials have discussed with the US Administration the use of EU airspace for the purpose of the extraordinary rendition of those accused of terrorist activities since 11 September 2001; and if he will make a statement. [33818]

Ian Pearson: We raise a range of issues with the United States Administration on a regular basis. The Government are aware of media allegations about "extraordinary rendition" operations allegedly conducted by the US authorities, and my right hon. Friend, the Foreign Secretary, has written to the US Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice, on behalf of EU Partners.

Albania

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the Government's policy is on the possible accession of Albania to the EU. [33591]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Thessaloniki summit of June 2003 reaffirmed the EU's commitment to the eventual integration of the Western Balkans countries, including Albania, into the Union. In return for this commitment, the countries undertook to meet the political and economic requirements, including regional co-operation, that are set for all aspirants. The Government fully support the commitment made at Thessaloniki towards Albania, and hopes that Albania will take steps to meet the necessary conditions.

Argentina

Mr. MacDougall: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent progress has been made in negotiations with Argentina over air-links to the Falkland Islands. [34121]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We would like to see an agreement on further flights between the Falklands and mainland South America but this must be on terms acceptable to all sides. So far we have not reached an agreed basis for starting discussion.

British Embassy (Moscow)

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost was of running the British embassy in Moscow in each year since 2002. [33365]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: From the budget devolved annually to the British embassy in Moscow, the following has been spent on its running costs during each financial year (FY) since 2002:

£

Financial year	*Amount*
2002–03	4,908,161.45
2003–04	4,542,097.90
2004–05	4,213,081.25

Departmental Research

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what research projects commissioned by his Department are being undertaken; and what the publication arrangements are in each case. [32995]

Ian Pearson: Definitive information on commissioning of research projects is not held centrally and could not be obtained except at disproportionate cost. However, I am not aware of any external organisations at present commissioned to carry out research projects on behalf of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

Departmental Tendering Policy

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his policy is on including *(a)* ethical and *(b)* environmental factors in tenders for services. [33332]

Ian Pearson: Tendering procedures for the award of contracts by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office adhere to strict guidelines embodying not only the EU procurement directives and UK legislation, but also the Department's own code of ethics. Robust measures for the evaluation process are in place which ensure not only the equal treatment of all tenders, but also the transparency and impartiality of the process.

Specific environmental factors can be a criterion and this is considered on a case-by-case basis. However, the Department requires as a minimum that all services are provided in accordance with the Department's environmental policy, which is to conserve energy, water and other resources, reduce waste and phase out the use of ozone depleting substances and minimise the release of greenhouse gases, volatile organic compounds and other substances damaging to health and the environment. All written work, including reports, in connection with the contract shall, unless otherwise specified, be produced on recycled paper containing at least 80 per cent. post consumer waste and used on both sides where appropriate.

Egypt

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what discussions he has had with the Government of Egypt on the human rights and welfare of the Baha'i community; [33452]

(2) what assessment he has made of the impact of the forthcoming computerisation of identity cards in Egypt and the potential exclusion of the Baha'i community upon the rights of the Baha'i community; [33453]

(3) what representations he has received on the impact of the forthcoming computerisation of identity cards in Egypt upon *(a)* the human rights, *(b)* the access to basic services and *(c)* the access to employment of the Baha'i community. [33459]

Dr. Howells: New Egyptian identity cards require citizens to associate themselves with one of only three religions: Islam, Judaism or Christianity. Egyptian citizens of other religions will not be entitled to an identity card, and may therefore suffer from lack of access to public services.

The Egyptian constitution states that all Egyptian citizens should be treated equally, regardless of religion. It is therefore important that provision is made for all Egyptian citizens to receive identity cards.

The UK, along with Australia, the USA, Canada and Ireland, took part in a demarche on the Egyptian Government in December 2004 on the topic of identity cards. We plan to raise our concerns again with the Egyptian Government before the end of the year.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has received representations from the Baha'i community, Egyptian and international human rights organisations and people that have converted from Islam to Christianity on the impact the new identity cards will have.

EU-Israel Association Agreement

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if, at the Association Council EU-Israel meeting to be held in Brussels on 12 December, the UK presidency will call for Israel to consult the EU by a set date on its compliance with the human rights obligations of the EU-Israel Association Agreement; and if he will make a statement. [33300]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The EU maintains a regular dialogue with Israel on human rights within the framework and structure of the EU-Israel Association Agreement. We last raised human rights with Israel at the EU-Israel Political Dialogue and Cooperation subcommittee, which met for the first time on 21 November 2005 and proposed the creation of a new working group on human rights. We will agree with other EU member states what issues to raise in advance of the forthcoming EU-Israel Association Council.

European Court of Human Rights

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many *(a)* petitions were received and *(b)* cases were dealt with by the European Court of Human Rights in the last five years for which figures are available; and how many and what percentage of each total related to each Council of Europe member state. [33724]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The following table provides a list of how many petitions have been received and how many cases have been dealt with by the European Court of Human Rights during the 5 year period 2000–04. The figures also relate to those for each member state of the Council of Europe, excluding Monaco, who only joined the Council of Europe in October 2004.

State	*Applications lodged 2000–04*	*Percentage of applications lodged*	*Cases dealt with 2000–04*[1]	*Percentage of cases dealt with*
Albania	107	0.060	22	0.029
Andorra	9	0.005	7	0.009
Armenia	239	0.135	52	0.070
Austria	2,080	1.173	1,573	2.108
Azerbaijan	816	0.460	245	0.328
Belgium	1,228	0.692	544	0.729
Bosnia and Herzegovina	370	0.209	46	0.062
Bulgaria	3,259	1.837	1,360	1.823
Croatia	2,720	1.533	1,485	1.990
Cyprus	219	0.123	107	0.143
Czech Republic	3,809	2.147	1,504	2.016
Denmark	628	0.354	307	0.411
Estonia	678	0.382	623	0.835
Finland	1,188	0.670	726	0.973
France	14,523	8.187	6,331	8.485
Georgia	195	0.110	61	0.082
Germany	9,484	5.347	3,348	4.487
Greece	1,774	1.000	894	1.198
Hungary	2,084	1.175	1,027	1.376

State	Applications lodged 2000–04	Percentage of applications lodged	Cases dealt with 2000–04[1]	Percentage of cases dealt with
Iceland	45	0.025	28	0.038
Ireland	338	0.191	142	0.190
Italy	16,144	9.401	5,610	7.518
Latvia	1,222	0.689	460	0.616
Liechtenstein	18	0.010	11	0.015
Lithuania	1,985	1.119	1,196	1.603
Luxembourg	231	0.130	87	0.117
Malta	55	0.031	17	0.023
Moldova	1,311	0.739	234	0.314
Netherlands	2,213	1.248	225	0.302
Norway	384	0.216	220	0.295
Poland	21,910	12.352	8,902	11.930
Portugal	1,108	0.625	741	0.993
Romania	14,288	8.055	3,262	4.372
Russia	26,149	14.742	11,324	15.176
San Marino	17	0.010	21	0.028
Serbia and Montenegro	694	0.391	0	0
Slovakia	2,465	1.390	1,316	1.764
Slovenia	1,260	0.710	450	0.603
Spain	3,751	2.115	1,997	2.676
Sweden	2,113	1.191	1,293	1.733
Switzerland	1,504	0.848	885	1.186
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia	480	0.271	156	0.209
Turkey	13,930	7.853	6,637	8.895
Ukraine	10,986	6.193	5,639	7.557
United Kingdom	7,371	4.155	3,503	4.695
Total	177,382	100	74,618	100

[1] Cases in this column include: applications declared inadmissible or struck out; and judgments.

Greek Cypriot Community

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when the Minister for Europe last received a request for a meeting with the Greek Cypriot community in the United Kingdom; what his reply was; and if he will make a statement. [34442]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Greek Cypriot community invited me to attend a dinner on 8 November and requested a meeting. My reply expressed my regret that I was unable to attend the dinner and meet with them at that time. I am, of course, willing to consider future requests for meetings.

Iraq

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to paragraph 92 of the Intelligence and Security Committee Report Cm 5972, whether the Secret Intelligence Service has reported to the Government on its investigations into the authenticity of its documentary evidence into the claim that Iraq sought to procure uranium from Africa. [33620]

Ian Pearson: It is not the Government's policy to comment on intelligence matters. The Intelligence and Security Committee reviewed the assessments made of available intelligence in the report to which my hon. Friend refers. Following this, and exceptionally, all relevant intelligence material relating to Iraq's alleged attempts to procure Uranium from Niger was made available to Lord Butler when conducting his 2004 Review.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many military missions over Iraq have been flown by US aircraft based on Diego Garcia since March 2003; and what types of missions have been flown. [32332]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* I have been asked to reply.

Information relating to military missions over Iraq from US aircraft based on Diego Garcia during the combat phase of Operation telic in March and April 2003 is not held centrally by the Ministry of Defence or any other Government Department and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, we can confirm that no US aircraft based at Diego Garcia has been involved in operations over Iraq since the end of April 2003.

Israel

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to *(a)* his Israeli counterpart and *(b)* the United Nations about the human rights implications of the Israeli air force policy of flying over the occupied Gaza strip breaking the sound barrier to create supersonic booms; and if he will make a statement. [33621]

Dr. Howells: Our embassy in Tel Aviv has raised our concerns about the indiscriminate damage caused by low flying aircraft in Gaza with the Israeli Government and directly with the Israeli air force. Israel has the right to defend itself against terrorism but must act within international law and minimise the impact of its actions on innocent civilians. Our concerns about Israeli military activity are reflected in our voting record at the United Nations.

Maladministration

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many payments for maladministration have been made by *(a)* his Department, *(b)* its agencies, *(c)* its non-departmental public bodies and *(d)* other bodies for which his Department has responsibility in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [32241]

Ian Pearson: It is the policy of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, its agencies, non-departmental public bodies and, where appropriate, its sponsored organisations to make financial redress in accordance with the guidance set out in chapter 18.7 and annexes 18.1 and 18.2 of "Government Accounting". The guidance can be accessed at:

http://www.government-accounting.gov.uk/current/content/ga_18_7.htm

The information the hon. Member requested is set out in the following table:

Foreign and Commonwealth Office	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Department	7	14	10	6	4
Agencies	0	0	0	0	0
NDPBs	0	0	0	0	0
Bodies sponsored by Department	0	0	0	0	0

Mauritania

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to visit Mauritania; and whether he has had recent discussions with officials from this country. [33369]

Dr. Howells: Following the coup d'etat in Mauritania on 3 August, the UK, along with our EU partners, has sought to engage constructively with the Mauritanian authorities, in order to encourage a return to democracy as soon as possible. Since the coup, UK officials have had bilateral contact with representatives of Mauritania. On 30 November, my right hon. Friend, the Foreign Secretary, took part in EU consultations with Mauritania under Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement, to set a timetable for a return to democracy.

There are no plans for a Government Minister to visit Mauritania.

Ministerial Meetings

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met the President of *(a)* Paraguay and *(b)* Mongolia; and what was discussed. [33366]

Ian Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has not had the opportunity to meet with President Duarte Frutos of Paraguay.

The Foreign Secretary has not met President Enkhbayar since he became President of Mongolia. Their last meeting was in October 2003, when he visited the United Kingdom as Prime Minister. They discussed relations between the two countries and shared concerns on international issues such as Iraq and terrorism.

Ministerial Visits

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs who made the decision for him to return early from Moscow in November. [33528]

Mr. Straw: I made the decision in consultation with the Chief Whip.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many joint visits he has made with the Prime Minister to foreign countries in 2005. [33362]

Mr. Straw: I have not made any joint bilateral visits with my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister to foreign countries in 2005. The Prime Minister and I attend European Councils together and we both attended the NATO and EU/US Summits in Brussels in February. More recently the Prime Minister and I were in Barcelona for the EuroMed Conference.

Pakistan

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations have been made by the Government to the Government of Pakistan about the safety of religious minorities living in Pakistan; and if he will make a statement. [33947]

Dr. Howells: Officials have renewed their representations to the Government of Pakistan following recent incidents of violence against minorities.

On 16 November 2005, EU Heads of Mission met Pakistan's Minister for Religious Affairs Ijaz ul Haq and called for greater protection of the rights of minorities.

The Archbishop of Canterbury, accompanied by members of the British high commission, raised the treatment of minorities in meetings with President Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz, during his visit from 19–29 November.

Romania

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he plans to visit Romania to assess its progress towards meeting the criteria for EU entry. [33361]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary does not currently have plans to visit Romania. The UK is providing assistance and advice to help the Romanian Government implement the necessary EU reforms. The European Commission is closely monitoring Romania's preparations and will produce a progress report in April/May 2006.

Treaty of Rome

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on events planned *(a)* in the UK and *(b)* at EU level to commemorate 50 years of the Treaty of Rome; and what budget has been allocated to each such events. [33735]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has not yet given consideration to what events it plans to hold in 2007. Further details of European Commission and European Parliament plans can be obtained from the UK Representations of the European Union's Institutions, contact details of which can be found at www.cec.org.uk, www.europarl.org.uk and www.europe.eu.int.

DEFENCE

Bosnia

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the value is of total outstanding claims against third party drivers deemed negligent in Bosnia in cases where reminders have been sent to the Ministry of Justice there. [34362]

Mr. Touhig: The total value of the three outstanding claims against third party drivers deemed negligent in Bosnia in cases where reminders have been sent to the Ministry of Justice is £18,729.

Army Vehicle Repairs

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* Warrior and *(b)* CVR(T) vehicles have undergone fourth line maintenance in the past 10 years; and to which Army Base Repair Organisation site they were despatched. [33579]

Mr. Ingram: All level 4 activity for Warrior and CVRT has historically been undertaken at ABRO Donnington. ABRO's records only go back as far as 1999–2000 and the output since then is as follows:

	Warrior	*CVRT*
1999–00	53	134
2000–01	91	158
2001–02	97	161
2002–03	88	149
2003–04	79	133
2004–05	77	132

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the expected throughput of *(a)* Warrior and *(b)* CVRT vehicles is for fourth line maintenance at the Army Base Repair Organisation Bovington site. [33581]

Mr. Ingram: As the trade union consultation process on the transfer of activity to Bovington has not concluded, the detailed planning has still to be finalised by ABRO, therefore precise information is not as yet available.

The intended throughput for level 4 activity at Bovington, based on the indicative requirements is as follows:

	Warrior	*CVRT*
2007–08	47	62
2008–09	55	66

BAE Systems (Saudi Arabia)

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence at how many meetings over the past year held between the Defence Export Services Organisation's (DESO) Regional Directorate 1 overseas staff based in Saudi Arabia and BAE Systems *(a)* the issue of agents to be used by BAE Systems in Saudi Arabia has been raised and *(b)* advice and information has been provided to BAE Systems by DESO's overseas staff. [33921]

Mr. Ingram: The Defence Export Services Organisation Regional Directorate responsible has one member of staff based in Saudi Arabia who has not been contacted by BAE Systems regarding the use of agents in the last year.

Departmental Finance

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the Winter Supplementary Estimates 2005–06 (HC 672), for what reasons actual expenditure under Request for Resources 1: Provision of Defence Capability in the first six months of the current financial year has exceeded forecasts. [32701]

John Reid: The forecast figure reported in table 1.6 of the MOD's 2005–06 Winter Supplementary Estimates was incorrect. HM Treasury will issue a correction notice.

The revised forecast will be £16,748.9 million, which is still slightly below the provisional out-turn. This is because Forecast Expenditure is profiled evenly across the year, but actual expenditure may not match this detailed profile exactly.

We expect to be within budget at year end.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the Winter Supplementary Estimates 2005–06 (HC 672), if he will break down the *(a)* current and *(b)* revised Request for Resources 1 provision for each of his Department's top level budget holders by (i) direct resource departmental expenditure limit (DEL), (ii) indirect resource DEL and (iii) capital DEL. [32702]

John Reid: The main estimates split between direct and indirect resources for each top level budget holder (TLB) is set out in table 1 as follows:

Table 1: Composition of direct and indirect DEL by TLB at main estimates 2005–06

£000

TLB	*Direct RDEL*	*Indirect RDEL*	*Total*
Commander-in-Chief Fleet	1,395,994	2,128,000	3,523,994
General Officer Commanding (Northern Ireland)	481,825	127,662	609,487
Commander-in-Chief of Land Command	4,184,573	1,435,867	5,620,440
Commander-in-Chief Strike Command	1,890,373	1,781,751	3,672,124
Chief of Joint Operations	386,115	158,473	544,588

Table 1: Composition of direct and indirect DEL by TLB at main estimates 2005–06

£000

TLB	Direct RDEL	Indirect RDEL	Total
Chief of Defence Logistics	3,803,680	3,766,363	7,570,043
2nd Sea Lord/Commander-in-Chief Naval Home Command	645,497	82,976	728,473
Adjutant General (Personnel and Training Command)	1,570,024	170,730	1,740,754
Commander-in-Chief Personnel and Training Command	751,006	159,998	911,004
Central	2,060,284	256,119	2,316,403
Defence Estates	827,602	146,808	974,410
Defence Procurement Agency	1,626,315	836,916	2,463,231
Corporate Science and Technology	507,943	(4,000)	503,943
Total	20,131,231	11,047,663	31,178,894

The revised winter supplementary estimates split between direct and indirect resources for each top level budget holder (TLB) is set out in table 2 as follows:

Table 2: Revised composition of direct and indirect DEL by TLB at winter supplementary estimates 2005–06

£000

TLB	Direct RDEL	Indirect RDEL	Total
Commander-in-Chief Fleet	1,434,270	2,132,205	3,566,475
General Officer Commanding (Northern Ireland)	449,571	105,396	554,967
Commander-in-Chief of Land Command	4,197,035	1,396,796	5,593,831
Commander-in-Chief Strike Command	1,965,203	1,868,531	3,833,734
Chief of Joint Operations	358,112	150,255	508,367
Chief of Defence Logistics	4,439,816	3,202,526	7,642,342
2nd Sea Lord/Commander-in-Chief Naval Home Command	659,936	85,207	745,143
Adjutant General (Personnel and Training Command)	1,586,602	172,193	1,758,795
Commander-in-Chief Personnel and Training Command	759,547	170,708	930,255
Central	1,876,209	543,373	2,419,582
Defence Estates	890,353	135,091	1,025,444
Defence Procurement Agency	1,808,613	739,582	2,548,195
Corporate Science and Technology	506,288	(4,200)	502,088
Total	20,931,555	10,697,663	31,629,218

The Capital DEL allocations by TLB are set out in the 2005–06 main estimates in column 7, pages 276–77. The revised capital DEL allocations by TLB are set out in column 7, page 207 of the "Part 11: Revised subhead detail including additional provision" section of the winter supplementary estimates.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the winter supplementary estimates 2005–06 (HC 672), for what reasons the total additional net resource requirement is lower than the additional net cash requirement. [32705]

John Reid: The additional cash requirement includes capital and resource expenditure. In accordance with HM Treasury consolidated budgeting guidance for 2005–06 the total additional net resource requirement excludes capital expenditure, and therefore a lower figure is shown than in the additional cash requirement.

Far East POWs

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he held with representatives of Far East prisoners of war before his decision to offer compensation for distress caused by his Department's failure to set out the eligibility criteria clearly to non-qualifying claimants for the ex-gratia payment scheme for Far East prisoners of war. [32339]

Mr. Touhig: I met my hon. Friend, the Member for Hendon (Mr. Dismore), who is chairman of the Far East Prisoner of War All Party Parliamentary Group on 13 September, and took the opportunity to discuss the Department's intentions with respect to the level of compensation and the likely reaction of those affected. I also took advice from officials who had previous contact with some of those affected and their representatives, and who therefore had an appreciation of the distress that our maladministration has caused.

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what criteria were used in arriving at the figure of £500 compensation awarded to non-qualifying claimants for the ex-gratia payment scheme for Far East prisoners of war for distress caused by his Department's failure to set out the eligibility criteria clearly. [32340]

Mr. Touhig: The payment is for any distress which may have resulted from the loss of expectation of a payment under the scheme. The amount reflects the extent of that expectation and the length of time that those involved have had to wait for a resolution. The award is at the upper end of the scale of what the Ministry of Defence would pay in cases where there has been similar maladministration of our pension and War Pension schemes.

Gulf War Veterans

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many of the personal medical records of veterans from Wales of the 1990–91 Gulf conflict have been lost. [22346]

Mr. Touhig *[pursuant to the reply, 1 November 2005, Official Report, c. 913W]:* It has come to light that some of the information about the retention of medical records of service and ex-Service personnel was misleading.

Medical records of members of the armed forces are not held centrally. The medical records of individuals who have left the services are held by each service at individual central locations. The records of those still serving are normally held at their unit medical centre. They are not held in a way that allows the identification of those who at some stage resided in Wales. It is not possible, therefore, to estimate the number that may be missing.

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many servicemen and women from Wales who served in the 1990–91 Gulf conflict are suffering from diagnosed illnesses. [22437]

Mr. Touhig *[pursuant to the reply, 2 November 2005, Official Report, c. 1069W]:* It has come to light that some of the information about the retention of medical records of service and ex-service personnel was misleading.

Information on all the illnesses reported by veterans of the 1990–91 Gulf conflict is not held centrally. Although the medical records of individuals who have left the services are held by each service at individual central locations, the MOD does not hold records of all illnesses reported after an individual has left the service. Furthermore, for those still serving, medical records are normally held at their unit medical centre. They are not held in a way that allows the identification of those who at some stage resided in Wales.

Harrier Servicing

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the cost per man hour of servicing the Harrier fleet at *(a)* RAF Cottesmore and *(b)* the Defence Aviation Repair Agency, St. Athan. [31646]

Mr. Ingram: Costs for servicing the Harrier fleet are not recorded by man-hour and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

In overall terms, however, the concentration of Harrier aircraft maintenance, including Harrier GR7 to GR9 upgrade, at RAF Cottesmore, and the introduction of more effective and efficient processes is expected to deliver savings of £44 million over financial years 2005–06—2008–09.

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the average repair times were in the last period for which figures are available on Harrier jets *(a)* at RAF Cottesmore and *(b)* the Defence Aviation Repair Agency St. Athan. [32700]

Mr. Ingram: Detailed information on average repair turn round times of aircraft is not held centrally. Repair times are agreed individually according to the extent of the damage and operational requirements. To obtain an accurate assessment of average repair times would require the manual checking of individual aircraft records to ascertain which elements of work were undertaken for repair purposes, and which fell into other categories, such as, upgrade, role change or scheduled maintenance. This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Iraq

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the extent of infiltration by insurgents of Iraqi security forces; and if he will make a statement. [23118]

John Reid: We are aware that a number of insurgents, militia members or individuals with militia allegiance have been able to join the Iraqi Security Forces (ISF) and that in some cases ISF members have committed insurgent acts. We continue to work with the Iraqi authorities to assess the scale of this problem. The Ministry of Defence does not, however, conduct routine monitoring of a kind that would provide an accurate quantitative assessment of ISF infiltration in the Multi National Division (South East) area where UK forces are operating.

NATO Secondees

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will pay those seconded to NATO, including those in the Territorial Army and reservists, the full rate according to current agreements. [32213]

Mr. Touhig: I understand that the hon. Member is referring to comparisons in pay between members of the UK's armed forces and those of the armed forces of other NATO member states.

The UK armed forces have an expectation of world wide service and their remuneration package is structured accordingly. Their pay is recommended by the independent Armed Forces Pay Review Body (AFPRB). For its 2005 report to the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Defence, the AFPRB commissioned a survey into the military remuneration packages of 12 countries which contribute to international operations alongside UK forces. The AFPRB concluded from the results that the UK package remains broadly comparable with those offered by other nations.

Naval Logistical Ships

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total overspend on the two logistical ships under construction at Swan Hunter has been to date. [33736]

Mr. Ingram: The increase in costs above the originally agreed contract value for the two Swan Hunter vessels is £84 million. However, the company have indicated a likelihood of a further cost increase. The Ministry of Defence is currently in discussion with the company and these discussions are subject to commercial confidentiality.

Operation Telic

Mr. Llwyd: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many service men and women who have served in Operation Telic have reported illnesses similar to those reported by veterans of the Gulf War. [22473]

Mr. Touhig *[pursuant to the reply, 1 November 2005, Official Report, c. 916W]:* It has come to light that some of the information about the retention of medical records of service and ex-service personnel was misleading.

Information on all the illnesses reported by service personnel who have served on Operation Telic is not held centrally. Although the medical records of individuals who have left the services are held by each service at individual central locations, the records of personnel who are still serving are normally held at their unit medical centre.

Royal Ordnance (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the contract between his Department and Proof Yard, Royal Ordnance in Chorley; and whether the contract for work at the Chorley Royal Ordnance site will be renewed after March 2006. [33965]

Mr. Ingram: The current contract is due to expire on 31 March 2006 and there are no plans to extend the contract beyond that date.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps the Government are taking to ensure that redundancy payments to former employees of Royal Ordnance in Chorley are fully funded. [33967]

Mr. Ingram: The former Royal Ordnance site at Chorley is now owned by BAE Systems Land Systems. Any redundancy payments made to employees arising from the closure of the site are a matter for the company.

University Officer Training Corps

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what training in leadership is offered to participants in University Officer Training Corps schemes. [33136]

Mr. Touhig: Both theoretical and practical leadership training is conducted throughout the syllabus in both military and adventurous training, sport and social activities. Military training, coloured by the sponsor service, is used as a vehicle to deliver leadership opportunities rather than simply delivering military skills. Those who successfully complete the syllabus may sit an examination to gain a City and Guilds Council of Military Education Committees Leadership Award. The award is based on the five core skills areas of: leadership, organisation and self-discipline, communication, teamwork, analysis and problem solving.

PRIME MINISTER

Administrative Savings

Mr. Maude: To ask the Prime Minister what administrative savings have been made by his office in each of the last eight years. [34955]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my office forms part of the Cabinet Office. I have therefore asked my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Murphy) to reply. A copy of the reply will be placed in the Library of the House.

Commonwealth Head of Government Meeting (Malta)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Prime Minister whether on the occasion of the Commonwealth Heads of Government in Malta *(a)* he, *(b)* accompanying Ministers and *(c)* officials had (i) formal discussions and (ii) discussions on the margins of the conference involving other prime ministers or members of delegations of those countries where Her Majesty the Queen is Head of State about the law and constitution pertaining to the common institution of the Monarchy; and if he will make a statement. [34509]

The Prime Minister: There were no such discussions.

Ministerial Travel

Mr. Hands: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 162W, on ministerial travel, when it was last appropriate for him to travel on the London underground on official business. [33703]

Bob Russell: To ask the Prime Minister on how many occasions since 7 July he has used the London underground in connection with his official duties. [35016]

The Prime Minister: I have nothing further to add to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Hammersmith and Fulham (Mr. Hands) on 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1661W.

Ministerial Visit (Saudi Arabia)

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Prime Minister (1) whether meetings he held with Crown Prince Abdullah and officials in July 2005 during his visit to Saudi Arabia were attended by employees of BAE Systems; and if he will make a statement; [34831]

(2) whether the meetings he held with Crown Prince Abdullah and officials in July 2005 during his visit to Saudi Arabia included discussion of *(a)* Saad al-Faqih and *(b)* Mohammed al-Masari; and if he will make a statement; [34834]

(3) whether the meetings he held with Crown Prince Abdullah and officials in July during his visit to Saudi Arabia included discussion of the Eurofighter Typhoon; and if he will make a statement. [34835]

The Prime Minister: I have nothing further to add to the answer I gave the hon. Member on 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 924W.

Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill

David Simpson: To ask the Prime Minister (1) what consultation he undertook with Northern Ireland political parties before the Government introduced the Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill; [34221]

(2) what discussions he had with church representatives before the Government introduced the Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill; [34222]

(3) what discussions he had with the Police Service of Northern Ireland about paramilitary fugitives from justice before the Government introduced the Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill; and what advice he received. [34244]

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The Prime Minister: I have meetings with a wide range of organisations and individuals on a wide range of subjects. Information relating to internal meetings, discussion and advice is not disclosed as to do so could harm the frankness and candour of internal discussion.

Sugar Beet Farmers

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Prime Minister if he will meet a delegation of Shrewsbury sugar beet farmers at No. 10 Downing Street to discuss their concerns about the proposed EU sugar regime changes. [33886]

The Prime Minister: I have no current plans to do so. However, my right hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Lord Bach) has met representatives from the National Farmers Union and other interested parties on this issue, and would be happy to meet such a delegation from Shrewsbury.

Terrorism

Grant Shapps: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his oral answer of 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 298 to the right hon. and learned Member for Folkstone and Hythe (Mr. Howard) on terrorism, what estimate he has made of the number of police officers required to analyse the data contained on one 20.4 gigabyte hard drive within 90 days. [33569]

The Prime Minister: A decision on the number of police officers deployed to focus on a particular area of an investigation, such as analysing data, is the responsibility of the chief constable of the force concerned.

Visits (Shrewsbury)

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Prime Minister (1) when he last visited Shrewsbury; [33885]

(2) if he will visit the areas in Shrewsbury prone to flooding. [33887]

The Prime Minister: I last visited Shrewsbury in November 2000 to inspect flooding in the area, where I met local councillors and members of the Environment Agency. As part of that trip I also visited the other flood hit areas of Bewdley and York.

While I have no current plans to visit again in the near future, I understand that the Environment Agency has recently invested £3.5 million in a flood risk management improvement project in Shrewsbury, and is considering carefully the case for further investment in other areas of the town.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Africa (Aid)

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what method he will use to measure progress in providing enhanced partnership at the country and regional level, especially through the G8, to increase the effectiveness of aid and ensure that international policies support African development as required by 2004 public service agreement target 1. [29933]

Hilary Benn: The Technical Note to DFID's 2005–08 public service agreement provides full details of the indicators and methodologies which will be used to monitor performance against target 1. The Technical Note is available on DFID's website at www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/PSA/technicalnotes.pdf

The latest progress against this target, and on all other targets within DFID's PSA, will be reported in the Autumn Performance Report 2005, which will be published later this month.

Darfur

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the development assistance which will be required by Darfur in the next *(a)* five and *(b)* 10 years. [33848]

Hilary Benn *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* The Department for International Development has not yet made an assessment of the development assistance required by Darfur in the next five and 10 years. The UK and the broader international community have focused efforts in Darfur on responding to the humanitarian needs there; until there is a political resolution to the conflict it is unlikely that significant development work will take place in Darfur. However, we welcome recent efforts by the UN to look at how peace would be consolidated in Darfur through a range of political, humanitarian, recovery and reconstruction work, after a peace agreement.

Following this, we have recommended to the UN that it and the World Bank undertake an assessment in Darfur as soon as the security situation allows, looking at needs over a three to four year period. We have asked the UN and the World Bank for a concept paper for such an assessment.

Departmental Estate

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what *(a)* land and *(b)* property his Department (i) owns and (ii) rents in each constituency; and if he will make a statement. [33248]

Mr. Thomas: DFID does not own or rent any land. DFID owns one property, namely Abercrombie House, Eaglesham Road, East Kilbride, Glasgow, G75 SEA in the constituency of East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow.

DFID rents the following properties:

1 Palace Street, London, SW1E SHE

20 Victoria Street, London, SW1H 0NF

both in the constituency of Cities of London and Westminster, and also (for storage purposes only) 43/45 Fairfield Place, East Kilbride, Glasgow, G74 5LP, also in the constituency of East Kilbride, Strathaven and Lesmahagow.

Departmental Targets

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of his Department's ability to influence the matters covered by his Department's 2004 public service agreement targets. [30639]

Hilary Benn: DFID, in common with all other Government Departments, submits a self-assessment of its capacity to deliver its public service agreement (PSA) targets to the Treasury on a six-monthly basis. These self-assessments feed into the Treasury's delivery reports on departmental performance.

DFID also makes assessments of its ability to deliver the PSA targets as part of our annual business planning process. Known as directors' delivery plans, the business plans, which are reviewed and amended each autumn: consider progress to date against each of the PSA targets; analyse the mechanisms and structures in place to secure delivery of the targets, making adjustments where necessary; review risk management strategies and set out the activities that will be carried out and the resources that will be required to deliver the targets.

Ethiopia

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what action the Government are taking on *(a)* government to government aid for Ethiopia and *(b)* direct budgetary support following recent events in Ethiopia; what representations he has made within the EU; and if he will make a statement. [34062]

Hilary Benn: The UK, holding Presidency of the EU, issued a statement on 6 November 2005 expressing grave concern about recent events in Ethiopia, and called for restraint and dialogue. In a separate statement all international donors to Ethiopia, including the UK, announced that they were reviewing their development assistance programmes.

We have not provided any direct budgetary support to Ethiopia this year, and together with the other budget support donors, we are considering how best to adjust our assistance programme to ensure that poor people are not disadvantaged.

Montserrat

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress the Government are making with its plan to establish in Montserrat a positive population policy which promotes population growth and is sensitive to the social and governance impact. [33757]

Mr. Thomas: With support from DFID and the European Union, the Montserrat Government have made good progress in several areas to promote the retention of the present population and to encourage the return of Montserratians from overseas. It has increased the level of housing and accommodation provision, increased access to good quality education, improved the quality and scope of health provision, improved air access to the island, and is promoting Montserrat as a safe and stable place to live in. The development of a social and economic hub at Little Bay, together with ongoing and planned efforts to stimulate economic growth, should contribute further to the achievement of this goal.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development when he will answer questions *(a)* 26330, *(b)* 26328 and *(c)* 26329 tabled by the hon. Member for Stratford-on-Avon on 3 November. [33012]

Hilary Benn: I refer the hon. member for Stratford-on-Avon to the responses given by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for International Development (Mr. Thomas) on 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 57W and on 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 356–57W respectively.

Public Service Agreement

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how value for money indicators will be used to measure performance against 2004 public service agreement number 6. [29929]

Hilary Benn: The technical note to DFID's 2005–08 public service agreement provides full details of the indicators and methodologies which will be used to monitor performance against target 6, which focuses on the impact and effectiveness of DFID's bilateral programme. The technical note is available on DFID's website at www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/PSA/technicalnotes.pdf.

The latest progress against this target, and on all other targets within DFID's PSA, will be reported in the autumn performance report 2005, which will be published later this month.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what criteria he will use to measure the effectiveness of multilateral institutions as required by 2004 public service agreement target number 3. [29930]

Hilary Benn: The technical note to DFID's 2005–08 public service agreement provides full details of the indicators and methodologies which will be used to monitor performance against target 3. The technical note is available on DFID's website at www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/PSA/technicalnotes.pdf.

The latest progress against this target, and on all other targets within DFID's PSA, will be reported in the autumn performance report 2005, which will be published later this month.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans he has to verify the quality of data used to measure performance against 2004 public service agreement target 2. [29931]

Hilary Benn: DFID's public service agreement (PSA) target 2 for the 2005–08 PSA seeks 'Progress towards the MDGs in nine key countries in Asia'. Detailed progress is measured against five indicators and the PSA Technical Note sets out the various sources of data which underpin these indicators. It can be seen that the information required is drawn from authoritative international data series. Despite every effort to secure accurate data for all PSA focus countries, DFID recognises that there are limitations to the data available for reviewing progress. A detailed note on methodology and data issues is found as an annex to DFID's 2004 Autumn Performance Report (APR) and a similar annex is included within our 2005 APR, which will be published shortly. DFID is at the forefront of the

international effort to improve the availability and quality of data for measuring progress towards the MDGs and some of the work we are doing in this area is also mentioned in our APR annex.

I am pleased to note that the National Audit Office (NAO) is confident that the systems we use to measure progress against this target are sufficiently robust and well explained that they have been awarded a 'green' traffic light in their recent assessment. We are currently looking at comments from a useful report by the Statistics Commission which also looked at the targets used for measuring PSA progress.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the baseline is against which a reduction in the proportion of 15 to 24-year-old pregnant women with HIV as required by 2004 public service agreement target 1 is measured. [29932]

Hilary Benn: In both the 2003–06 and 2005–08 public sector agreements (PSAs), DFID has targets seeking progress towards the millennium development goals (MDGs) in countries in Africa and Asia. For the 2003–06 PSA baseline positions were set out, however over time, the baselines were revised due to new data becoming available and ongoing work within the international statistical organisations who provide the data we use. In response to this, for the 2005–08 PSA DFID has not published baseline figures, but rather has set percentage point changes, or directions of travel sought and will make an assessment of progress during the PSA focus period, based on the difference between the prevalence figure for the baseline year (in many cases 2000) given when the assessment is made, and the latest data available. This is explained in the Technical Note which accompanies our PSA.

The Joint United Nations Programme of HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), is the United Nations body which provides statistical data to measure progress in the area of HIV/AIDS and difficulties with these data are set out in DFID's PSA Technical Note. At the time the Technical Note was written, new data on HIV/AIDS were anticipated. These figures were supplied in 2004 and used in DFID's 2004 Autumn Performance Report. This stated that the average HIV prevalence rate among pregnant women aged 15–24 years, in the 11 African countries for which data were available, was 14 per cent., although prevalence rates range from 4 per cent. in Ghana to more than 28 per cent. in Lesotho. Most data in this assessment dated from 2003 and it is likely that this will represent the best baseline position for monitoring against the 2005–08 PSA. However DFID will continue to monitor methodological work in this area and seek the inclusion of data for the five PSA countries that were not included in the assessment made in 2004.

St. Helena

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development for what reason the costings have been removed from the publicly available version of the St. Helena Access Feasibility Study undertaken by Atkins. [34085]

Mr. Thomas: Procurement of a suitably qualified contractor for the design, construction and operation of the airport on St. Helena is being taken forward through international competitive tendering. Making available the cost information contained in the Feasibility Study may prejudice the procurement process and compromise our ability to ensure value for money.

UN Central Emergency Response Fund

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what representations he has made to governments from the *(a)* G8, *(b)* EU and *(c)* OPEC about the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund; and what responses he has received. [34844]

Mr. Thomas: An expanded United Nations Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF) forms a key element of the wider package of reforms to the international humanitarian system currently under way. A resolution to establish the new CERF is currently under discussion in the UN General Assembly. The G8 Response to the Indian Ocean Disaster issued at Gleneagles 2005 welcomed the work being done on the CERF. The UK is the only G8 member to have made a pledge so far.

Under the UK presidency, the EU has issued statements at UN events such as the July meeting of the Economic and Social Council, and the World Summit in September, supporting the expanded CERF. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development, has continued to discuss this with EU ministerial colleagues. In addition, I addressed the EU Informal Humanitarian Aid Committee in October on the reform package. So far, contributions to the expanded CERF have been pledged by the UK ($70 million), Sweden ($40 million), the Netherlands ($12 million), Ireland ($12 million), and Luxembourg ($4 million).

In terms of representations to OPEC countries, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development wrote to the Foreign Minister of Saudi Arabia in September, but to date no reply has been received. The UK plans to make representations to Indonesia.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which countries have pledged funds to the United Nations Central Emergency Response Fund; and how much each has pledged. [34845]

Mr. Thomas: To date a total of $172 million has been pledged from seven countries, including the UK. The UK contribution is $70 million (£40 million), and we have undertaken to increase it by $1 for every $3 donated by others, up to a maximum UK contribution of $100 million. The other six countries that have agreed to contribute are Sweden ($40 million), Norway ($30 million over 2 years), the Netherlands ($12 million), Ireland ($12 million), Switzerland ($4 million), and Luxembourg ($4 million).

Uzbekistan

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the circumstances were of the termination of aid projects in Uzbekistan in 2005; and if he will make a statement. [33476]

Mr. Thomas: Immediately after the events in Andijan in May 2005, DFID suspended, and subsequently terminated, its support to a poverty statistics project being implemented jointly with the World Bank, which involved close co-operation with the central Government. DFID has since decided to end its bilateral programme with effect from March 2006 when our remaining bilateral project-working with the United Nations Development Programme and local government on a cross-border sustainable livelihoods programme with Tajikistan-comes to an end. Given the policies of the Uzbek government the potential impact on poverty reduction of our small bilateral programme is very limited.

We will continue to support the work of multilateral agencies in Uzbekistan, particularly the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (EBRD), the World Bank and the Asian Development Bank (ADB). The EBRD has agreed a new country strategy, limiting its assistance to the private sector. The World Bank and the ADB are in the process of revising their strategies. We are keeping closely in touch with them.

DFID's regional HIV/AIDS programme in Central Asia, working with the World Bank and other partners and based in the Kyrgyz Republic, will include a component in Uzbekistan, managed by a non-government agency. The programme has just begun, in the Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, and will run to 2008.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefits Office Closures

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many crisis loans were issued in *(a)* Vale of Clwyd constituency and *(b)* Denbighshire in each week of (i) the six-month period prior to the closure of the Rhyl Benefits Office and (ii) the period since closure. [34625]

Mr. Plaskitt: The available information is in the following table.

Crisis loan initial awards made in Wrexham and North Wales Coast Jobcentre Plus district for each month from April 2005

	Number
April	516
May	461
June	504
July	479
August	485
September	652
October	612
November	741

Notes:
1. Rhyl Social Security Office closed on 21 October 2005, but social fund applications were no longer processed there after 31 July 2005.
2. Data is not available by parliamentary constituency or local authority, but only by Jobcentre Plus district.
3. Vale of Clwyd parliamentary constituency and Denbighshire local authority are in Wrexham and North Wales Jobcentre Plus district.
4. Data is not available by week, but only by month.
5. Initial awards do not include awards made after review.

Source:
DWP Social Fund Policy, Budget and Management Information System.

Child Maintenance

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Gravesham constituency are receiving maintenance via the Child Support Agency under the *(a)* old and *(b)* new scheme. [28373]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available at constituency level.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in respect of how many parliamentary questions tabled by the hon. Member for Yeovil on the Child Support Agency since 5 May the answers drafted by staff of the Child Support Agency have been altered following advice, representations or comment by *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* special advisers and *(c)* civil servants; and if he will make a statement. [33434]

Mr. Plaskitt: Ministers, special advisors and civil servants in the Department, including the Child Support Agency, contribute to drafting and quality assuring parliamentary question responses. The final reply is then the responsibility of the Minister or chief executive as appropriate.

The specific information requested is not available.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of Child Support Agency staff have been working for the Agency for *(a)* less than one year and *(b)* less than two years; and if he will make a statement. [21856]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty, dated 5 December 2005:

In reply to your Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of state promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of Child Support Agency staff have been working for the Agency for *(a)* less than one year and *(b)* less than two years; and if he will make a statement.

a) 8.16% of Child Support Agency staff (821.73 full-time equivalent) have been working for the Agency for less than one year.

b) 14.19% of Child Support Agency staff (1429.24 full-time equivalent) have been working for the Agency for less than 2 years.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what assessment he has made of the impact of the failures of the new Child Support Agency computer system on the Government's ability to meet its poverty reduction targets; and if he will make a statement; [30020]

(2) what assessment he has made of the effect of delays in the transfer of old cases to the new system by the Child Support Agency on progress towards the Government's poverty targets. [30037]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Child Support Agency contributes to the Government's wider target for the reduction of child poverty through a supporting target to increase the proportion of parents with care on income support and income-based jobseeker's allowance who receive maintenance for their children.

Achievement of this supporting target is dependent upon converting old scheme cases to the new scheme.

The Child Support Agency's chief executive, Stephen Geraghty, is currently undertaking a root and branch review of the Agency. He will report to Ministers and we will make announcements shortly.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average time taken to process compensation payments made to Child Support Agency clients for administrative errors was in 2004–05. [30031]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty, dated 5 December 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the average time taken to process compensation payments made to Child Support Agency clients for administrative errors was in 2004–05.

Financial redress is made to clients in cases where maladministration has occurred. The Agency does not hold robust information to distinguish administrative errors from other acts of maladministration.

However, in the 2004/2005 financial year 80% of financial redress payments for maladministered cases were processed within 30 days.

I hope you find this information useful.

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what disability benefits and allowances are taken into account when calculating Child Support Agency maintenance payments under the *(a)* old and *(b)* new systems. [30866]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* The old child support scheme takes fully into account as income payments of incapacity benefit, severe disablement allowance and certain elements of industrial injuries disablement benefit awards. War disablement pension, and any analogous payment made by another state, is taken into account apart from the first £10 a week.

Where a non-resident parent is entitled to a relevant benefit and would otherwise be required to pay the minimum amount of child support maintenance, their liability will instead be nil. The relevant disability benefits are incapacity benefit, attendance allowance, severe disablement allowance, disability living allowance and certain elements of industrial injuries disablement benefit.

The new child support scheme is more straightforward, the amount of a disability benefit or allowance is ignored in the calculation of a non-resident parent's income. Non-resident parents in receipt of a benefit generally pay child support maintenance at a flat-rate of £5 a week.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the backlog of Child Support Agency claims made by claimants in Coventry South was in each month since January 2004. [33513]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available at constituency level.

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the national targets are for the Child Support Agency; and what the performance of relevant offices in Devon and Cornwall has been against those targets. [34033]

Mr. Plaskitt: I would refer the hon. Member to the Child Support Agency's 2005 Business Plan which is held in the House of Commons Library and details the Agency targets.

I am sorry to say that information requested on performance against targets is not available at constituency level.

Community Employment and Social Solidarity Programme

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1867–68W, on the Community Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity, what the budget allocation has been for the programme; and if he will place in the Library copies of publications arising from the programme. [33668]

Mr. Plaskitt: Member states have not discussed the programme budget pending settlement of the Financial Perspective, the new EU-wide budget.

The Decision to establish the programme, including its eventual budget allocation, is subject to parliamentary scrutiny. The European Commission will publish annual activity reports, plus mid-term and ex-post evaluations of programme spending, outcomes and added value. Where appropriate these will be deposited for further consideration by the scrutiny Committees. Deposited documents and their associated explanatory memoranda provided by the Government are made available to the House Library.

Habitual Residence Test

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 613W on the habitual residence test, whether someone who has paid sufficient national insurance contributions to qualify for contributory benefits is subject to the habitual residence test for non-contributory benefits. [35117]

Mr. Plaskitt: Yes; all claims for income-related benefits are subject to the habitual residence test.

Jobcentre Benefit Claims

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the performance of the new case management system for Jobcentre benefit claims. [30545]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 5 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question about the performance of the Customer Management System (CMS) for Jobcentre Plus benefit claims. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Since 2003 Jobcentre Plus has been introducing a new process for taking claims for benefit, supported by CMS. Information to support claims for benefit is gathered from customers through Contact Centres and recorded in CMS, before being transferred, electronically for Income Support and Jobseekers Allowance, to benefit processing IT systems.

When the system was first introduced, we experienced some difficulties with system performance and reliability. Following a series of "performance releases" designed to tackle these problems, the computer system now performs to agreed service levels. Since February 2005, there has only been one occasion where a CMS failure has affected all offices and made it necessary to invoke business continuity procedures.

We have, however, experienced some difficulties in call handling in some of our Contact Centres. Some of our customers have found it difficult to get through on the telephone, and we have had to introduce clerical contingency procedures in a number of sites in order to maintain customer service. This has not been caused by any failure on the part of the computer system itself, but relates to the administrative processes that have been introduced alongside the new computer system.

Since introducing a number of temporary adjustments to these processes and taking urgent measures to recruit and train staff, there have been encouraging signs of recovery in our call handling. We are keeping the position under review on a site-by-site basis and each site has a plan for returning to the full process, supported by CMS, as quickly as possible.

I hope this reply has been helpful.

Jobcentre Plus

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what proportion of Jobcentre Plus CMS2 enabled contact centres have been unable to process cases on CMS2 in each of the last 24 months; what the average time taken to start payments *(a)* from CMS2 contact centres and *(b)* nationally was in the latest period for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [29989]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 5 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning how many CMS2 contact centres have been unable to process cases on CMS2 in each of the last 24 months and the average time taken to start payments from CMS2 contact centres and nationally. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

In answering the first part of your question, there are two circumstances where claims would not be processed through CMS:

1. in the event of a full CMS failure, contingency processes to issue clerical claim forms would be invoked. Information on this has only been recorded from February 2005. There has only been one single day instance between February 2005 and October 2005 where this affected all contact centres; and

2. when a business decision is taken to ensure that customer service is maintained; for example, a decision to introduce temporary process adjustments. Across all 22 CMS contact centres this happened in:

August 2005 in 3 contact centres;

September 2005 in 5 contact centres; and

October 2005 in 9 contact centres.

Turning to the second part of your question about the average time to start payments from CMS2 contact centres and nationally, Jobcentre Plus keeps statistics about the number of claims cleared and how long it takes. The statistics only show where the claim was processed, not where it originated so it is not possible to differentiate between claims that have been initiated through CMS2 enabled contact centres and existing service outlets. This means we cannot provide the specific information you have requested.

I can say, however, that in September, Income Support claims were cleared in an average of 10.8 days against a standard of 12 days, Incapacity Benefit claims were cleared in an average of 15.2 days against a standard of 17 days and Jobseeker's Allowance claims were cleared in an average of 13.5 days against a standard of 12 days.

I hope this is helpful.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many calls to Jobcentre Plus contact centres *(a)* were answered, *(b)* received an engaged tone and *(c)* were disconnected in each month from January; and if he will make a statement. [32512]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 5 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning how many calls to Jobcentre Plus contact centres *(a)* were answered, *(b)* received an engaged tone and *(c)* were disconnected in each month from January; and if he will make a statement. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

The table below gives information concerning the number of calls answered by our contact centres each month from January 2005:

2005	*Calls answered*	*Number of weeks in month*
January	1,047,410	4
February	987,512	4
March	1,123,918	5
April	974,024	4
May	983,397	4
June	1,347,089	5
July	1,068,299	4
August	972,636	4
September	1,357,084	5
October	1,082,554	4

When a customer calls they are placed into a queue either until the call is answered or they choose to abandon the call. Customers do not get an engaged tone. The information on disconnected calls is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

I hope this is helpful.

Means-tested Benefits

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the value of unclaimed means tested benefits funded by his

Department in *(a)* each region of the UK and *(b)* each county within Wales in each of the last five years, broken down by type of benefit. [33292]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information requested is not available.

Estimates of the value of the main income-related benefits unclaimed, that cover income support, minimum income guarantee and income-based jobseeker's allowance, as well as local authority administered housing benefit and council tax benefit, are available on a national basis. Estimates cannot be reliably disaggregated to lower geographies. The latest and previous years' national estimates can be found in the DWP report series entitled: "Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take-Up"; copies of which are available in the Library.

Pension Credit

Mr. McGovern: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of whether extra staff and resources would be required for administration purposes if every pensioner entitled to pension credit applied for it. [34859]

Mr. Timms: It is likely that additional staff would be needed to process a higher level of applications and administer a higher number of live awards. No specific estimates have been made of the number of staff and other resources that would be required in the event of full take-up by all entitled pensioners.

Pension Service staff and resource planning takes into account the planned take-up profile for pension credit.

Pensioners

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of pensioners in Wales receive less than £109 in total for state pensions and benefits; and if he will make a statement. [32569]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* The information in the following table shows those pensioners in Wales with a total weekly benefit income, including the state pension but excluding all private income, that is less than the standard minimum guarantee in pension credit for singles and couples.

	Couples	*Singles*	*All*
Number of pensioner units	80,000	100,000	170,000
Percentage of family type	50	43	45

Notes:
1. The total weekly benefit income includes pension credit but not income from private pensions.
2. Data is taken from the Family Resources Survey for years: 2001–02; 2002–03; and 2003–04. The Family Resources Survey is based on around 20,000 households, therefore there is a degree of sampling variation.
3. Figures are provided using a three-year rolled average as single-year estimates do not provide a robust guide to year-on-year changes.
4. The standard minimum guarantee in pension credit is equal to £109.45 per week for single pensioners and £167.05 for couples deflated to the appropriate price level for each year of data.
5. Pensioner couples are where the head of the household is above state pension age.
6. Number of pensioner units are rounded to the nearest 10,000.

Source:
Family Resources Survey

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Beverley and Holderness are entitled to the basic state pension. [33455]

Mr. Timms: The information requested is not available. However, as at 31 March 2005, there were 20,600 people in the Beverley and Holderness parliamentary constituency in receipt of a basic state pension.

Notes:
1. Data is taken from 5 per cent. sample therefore figures are subject to a degree of sampling variation. They are also adjusted to be consistent with the overall caseload from the WPLS.
2. Figure is rounded to the nearest 100.
3. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant Office for National Statistics postcode directory.

Source:
DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) 100 per cent. data and PSCS 5 per cent. samples.

Pensions

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost implications were in 2004–05 of deferring the start date for state pension payments until the Monday after an individual's 65th birthday; and what assessment has been made of the effects on the individuals concerned. [26108]

Mr. Timms: There are no benefit cost implications in paying state pension in advance and in whole weeks as opposed to paying it in arrears which would allow for part-week payments at the start and end of an award. We have assessed the current policy and have concluded that whatever the circumstances of the individuals concerned. They will always be able to collect a full week's pension within one week of establishing entitlement.

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the basic state pension was in 1997. [33278]

Mr. Timms: The basic state pension was £62.45 per week in April 1997. It is now £82.05 per week.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Abandoned Court Cases

Mike Penning: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the average cost of a court case was where prosecution was abandoned in the last year for which figures are available. [32202]

Ms Harman: This information cannot be provided without incurring disproportionate cost.

Asylum/Immigration

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the legal aid costs were of *(a)* representation in criminal cases in England and Wales and *(b)* representation and advice to detained asylum seekers in each year since 1997. [32216]

Bridget Prentice: The legal aid expenditure for representation in criminal cases for each financial year since 1997 was as follows:

	£ million
2004–05	971
2003–04	943
2002–03	866
2001–02	773
2000–01	657
1999–2000	619
1998–99	637
1997–98	596

The Legal Services Commission does not hold information on how much was spent on representation and advice for detained asylum seekers.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when she expects the immigration appeal of Basamai Abdul Wahab Salih, reference number VA07966/2005, to be heard. [33720]

Bridget Prentice: The Asylum and Immigration Tribunal (AIT) has confirmed that the appeal number provided in the question refers to the family visitor appeal of a Ms Basamat Abdulwhab Mohamed Salih. The appellant has requested the appeal be heard on papers.

A date for the hearing has not yet been set. A notice of pending appeal was issued to parties on 11 November 2005. Under current arrangements, the respondent has up to 11 weeks—including allowance for international transit—to prepare and serve the appeal bundle. Upon receipt of the bundle, such a case would be listed for hearing four weeks hence. On this basis, the AIT would expect to hear this case no later than the end of February 2006.

Correspondence

Sarah Teather: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when she will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Brent East dated 17 December 2004. [33860]

Ms Harman: My Department does not appear to have received the hon. Member's letter. My officials therefore contacted the hon. Member's office and obtained a copy. The Lord Chancellor will write to the hon. Member soon.

Crown Courts

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what proportion of trials in Crown courts were ineffective in each quarter since January 2000; and if she will make a statement. [34319]

Ms Harman: The following table sets out the proportion of trials in the Crown court which were ineffective in each quarter since June 2001. Data on ineffective trials was not collected before that period.

Proportion of trials in the Crown court that were ineffective since June 2001: England and Wales

	Number of:		
Quarter	*Trials listed*	*Ineffective trials*	*Percentage of ineffective trials*
2001			
June	12,155	2,943	24.2
September	13,357	3,239	24.2
December	13,048	3,173	24.3
2002			
March	13,398	3,070	22.9
June	13,133	3,147	24.0
September	14,359	3,291	22.9
December	13,377	3,184	23.8
2003			
March	14,734	3,236	22.0
June	12,515	2,923	23.4
September	13,201	2,872	21.8
December	11,981	2,362	19.7
2004			
March	13,584	2,443	18.0
June	11,175	1,912	17.1
September	11,650	1,905	16.4
December	10,788	1,644	15.2
2005			
March	10,536	1,514	14.4
June	9,854	1,332	13.5
September	9,188	1,269	13.8

Note:
The data is based on rolling quarters.

Departmental Estate

Dr. Cable: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs which buildings and sites used by her Department and related agencies *(a)* have ceased to be used in the last year and *(b)* will be closed under current plans for relocation. [31757]

Ms Harman: My Department has:

(a) Ceased to use: Stewart House, Kingsway; 6th–8th floors, Southside, London SW1E; and Bradford Combined Court in the past year.

(b) Southside, London SW1E 1st–4th floors will be closed on 24 December 2005 at the end of the lease term.

Further offices will be closed at the end of their lease terms, after the refurbishment of Queen Anne's Gate, as part of the wider rationalisation of the DCA estate.

Diplock Courts

Lorely Burt: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many court cases the Diplock courts have considered in each year since the Diplock courts were introduced. [34869]

Bridget Prentice: Diplock courts were introduced in Northern Ireland in 1973. Statistics relating to the number of defendants dealt with by the Diplock courts have been maintained since 1983. Statistics relating to the number of cases dealt with in the Diplock courts have been maintained from 1986.

Defendants and cases dealt with in the Diplock courts

	Defendants	*Cases*
1983	432	—
1984	435	—
1985	750	—
1986	622	329
1987	743	354
1988	557	315
1989	461	277
1990	492	265
1991	433	206
1992	418	221
1993	427	256
1994	376	222
1995	453	237
1996	174	110
1997	149	94
1998	177	92
1999	108	73
2000	89	49
2001	62	45
2002	113	72
2003	110	71
2004	77	65

Disability Discrimination (Legal Aid)

Danny Alexander: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many individuals have *(a)* applied for and *(b)* been granted legal aid for action against (i) employers, (ii) transport providers and (iii) providers of goods and services for failure to comply with disability discrimination legislation. [31147]

Bridget Prentice: Records held by the Legal Services Commission (LSC) only record the category of law to which a proceeding relates rather than the category of business against which the action was taken. Therefore, the LSC can only provide details about Disability Discrimination Act proceedings in the categories of employment, housing and public law. In the last three full financial years 106 certificates were granted within these categories.

European Court of Human Rights

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list the cases before the European Court of Human Rights since 1 January 1976 which have been brought against the United Kingdom, indicating in each case whether a finding of a violation of the Convention on Human Rights occurred; which Articles of the Convention were cited in each application as having been breached; what action has been taken to implement the ruling in each successful case; in respect of which successful cases the ruling has not been fully implemented; what the obstacles are to full implementation of each such ruling; and if she will make a statement. [33722]

Ms Harman: Records have not been kept of all cases brought against the United Kingdom since 1976. There are currently 60 judgments given against the United Kingdom which require implementation by the Government. Information on those cases is not held centrally, but we are taking action to obtain and collate it. We expect to provide a list giving details of progress towards implementation in each case before Parliament rises for Christmas.

Gender Recognition Certificates

Dr. Evan Harris: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many applications for gender recognition certificates *(a)* she has received, *(b)* have been approved, *(c)* have come from overseas and *(d)* have come from overseas and have been approved. [34654]

Ms Harman: The information requested is as follows:

In total, 1,123 applications have been received and 863 full gender recognition certificates have been issued.

Included in the totals above are 28 applications made on the basis of having changed gender under the law of another country or territory outside the United Kingdom, in respect of which 15 full certificates have been issued.

General Election (Kettering)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs why the complete marked register for Kettering constituency from the 2005 General Election is not yet available. [34099]

Ms Harman: Pickfords Records Management, who administer the supply of copies of the marked registers, have informed us that after receiving notice on 21 November 2005 that the marked register for Kettering was not complete, located the missing pages on 25 November 2005. These are now being processed.

The missing pages were located in a sack of election documents, separate from the bulk of the marked register. Guidance was issued to returning officers before the 5 May General Election, that marked registers should be stored in the first numbered sack only.

Inquests

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many inquests are outstanding in *(a)* Southend, *(b)* Essex, *(c)* Greater London and *(d)* Hertfordshire; and how many have been waiting more than (i) one, (ii) two, (iii) three, (iv) four and (v) five years since death occurred. [34210]

Ms Harman: I am obtaining this information from the 10 coroners concerned and will then write to the hon. Member. A copy of my reply will be placed in the House of Commons Library.

Kettering Magistrates Court

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many warrants were issued from Kettering magistrates court for the arrest of non-attendees in each year since 1997. [34098]

Ms Harman: Figures for failure to appear warrants are only available for Kettering magistrates court from 2003. The figures to date for police failure to appear warrants are *(a)* 345 for 2003 *(b)* 311 for 2004 and *(c)* 162[1] for 2005.

[1] Figure up to 29 November 2005.

Legal Aid

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what estimate she has made of the cost of legal aid for asylum seekers for the last 12 months for which figures are available; and if she will list the 10 companies in receipt of most aid. [27745]

Bridget Prentice: It Is not possible to separate spend on asylum from this overall category of Immigration and Asylum. Expenditure on legal aid for Immigration and Asylum matters in 2004–05 came to £171 million. Nor is it possible to estimate the cost of legal aid in other matters for those seeking asylum, for example, public law, crime, and clinical negligence.

I will write to the hon. Member when the Legal Services Commission has verified amounts paid to the 10 suppliers in receipt of the most funds.

Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal

John Mann: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many solicitors have been referred by the Law Society to the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal in the last three years for which figures are available. [34776]

Bridget Prentice: The Law Society has provided information on the total number of referrals to the Solicitors Disciplinary Tribunal for the last three years. The data are set out in the following:

	2003	*2004*	*2005*[1]
Decision			
Strike off	57	51	52
Suspend	41	38	37
Fine	73	68	48
Other Decision[2]	48	55	39
Total number of referrals	219	212	176

[1] To 31 October 2005.

[2] Other decisions include: appeals allowed, appeals dismissed, costs only with no penalty being imposed except to pay costs of the application to the tribunal, no order was imposed, a minor reprimand being given and withdrawal of the application.

Southend Magistracy

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women (i) applied to join, (ii) were appointed to and (iii) left the Southend magistracy in each of the last five years. [33659]

Ms Harman: Applications to join the magistracy are made to the applicant's local advisory committee who recommend candidates for the local justice areas for which they are responsible. The number of men and women appointed to and leaving the Southend magistracy in each of the last five years is shown in the following table[1].

[1] The figures shown are for the South East Essex Local Justice Area which covers the court that sits at Southend.

	Men appointed[1]	*Women appointed*[1]	*Men leaving*[2]	*Women leaving*[2]
2001	1	2	7	7
2002	3	2	8	7
2003	2	3	8	4
2004	5	1	0	4
2005 (to date)	4	4	0	4

[1] Including transfers into the Bench.

[2] Including resignations, retirements, transfers out and deaths.

State Prayers

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what discussions Ministers have had with *(a)* the Royal Household, *(b)* the Archbishop of Canterbury and *(c)* officials at Clarence House on varying the State prayers; and if she will make a statement. [34507]

Ms Harman: It is the long-established custom that communications between Ministers and the Royal Households remain confidential. There has been no discussion between Ministers and the Archbishop of Canterbury.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether it is intended that a court warrant will be issued adding a name to the State prayers; and if she will make a statement. [34508]

Ms Harman: The Government has no plans to do so.

Tamworth Magistrates Court

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many arrest warrants were issued from Tamworth magistrates court for the arrest of non-attendees resident in Tamworth constituency in the last year for which figures are available. [33729]

Ms Harman: Figures are only available for south Staffordshire. The number of police warrants for non-attendance issued for the south Staffordshire magistrates courts of Tamworth, Stafford, Cannock and Burton on Trent between October 2004 and October 2005 was 1,440. The figures are not broken down by the defendant's residence.

Voting Age

Mr. Bone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the Government's policy is on lowering the voting age from 18 to 16 years for *(a)* local, *(b)* parliamentary and *(c)* European elections. [33423]

Ms Harman: The Government intends to keep the minimum age of voting under review.

HEALTH

Alcohol-related Hospital Admissions

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of attendances at accident and emergency departments were alcohol-related in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [24221]

Mr. Byrne: Reasons for attendances at accident and emergency departments are not collected centrally. However, data are collected on emergency admissions. The percentage of all alcohol-related emergency admissions has fallen from 1.2 per cent. in 1999–2000 to 1 per cent. in 2003–04.

Alliance Medical

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 5 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 2810W, on Alliance Medical, when she envisages the new data reporting system will be in place; and at what cost. [18882]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 17 October 2005]:* The new diagnostic data collection will start across England in January 2006. It will enable the national health service to track progress towards meeting the Government's election pledge of a maximum wait of no more than 18 weeks from general practitioner referral to the start of hospital treatment. It will identify areas requiring focused attention and assist diagnostics capacity planning for future years.

The Department estimates that, once the initial implementation stage is complete and being submitted through Unify, the Department's new system designed to capture and analyse NHS performance data, the cost burden on the NHS will be lower than for existing monthly returns.

Ambulance Response Times

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the likely impact on ambulance response times in Warrington of creating a single North-West Ambulance Trust. [30716]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 22 November 2005]:* Ambulance trusts in England are expected to meet national requirements on response times to 999 calls. If our proposals to reconfigure ambulance trusts are accepted, national response time requirements will be unchanged.

Cataract Units

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether funding projections for trusts will take account of take-up rates by patients at independent treatment scheme cataract units. [17414]

Mr. Byrne: Patient referral levels to independent sector treatment centres (ISTCs) have been estimated and agreed by primary care trusts (PCTs). These form a key part of the contracts with ISTC providers, to which PCTs are party. The financial cost at national health service tariff of the projected referrals should be included by PCTs in their financial projections.

Cheshire and Merseyside Health Authority

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total cost of running the Cheshire and Merseyside health authority has been in each year since it was set up. [31477]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* The Cheshire and Merseyside strategic health authority has received allocations for its running costs of £4.7 million in 2003–04, £5.1 million in 2004–05 and £5.4 million in 2005–06.

Clinical Negligence

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many successful claims of clinical negligence were made against each hospital in hospital trusts in the Lancashire strategic health authority in 2004–05; and what the total cost of all successful claims was against each hospital. [33043]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 29 November 2005]:* The number of successful clinical negligence claims made against hospital trusts in Lancashire strategic health authority (SHA) in 2004–05; and the total cost of all successful claims against each hospital trust is shown in the following table.

Number of successful clinical negligence claims made against hospital trusts in Cumbria and Lancashire SHA in 2004–05 and their total cost

Hospital	*Number of claims*	*Total cost (£)*
Burnley general hospital (East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust)	1	4,250
Royal Preston hospital (Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust)	1	15,700

Source:
NHS Litigation Authority

Clinical Services Review (East Lancashire)

Kitty Ussher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what consultations with clinicians have taken place as part of the review of clinical services being undertaken by East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust. [26124]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 29 November 2005]:* This is a matter for the East Lancashire Hospitals NHS trust.

Kitty Ussher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will place in the Library the evidence presented to the review of clinical services being undertaken by East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust. [26126]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 29 November 2005]:* This is a matter for the East Lancashire Hospitals NHS trust. The Cumbria and Lancashire strategic health authority report that evidence is still being submitted to the current review of clinical services and that the trust intends to publish this early next year.

Contrast Thermal Imaging

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS centres in England have contrast thermal imaging equipment; and what plans there are to increase the number. [21391]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Diagnostic Scans

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the reasons healthcare providers operating existing NHS scanners are unable to meet the demand for diagnostic scans in the NHS. [19845]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 20 October 2005]:* Independent sector diagnostic scanning activity has been procured to meet the immediate need for additional workforce and imaging capacity to treat national health service patients and to enable the Government to deliver their election manifesto pledge to deliver a maximum wait of 18 weeks from general practitioner referral to hospital treatment by 2008.

As well as making selective use of the independent sector, the Government are also tackling the shortage of radiographers in the NHS. The pledges in the NHS Plan to train and recruit more therapists and other health professionals have been delivered and we expect that there will be 30,000 more therapists and scientists, including radiographers, employed in the NHS by 2008 than there were in 2001.

Flu Pandemic

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether *(a)* mortuary and *(b)* crematoria capacity is estimated to be adequate for dealing with the anticipated increase in death rates during an influenza pandemic. [24657]

Paul Goggins: I have been asked to reply.

Work is being taken forward on the capacity of local mortuaries and crematoria within the theoretical projections in the UK Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan. An assessment will be put to Ministers before the end of the year.

Foundation Hospitals

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many foundation hospitals plan to commission services from the private sector; and if she will make a statement. [22255]

Mr. Byrne: National health service foundation trusts (NHSFTs) are free to enter into arrangements with third parties at their own discretion, subject to the terms of their authorisation issued by Monitor and the cap on private patient activity set out in legislation. If NHSFTs wish to collaborate with third parties to the benefit of NHS patients, they are free to do so subject to these constraints.

General Practice

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 2163W, on general practitioners' contracts, when she expects the NHS employers organisation to report back. [17692]

Mr. Byrne: Negotiations are progressing and it is hoped that the first phase of the contract review will be completed before Christmas, with any changes being implemented from April 2006.

Glass Injuries

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS patients received treatment for incidents involving stabbing and laceration by glass in the latest year for which figures are available; and how many of these incidents were alcohol-related. [30878]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 22 November 2005]:* There were 4,772 finished admission episodes due to assault by a sharp object in 2003–04. It is not possible to identify how many of these incidents involved stabbing and laceration by glass, nor is it possible to identify how many were alcohol related.

Healthcare Professionals Recruitment

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1169–70W, on healthcare professionals recruitment, (1) what sanctions *(a)* are available and *(b)* have been used in cases in which a breach of the code of practice on the International Recruitment of Healthcare Professionals has been identified; [30787]

(2) how many breaches of the code of practice have been identified by NHS employers; how many of these have led to penalties *(a)* after the code of practice was first published and *(b)* since it was revised in December 2004; [30788]

(3) what discussions her Department has had with NHS employers on the effectiveness of the monitoring of compliance with the Code of Practice on the International Recruitment of Healthcare Professionals; and what assessment her Department has made of the effectiveness of *(a)* systems of monitoring used and *(b)* steps taken by NHS employers to ensure compliance with the code of practice. [30791]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* NHS Employers are responsible for monitoring the code of practice, investigating alleged breaches of the code and applying any appropriate sanctions. The latter can include investigation and removal from the list of agencies adhering to the code of practice. The Department receives regular reports on compliance with the code from NHS Employers and holds regular review meetings with NHS Employers on the operation of the code. There is routine liaison between officials of the Department and NHS Employers. To date, 11 agencies have been removed from the list for breaches of the code.

Hospital Finances

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on what date her Department instructed strategic health authorities to review the financial stability of every hospital; and what deadline she has set to receive responses. [29969]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* I would like to refer the hon. Member to the written ministerial statement made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health on 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 5WS.

Hospital Trusts

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 12 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 688W, on hospital trusts, what account will be taken of the interdependency of accident and emergency with other hospital departments when deciding whether departments will be closed; and if she will make a statement. [18872]

Mr. Byrne: Decisions about service reconfiguration are a matter for the national health service locally. Patients will increasingly influence such decisions as they exercise their new abilities to choose where their treatment takes place. However, this Government are committed to maintaining a national accident and emergency service and we expect the NHS to take into account the impact of reconfiguring interdependent services when making such decisions.

Independent Treatment Centres

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is planning to take to ensure that independent treatment centres work to their optimum capacity. [18477]

Mr. Byrne: Independent sector treatment centres (ISTCs) are intended to build capacity to treat national health service patients as quickly and effectively as possible. Primary care trusts (PCTs) have signed up to referral levels in contract for all wave one ISTCs. Optimising the use of this capacity is a matter for PCTs under contract. In the future, the decision whether or not patients are referred to an independent sector provider will be down to the choice of individual patients and service providers and commissioners will need to respond accordingly.

Information Technology

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent on schemes to install centralised information technology systems for patient care in the NHS since 1997. [27220]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 20 November 2005]:* Funds for information management and technology systems are included in general allocations to the national health service. Until 2003, comprehensive information about actual spend across the NHS was not collected centrally. Since then, this information has been available from revenue expenditure reported through an annual national survey of NHS bodies, and capital expenditure identified from NHS accounts, and is as follows:

	£ million
2002–03	928
2003–04	1,128

Notes:
1. Figures do not include expenditure on software licenses, expenditure by special health authorities, or central expenditure through the Department.
2. In both years a small number of NHS bodies failed to complete survey returns. The revenue component has been projected to 100 per cent, response in each case.

Comparable information for 2004–05 is not yet available.

In addition, NHS Connecting for Health is managing contracts to the value of £6.2 billion for the national programme for information technology in the NHS in the period 2002–10 above the ongoing NHS baseline expenditure. To date, £234 million has been paid to the programme's principal contractors.

Intensive Care

Kitty Ussher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many intensive care beds are available in East Lancashire; what the occupancy rates of these beds was in the last year for which figures are available; and what assessment she has made of the future requirement for intensive care beds in the sub-region. [26122]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 29 November 2005]:* There were, on average, 38 intensive care beds available in 2004–05 at the East Lancashire Hospitals NHS trust. The occupancy rate was 70.4 per cent.

The trust is currently conducting a review of clinical services.

Source: Department of Health H KH03 statistical returns.

Note: Ward classifications-intensive care: neonates, intensive care: paediatrics and intensive care: wholly or mainly adult have been grouped to form intensive care beds.

Maternity Care

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures are in place to improve the range of choices available to women who wish to receive one-to-one maternity care. [16657]

Mr. Byrne: The maternity standard of the national service framework for children, young people and maternity services requires maternity care providers and primary care trusts to ensure that the range of ante-natal, birth and post-birth care services available locally constitutes real choice for women including the offer of support from a named midwife throughout pregnancy. It also advocates that all women are able to contact a midwife day or night at any stage in pregnancy if they have concerns.

In its manifesto commitment, the Government made a commitment that

> "by 2009 all women will have choice over where and how they have their baby and what pain relief to use. We want every woman to be supported by the same midwife throughout her pregnancy. Support will be linked closely to other services that will be provided in Children's Centre."

We have put in place a concentrated work programme to support implementation of the both the manifesto commitment and the maternity standard.

Medical Consultation Costs

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average cost of *(a)* a general practitioner consultation, *(b)* an attendance at accident and emergency and *(c)* a consultation at an NHS walk-in-centre was in the latest period for which figures are available. [20858]

Mr. Byrne: This data is not routinely collected centrally. The latest available estimates are contained in the 2004 National Audit Office report, 'Improving Emergency Care in England'. This report estimates that a general practice consultation costs about £15, a presentation at an established national health service walk-in centre between £20 and £30 which is based on 2002 data, and an attendance at an accident and emergency department around £55 to £60. The full report is available in the Library.

Ophthalmic Operations

Frank Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cataract operations carried out by the private sector led to a reduction in such NHS operations. [17372]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 17 October 2005]:* Centrally procured independent sector mobile cataract units have carried out over 17,500 procedures to date on national health service patients, increasing NHS capacity and helping to reduce long waiting times. In the past, these patients would have faced a much longer wait for their operations in NHS facilities.

Patient Advice and Liaison Services

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has had with *(a)* Patient Advice and Liaison Services and *(b)* other patient and public involvement organisations on advising individuals on Choose and Book. [22409]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 26 October 2005]:* NHS Connecting for Health's choose and book patient reference group, which meets once every six to eight weeks, is comprised of patient and public involvement forum members. Through this mechanism, they have been supporting the development of the choose and book service since May 2004. In addition, the Plain English Campaign and the Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) are involved in reviewing choose and book related communications.

Since February 2003, the choose and book joint programme board has met on a six weekly basis. The board is an important part of the governance arrangements for choose and book. The chief executive of the National Association for Patient Participation is a member of this board and attends these meetings.

The Department has also issued guidance to primary care trusts, which advises them to engage their local PALS, libraries and existing patient and public involvement organisations with providing information and support to patients offered choice through the choose and book service or other routes.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the *(a)* quality *(b)* consistency and *(c)* impact on equity of access to treatment for patients of the service provided by patient care advisers; and if she will make a statement. [19234]

Mr. Byrne: Evaluations of the two largest choice pilots recognised the importance of patient care advisers (PCAs) to support and advise patients through choice and ensure equitable access. These showed that patients appreciated the role of PCAs, with over 93 per cent. of patients in London rating the PCAs quality of service as good, very good, or excellent. In addition, in London the evaluation found that the equity of access to choice was achieved in particular by providing support through PCAs to patients who needed help finding their way through the system.

Primary Care Services

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations the Government have received on their proposals to involve the private sector in managing primary care services. [21591]

Mr. Byrne: The Government have not made any proposals to involve the private sector in managing primary care services.

Private Sector Transfers

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the NHS facilities in each region which are being considered for transfer to private sector management in the current round of tendering. [21493]

Mr. Byrne: No facilities will be transferred. As part of the elective phase two procurement programme, strategic health authorities (SHAs) with primary care trusts proposed facilities which could be leased to the independent sector for the provision of elective surgery. Final decisions about which sites are used will not be made until the procurement process has ended. The specific facilities identified by SHAs include those shown in the table.

SHAs	*Proposed facilities*
Birmingham and The Black Country	Birmingham City Treatment Centre
Cheshire and Merseyside	Facilities in Whiston, Clatterbridge and Warrington (renal dialysis)
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	New Forest Lymington
North and East Yorkshire and North Lincolnshire	Facilities at Hull, Scunthorpe, Scarborough and Grimsby (renal dialysis)
North West London	Ravenscourt Park
South West Peninsula	Scope for provider to utilise spare surgical capacity at the following NHS hospitals: Axminster, Sidmouth, Exmouth, Tavistock.
South Yorkshire	Catheter laboratories at Rotherham and Barnsley.
West Yorkshire	Facilities at Bradford and Skipton (renal dialysis)

Quality and Outcomes Framework

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the outcome of the review of the quality and outcomes framework will allow GPs to have their performance measured against specific local indicators. [29388]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 17 November 2005]:* The quality and outcomes framework is a national agreement as part of the general medical services contract, but primary care trusts are able to make local agreements with practices, in addition to those contained in the framework.

Reconfigurations

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what criteria she uses to decide whether to refer disputed health service reconfigurations to the Independent Reconfiguration Panel; and how many such cases are awaiting her decision. [22584]

Mr. Byrne: When the Secretary of State receives a referral of a decision from an overview and scrutiny committee she has an option of seeking advice from the independent reconfiguration panel if she considers. She needs further independent advice before making a final decision. Currently, there are three cases awaiting her decision.

Rehabilitation (Visually Impaired People)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what measures are in place to ensure that rehabilitation services for visually impaired people are made available to those who need them; [31390]

(2) what measures are in place to ensure that rehabilitation services for visually impaired people are made available to those who need them. [31919]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* Rehabilitation services for blind and partially sighted people are provided by local health and social care bodies. It is for those organisations to commission appropriate services based on local need. This would include the number and training of teams available to provide rehabilitation for blind and partially sighted people.

Scanning Services

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether private providers under the new contract to provide diagnostic scans will be able to use *(a)* NHS equipment and *(b)* NHS staff to provide the scans; and if she will make a statement. [18898]

Mr. Byrne: The diagnostic capacity being procured is intended to be additional to national health service capacity but independent sector providers may be able to lease unused or surplus NHS equipment to treat NHS patients. Under revised additionality rules, NHS staff in shortage specialisms may offer independent sector providers their non-contracted hours, subject to the permission of the employing trust and adherence to safe working practices.

Vaccinations

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what numbers of vaccinations for children triggered top rate vaccine payments to general practitioners in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005. [28289]

Caroline Flint: The information is not available in the form requested.

In 2004, 93 per cent. of practices achieved the higher target payment of 90 per cent.

Coverage levels at 12 months of age increased slightly compared to the previous quarter, October to December 2004, and are now around 91 per cent.. At 24 months, uptake for all vaccines were between 93 per cent. and 94 per cent. Coverage with measles, mumps and rubella at 24 months has increased by 2.2 per cent. to 83 per cent. for April to June 2005, compared with the previous quarter.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Ambulances

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many ambulances are available to each hospital in Northern Ireland; and how many were available in *(a)* 1990, *(b)* 1995, *(c)* 2000 and *(d)* 2005. [33066]

Mr. Woodward: The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service provides a regional emergency and non-emergency ambulance service deployed from 32 stations throughout Northern Ireland. Ambulances are not allocated to individual hospitals, as these are not always the best points from which to deploy ambulances to reach patients in the shortest possible time.

However, the total number of ambulances available is as follows:

	Number
1995	220
2000	225
2005	243

Information on the number of ambulances in 1990 is not readily available.

Animal Feeds

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost of animal feeds was to farmers in Northern Ireland in the 2004–05 financial year. [33796]

Angela E. Smith: The total cost of feedstuffs to Northern Ireland farmers in 2004–05 was £363 million. Of this, £318 million was compound feed.

CAP

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Government, at the time that modulation was introduced for direct common agricultural policy subsidies in 2001, gave a commitment to provide an equal amount of national match funding in the form of co-financing; and if he will make a statement. [33560]

Angela E. Smith: When the decision to apply modulation from 2001 was made at the end of 1999, Government indicated that it would provide an equal amount of additional national match funding. Since then, the additions to the Northern Ireland Block in respect of match funding have been made with that objective in mind.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much match funded money in relation to common agricultural policy subsidies has been raised within Northern Ireland since modulation was introduced in 2001. [33561]

Angela E. Smith: The amount of modulation match funding allocated to the Northern Ireland block since 2001–02 was as follows:

	£ million
2001–02	3.9
2002–03	5.2
2003–04	6.1
2004–05	6.1
2005–06	17.8

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much national match funded money has been awarded by the Government in relation to common agricultural policy subsidies in each year since modulation was introduced in 2001. [33562]

Angela E. Smith: Expenditure of modulation match funding in Northern Ireland in each year since 2001–02 was as follows:

	£ million
2001–02	0.15
2002–03	0.62
2003–04	1.36
2004–05	1.97
2005–06 (to date)	0.96

Centenarians

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many centenarians live in Northern Ireland. [31943]

Angela E. Smith: There were estimated[1] to be about 170 centenarians (aged 100 and over) resident in Northern Ireland at 30 June 2004.

Source:

[1] Government Actuary's Department

Community Relations

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the timetable is for the re-launch and implementation of the shared future strategy for improving community relations in Northern Ireland; and what resources have been allocated to this strategy in 2006–07. [32899]

Angela E. Smith: The plan is to re-launch the Shared Future policy and strategic framework before March 2006. As part of the re-launch we will set out in a Triennial Action plan the key actions to meet the policy objectives.

At its core the policy is about promoting sharing over separation. Its aim is to establish over time a normal, civic society, in which all individuals are considered as equals, where differences are resolved through dialogue in the public sphere, and where all people are treated impartially.

The Triennial Action plan will aim to ensure, over time, that all expenditure is designed to promote sharing over separation. In the interim, and in the run up to the comprehensive spending review, the planned expenditure in 2006–07 on "community relations/good relations" activities across departments, which is about £15 million, will be specifically used to support the objectives of a shared future.

Cyclists

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cyclists have been *(a)* charged and *(b)* convicted in Northern Ireland of neglect of traffic regulations in each of the last five years. [33068]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is provided in the following tables.

Table 1 provides details of how many cyclists were reported for prosecution in Northern Ireland during the period 1 April 2004 to 31 October 2005 (1 April 2004 being the earliest date for which this data is available).

Table 2 provides figures for the number of cyclists convicted in Northern Ireland of neglect of traffic regulations from 1999–2003 (the most recent year for which statistics are available).

Table 1

	Number recorded
1 April 2004–31 March 2005	71
1 April 2005–31 October 2005	29

Table 2[1]

	Number of convictions
1999	5
2000	2
2001	3
2002	5
2003	2
Total	17

[1] Convictions in table 2 were for the specific offences of 'cycling without due care and attention', 'cycling without reasonable consideration', 'cycling when unfit through drink or drugs', 'no lights on pedal cycle' and 'failing to wear protective headgear'.

Electricity Supply

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with Northern Ireland Electricity regarding the possibility of disruption to the electricity supply in the event of severe winter conditions over the next few months. [34443]

Angela E. Smith: My officials are in regular contact with Northern Ireland Electricity (NIE) and the Northern Ireland Authority for Energy Regulation (NIAER) about the maintenance of the electricity supply in Northern Ireland.

NIE is confident that it has a network and response capability sufficiently robust to meet our winter needs, and that there is access to sufficient stocks of generating fuels or alternatives at the power stations to avoid disruption in supply over the winter months.

Electrical Apprenticeships

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the terms are of the Electrical Training Trust's contract to manage all entrants to the electrical installation Jobskills Modern Apprenticeship Programme in Northern Ireland. [33971]

Angela E. Smith: Electrical Training Trust's (ETT) contract is to manage all entrants to electrical installation on the Jobskills Modern Apprenticeship programme in Northern Ireland is in line with terms and conditions contained in all training organisation contracts managing the Jobskills programme. The contract covers areas such as: proper financial accounting for public funds; skills and experience of delivery staff; health and safety; and insurance and liability issues.

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many electrical installation modern apprenticeship trainees there were *(a)* for each location and *(b)* for each provider in each year since 1996 in Northern Ireland. [33972]

Angela E. Smith: Data for the period 1996–98 is not available because of disproportionate cost. Since 1998 the Electrical Training Trust (ETT) is the training provider which has been contracted by the Department to manage all entrants to the electrical installation Jobskills Modern Apprenticeship programme. The following table provides details on the number of young people, by geographical area, starting each year.

Area	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*[1]	*Total*
Antrim	28	28	12	11	9	12	10	110
Armagh	50	36	19	11	16	25	18	175
Augher	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Aughnacloy	0	0	1	1		2	4	8
Ballycastle	0	6	7	5	4	1	2	25
Ballyclare	2	10	3	5	2	2	3	27
Ballymena	36	41	36	34	32	33	28	240
Ballymoney	10	16	7	6	8	5	10	62
Ballynahinch	13	14	10	3	5	7	2	54
Banbridge	4	16	6	9	10	6	7	58
Bangor	8	22	11	11	8	12	12	84
Belfast	65	108	40	26	44	27	31	341
Bushmills	0	4	5	1	1	0	0	11
Caledon	2	2	0	0	0	0	0	4
Carrickfergus	10	6	1	4	9	8	5	43
Castlederg	11	2	4	4	6	7	2	36
Castlewellan	6	12	4	0	2	3	3	30
Clogher	4	2	0	0	2	0	2	10
Coleraine	18	24	5	12	6	3	4	72
Cookstown	18	20	9	9	5	3	7	71
Craigavon	34	36	19	26	21	22	17	175
Crumlin	8	2	1	4	1	3	1	20
Derry	42	44	19	22	15	15	6	163
Donaghadee	0	6		1	1	0	2	10
Downpatrick	16	18	12	7	7	10	7	77
Dromore	2	6	3	2	3	2	2	20
Dungannon	34	44	27	32	31	20	22	210
Enniskillen	42	45	20	13	32	29	13	194
Fivemiletown	2	2	1	2	0	0	1	8
Hillsborough	6	4	0	1	0	4	0	15
Holywood	2	2	0	1	0	1	0	6
Larne	4	10	3	3	8	2	0	30
Limavady	22	16	11	10	15	6	8	88
Lisburn	4	4	9	9	7	12	2	47
Maghera	20	12	9	6	2	8	3	60
Magherafelt	34	28	15	14	21	15	11	138
Newcastle	10	2	3	3	4	1	2	25
Newry	74	60	49	40	44	29	31	327
Newtownabbey	19	23	12	13	5	13	11	96
Newtownards	32	47	15	18	14	13	14	153
Omagh	40	53	23	33	23	23	24	219
Portrush	0	0	4	1	1	0	0	6
Portstewart	0	4	1	2	1	0	1	9
Strabane	2	10	5	3	8	12	3	43
Total	734	847	441	418	433	396	332	3,601

[1] Figures are up to 28 October 2005 for 2005–06 cohort.

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the reduced availability of electrical installation modern apprenticeships in Derry and the North West of Northern Ireland. [33973]

Angela E. Smith: There has been an overall reduction in the number of entrants to the electrical installation Jobskills modern apprenticeship over the past number of years, in particular in the North West of Northern Ireland. While there has been no change in the contract delivery arrangements, it is recognised that there has been a shift in the economic climate which has contributed to a reduction in the overall employer base in the North West. However, I will wish to inquire further and will write to the hon. Gentleman.

Energy Efficiency

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what energy efficiency measures have been taken by Government Department offices in Northern Ireland in 2005. [30471]

Angela E. Smith: Northern Ireland Departments have adopted the targets for improvements in energy performance contained in the 2003 Government White Paper "Our energy future—creating a low carbon economy". Departments are accommodated in buildings provided and managed by the Department of Finance and Personnel, which conducts a continuous programme of improvements of building energy performance in pursuit of the aforementioned targets.

Since 2003, within the office estate planned actions have included conducting surveys to identify and implement cost-effective energy conservation measures; converting suitable buildings from oil or electric heating to natural gas; and purchasing green electricity, where this represents value for money. Similar actions have been taken in the specialised buildings within the Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment and the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development.

The Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP) also manages the Public Sector Energy Campaign, monitoring energy use in all public buildings, and providing energy performance returns to Departments for attention. DFP also manages the Central Energy Efficiency Fund which provides financial support for the introduction of cost-effective measures for reducing carbon emissions from public buildings.

Official vehicle fleets are now generally diesel fuelled, and the official car pool has purchased two petrol/electric hybrid cars. Local plans are also in place covering car travel.

Executive Programme Funds

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will reinstate the Executive Programme Funds which were abolished in 2002; and if he will make a statement. [33535]

Angela E. Smith: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1980W.

Hypothermia

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland over the age of 65 years died as a result of winter cold weather in each of the last five years. [32226]

Angela E. Smith: For the years 2000 to 2004, the number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland of people aged 65 and over, where hypothermia was mentioned on the death certificate, is presented in the following table.

Registered number of deaths of people aged 65 and over, with a mention of hypothermia[1] Northern Ireland, 2000–04

	Deaths with mention of hypothermia
2000	8
2001	11
2002	6
2003	5
2004	8

[1] Deaths with a mention of hypothermia defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) code 991.6 for the year 2000 and, for the years 2001 to 2004, the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) code T68.

Identity Cards

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the *(a)* total and *(b)* net cost of (i) integrating the proposed identity card scheme into his Department's IT systems and (ii) the ongoing operation of the scheme within his Department. [31112]

Mr. Hain: At this stage, the Northern Ireland Office does not plan to make any estimate of the cost of using the ID cards scheme to support the services which it oversees. The Identity Cards Bill makes clear that the use of the ID cards scheme by devolved administrations is a matter for them. The business case makes no assumptions that the scheme will be used for services which are the responsibility of devolved administrations.

Lyons Inquiry

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether his Department has made a written submission to the Lyons Inquiry on local government finance. [33158]

Angela E. Smith: A written submission was sent by the Department of Finance and Personnel in Northern Ireland to the Lyons Inquiry in November 2004 outlining the policy proposals for reform of the domestic rating system in Northern Ireland.

ME

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he takes to monitor the balance of research findings in the field of myalgic encephalomyelitis in Northern Ireland. [33588]

Mr. Woodward: Myalgic encephalomyelitis is a relatively poorly understood disorder which produces a broad range of symptoms and disabilities and has

various suggested causes and treatments. As such research in the field of myalgic encephalomyelitis is extensive and varied in both approach and results.

The Department, in considering research findings for specific conditions and their potential implications, is informed by the views of the relevant professional and clinical standard setting bodies.

Medicine (Imports and Exports)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much medicine was *(a)* imported and *(b)* exported by Northern Ireland in each of the last three years for which figures are available. [33081]

Dawn Primarolo: I have been asked to reply.

The value and weight of the medicine that was *(a)* imported and *(b)* exported by Northern Ireland in each of the last three years is included in the following table.

Imports and exports of medicines[1,2], by Northern Ireland[3]

	Value (£000)	*Weight (Kg 000)*
Exports		
2002	73,461	4,196
2003	97,834	13,907
2004	99,428	9,056
Imports		
2002	13,253	456
2003	11,985	521
2004	15,566	556

[1] Figures are combined EU and non-EU.

[2] Trade included covers pharmaceutical products classified as Medicaments (CN4 3003 and CN3004).

[3] Figures refer to trade imported into or exported from any part of the UK by traders registered to addresses in Northern Ireland.

Source:
Regional Trade Statistics, HM Revenue and Customs

Military Bases

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total cost to the public purse of care and maintenance for the *(a)* Ebrington and *(b)* Fort George military bases in Londonderry has been since the Army handed over both sites to ILEX. [32522]

Angela E. Smith: Since taking ownership of the Ebrington and Fort George sites in Londonderry the total cost to the public purse of care and maintenance has been £968,183 and nil respectively.

Pregnancy-related Deaths

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many women aged *(a)* 14 to 16 years, *(b)* 17 to 21 years, *(c)* 22 to 24 years, *(d)* 25 to 30 years, *(e)* 31 to 35 years and *(f)* 36 to 40 years have died from pregnancy-related diseases in Northern Ireland in each year since 1980. [33087]

Angela E. Smith: The following table gives the number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland by age of deceased in each year between 1980 and 2004, where the underlying cause of death related to pregnancy, childbirth and the puerperium[1].

[1] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes O00 to O99 for years 2001–2004 and Ninth Revision codes 630 to 676 for years 1980–2000.

Number of maternal deaths registered in Northern Ireland, by age group, 1980–2004

Year of registration	*Age group in years of deceased*					
	14 to 16	*17 to 21*	*22 to 24*	*25 to 30*	*31 to 35*	*36 to 40*
1980	0	0	0	2	0	0
1981	0	0	0	1	0	0
1982	0	2	0	0	0	0
1983	0	0	0	3	0	0
1984	0	0	0	0	2	1
1985	0	0	0	2	0	0
1986	0	0	0	0	0	0
1987	0	0	0	0	1	0
1988	0	1	1	0	0	0
1989	0	0	0	0	0	0
1990	0	0	0	0	0	0
1991	0	0	1	0	0	0
1992	0	0	0	0	0	0
1993	0	0	0	0	0	0
1994	0	0	0	0	0	0
1995	0	0	0	0	0	0
1996	0	0	1	0	0	0
1997	0	0	0	0	0	0
1998	0	0	0	1	0	0
1999	0	0	0	0	0	0
2000	0	0	0	0	0	0
2001	0	0	0	1	0	0
2002	0	0	0	0	0	1
2003	0	1	0	1	1	0
2004	0	0	0	0	0	1

Telecare Scheme

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will increase funding in Northern Ireland for the telecare scheme to equal the average per capita spending in the rest of the United Kingdom. [33533]

Mr. Woodward: The Department does not make a specific allocation of funding for the provision of telecare services. The HPSS will receive almost £450 million of additional funding over the next two years and HPSS boards must balance a wide range of health priorities ensuring that priority is given to meeting the Department's PSA commitments. It is for boards to identify the most appropriate and cost effective means of delivering their health and social care services, including the provision of telecare where deemed fitting.

Pricewaterhouse Coopers

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the Government departments in Northern Ireland which have received advice from PricewaterhouseCoopers on their business strategies and e-Government requirements; and what the timeline of the contracts was in each case. [34412]

Angela E. Smith: The details of the Government Departments in Northern Ireland which received advice from PricewaterhouseCoopers on their e-business strategies and e-government requirements in the last five years are set out in the following table:

Department/contract details	*Award date*	*Contract period*
DRD		
e Business Strategies	February 2001	2 months
e-procurement for Goods and Services (Business case)	May 2004	2 months
DOE		
e Business Strategies	February 2001	2 months
DFP		
e Business Strategies	April 2001	2 months
Accounting Services Review	April 2002	Ongoing
DCAL		
e Business Strategies	April 2001	2 months
OFMDFM		
e Business Strategies	June 2001	2 months
Review of Mission Critical ICT Projects in the NICS	August 2003	8 months
e-Participation Scoping Study	September 2003	10 months
DETI		
e Business Strategy Review	July 2003	3 months
Insolvency e-business	June 2004	6 months
INI e-business training programme	May 2004	12 months
DENI		
Information Strategy for Education Sector	January 2000	2 months
Information Needs Analysis	November 2002	4 months
Information Strategy for Education and Library Boards.	January 2002	2 months
Update IS and e-business strategy	May 2003	9 months
ICT Governance—Education Service	February 2004	8 months
DHSSPS		
Outline Business Case for three ICT projects for Health and Personal Social Services		
Business Systems Review programme	October 2002	2 years
	March 2003	2 years

Key for Departments:
DRD—Department for Regional Development
DOE—Department of Environment
DFP—Department of Finance and Personnel
DCAL—Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure
OFMDFM—Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister
DETI—Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment
DENI—Department of Education
DHSSPS—Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety

Rates Revaluation

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment the Valuation and Lands Agency has made of whether a police presence will be required in some circumstances for inspectors wishing to inspect a property for valuation purposes as part of the rates revaluation in Northern Ireland. [33154]

Angela E. Smith: The Valuation and Lands Agency has trained risk assessors familiar with the risks in each area of its operations. Risk assessments are carried out on a regular basis as well as in response to changes in circumstances or the operational environment.

There has been no separate assessment made of whether a police presence would be required to facilitate

the inspection of any property as part of the rates revaluation.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) whether the Government expects that pensioners participating in a deferred rates payment system would have a charge placed on their home; and how such a charge would be prioritised on the death of the pensioner relative to their other liabilities; [33155]

(2) whether the Government expects that pensioners participating in a deferred rates payment system would pay interest on the deferred payment; [33156]

(3) if he will publish the preliminary analysis that the Government has drafted on how a deferred payment scheme for pensioners would operate in relation to the draft Rates (Capital Values, etc.) (Northern Ireland) Order 2005. [33157]

Angela E. Smith: The Government has no plans to introduce a rates deferment scheme for people of pension age. No analysis has therefore been carried out on how such a scheme would operate. It is, however, intended to make provision in primary legislation that would allow a future executive to introduce a deferment scheme.

Regional Transport Strategy

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the impact of the level of funding to the Department for Regional Development Roads Service on the completion of Northern Ireland's Regional Transport Strategy. [33234]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Lady in response to this question.

Letter from Malcolm McKibbin, dated 5 December 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding what assessment he has made of the impact of the reduced funding to the Department for Regional Development Roads Service on the completion of Northern Ireland's Regional Transport Strategy.

I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

In terms of the capital budget, I can advise that by the mid-way point on the Regional Transportation Strategy (RTS) ten-year strategy period i.e. in 2006–7, investment on strategic improvements, local transport and safety measures, minor network development schemes, bridge strengthening, street lighting, etc. will have reached approximately 50% of the total envisaged in the RTS. Thus I can reassure you that the overall capital investment in the road network is in line with the increased level of investment that the RTS proposed for initiatives to address the bottlenecks and upgrade the key transport corridors in the network. Indeed, the investment plans outlined in the Draft Investment Strategy for Northern Ireland (ISNI) embodies proposals which would take capital spending to levels beyond those of the RTS.

From the maintenance point of view, while average expenditure increased substantially following approval of the RTS, the scope to allocate resources is constrained by the amounts that can be made available from new sources or by reallocating funds from other areas. In order to help create scope to release resources for other priorities, including Health and Education, Ministers have agreed to reduce the amounts in the Draft Budget allocations from those previously allocated for roads. This will result in maintenance levels, which, although above those prior to the RTS, will be short of the total levels envisaged by the RTS. Nevertheless, it is important to note that in the last three years (2003/04–2005/06), over £220 million has been allocated to this structural maintenance of roads and when assessing maintenance investment it is important to consider this figure over the full cycle.

I assure you that Roads Service will continue to make the best use of resources available taking proper account of both safety issues and the need to achieve value for money.

I hope this information is helpful.

Severe Weather (Elderly People)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans are in place to ensure that elderly people in Northern Ireland are protected from the worst effects of prolonged and severe winter weather. [34445]

Mr. Hanson: There are a number of measures in place to protect the elderly from the effects of severe winter weather. The warm homes scheme offers a range of heating and insulation measures to make homes more energy efficient and help save on fuel bills. Since it began in 2001, the warm homes scheme has assisted over 25,000 vulnerable households in the private sector and continues to make a major contribution towards improving the quality of life of those in fuel poverty. To strengthen our commitment to warm homes, funding for the scheme has increased from just under £3 million in 2001 to just under £15 million in the current financial year and despite the many pressures on public funding the target of 8,250 participants each year continues to be achieved.

Those who live in public sector homes are also supported by the Housing Executive's maintenance and improvements programmes which include measures to address fuel poverty.

Winter fuel payments are available to people aged 60 or over who are ordinarily resident in Northern Ireland. These payments of £200 are paid to all eligible households. Households which include people aged 80 or over can receive an extra payment of £100. During the winter 2004/05, 230,553 households in Northern Ireland benefited from winter fuel payments amounting to £49.7 million.

In addition cold weather payments provide extra help towards heating costs for the poorest and most vulnerable members of our society, including pensioners receiving pension credit, in periods of exceptionally cold weather.

The cold weather payment is made automatically to people awarded pension credit when the average temperature is recorded as, or forecast to be, 0 degrees Celsius or below over seven consecutive days at the weather station linked to the customer's postcode. Savings are not taken into account and Cold Weather Payments are paid in addition to winter fuel payments. This year the Government are also making Age-Related Payments to help pensioners with their rates bills or other living expenses. People aged 65 or over and not in receipt of the guarantee credit element of pension credit, could receive £200 per household to help with rates bills. Pensioners are free to use it towards heating costs. People aged 70 or over and in receipt of the guarantee

credit element of pension credit could receive 50 to help with their living expenses such as heating bills. Age-Related Payments will be paid together with winter fuel payments.

Sports Council for Northern Ireland

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what role the Sports Council for Northern Ireland has in ensuring that the interests of sportsmen and women in the Province are represented within sports which are *(a)* organised on a Northern Ireland/Republic of Ireland basis and *(b)* funded through similarly organised sporting bodies. [33270]

Mr. Hanson: Under the Recreation and Youth Service (Northern Ireland Order) 1986 the Sports Council for Northern Ireland (SCNI) is statutorily responsible for the development of Sport in Northern Ireland including the distribution of public funding to sport. SCNI runs a range of development programmes designed to assist sports men and women in Northern Ireland to develop their full sporting potential regardless of whether their sports are organised on a Northern Ireland, all-Ireland or UK basis or organised through similarly organised bodies.

The SCNI does not recognise any governing bodies of sport organised and funded on a Republic of Ireland basis.

Terrorist Offences

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) if he will list the individuals who are on the run for terrorist offences after conviction; and how many individuals are wanted for questioning in connection with offences relating to terrorism in Northern Ireland; [30953]

(2) when he intends to answer Question 30953, on terrorist offences, tabled by the hon. Member for Lancaster and Wyre on 17 November. [34236]

Mr. Hain: According to Prison Service records the following five individuals convicted of terrorist offences are unlawfully at large from prison in Northern Ireland:

Kevin Barry Artt
Paul Brennan
Terrence Damien Kirby
Patrick Joseph McKenna
Dermot Delaney.

This list includes individuals who escaped from prison after the Belfast Agreement.

The Government does not hold figures on how many people are wanted for questioning in connection with offences relating to terrorism in Northern Ireland. The Police Service of Northern Ireland is currently conducting a review of outstanding warrants. This review has not yet been completed.

Tourism

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he has taken to promote *(a)* Lough Neagh, *(b)* the annual Sham Fight in Scarva, *(c)* the annual Twelfth of July Demonstrations in Scarva, *(d)* the site of the Battle of Diamond at Loughgall, *(e)* the annual demonstrations by the Royal Black Institution and *(f)* the annual Apprentice Boys of Derry parades as major tourist attractions. [31276]

Angela E. Smith: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board's (NITB) Strategic Framework for Action 2004–07 document has identified the regions, signature projects and winning themes on which NITB will focus over this period.

With regard to the specific areas referred to:

Lough Neagh

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) currently has a seat on the Lough Neagh Partnership Board and had been represented on the Lough Neagh and Lower Bann Advisory Board until 2005. Also in March 2005, the NITB contributed £4,000 to the Lough Neagh Partnership Board to assist with a marketing strategy for the Lough.

Sham Fight in Scarva

The Sham fight at Scarva while not featured directly on the NITB Discover Northern Ireland website, has links through the Twelfth of July Celebrations (www.grandorange.org.uk) and Scarva Visitors Centre (www.banbridge.com).

Annual 12th July Demonstrations

The NITB has promoted the Orange order Annual 12th July Parades through a number of media channels, including the 'Northern Ireland Visitor Guide 2005/06' and, 'Events in Northern Ireland', and on its Discover Northern Ireland website.

The Battle of the Diamond, Loughgall

This project lies outside the core priorities of the Strategic Framework for Action 2004–07 and as such the NITB has no further plans for this site. However, the Dan Winter Cottage in Loughgall is listed on the NITB website www.discovernorthernireland.com and the 'Stop and Visit Guide' on an annual basis.

Royal Black Institution

The NITB has not promoted any events from this organisation to date.

Apprentice Boys

Over the past five years the NITB has offered the Apprentice Boys £28,300 in selective financial assistance through the Events Marketing Support Scheme and paid out £25,000 in relation to the same. In addition to the Events Marketing Support Scheme money, the NITB board agreed to make an additional payment of £20,000 in 2002–03 towards the cost associated with the festival. This was in recognition of the potential benefits for tourism which may have arisen from the continued success and development of the event. The NITB has also listed the event in the 'Events in Northern Ireland' guide for the past five years and the Maiden City Festival was listed in the events section of the Discover Northern Ireland website from 29 November 2004 to 14 August 2005.

Valuation and Lands Agency

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the Valuation and Lands Agency plans to employ extra staff for the domestic rates revaluation in Northern Ireland. [30663]

Angela E. Smith: The Valuation and Lands Agency has employed 26 additional staff in order to fully resource the revaluation. Four of these staff are employed on short-term contracts.

Additionally the Agency has employed two staff on secondment from another Government Agency within Northern Ireland for the purposes of the revaluation.

No further recruitment is anticipated for the purposes of the revaluation.

Vehicle Licences and Insurance

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many drivers have been convicted of driving without *(a)* road tax licence and *(b)* valid car insurance in each district command unit in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [31973]

Mr. Hanson: The information is as follows.

(a) Road tax licence

Figures in table 1 are provided by Driver and Vehicle Licensing Northern Ireland (DVLNI) and cover the financial years 2000–01 to 2004–05. It is not possible to provide a breakdown by district command unit, therefore, Northern Ireland totals are included.

Those detected for vehicle excise duty offences are usually offered an out-of-court settlement. Only if they ignore the penalty or refuse to pay are they prosecuted in court. The figures for those convicted or who paid out-of-court settlements in the last five years are:

Table 1: Number of convictions or those who paid out-of-court settlements 2000–01 to 2004–05

	Number
2000–01	15,966
2001–02	15,428
2002–03	13,932
2003–04	10,876
2004–05	8,796

Note:
Of the 64,998 cases actioned over the last five years 86 per cent. resulted in out-of-court settlements and 14 per cent. were prosecuted through the courts.

Source:
Enforcement Section (DVLNI)

(b) Valid car insurance

The statistics included within table 2 cover the calendar years 2000 to 2003 and are based on the PSNI district command unit in which an offender's address falls. Data for 2004 will become available in early 2006. Due to the lack of comparability of 1999 data (based on crimes reported to 12 police divisions) figures for that year have not been included.

Table 2: Persons convicted for driving without insurance by PSNI district command unit 2000–03[1,2]

	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Antrim	51	74	91	87
Ards	101	115	134	111
Armagh	74	99	123	147
Banbridge	34	51	64	65
Belfast East	85	112	178	143
Belfast North	178	264	294	290
Belfast South	79	112	117	103
Belfast West	101	149	272	167
Ballymena	62	80	140	81
Ballymoney	25	46	51	57
Carrickfergus	50	68	74	76
Coleraine	64	80	121	87
Cookstown	40	70	79	58
Craigavon	119	133	218	263
Castlereagh	58	62	91	70
Dungannon	82	145	132	105
Down	82	125	130	120
Fermanagh	97	136	203	153
Foyle	253	336	300	341
Larne	53	57	85	53
Limavady	53	59	77	83
Lisburn	120	146	194	223
Magherafelt	46	49	77	51
Moyle	37	24	50	38
Newtownabbey	71	105	123	125
North Down	77	93	176	114
Newry and Mourne	158	186	182	222
Omagh	120	165	168	134
Strabane	84	114	147	97
Missing[3]	58	77	110	84
Total	2,512	3,332	4,201	3,748

[1] Data are based on the district command unit in which an offender's address falls. The district command unit structure became operational in April 2001, however, for the purposes of comparability with later years, figures for 2000 and the first quarter of 2001 are also based on the 2001 DCU structure.
[2] Includes offences of 'no insurance' and 'causing no insurance'.
[3] Missing data relate to those offenders for which DCU information is not available.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 6 December 2005

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Avian Influenza

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to assist poultry farmers to combat any suspected outbreak of avian influenza; and if she will make a statement. [35218]

Mr. Bradshaw: Anyone who keeps poultry has an obligation to report signs of illness in their birds, and must know what to do about an avian influenza notifiable disease: this includes operating adequate biosecurity, and consulting their vet.

My department has distributed guidance material to our partners in the industry who are helping to distribute this material to their members, who cover the great majority of birds. We have also produced a simple one-page leaflet on biosecurity and surveillance for smaller concerns and back-yard keepers. This was posted on our website and sent out to organisations representing the industry to send on to their members.

In addition we have placed adverts in trade and specialist press targeting the same audience to get biosecurity and surveillance messages across. All these pieces of guidance are available on the Defra website.

Bees

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much funding has been allocated to the bee health programme in each of the last 10 years. [34608]

Jim Knight: The Department's expenditure with the National Bee Unit in each of the last 10 years is set out in the following table:

£

	Defra expenditure with the National Bee Unit
1996–97	1,300,000
1997–98	1,300,000
1998–99	1,300,000
1999–2000	1,300,000
2000–01	1,300,000
2001–02	1,300,000
2002–03	1,300,000
2003–04	1,235,000
2004–05	1,235,000
2005–06	1,235,000

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will set out the criteria by which funding decisions for the bee health programme are made. [34609]

Jim Knight: The bee health programme is funded from the Departmental vote. Funding is allocated in order to achieve the best available value for money in achieving the Department's objectives.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department *(a)* has taken and *(b)* is planning to take to safeguard bee health against the threat of the varroa mite. [34610]

Jim Knight: DEFRA (and MAFF before it) has been helping the beekeeping sector to better equip itself to manage varroa infestations ever since the pest was first discovered in England in 1992. The Department has funded a range of measures delivered by the National Bee Unit, including the provision of a free diagnostic and inspection service to beekeepers and a comprehensive training and advisory programme, as well as R&D.

Although varroa continues to pose challenges to contemporary beekeeping particularly with the development of mite resistance to chemical treatments, it is now endemic in the UK and has been for several years. The Department has issued a consultation document on plans to remove the mite from the list of notifiable diseases in March 2006. However, the National Bee Unit will continue to offer advice to beekeepers about its management and control, as it does now for other serious but non-statutory diseases.

Biofuels

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of arisings from forestry waste were used as biomass fuel in 2004–05. [27310]

Margaret Beckett: Information on the removal of tree tops and branch wood for use as fuel following conventional timber harvesting operations is not routinely collected. However, the Forestry Commission estimates that less than 2,000 tonnes of this material, from a possible 500,000 tonnes, was removed from woodland and used as fuel in England last year.

Damages

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2032W, on damages, what the basis was of the *(a)* personal injury claims and *(b)* unfair dismissal claim; and if she will make a statement. [34394]

Jim Knight: The information is as follows:

(a) The personal injury claim was brought in relation to a work related upper limb disorder.

(b) The unfair dismissal and discrimination claim concerned an employee who had failed their probation and lodged a case with the employment tribunal for

unfair dismissal and race discrimination. The case was settled via ACAS outside of the employment tribunal without any admission of liability.

Departmental Research

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research projects commissioned by her Department are being undertaken; and what the publication arrangements are in each case. [32996]

Jim Knight: The Department spends around £160 million each year on research projects covering a wide range of science in support of policy formulation and development. At any one time we have around 1,500 'live' research projects. We publish a large amount of information on completed and ongoing research projects on the department's internet site at:

http://www2.defra.gov.uk/research/project_data/Default.asp.

This information is available free to all. Our searchable system provides a range of information on projects, including title, cost, contractor, duration, description and, once completed, the final report.

EU Decision 2005/745/EC

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with her counterparts in the European Union on the duration of decision 2005/745/EC. [24940]

Mr. Bradshaw: No proposals have yet been made by the European Commission to extend or limit the duration of decision 2005/745/EC.

Flood Defences

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what improvements have been made to flood defences in each borough along the River Thames in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [32628]

Mr. Morley: I understand from the Environment Agency that they have undertaken the improvements detailed in the following table. Expenditure on the River Thames is expected to increase significantly during the next five years as many tidal walls and embankments reach the end of their design life and the recommendations from improvement strategies are implemented.

£000

London borough	Location	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Greenwich	Thames Barrier and Associated Gates[1]	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000	5,000
Various	Tidal Side Channels and Tributaries[2]	0	2,588	0	1,621	309
Bexley	Thamesmead[3]	—	16	—	—	—
Hammersmith	Hammersmith[4]	109	—	—	—	—
Tower Hamlets	Tower of London[5]	671	—	—	—	—
Tower Hamlets	Isle of Dogs: Blackwall Stairs[5]	—	125	—	—	—
Tower Hamlets	Isle of Dogs: Lockes Wharf[5]	160	—	—	—	—
Newham	Royal Docks: Orchard Wharf[5]	—	—	325	—	—
Chiswick	Strand on The Green Frontage[5]	—	—	—	—	700
		5,940	7,729	5,325	6,621	6,009

[1] Annual £5 million for renewals and maintenance. Although the Thames barrier and associated gates are located in the London borough of Greenwich, the benefits accrue across all of the boroughs along the tidal Thames.
[2] Renewals and maintenance. The breakdown includes all improvements on the River Thames and excludes works on side channels and tributaries.
[3] New tidal flap gate.
[4] Moveable tidal defences installation.
[5] Tidal wall-embankment repairs.

Floodline

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many telephone calls were received by Floodline in each of the last 36 months; and if she will make a statement. [32617]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency is the principal operating authority responsible for flood risk in England and operates the Floodline telephone advice service. The number of calls is given in the following table.

	Number of calls
2002	
November	7107
December	4753
2003	
January	14,065
February	1879
March	1890
April	1496
May	1397
June	1548
July	1697
August	1574
September	2109
October	6476
November	2819
December	2203
2004	
January	2546
February	5921
March	2154
April	2106
May	1488
June	1763
July	1787
August	6559
September	1928
October	5806
November	2792
December	1809

	Number of calls
2005	
January	5379
February	2804
March	2269
April	2580
May	2199
June	2870
July	2349
August	2194
September	2305
October	5338

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many visits to the Floodline website there were in each of the last 36 months; and if she will make a statement. [32618]

Mr. Morley: "Floodline" is an Environment Agency telephone service. The number of times the Flood Warning pages on the Agency's website were accessed are given in the following table. It should be noted that an individual might access more than one page at each visit to the website. Each such page access has been counted separately rather than the "visits" as such.

	Number
2002	
November	288,541
December	281,478
2003	
January	453,796
February	77,221
March	78,937
April	63,514
May	54,564
June	52,500
July	54,033
August	37,964
September	45,152
October	78,291
November	110,169
December	91,947
2004	
January	186,362
February	520,410
March	98,332
April	154,206
May	81,871
June	69,448
July	79,494
August	386,188
September	121,902
October	2,446,509
November	238,813
December	144,280
2005	
January	752,578
February	230,328
March	189,832
April	202,371
May	170,891
June	193,276
July	144,772
August	146,962
September	193,619
October	682,603

Ministerial Travel

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on how many occasions since 7 July she has used the London underground in connection with her official duties. [35027]

Jim Knight: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State, has not had an opportunity to use the London underground in connection with her official duties since 7 July 2005.

MRSA

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with colleagues in the Department for Health on MRSA, with particular reference to the emergence of similar strains in humans and animals. [33790]

Mr. Bradshaw: Meticillin-resistant "Staphylococcus aureus" (MRSA) in animals has been specifically discussed at the Defra Antimicrobial Resistance Co-ordination (DARC) Group, which is led by the Veterinary Medicines Directorate (VMD) and includes the Department of Health (DH) membership. The VMD held a meeting in 2004 involving DARC group members, and external specialists in MRSA, to consider how the issue should be addressed. It was decided to turn this group into a MRSA sub group of DARC. There have been two meetings of this MRSA sub group in 2005, in January and in July and a position statement on (MRSA) in animals is available on the web at http://defraweb/animalh/diseases/zoonoses/mrsa.htm

North Western Waters Regional Advisory Council

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1068–69W, on the Regional Advisory Council for North Western Waters, what the *(a)* mandate, *(b)* budget and *(c)* powers are of the Regional Advisory Council for North Western Waters; how many members the Council has; how many UK representatives are on the Council; what posts on the Council are held by UK nationals; and if she will make a statement. [32042]

Mr. Bradshaw: The information is as follows:

(a) The remit or mandate of the North Western Waters Regional Advisory Council (hereafter RAC):

To submit recommendations and suggestions to the European Commission or Member States on matters regarding fisheries management. This may be upon request of the aforementioned bodies or made of the RAC's own accord.

To inform the Commission or Member States of any problems relating to the implementation of fisheries policy, and suggest ways of addressing the problems.

Issues addressed will often be relevant to the region concerned, but may also be more general in nature.

(b) The budget of the RAC for September 2005-September 2006 is 299,310/205,010. This is comes from the Commission (84 per cent.), member states (7 per cent.) and other contributors including members (9 per cent.).

(c) The RACs play an advisory role only; neither the Commission nor the member states are bound by the advice they receive from the RAC. However those in receipt of advice must respond precisely, within three months of the advice being given.

Currently there are 82 members on the General Assembly, 24 on the Executive Committee, and 58 members of the four working groups. Of these totals 26, five and 19 are from the UK respectively.

RAC members from the UK hold the following positions: Chairman of the RAC and Executive Committee, Chairman of the West of Scotland Working Group, Vice Chairman of the English Channel Working Group, and Vice Chairman of the Irish Sea Working group.

Public Sector Energy Savings

Susan Kramer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the percentage of energy usage in the public sector that will be saved through energy efficiency measures by 2020. [31468]

Mr. Morley: With current policies the public sector is expected to save about 3–5 per cent. of its energy consumption in 2010 compared to a business as usual baseline. Without any further policies the savings would remain at the same level to 2020. Current policies in this sector are being reviewed as part of the wider review of the UK climate change programme.

Statutory Instruments

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many statutory instruments introduced by her Department were *(a)* withdrawn, *(b)* amended by a further statutory instrument and *(c)* reprinted because of defective drafting in each session since 1997; and what steps she (i) is taking and (ii) plans to take to prevent further such instances. [33553]

Jim Knight: The Department does not maintain comprehensive statistics on these questions for the period since 1997. The Department was created in June 2001. According to available sources dating back to 1999 (which therefore relate in part to MAFF), the Department has in the last six years made 26 instruments which correct defective drafting. The training measures mentioned in the answer to UIN 33554 are designed to limit such occurrences to a minimum.

Waste Disposal

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how long it takes on average to build a fully working incinerator to deal with refuse. [26496]

Mr. Bradshaw: Indicative lead times to develop new waste management facilities are given in Defra's practice guide to support local authorities in developing municipal waste management strategies, which is available on Defra's website at:

www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/localauth/practice-guidance/index.htm.

For energy from waste facilities the indicative lead times from commencement of procurement to operation range from five to eight years, depending on factors such as the size of the facility and local planning issues.

Water Supplies

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will introduce a requirement on water companies to submit an application for water scarcity status before seeking permission for any new reservoir capacity. [33665]

Mr. Morley: The Government expects any water company proposing a major new water resources development, such as a reservoir, to have fully investigated the opportunities for enhanced levels of demand management. Enhanced levels of metering is one of the measures that should be considered.

The legislation governing application for designation as an Area of Water Scarcity are The Water Industry (Prescribed Conditions) Regulations 1999. Under this legislation when determining an application the Secretary of State must have regard to, among other considerations, the water resources which are or could be made available for meeting demand in an area over the period of 10 years following an application. This would include reservoir capacity.

One of the projects the recently formed Water Saving Group will be doing is to encourage companies to better use the current powers they have for promoting metering and develop and take forward options for increasing the particular circumstances in which companies have the discretion to meter, particularly in water stressed areas. The Group will also consider the lessons learnt from a review of the current application for area of water scarcity status and encourage further applications for area of water scarcity status in water stressed areas as well as looking at ways of simplifying the application process.

Wild Fowl

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 17 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1383W, on wild fowl, what estimate she has made of the total number of mallard released on National Gamebag Census shooting estates in each of the last five years. [33745]

Jim Knight: The Secretary of State for Environment and Rural Affairs has not made any such assessment of the total number of mallard released on National Gamebag Census shooting estates in each of the last five years, but figures provided to the Game Conservancy Trust suggest that on average 34,988 mallard are released each year on shooting estates.

The actual figures taken from the National Game Census on a yearly basis are as follows:

	Total number of Mallard released
2000	39,614
2001	36,313
2002	25,521
2003	33,734
2004	39,761

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

International Convention Against Doping In Sport

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when the UK will ratify the international convention against doping in sport recently adopted by the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation; and if she will make a statement. [34721]

Mr. Caborn: It is the Government's intention to become party to the convention as soon as the necessary parliamentary procedures have been completed. However, until we receive an authenticated copy from UNESCO of the adopted convention, we are unable at this time to give a precise date for when the UK expects to ratify the convention.

Consultants/Special Advisers

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many *(a)* consultants and *(b)* special advisers were employed by her Department in each year since 1997; what the cost of each was in each year; and if she will make a statement. [27420]

Mr. Lammy: The information requested is as follows.

(a) Detailed records of contracts are not retained for the years 1997 and 1998. In the year 1997 the cost of consultants was £309,000 and in 1998 it was £728,000.

Consultant	Contract	Amount (£)
1999		
Deloitte and Touche	Review of Museums and Galleries	27,500
KPMG	Risk Management Systems	11,836
MORI	Attitude Survey Research	15,660
PKF	Financial Projections	18,000
Price WaterhouseCoopers	Royal Armouries Consultancy	21,500
Spectrum	E-commerce Best Practice	26,790
Price WaterhouseCoopers	Business Risk Management	24,220
Small miscellaneous projects aggregate	—	58,000
Total	—	203,506
2000		
Lorien	NDPB Review Programme (Framework)	
PKF	NDPB Review Programme (Framework)	223,602
Capita	NDPB Review Programme (Framework)	
PKF	BBC's Financial Reporting	27,300
ORC International	Staff Survey Report	13,130
Small miscellaneous projects aggregate	—	22,600
Total	—	286,632
2001		
McKinseys	Culture Online Formation	1,340,000
AHL Ltd	Internal Audit Resources	70,000
Organisational Consulting	Horse Race Levy Scheme	40,000
Price WaterhouseCoopers	Commonwealth Games Review	58,500
AJW Associates	Coaching Task Force	10,000
Small miscellaneous projects aggregate	—	37,100
Total	—	1,457,100
2002		
Kingshurst Consulting Group	Capital of Culture Analysis	30,480
Richard Lambert	BBC News 24 requirement)	44,700
MORI	BBC News 24 requirement)	
Robert Palmer	Capital of Culture Adviser	30,000
PriceWaterhouseCoopers	E-Commerce Impact Study	43,750
Stanton Marris	Touchstone Project	85,000
Hay Group	Skill Audit	136,195
Atkins Management Consultants	Financial Adviser-Apethorpe Hall	17,290
Experian	Cultural Facilities Register	42,400
Small miscellaneous projects aggregate	—	28,600
Total	—	458,415
2003		
Kingshurst Consulting Group	Capital of Culture shortlist	16,875
Health Food and Safety Solutions	Fitness for Purposes	16,000
PriceWaterhouseCoopers	London 2012 Costs and Benefits	38,000
Gillian Ashmore	Review of Heritage Protection	50,000
Odgers, Ray and Berndtson	Public Appointments Advice	50,000
Europe Economics	BBC Online Review)	
Spectrum Strategy Consultants	BBC Online Adviser)	332,000
Philip Graf	BBC Online Review Co-ordinator)	
ASK Europe plc	360 Degree Feedback	130,070
Denis Allnut	Tourist Data Project	15,750
Small miscellaneous projects aggregate	—	23,450
Total	—	672,145

Consultant	Contract	Amount (£)
2004		
PA Consulting	Local Communities Project	151,410
PKF	Historic Environment Review	40,090
The Gartner Group	Benchmarking of IT Services	29,100
Patrick Barwise	BBC New Digital Services—TV)	161,300
Tim Gardam	BBC New Digital Services—Radio)	
Shared Intelligence	Peer Reviews	61,300
PriceWaterhouseCoopers	Efficiency Review	89,410
PriceWaterhouseCoopers	Olympic Cost Review	114,080
PriceWaterhouseCoopers	Olympic Games Impact Study	72,000
AHL Ltd	Audit Services	23,100
Ubiqus	BBC Charter Review	42,000
Angela Watson and Associates	Cultural Services Framework	40,000
Eftec	Olympic Games Impact Study	128,530
Morris Hargreaves McIntyre	Museums Education Strategy	12,000
Deloitte and Touche	Sports Strategy	24,000
Odgers Rayand Berndtson	Headhunting	18,000
Small miscellaneous projects aggregate	—	26,000
Total	—	1,032,320
2005		
Opsis Renewal Consulting	Framework for NDPB Reviews	66,900
Hedra plc	NDPB Governance	47,660
Price WaterhouseCoopers	Licensing Act	29,500
Price WaterhouseCoopers	Sponsorship of British Library	24,000
KPMG	Olympic Games Validation	255,000
Helen Nimmo	Olympic Games Transition)	
Matthew Symes	Olympic Games Transition)	303,000
Kate Cohen	Olympic Games Transition)	
Ubiqus	BBC requirement	38,500
Veredus	Public Appointments Advice	14,000
Small miscellaneous projects aggregate	—	42,500
Total	—	831,060

Outside legal firms employed by DCMS have not been included in the list.

(b) Since 2003, the Government has published on an annual basis the names and overall cost of special advisers and the number in each pay band. For the most recent information I refer the hon. Member to the statement made by my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, 158–62WS.

Information on the numbers of special advisers prior to 2003 was provided at regular intervals and this information will be available in the Libraries of both Houses.

Licensing

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what estimate the Government have made of the number of *(a)* village halls, *(b)* sports clubs and *(c)* community centres which have applied for a full premises licence under the Licensing Act 2003. [32499]

James Purnell: Initial feedback from licensing authorities suggests that the vast majority of the 9,000 village halls in England and Wales applied to convert their old licences into new premises licences. We do not hold the information on the number of community centres that applied for premises licences or the number of sports clubs that applied for premises licences rather than club premises certificates.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to her answer of 17 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1403W, on licensing appeals, what guidance has been provided to magistrates courts by *(a)* the Magistrates' Association and *(b)* the Justices Clerks' Society. [32716]

James Purnell: The main guidance that has been provided to magistrates courts on the Licensing Act 2003 is through a training pack designed by the Justices Clerks' Society and issued by the Judicial Studies Board. The procedure for magistrates' courts is one that they are familiar with as they already deal with appeals arising from local authority decisions for example, on hackney carriage licences and entertainment licences.

National Water Sports Centre

Angela Browning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the outcome was of the recent inquiry into the future of the National Water Sports Centre at Holme Pierpoint; and if she will make a statement. [34988]

Mr. Caborn: Sport England is carrying out a review of the future of the National Sports Centres, including the National Water Sports Centre at Holme Pierrepont. The Holme Pierrepont site is owned by Nottinghamshire county council (NCC) and leased to Sport England through the Sports Council Trust Company. A joint Sport England and NCC study of the wider strategic development options for Holme Pierrepont has been carried out, taking into account sporting requirements and local and regional stakeholder interests.

These options are still being evaluated. Discussions between Sport England and NCC continue with the aim of developing a strategy that offers a stronger long-term future for the site.

Olympic Games

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the contribution of London council tax payers will be to the 2012 Olympics. [30614]

Mr. Caborn: The Memorandum of Understanding between the Government and the Mayor of London (Command Paper CM5867 laid before the House in June 2003) provides for a contribution to the Olympics from the London council tax payer of up to £625 million over a period of eleven years.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the latest estimate of the costs of holding the Olympic games in London in 2012. [30650]

Mr. Caborn: The most recent figures for the costs of holding the Olympic games in London in 2012 are published in the candidature file. These costs are currently under review as part of process of robust cost management that is being put in place following the successful Olympic bid.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when the Olympic Delivery Authority is expected to *(a)* select its chairman and *(b)* be a functioning body. [31172]

Mr. Caborn: On 18 November my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced the selection of Mr. Jack Lemley as the chairman of the Olympic Delivery Authority. From 1989 to 1993 Mr. Lemley was chief executive of Trans-Manche Link, the consortium responsible for the construction of the channel tunnel. The appointment was made in accordance with the code of practice of the Office of the Commissioner for Public Appointments. The timing of the establishment of the Olympic Delivery Authority is subject to the passage of the London Olympic games and Paralympic Games Bill.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the relationship is between the Olympic Delivery Authority and the Olympic Transport Authority; and to whom each is accountable. [31173]

Mr. Caborn: The Olympic Transport Authority will be part of the Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA), which will itself be accountable to the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport as a member of the Olympic Board. In addition, the ODA's annual report and statement of accounts will be laid before Parliament.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the state is of negotiations between the London Development Agency and London and Continental Railways Limited regarding land needed for the 2012 Olympics over which London and Continental Railways Limited has development rights. [31174]

Mr. Caborn: Negotiations have resulted in the parties reaching an agreement. The agreement ensures that all the land and infrastructure required for the Olympics on the Stratford City land can be delivered and that the first phase of the Stratford City development, known as zone 1, can proceed.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what measures have been taken to ensure that unemployed people in inner London constituencies benefit from increased employment opportunities connected to construction work prior to the 2012 Olympics. [31175]

Mr. Caborn: The Government are committed to ensure that the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games maximise the potential for job creation, training and business growth so that the games leave a lasting social and economic, as well as physical, legacy for London and the rest of the UK. This is reflected in the "Procurement Principles" published by the interim Olympic Delivery Authority in September which will form the basis of the draft procurement strategy to be adopted by the Olympic Delivery Authority.

The London Development Authority is also now finalising a framework of initiatives with the London boroughs of Newham, Tower Hamlets, Hackney, Waltham Forest and Greenwich designed to give local people the skills they need to access Olympic-related jobs (including those in construction). This is an important pre-condition of the Olympic and legacy planning permissions granted by the boroughs in 2004. The details of how this programme will be delivered, match funding arrangements, and how the programme will operate within the existing construction training environment will need to be finalised and agreed with the boroughs as part of the ongoing planning process.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with *(a)* the International Olympic Committee and *(b)* National Olympic Committees on the prevention of exploitation of and cruelty to children training in Olympic sports. [34626]

Mr. Caborn: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has had no such discussions with the International Olympic Committee or other National Olympic Committees.

However, the Government firmly believes that parents and their children have a right to believe that they will be safe and well protected whilst participating in all sport. All sports organisations that receive statutory funding through Sport England must have an active child protection policy in place. The Child Protection in Sport Unit—a partnership between the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children, Sport England, sportscotland, the Sports Council for Northern Ireland and the Sports Council for Wales—works with the various National Governing Bodies of sport on their child protection policies to ensure that this happens.

Queen's Diamond Jubilee

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what preparations and planning her Department has undertaken in connection with events to mark Her Majesty the Queen's diamond jubilee in 2012. [34439]

Mr. Lammy: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport is not currently involved in preparations to commemorate The Queen's diamond jubilee in 2012. Any announcement of plans will be made closer to the time.

DEFENCE

Aircraft Crashes

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what procedure was followed in clearing the radar altimeter hold for use on *(a)* the Chinook HC1 and *(b)* the Chinook HC2. [25194]

Mr. Touhig: The Chinook HC1 radar altimeter system under went detailed flight trials at the Aeroplane and Armament Experimental Establishment (A&AEE), Boscombe Down (now Qinetiq). Prior to the upgrade of the Chinook HC1 to Chinook HC2, further trials were undertaken, also at A&AEE.

Army Vehicles

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many vehicles have been sent to the Army Base Repair Organisation workshop Donnington for specified repair-only repairs over the past five years, broken down by type. [33580]

Mr. Ingram: The information requested is shown in the following table:

	Equipment	
	Warrior	*CVRT*
2000–01	1	0
2001–02	0	0
2002–03	1	4
2003–04	1	24
2004–05	7	36

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* Warrior and *(b)* CVR(T) vehicles are expected to be sent to Afghanistan in 2006. [33583]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the written statement I made on 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 41WS.

Once ISAF plans for expansion into the South and East of Afghanistan mature, individual Allies, including the United Kingdom, will be able to take final decisions on deployment of forces and capability.

British Troop Deployment (Afghanistan)

Mr. MacDougall: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British troops will be deployed to Afghanistan in the next 12 months; and in which region of Afghanistan they will be deployed. [34123]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* I refer my hon. Friend to the written statement I made on 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 41WS.

Claims Annual Report

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the background to the claims referred to in *(a)* Annex C and *(b)* Annex D of the Claims Annual Report 2004–05. [34358]

Mr. Touhig: The top 10 settled claims by value brought by service personnel and civilian employees under the Department's Employer's Liability obligations are set out in Annexes C and D of the Ministry of Defence's Claims Annual Report 2004–05. These claims are handled respectively by Royal and Sun Alliance and AXA Corporate Solutions, on behalf of the Ministry of Defence. Such claims are considered on the basis of whether or not the Ministry of Defence has a legal liability to pay compensation. Where there is a proven legal liability, compensation is paid.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the nature of the cases referred to in paragraph 10.25 of the Claims Annual Report 2004–05. [34359]

Mr. Touhig: The cases referred to in paragraph 10.25 of the Ministry of Defence's Claims Annual Report 2004–05 relate to compensation claims arising in Northern Ireland. The details are as follows:

High value bloodstock claims

	£
Death of five year-old mare as a result of being startled by low flying helicopter	32,000.00
Death of foal	12,700.00
Veterinary fees	108.70
Total	44,808.70
Injury leading to loss in value of racehorse as a result of being startled by low flying helicopter	23,400.00
Loss in training fees	1,600.00
Potential loss of earnings	5,000.00
Total:	30,000.00
Injury leading to loss in value of stallion as a result of being startled by low flying helicopter	24,507.45
Total:	24,507.45

High value personal injury claims

	£
Claimant thrown from a trailer attached to a moving tractor sustaining serious injury. Value of compensation paid:	184,000.00
Injuries sustained when claimant's car was hit by a rising bollard as he was leaving a military base. Value of compensation paid:	100,000.00
Injuries sustained by an 80 year-old lady as a result of being blown off her feet by a Chinook helicopter	30,900

Defence Advisory Notices

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Defence Advisory (DA) Notices were issued to the media in each month since January 1997; and how many were *(a)* DA-Notices 01, *(b)* DA-Notices 02, *(c)* DA-Notices 03, *(d)* DA-Notices 04 and *(e)* DA-Notices 05. [33063]

Mr. Ingram: The term 'DA Notice' refers only to the five standing Defence Advisory (DA) Notices agreed by the Defence Press and Broadcasting Advisory Committee (DPBAC). Changes to DA Notices are made rarely and are circulated directly to editors throughout the UK, and made available to the public through the DPBAC website (www.dnotice.org.uk). Only two changes have been made to the standing DA Notices since January 1997. In May 2000, the then DA Notice No 6 was incorporated into DA notice No 4 (sensitive installations and home addresses). In March

2005. DA Notice No 4 was amended to reflect concerns over possible terrorist attacks on elements of the critical national infrastructure.

Additional DA Notice guidance, amplifying the advice set out in the standing DA Notices, is issued by the DPBAC secretary (on behalf of the Committee) to all editors in the United Kingdom to cover specific circumstances or to meet particular concerns. Since January 1997, the DPBAC secretary has written to all UK editors amplifying DA Notice guidance on the following occasions:

1997: No record of any letters being issued

1998: No record of any letters being issued

1999: February DA Notice No 6 (two letters); May DA Notice No 6

2000: August DA Notice No 5; September DA Notice No 5

2001: September DA Notice No 5; October DA Notice No 5; November DA Notice No 5

2002: January DA Notice No 5

2003: May DA Notice No 5 (two letters)

2004: September DA Notice No 2; November DA Notice No 1

2005: August DA Notice No 2; October DA Notice No 2

Defence Procurement

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will list the defence procurement projects in which changes in acquisition numbers have been made since 1997; [34364]

(2) if he will list the defence procurement projects in which capability requirement changes have been made since 1997. [34365]

Mr. Ingram: This information could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Eurofighter Typhoon

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) whether the meetings he held with Crown Prince Abdullah and officials in July during his visit to Saudi Arabia included discussion of the Eurofighter Typhoon; and if he will make a statement; [34836]

(2) whether the meetings he held with Crown Prince Abdullah and other officials in July 2005 on his visit to Saudi Arabia were attended by employees of BAE Systems; and if he will make a statement; [34837]

(3) whether the meetings he held with Crown Prince Abdullah and other officials in July 2005 on his visit to Saudi Arabia included discussions on *(a)* Saad al-Faqih and *(b)* Mohammed al-Masari; and if he will make a statement. [34838]

John Reid: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 563W. I have nothing further to add.

Falkland Islands

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to change the size of the UK garrison in the Falkland Islands. [33864]

Mr. Ingram: There are no plans to change the size of the United Kingdom garrison in the Falkland Islands. We keep all commitments under continual review and adjust resources when it is appropriate to do so.

Former Warsaw Pact Countries

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will list those former Warsaw pact countries belonging to NATO which have made information available *(a)* bilaterally to the United Kingdom, *(b)* to NATO and *(c)* by means of general publication revealing former Soviet plans to use (i) nuclear and (ii) conventional weapons in Europe; [34194]

(2) if he take steps, in conjunction with the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, to obtain the material about former Soviet plans for *(a)* nuclear and *(b)* conventional warfare in Europe released by the Polish Government and publish translations in English of this material. [34195]

John Reid: Former Soviet plans for the use of nuclear and conventional weapons in Europe are of historic interest only. The Ministry of Defence have not therefore attempted to draw together information made available by former Warsaw pact countries; to do so would incur disproportionate cost.

We are aware that the Polish Government have recently released information about former Soviet plans for the use of nuclear weapons in Europe. However, as this information is considered to be of historic interest only, the Ministry of Defence and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office have no plans to publish translations of this information.

Future Aircraft Carrier

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) for what reasons Ministers in his Department have ceased to identify the target in-service dates for each Future Aircraft Carrier as 2012 and 2015; [33616]

(2) if he will make a statement on changes in the target in-service dates for each of the Future Aircraft Carriers. [33615]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 2 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 818W.

HMS Sheffield

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 17 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1409W, on HMS Sheffield, whether the departmental files that are under review also contain all the reports that were written by the HMS Sheffield veterans on board the tanker British Elsk while on passage from the Falkland Islands to Ascension Island; and if he will make a statement. [34849]

Mr. Ingram: Witness statements are held on file from all but one of the surviving members of HMS Sheffield's crew.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Jet Emissions

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will take steps to ensure that carbon emissions from military jets are offset by carbon reducing programmes. [33360]

Mr. Touhig: The Government are committed to offsetting carbon dioxide emissions from central Government civilian air travel from April 2006. Defra are developing a strategy for an offsetting scheme across Government. The MOD is currently working with Defra to identify how best to contribute to this.

Joint Combat Aircraft

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent information he has received about whether the United States intends to develop the STOVL variant of the Joint Combat Aircraft; and what assessment he has made of the effect on plans for *(a)* the Future Aircraft Carriers and *(b)* the RAF if the STOVL variant were cancelled. [33618]

Mr. Ingram: Development of the STOVL variant of the Joint Strike Fighter (JSF), which is the solution to the UK Joint Combat Aircraft requirement, continues as planned. Assembly of the first STOVL development aircraft has commenced with its first flight planned for late 2007. It is too early to say what will emerge from the US Quadrennial Defence Review (QDR). So far as the STOVL JSF is concerned, however, while there is no doubt that it will remain under close scrutiny as the development programme transitions into production, we are not aware of any delay as a result of the QDR.

Lynx Helicopter

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to sign the contract for the Future Lynx helicopter; and when he expects it to enter service; [32715]

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence the service entry planning assumption target date is for the Future Lynx project; and what provisions he has made for *(a)* naval and *(b)* Amy helicopter capability until the Future Lynx enters service. [33404]

Mr. Ingram: The Future Lynx is our preferred procurement option to meet the Surface Combatant Maritime Rotorcraft and Battlefield Reconnaissance helicopter requirements. This is, however, subject to continuing negotiations with the company, and the main investment decision has not yet been taken. While the Department will consider a number of planning assumptions for in-service dates when conducting assessment studies on projects, actual in-service dates are not set until projects achieve their main gate approval. If we decide to proceed with FLynx its entry into service will be coordinated with the progressive withdrawal from service of the current Lynx aircraft.

Ministerial Visits

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions he has visited wounded soldiers since May; and in which locations. [33402]

John Reid: I visited wounded soldiers at Shaibah field hospital in Iraq on 17 May and again on 2 December. My ministerial colleagues have also visited wounded soldiers on four occasions since May:

My hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Defence and Minister for Veterans visited wounded soldiers at the Royal Centre for Defence Medicine (RCDM) in Birmingham on 8 September. This was in a private capacity and was part of a wider official visit.

My right hon. Friend the Minster for the Armed Forces visited wounded soldiers at RCDM on 14 June.

My noble Friend the Minister for Defence Procurement visited wounded soldiers at RCDM on 18 November, and visited Shaibah field hospital in early July.

With regard to support for wounded servicemen and women, the Government's priority has been to provide the best possible medical care to injured personnel, giving them the peace and quiet needed to allow a speedy recovery. It is the emotional support provided by friends and family that is of most importance to our injured soldiers. The Government supplement this through the wide range of welfare services made available by the Ministry of Defence.

MOD Contracts

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library copies of the audit clauses contained in contracts between the Ministry of Defence and BAE Systems agreed over the past two years. [33920]

Mr. Ingram: A number of defence contract conditions (DEFCONS) provide for audits or investigations to be conducted in a variety of circumstances during and after the contract period, mainly for pricing, quality assurance and government property holdings purposes. Audits are conducted by the appropriate MOD integrated project team staffer authority, such as the pricing and forecasting group, defence quality assurance authority or directorate of internal audit.

Information about the clauses contained in the 639 contracts between the MOD and BAE Systems and its divisions agreed over the past two financial years is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost. However, a 'Conditions guide' and a copy of each DEFCON, along with other commercial policy information, are available through the Commercial Toolkit at www.ams.mod.uk. I will place a copy of the 'Guide' in the Library of the House.

Naval Rules of Engagement

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent assessment he has made of the adequacy of the rules of engagement under which the Royal Navy ships operate in the Mediterranean to deal with *(a)* threats of terrorism, *(b)* drugs and arms running and *(c)* the smuggling of illegal immigrants; and if he will make a statement. [33712]

Mr. Ingram: It has been the practice of successive Governments not to comment in detail on the rules of engagement under which our armed forces operate.

Royal Ordnance

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1092W on Royal Ordnance, from which country each of the munitions listed are to be sourced. [32744]

Mr. Ingram: BAE Systems Land Systems remain responsible for the alternative sourcing of items previously manufactured at their Bridgwater and Chorley sites, and for maintaining overall security of supply. The company is examining a range of alternative sources for the products, both at home and overseas. The details are a matter for the company.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Bona Vacantia Division

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Solicitor General what the national targets are for the Bona Vacantia division; and what the performance of relevant offices in South Devon has been against those targets. [34031]

The Solicitor-General: There are no national targets for the Bona Vacantia division for either receipts or volumes of new cases as it would be inappropriate to set targets in these areas. The Bona Vacantia division does not in general seek out bona vacantia assets relying instead on notification by others.

Income and expenditure from bona vacantia is detailed in the Crown's nominee account, laid before Parliament each financial year. The Bona Vacantia division operates from the offices of the Treasury solicitor based in central London. There are no other Bona Vacantia offices located anywhere else in England and Wales.

Information on the volume of cases as well as a suite of internal quality targets is kept by the division. These include responding to new cases within five working days, against which performance in the year to date is 94.3 per cent. and responding to complaints within 10 working days, against which performance this year is 100 per cent.. Apart from Northern Ireland there is no geographical breakdown of this information for England and Wales.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Antisocial Behaviour

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many antisocial behaviour orders have been issued to children in each local authority in England and Wales in each year since they were established, broken down by age of child. [33302]

Hazel Blears: The available information is given in the tables and a copy will be placed in the Library.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) if he will list the grants available to organisations tackling antisocial behaviour in East Sussex; and how much money is available in each case; [33573]

(2) what funding is available to organisations tackling antisocial behaviour in Bexhill-on-Sea, East Sussex; [33778]

(3) how much money has been spent on antisocial behaviour prevention in East Sussex since 1997. [33779]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 1 December 2005]:* Prior to the antisocial behaviour unit being set up in January 2003 there was no specific funding for antisocial behaviour. However since 2003 each CDRP has received £25,000, primarily for an ASB co-ordinator. In 2004 Hastings was made an action area. £55,000 has been allocated to Hastings for 2005–06.

This resource has been used to help support the recruitment of housing association staff to work in the ASB team. It has also been used to fund in part the development of four together action zones which will divide the area and enable a more structured approach to tackling ASB. Some of the resource will be spent on a targeted advertising campaign informing residents about ASB and how to tackle it.

Correspondence

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of hon. Members' correspondence with his Department was answered within 15 working days for the period *(a)* January to March, *(b)* April to June and *(c)* July to September; and if he will make a statement. [34325]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The proportion of Members' correspondence answered by core Home Office units (excludes the Immigration and Nationality Department and agencies) within 15 working days was: 52 per cent. in January to March 78 per cent. in April to June 93 per cent. in July to September. In October we reached the target of 95 per cent. of Members' correspondence that was answered within 15 working days.

Council Tax Valuation

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether an individual prosecuted in the magistrates court for intentionally delaying or obstructing a Valuation Office Agency representative conducting a council tax valuation inspection would receive a criminal record if convicted. [33118]

Hazel Blears: A person who intentionally obstructs a valuation officer commits an offence and may be liable on summary conviction to a fine not exceeding level two (£500) on the standard scale. This is not a recordable offence and will not be recorded nationally on the police national computer, but will be recorded on local police and court records.

Data Analysis

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent steps have been taken to speed up the processing of data analysis by *(a)* the police and *(b)* the security services. [33567]

Hazel Blears: Recent investigations have demonstrated how the use of technology by terrorist suspects has an impact on the data processing required by investigating authorities. However, the steps taken

by the police and the Security Service to respond to this increased requirement is an operational matter on which it would not be appropriate to comment.

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average number of police officers is which has been assigned to the processing of data held by a terrorist suspect. [33568]

Hazel Blears: The Home Office does not hold this information. A decision on the number of police officers deployed to focus on a particular area of an investigation, such as processing data is the responsibility of the chief constable of the force concerned.

Independent Police Complaints Commission

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department why the *(a)* salary, *(b)* pension and *(c)* other costs relating to the former Joint Deputy Chair of the Independent Police Complaints Commission were not included in the Commission's annual report and accounts 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [32580]

Hazel Blears: This information may only be made available with the consent of the individual concerned and it was specifically not given.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what were the *(a)* salary, *(b)* pension and *(c)* other costs relating to the former joint deputy chair of the Independent Police Complaints Commission in 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [32582]

Hazel Blears: The former deputy chair was paid in accordance with the salary range advertised for the post (£50,000-£70,000). Further details can not be disclosed without the consent of the individual concerned. Recruitment costs cannot be identified because they are part of a campaign to recruit 16 commissioners.

Licensing Hours

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will visit Shrewsbury *(a)* to assess the impact of extended licensing hours on the town and *(b)* to discuss the issue with local police. [34368]

Mr. Charles Clarke: At the present time I have no plans to visit Shrewsbury. I understand however that the majority of the 165 premises within the Shrewsbury and Atcham Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership area, including public houses, clubs, restaurants and shops that applied for an extension of their opening hours were for extensions of only one or two hours. I also believe West Mercia police, who cover Shrewsbury, have briefed Pub Watch members and licencees on the new powers in the Licensing Act 2003.

The Act which became effective from 24 November 2005 strengthens the powers the police have to clamp down on crime and disorder if it arises. Not only does that help the police and licensing authorities to do their jobs, but it gives licence holders an added incentive to manage venues responsibly. The Government have given a commitment to monitor the impact of the act on crime and disorder and the other licensing objectives. If necessary the Government will introduce further legislation with the consent of Parliament to strengthen or alter any provisions.

Money Laundering

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which law enforcement agencies have responsibility for *(a)* monitoring, *(b)* investigating and *(c)* prosecuting money laundering offences committed by foreign politically exposed persons which bring money derived from corrupt activities or theft of state assets into the UK financial system; and whether he plans to change the allocation of responsibilities. [34011]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The principal law enforcement agencies involved are the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) and local police forces. Prosecutions are the responsibility of the Crown Prosecution Service and the Serious Fraud Office. The Serious Organised Crime Agency will take over the NCIS responsibilities from 1 April 2006.

Motor Vehicle-related Accidents/Deaths

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to propose changes to the law relating to penalties for those responsible for motor vehicle related *(a)* accidents and *(b)* deaths. [32296]

Fiona Mactaggart: Following consultation on road traffic offences involving bad driving earlier this year the Government are taking forward a number of measures. These include two new offences where a death has occurred: a new offence of causing death by careless driving, with a maximum of five years imprisonment: a new offence dealing with death resulting from illegal (disqualified, unlicensed and uninsured) driving, with a maximum penalty of two years.

These measures were tabled by the Government as amendments to the Road Safety Bill currently before Parliament and included in the Bill at Lords Report on 22 November. The Government are not recommending any statutory changes in relation to bad driving that causes injury. The consultation proposed that the courts should be under a statutory responsibility to take account of non-fatal injuries when sentencing. This proposal received some support but some respondents thought it was unnecessary and that this is already done in practice in England and Wales.

The Government agree that requiring sentencers to take appropriate account of these factors in sentencing is an issue better dealt with by the Sentencing Guidelines Council and the Sentencing Commission for Scotland rather than through legislation.

Muttahida Quami

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the activities of the Muttahida Quami movement in the United Kingdom. [27692]

Mr. Charles Clarke: We do not comment on operational matters nor do we comment on any decisions whether to proscribe or deproscribe organisations

Nursery Bullying Study (Leak Inquiry)

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will hold an inquiry into the leak of the study proposing that nursery staff should identify children aged three and four who bully other children as being at risk of growing up criminals; and for what reason he will not publish the leaked study referred to on page 20 of *The Times* on Monday 13 June. [5035]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 15 June 2005]:* The study on nursery staff and bullying children was more than a year old and could have been leaked at any time during the previous twelve months. Previous leak inquiries have identified the source of other similar leaks over that period. The Secretary of State has therefore decided that a separate leak inquiry is not required in this instance.

I will not publish the leaked report referred to on page 20 of *The Times* on Monday 13 June 2005 because, in order to fully protect the ability of officials to formulate clear and well considered policy recommendations, it would not be in the public interest to do so. We do however propose to release a factual synthesis of crime patterns and reduction measures analysis in the new year which will provide a more up to date picture than is currently available.

Police

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which police forces have a policy of visiting every crime. [34498]

Hazel Blears: Attendance policy in respect of visiting every crime is essentially an operational matter for chief officers and police authorities to determine.

This information is not therefore collected centrally.

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress his Department has made towards light touch inspection of high performing police services. [13580]

Hazel Blears: HM Inspectorate of Constabulary has conducted a comprehensive scrutiny of core policing activities, known as baseline assessment. The results were published in October, with each activity graded as excellent, good, fair or poor.

HMIC will now use this baseline assessment to identify high performing forces—ie those with a majority of excellent or good and no poor grades—which will benefit from significant inspection freedoms. Instead of inspecting these forces across the board, HMIC will rely upon a significant degree of self-assessment and will limit its scrutiny to core governance issues—leadership, diversity and integrity—and those areas of greatest threat and vulnerability. Other forces will be subject to more inspection attention but this will be risk-based, focusing on activities attracting a poor grading and, as above, those activities that are high risk such as child protection, the management of dangerous sex offenders, civil contingencies and major crime.

The inspection effort will also take into account the fact that forces/police authorities are engaged in a significant exercise to reconfigure policing for the 21st century. HMIC will support the process by advising on how current high levels of performance can be maintained, and by ensuring that forces go into new merged arrangements, where appropriate, with a clear "balance sheet" of their respective strengths and weaknesses. HMIs' assessments of force leadership will specifically address the chief officers' change management capabilities.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* role and *(b)* composition of the police authority will be in the proposed strategic police forces. [34617]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* We continue to see a vital role for police authorities in setting priorities for strategic police forces and in holding the chief officer to account for the delivery of an efficient, effective and responsive policing service. Under the provisions of the Police Act 1996, any order amalgamating police force areas would provide for the establishment of a police authority for the new force.

As now, the authority would comprise a mix of councillors, magistrates and independent members. The White Paper "Building Communities, Beating Crime" set out proposals for strengthening the role and composition of police authorities, including by widening the skills and experience of the membership by removing the separate category of magistrate members.

Politically Exposed Persons

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate the National Criminal Intelligence Service has made of the value of assets held by foreign politically exposed persons in the UK. [34014]

Mr. Charles Clarke: No estimate has been made as the National Criminal Intelligence Service only receives and assesses suspicious activity reports of money laundering.

It would not be appropriate to comment on intelligence assessments carried out by NCIS.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many bank or building society accounts held by politically exposed persons in the UK are being monitored by law enforcement agencies; and how much money is held in these accounts. [34015]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This information is not held centrally. The National Criminal Intelligence Service does not have the powers to monitor bank or building society accounts. This is a function of individual law enforcement agencies.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many persons on the list of foreign politically exposed persons which has been circulated to financial institutions in the UK come from *(a)* Africa, *(b)* the Middle East, *(c)* Russia, *(d)* Europe, *(e)* Asia, *(f)* North America, *(g)* Central and Southern America and *(h)* other countries. [34016]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Government have not circulated a list of foreign politically exposed persons to financial institutions in the UK.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 24 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2322W, on politically exposed persons, if he will list the countries of origin of the persons about whom the suspicious activity

reports refer; and what the total value was of transactions made by the persons to which the suspicious activity reports refer. [34017]

Mr. Charles Clarke: It would not be appropriate to comment on current intelligence assessments, or amounts of funds concerned, in view of the risk of prejudicing the outcome of any investigations.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 47W, on politically exposed persons, how many of the suspicious activity reports received by the National Criminal Intelligence Service relating to foreign politically exposed persons have been forwarded to other law enforcement agencies; and if he will list the law enforcement agencies to which they have been sent. [34851]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* This information is not available. It would be disproportionate to try to compile the details requested as the information is now made available to law enforcement agencies online.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 47W, on politically exposed persons, which Government Departments or agencies submitted the suspicious activity reports which refer to corrupt activity overseas. [34852]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* It would not be appropriate to comment on those suspicious activity reports, regardless of source, which indicate corrupt activity and are possibly under investigation.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many investigations into the proceeds of corruption held by foreign politically exposed persons in the UK have been initiated by *(a)* the Metropolitan police, *(b)* the City of London police, *(c)* the Serious Fraud Office and *(d)* other regional police forces. [34853]

Mr. Charles Clarke *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* This information is not available. These are operational matters for law enforcement agencies. It would not be appropriate to comment on any current investigations, in view of the risk of prejudicing the outcome.

Prisoner Rehabilitation

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much was spent in 2004–05 on programmes to ensure that prisoners are released with employment or training arranged. [32637]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Prison Service's custody to work initiative provided £14.2 million to support prisoner resettlement in 2004–05. Of this funding, £5 million was used for supporting prisoners' future employment or training when released. A further £5.2 million was directed to supporting prisoners find accommodation on release, with a further £4 million split between the two. In addition, £4.2 million was invested through the Prison Service Plus initiative to support employment and training outcomes and Jobcentre Plus funded £4.5 million for employment and benefit surgeries.

Terrorist Suspects

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what average number of days terrorist suspects were held over the past two years prior to being *(a)* charged and *(b)* released without charge. [35139]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The maximum period of detention pre-charge was extended to 14 days with effect from 20 January 2004. Between that date and 4 September 2005, 357 people have been arrested of whom 36 have been held for in excess of seven days. A breakdown of these cases is in the table.

Period	*Number held for this period*	*Charged*	*Released without charge*
2004			
7–8 days	3	1	2
8–9 days	0	—	—
9–10 days	11	6	5
10–11 days	1	0	1
11–12 days	0	—	—
12–13 days	0	—	—
13–14 days	9	9	0
2005			
7–8 days	1	1	0
8–9 days	0	—	—
9–10 days	5	4	1
10–11 days	1	1	0
11–12 days	1	1	0
12–13 days	2	1	1
13–14 days	2	2	0

Together We Can Conference

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what action plan resulted from the Together We Can conference in December 2004; what plans there are to hold future conferences; and if he will make a statement. [33185]

Hazel Blears: Following the December 2004 Together We Can conference, the Home Office worked with Departments across Government to develop the Together We Can action plan, which was launched on 28 June 2005. This draws together community engagement initiatives from across 12 Government Departments around the themes of citizens and democracy; health and sustainability; regeneration and cohesion; and safety and justice. The plan is available on the Home Office website.

The Home Office leads on the Together We Can plan and the Department has held a series of Together We Can conferences. The next Together We Can conference is likely to take place in March 2006.

Victim Support

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what mechanisms are in place to support victims of crime and their families *(a)* before an offender is apprehended, *(b)* during the trial and *(c)* after the completion of the trial. [21549]

Fiona Mactaggart: The key elements of effective support for victims and witnesses of crime are receiving information, having a voice in the system and access to appropriate services.

The code of practice for Victims of Crime, which will come into force in April 2006, sets out in detail victims' rights to information from all key parts of the criminal justice system. The code covers all stages of the criminal justice process from the point at which an offence is reported to post-sentence. Copies of the code have been placed in the House Library.

The Victim Personal Statement, introduced in 2001, gives victims a voice by giving them the opportunity to explain how a crime has affected them. The statement forms part of the case papers and can be seen by everybody who makes decisions about the case as it progresses. Building on this, in September 2005, we published proposals for those bereaved through homicide to have their views heard in court. Assistance and support services for victims and witnesses of crime are available at all stages throughout the criminal justice process.

The Criminal Injuries Compensation Scheme provides financial help to blameless victims of violent crime. A national network of Witness Care Units is being implemented to provide a more customer focused service to witnesses, this includes the tailoring of services to help the witness attend court. The Home Office also provides £30 million to the charity Victim Support to provide support to those affected by crime, regardless of whether the crime has been reported.

Violent Offences (Licensed Premises)

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many violent offences were committed in connection with licensed premises in each year since 2002–03, broken down by *(a)* crime and disorder reduction partnership area and *(b)* basic command unit area. [33121]

Hazel Blears: Information on violent offences committed in connection with licensed premises by crime and disorder reduction partnerships is not collected centrally. Police forces returned data for basic command units but they were incomplete and of variable quality. These are given in the table and a copy will be placed in the Library.

Recording of such incidents will be dependent on levels of police activity and how police define such incidents locally. For example in certain areas where alcohol-related violence is particularly prevalent, local police are more likely to police city centres on Friday and Saturday nights thus recording more incidents of violent offences committed in connection with licensed premises.

TRANSPORT

A5117 Improvements

10. **Mr. David Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the proposed improvements to the A5117 between Deeside Park and the M56 are expected *(a)* to start and *(b)* to be completed. [34469]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency has scheduled the proposed improvements to the A5117 between Deeside Park and the M56 to start in the summer of 2006. Completion of the scheme is scheduled for summer 2008, subject to satisfactory completion of remaining statutory procedures.

Transport Access (Pensioners)

12. **Mr. Simon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to improve pensioners' access to public transport. [34471]

Ms Buck: From 1 April 2006 people 60 or over will be entitled to free off-peak bus travel within their local authority boundary or passenger transport executive area.

We have also introduced regulations for trains and buses and coaches which require new vehicles to be accessible and so easier to use for older people

Street Lights (Bingley)

14. **Philip Davies:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will ensure that street lights in Bingley in West Yorkshire are improved and paid for by the Highways Agency. [34474]

Dr. Ladyman: Following completion of the A650 Bingley Relief Road the Highways Agency passed responsibility for the existing route through Bingley to the City of Bradford metropolitan district council in April 2004. Therefore any improvements to, and funding for, street lighting is a matter for the district council.

Road Congestion

15. **Mr. Ian Austin:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps his Department is taking to prevent congestion increasing on the road network. [34475]

Dr. Ladyman: We are tackling road congestion through targeted solutions developed with national and local agencies—investing more in the road network, including new capacity where it's justified, trialling innovative new traffic management systems, and exploring the benefits of new ways to manage demand for road space—including road pricing.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the timetable is for the Department's research programme into road congestion. [34070]

Dr. Ladyman: Tackling road congestion is informed by a wide range of research covering issues such as incident and demand management, as well as road capacity and the use of public transport. Congestion has implications also for the delivery of other objectives, for example relating to safety and the environment. The research on those objectives also contributes to the

evidence base on congestion. Much of this is ongoing—though new research is commissioned to improve the evidence available and to address new issues.

The Department for Transport (DfT) is developing a new high-level Evidence and Research Strategy. It will include an overview of our evidence needs and how these will be met. It will be organised around the Department's strategic priorities and will therefore contain a section on congestion. The strategy is expected to be published on the DfT website within the next few weeks. More details of the individual units' and agencies' evidence and research activities will be published on the Departments website in 2006. Details of current research are available through the DfT and Highways Agency websites.

Mineral Railway Lines

16. **Paddy Tipping:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what powers he has to safeguard former mineral railway lines for future transport use. [34476]

Ms Buck: Disused railway land that is owned by British Rail Residuary Limited is subject to a review of its possible use in the future for railway purposes prior to its disposal. Similar arrangements apply to land owned by Network Rail.

Road Network (East Anglia)

17. **Mr. Blizzard:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the road network in East Anglia. [34477]

Dr. Ladyman: In recent years, the Department and the Highways Agency have undertaken a number of studies on individual roads and wider areas which have assessed the problems and effectiveness of key routes within East Anglia, including the A11, A12, A120, A14 and A47.

Concessionary Fares

18. **Mr. Bone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the availability of concessionary fares for pensioners across local authority area boundaries. [34478]

Ms Buck: We are keen for local authorities to work together to provide cross boundary, county or regional-wide schemes where that suits local circumstances. Local authorities will have discretion to work together to provide cross-boundary travel, as they do at present, based on their judgment of local needs and their overall financial priorities.

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on what date a decision on the distribution of concessionary fares funding will be made. [34051]

Ms Buck: The decision was announced as part of the provisional local government settlement on 5 December.

Telford to London Rail Services

19. **David Wright:** To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on rail services from Telford to London. [34479]

Ms Buck: The Department is continuing to examine the business case for direct rail passenger services linking both Shrewsbury and Telford with London. The work is being carried out in conjunction with the train operators, local authorities in the area and other interested bodies.

A1 Western Bypass

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department required section 106 provision to be made to widen the A1 Western Bypass as part of the approval of Newcastle Great Park; for what stretch of the A1 such widening was required; and when he expects the widening to take place. [31576]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* Planning approval has been given for the development of Newcastle Great Park in phases. The earlier phases of the development have no planning conditions that require the A1 to be widened. However, in order for the later stages to be built the developer would have to fund the widening of a section of the A1 Western Bypass immediately adjacent to the development—between Ponteland Road and North Brunton Junctions—from two to three lanes in each direction, a distance of 4 kilometres. This would be under the provision of a S278 agreement which is equivalent to S106, but for a trunk road not a local road. The timing of the improvement is in the hands of the developer and the rate at which he wishes to implement the phases of the project, and is only guaranteed to go ahead if there is full development of the site.

A14

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations the Department has received from the *(a)* East Midlands regional assembly and *(b)* East Midlands Development Agency on improvements to the A14. [34089]

Dr. Ladyman: Neither East Midlands regional assembly (EMRA) nor East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA) have made any representations to the Department regarding improvements to the A14.

However, they both contributed to London to South Midlands Multi Modal Study (LSM MMS). Its recommendations were to widen the A14 through the East Midlands to dual three lanes. Both were also heavily involved in the production and publication in March 2005 of the East Midlands regional spatial strategy (RSS 8) and the Milton Keynes and South Midlands sub-regional strategy. Both strategies include a timetable for implementing improvements to the A14, matching the LSM MMS recommendations.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the A14 Kettering bypass is included in the Department's targeted programme of improvements. [34090]

Dr. Ladyman: A scheme to widen the existing A14 around Kettering has not yet been included in the Government's targeted programme of improvement (TPI). It will not be included until we are satisfied that a robust and affordable scheme can be delivered to meet the aspirations set out in the East Midlands regional

spatial strategy (RSS 8) and the Milton Keynes and South Midlands sub-regional strategy, both published in March 2005.

Both documents state 2016–17 as the earliest implementation date for the widening scheme. Schemes are entered into the TPI between five and seven years before their implementation.

A417 (Maintenance)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport who is responsible for the maintenance of the A417 between Cirencester and Gloucester. [34998]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency is responsible for the A417 between Cirencester and Gloucester, which is managed on their behalf, as a Design, Build, Finance and Operate contract, by Road Management Services (Gloucester) Limited.

Blue Badge Scheme

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what offence is committed if someone wrongly takes advantage of the Blue Badge scheme on private land; and if he will make a statement. [35090]

Ms Buck: The Blue Badge scheme is a European and national scheme offering parking concessions primarily for disabled people with severe walking difficulties who travel as drivers or passengers. The scheme applies to on-street parking only.

The Blue Badge scheme does not apply to off-street car parks, private roads or at most airports. Charges for and conditions of use in off-street car parks, which are likely to be privately owned and managed, are a matter for the landowner. It is unlikely that spaces in such off-street car parks marked for blue badge holders are legally enforceable and the regulation of such parking is at the discretion of landowners and depends on the courtesy and consideration of drivers.

It is the Department for Transport's view that it is possible in law for the owners of a private car park to agree with the local authority that a parking place order be made in respect of that car park. Conditions of use can then be enforced as if it were a local authority car park, with penalties or excess charges levied on offenders. It would, therefore, be an offence under the Traffic Regulation Order rather the Blue Badge regulations.

Buckshaw Village (Railway Station)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on progress being made on the new railway station at Buckshaw village in Chorley. [35481]

Derek Twigg: Lancashire county council have a proposal to provide a new station at Buckshaw Village. The council are in discussions with Network Rail about the proposal, who would be responsible for delivering the project.

c2c Line/One Rail

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much investment has been made in *(a)* the c2c line and *(b)* One Rail between Liverpool Street and Southend Victoria in each of the last two years. [34255]

Derek Twigg: The One franchise began operation on 1 April 2005, since when the franchise holder has invested approximately £480,000 on the Liverpool Street to Southend Victoria line. c2c does not operate trains on this route.

Car Accidents (Young People)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to reduce car accidents involving people between the ages of 17 and 24 years; and if he will make a statement. [35089]

Dr. Ladyman: I am very concerned to reduce car accidents involving young drivers, especially those that result in deaths and serious injuries. The Department has recently consulted on a more structured approach to learning to drive and a copy of its decision letter in August 2004 is on the Department's website at—www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_rdsafety/documents/page/dft_rdsafety_028178–01.hcsp#P37_1339.

The main conclusions were that:

the way forward is to improve the education environment so that learners have access to a more consistent and better standard of training;

the Department's Driving Standards Agency (DSA) should consider what further learning resources might be made available to learners and trainers. In particular, they will look at how modern learning techniques and information technology can be further developed and used to help learners develop safe driving skills for life; and

the regulatory arrangements for driving instructors will also be reviewed to ensure that the public can have confidence that the driver training services they are buying are of the highest quality. DSA will consult interested parties on measures to achieve these changes.

We decided that further statutory regulation on the way new drivers learn would be unlikely to make enough of a contribution to road safety to justify legislative action at present.

The Department has a substantial programme of research relating to learning to drive and new drivers. It is repeating and extending a cohort study of young and new drivers, which is a large scale evaluation of they way people learn to drive, and their attitudes and behaviour, and an evaluation of the effectiveness of measures introduced as part of the Government's Road Safety Strategy. Separate studies are being commissioned on DSA's Driver Record, and the Pass Plus scheme for newly-qualified drivers.

Civil Service Relocation (Scotland)

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many departmental civil service jobs have been relocated to Scotland in each year since 2001. [32257]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* The Department was formed in May 2002. Since then no civil service jobs have been relocated to Scotland.

Eco-driving

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of proposals to *(a)* make driving instructors attend training for eco-driving and *(b)* teach and test learner drivers on eco-driving. [33421]

Dr. Ladyman: On 1 October, the Driving Standards Agency (DSA) introduced an assessment of eco-safe driving skills as part of the driving ability test taken by those seeking to qualify as Approved Driving Instructors (ADIs). We believe it is important that all drivers should acquire these basic skills at the earliest opportunity, ideally while they are learning to drive.

When DSA has evaluated the effectiveness of this initiative, we will consider whether an assessment of eco-safe driving skills should form part of the driving theory and practical tests.

Infrastructure Projects

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the suitability of the London underground public-private partnership as a model for future infrastructure projects. [34473]

Ms Buck: The London Underground Public Private Partnerships were unique, as the contracts provided for the extensive rehabilitation and replacement of existing assets over 30 years. The National Audit Office published two reports on the London Underground PPPs in 2004, which identified the lessons that could be learnt for other private finance initiatives or public private partnerships, which the Government accepted.

Kent Franchise

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what effect the recent award of the Integrated Kent Franchise will have on rail services between Bexhill and London Victoria. [34575]

Derek Twigg: Services from Bexhill to London Victoria are operated by Southern and so are unaffected by the award of the Integrated Kent Franchise.

M6 Toll Road

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the construction cost was of the M6 toll road; and what the total receipts have been to date. [34343]

Dr. Ladyman: The construction costs awarded by Midland Expressway Limited (MEL), the concessionaire for the M6 Toll, to its contractor at tender stage were £485.5 million. The overall costs are a matter for MEL, but I understand that the development cost incurred was in the region of £900 million, including construction, the cost of land, interest on loans, consultancy, management and legal fees.

Information on receipts is not held by the Department for Transport. Requests for this information should be made direct to MEL.

Merseytravel

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1542W, on Merseytram services, if he will publish the evidence on which he based his statement on the promoters' assessment of regeneration and employment impacts; and when he discussed this issue with the promoters. [33466]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 1 December 2005]:* The Department's view on the regeneration impacts of Merseytram was based on the analysis presented by Merseytravel in their Economic Impact Report. Merseytravel has declined to permit the Department to publish the Economic Impact Report.

The Department carried out an assessment of Merseytravel's analysis, and will make that available in the House Library, and on the Department's website.

MV Derbyshire/MV Tribulus

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to ensure that all information regarding the sinking of *(a)* the MV Derbyshire and *(b)* the MV Tribulus has been examined. [34915]

Dr. Ladyman: All information on the sinking of the MV Derbyshire has been examined in close co-operation with the families of those who lost their lives.

The Maritime and Coastguard Agency will shortly be publishing a Marine Information Note which describes the history of the Derbyshire surveys, the principal findings of the re-opened formal investigation, and records the research programmes undertaken by the DfT and the MCA into seakeeping and wave loads and the Formal Safety Assessment studies on bulk carriers. It also describes the process that led to the introduction of revised standards for bulk carriers by the International Maritime Organization following the sinking of the MV Derbyshire.

In addition, arrangements are being made to transfer information on the sinking of the MV Derbyshire from the DFT to the National Archives.

The Tribulus, owned by Shell and registered with the Isle of Man, was involved in an incident in Bantry Bay in 1990 in Irish coastal waters. The matter was not therefore for the UK Government.

Railways

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to change the composition of Network Rail. [34153]

Derek Twigg: Network Rail is a private sector company limited by guarantee, whose board is accountable to its members drawn from the rail industry and other stakeholder groups. Any change to the composition of the board is a matter for the company and its members. Any change to membership is governed by its Articles of Association and company law.

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to publish *(a)* the final regional planning assessment for the North East and *(b)* the consultants' final report on the review of the Northern Rail franchise; and whether their recommendations will be available to the 2006 rail timetable planning conference in February 2006. [32615]

Derek Twigg: I am currently considering the draft of the North East England Rail Regional Planning Assessment with a view to publication in due course. The RPA is an assessment rather than a commitment to certain courses of action. Work on the review of the Northern Rail franchise is proceeding, and I expect to announce proposals for consultation early next year. No decision has been made as to whether any service change proposals relating to the review will be tabled at the 2006 timetable conference.

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will recommence rail passenger partnership funding for new passenger services; whether such services can be considered under *(a)* the local transport plan major scheme procedure and *(b)* a similar procedure; and if he will make a statement. [32614]

Derek Twigg: There is no plan to re-instate the Rail Passenger Partnership funding programme for new passenger services. Funding in support of such services can be provided by devolved administrations, Passenger Transport Executives and local authorities and, should capital expenditure be required, through the Local Transport Plan Major Schemes procedure, or through the new Network Rail Discretionary Fund. Proposals will need to be supported by a fully costed business case.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 11 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 242W, on rail services, what the timetable is for *(a)* the publication of the results of the South West Trains route utilisation strategy and *(b)* public consultation; and if he will make a statement. [34850]

Derek Twigg: The final South West main line route utilisation strategy is due to be published by Network Rail in spring 2006. The period for public consultation runs until 6 January 2006.

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the public subsidy to the railway industry *(a)* was in 1997 and *(b)* has been in 2005 to date. [34472]

Derek Twigg: Government subsidy for the railways was £1.8 billion in 1996–97. This year the Government will be spending £4.5 billion on the railway.

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many staff work in DFT Rail. [34152]

Derek Twigg: There are 327 people working in Department for Transport Rail.

Road Accidents

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* pedestrians, *(b)* cyclists, *(c)* drivers and *(d)* car occupants were (i) injured and (ii) killed in road accidents in Lancashire in each of the last six years for which figures are available. [34520]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of pedestrians, cyclists, car drivers and car passengers killed and injured in personal injury road accidents in the county of Lancashire (excluding Blackburn with Darwen unitary authority and Blackpool unitary authority) for the years 1999–2004 are shown in the table.

Lancashire (excluding Blackburn with Darwen UA and Blackpool UA)

	Pedestrians		*Cyclists*		*Car drivers*		*Car passengers*	
	Fatal	*Injured*[1]	*Fatal*	*Injured*[1]	*Fatal*	*Injured*[1]	*Fatal*	*Injured*[1]
1999	13	781	0	415	21	2729	13	1743
2000	12	779	2	403	12	2659	11	1554
2001	18	789	4	415	29	2909	4	1706
2002	11	698	1	343	16	2881	14	1686
2003	19	688	1	330	26	2662	12	1524
2004	10	715	3	356	16	2868	11	1612

[1] Includes serious and slight injuries

Road/Rail Journeys (Costs)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent estimate he has made of the typical per passenger per mile comparative costs of passenger road and rail journeys within the United Kingdom. [34072]

Dr. Ladyman: The estimated average cost per passenger/person per mile in Great Britain in 2004–05 was 15p for bus, 18p for rail and 25p for private motoring by car and van (of which fuel costs account for 7p per mile).

Estimates are for the average cost faced by the transport user, net of any subsidy. Estimates for bus and rail average costs are based on revenue collected by operators and passenger mileage estimates. The car and van motoring cost estimate is based on household expenditure on private motoring from the "Expenditure and Food Survey 2004–05" and household car mileage figures from the "National Travel Survey 2004". Motoring costs include expenditure on car purchase, spares, maintenance, insurance, taxation, fuel and parking, but excludes costs paid by employers. The marginal cost of travelling by car is significantly less than the average cost as car purchase, and other fixed costs, would be excluded.

Roads

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what funding the Government are providing to improve the condition of Bedfordshire's road network; and if he will make a statement; [34450]

(2) what funds the Government have allocated to *(a)* road maintenance and *(b)* improvement of the road network in Bedfordshire in the next three years; and if he will make a statement. [34502]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency expects to spend the following amounts on the maintenance and improvement of the trunk road and motorway network in Bedfordshire in the current and next three financial years:

Financial year	*Maintenance (£ million)*	*Improvement scheme (£ million)*
2005–06	3.799	34.916
2006–07	3.375	33.920
2007–08	3.297	43.427
2008–09	5.402	157.855

Note:
Figures are approximate and are subject to change.

In 2005–06, we allocated Bedfordshire county council, through the local transport plan programme, £3.350 million for its integrated transport block and £6.001 million for capital highway maintenance.

We have also announced an indicative allocation for highway capital maintenance of £6.001 million for 2006–07 (as part of a two-year settlement) and that the capital highway maintenance allocation for 2007–08 will represent a minimum of 75 percent. of the 2006–07 allocation.

The integrated transport block and capital highway maintenance provide funding for local capital expenditure except major schemes. It is for the authority to determine how these allocations are spent in line with its local transport plan and their priorities. Other future funding for the integrated transport block and capital maintenance has yet to be announced.

In addition, funding for the routine maintenance of local roads is provided through the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's revenue support grant. This grant is unhypothecated and may be applied to any services.

Under the local transport plan programme, we have provisionally approved the Bedford Western Bypass, East Luton corridor improvement scheme and A507 Ridgmont Bypass for funding, subject to certain conditions, including the completion of the necessary statutory procedures. Funding for these schemes would be allocated once they had achieved final approval under the Department's procedures for major transport schemes.

Sleep Apnoea

Mrs. Riordan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the effect is of an individual having obstructive sleep apnoea on their eligibility for *(a)* a driving licence and *(b)* an heavy goods vehicle licence. [34451]

Dr. Ladyman: A driving licence will be revoked if the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency is not satisfied that treatment is both effective and well tolerated.

A licence can be reinstated once satisfactory control is achieved and confirmed by medical inquiry. Confirmation from a consultant or specialist is required for Group 2 (lorry and bus) licence holders. Group 2 drivers will normally be issued with a licence valid initially for one year to allow for periodic medical review. AGroup 1 (car or motorcycle) licence will normally be restored without further restriction.

All licences issued to drivers with obstructive sleep apnoea syndrome are accompanied by advice to the driver and their doctor of the necessity to maintain good control of the condition and the need to report any deterioration in that control.

St. Pancras Station

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans there are to open the unused Thameslink Station underneath St. Pancras. [32740]

Derek Twigg: The fitting out and opening of the Thameslink station box underneath St. Pancras Station at Midland Road has always been part of the Thameslink Project.

The station shell was constructed as planned, as part of the Channel Tunnel Rail Link Project. Further investment will be required to make the station operational.

As a result of the delays to the Thameslink Project, officials are currently determining the viability and value for money case of fitting out and operating the station prior to the Thameslink Project.

Strategic Rail Authority

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what costs were incurred by his Department in abolishing the Strategic Rail Authority (SRA); how many people are still employed at the SRA; and when the authority will be completely wound up. [34165]

Derek Twigg: The Department is aiming to complete the winding up of the Strategic Rail Authority by the end of this financial year. As such final outturn costs are not available. The current estimate of the financial costs and benefits is set out as follows.

All figures £ million

	2005–06	*2006–07*	*2007–08*	*2008–09*	*2009–10*	*2010–11*
DfT extra costs	21.0	34.8	34.8	34.8	34.8	34.8
SRA cost savings	19.5	39	39	39	39	39
SRA building savings	0	4.1	5.5	5.5	5.5	5.5
Transition costs	11.6	0	0	0	0	0
Net cost (benefit)	13.1	(8.3)	(9.7)	(9.7)	(9.7	(9.7)

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As at 15 November 2005 107 people were employed by the SRA.

ThamesLink 2000 Project

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the future of the ThamesLink 2000 Project. [34157]

Derek Twigg: The Thameslink Public Inquiry which opened on 6 September 2005 is due to be completed on 7 December 2005. The Inspector is then expected to report to the Secretary of State and the Deputy Prime Minister in January 2006, which will be followed in spring 2006 by the report on closures relating to the Thameslink project. Until these reports are published the Secretary of State cannot comment on the future of the Thameslink project.

Traffic Flow Forecasts

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what retrospective analysis has been undertaken of the accuracy of the Highways Agency's traffic flow forecasts on *(a)* motorways, *(b)* A roads and *(c)* other roads. [34074]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency retrospectively analyses the accuracy of the traffic flow forecasts for all improvement schemes in the Targeted Programme of Improvements (TPIs). On motorways, A roads and other roads where the forecasts have indicated that significant traffic flow changes were likely, the forecast flows are compared with the flows measured one and five years after opening.

Traffic Management

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to issue statutory guidance under section 87 of the Traffic Management Act 2004; and what the reason is for the time taken in so doing. [34013]

Ms Buck: The Department is currently working on regulations and statutory guidance on civil parking enforcement under parts 6 and 7 of the Traffic Management Act 2004. This follows a review of the existing system of decriminalised parking enforcement which has been undertaken with the help of key industry stakeholders. We intend to consult on draft parking regulations and statutory guidance in spring 2006, with a view to issuing final regulations and guidance in early 2007. Our work on civil parking enforcement will be followed by regulations and statutory guidance on the civil enforcement of bus lanes and moving traffic offences.

Vehicle Registrations

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* motorcycles, *(b)* cars, *(c)* vans, *(d)* lorries and *(e)* other vehicles were registered to owners in (i) Kettering, (ii) Northamptonshire and (iii) England in (A) 2004, (B) 2001, (C) 1997, (D) 1992, (E) 1987, (F) 1983, (G) 1979 and (H) 1975. [34094]

Dr. Ladyman: For 1997, 2001 and 2004 the information requested is as follows:

	1997	*2001*	*2004*
Kettering			
Motorcycles	1,279	1,766	2,264
Cars	33,355	39,065	42,630
Vans	2,781	3,388	4,013
Lorries	516	524	481
Other	800	826	893
Northants			
Motorcycles	9,438	13,008	15,780
Cars	261,194	314,342	323,536
Vans	24,270	28,954	31,811
Lorries	6,811	7,988	7,363
Other	9,901	9,665	11,531
England			
Motorcycles	670,841	904,600	1,051,788
Cars	19,540,596	21,539,954	22,921,368
Vans	1,902,672	2,126,992	2,414,478
Lorries	330,658	367,248	367,205
Other	628,221	593,350	638,031

Prior to 1993, neither body type nor regionalised information is available. However, the total licensed GB stock at the end of each of the requested years is as follows:

	Number of registered vehicles
1975	16,511,000
1979	18,616,000
1983	20,209,000
1987	22,152,000
1992	24,577,000
1997	26,974,000
2001	25,126,000
2004	27,028,000

CABINET OFFICE

Standards in Public Life

23. **Mr. Harper:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the Department's role in monitoring standards in public life. [34455]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Cabinet Office promotes standards that ensure good governance, including adherence to ministerial and civil service codes.

e-Government Programme

24. **Gordon Banks:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the progress of the e-Government programme. [34456]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Government recently launched our transformation Government strategy enabled by IT.

Maximising the opportunities provided by IT to make public services increasingly personal and responsive to the needs of customers. The strategy is available at www.coi.gov.uk.

Government Regulation

26. **Mr. Bellingham:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what plans he has to reduce the level of Government regulation. [34458]

Mr. Jim Murphy: We are on track to deliver the radical programme of regulatory reform set out in the March 2005 Budget and the better regulation action plan published in May 2005.

We have consulted on proposals for a Bill for better regulation that will create a powerful tool to enable wide scale regulatory reform, begun a major exercise to measure and then reduce administrative burdens faced by business, launched a new web-based portal so that business and other stakeholders can submit proposals for simplification and are on track to rationalise the number of regulators in the public and private sectors.

Ministerial Visits

27. **Mr. Wallace:** To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster when he next intends to visit Duchy lands in Lancaster and Wyre constituency. [34459]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Pending the appointment of a new Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster I am unable to commit to such a visit.

Admiralty Arch

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the cost to public funds of official residences at Admiralty Arch were in 2004–05; and who the occupants are. [34356]

Mr. Jim Murphy: There are no official residencies at Admiralty Arch.

Civil Contingency Secretariat

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what matters the Civil Contingency Secretariat has discussed recently. [34691]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Civil Contingencies Secretariat co-ordinates work to improve the United Kingdom's ability to respond to and recover from emergencies. As part of that role, the Secretariat considers the full range of risks that the UK faces and any necessary emergency preparedness, response and recovery measures. It carries out this work in discussion with a wide range of partners from both inside and outside Government.

Civil Service Nurseries

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the running costs of nurseries for civil service staff were in 2004–05. [34374]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Cabinet Office does not hold central expenditure figures on the costs to public funds of nurseries for civil service staff. A number of Departments and agencies support employees' access to child care and in doing so, the civil service shows it is committed to being an equal opportunities employer, supporting a diverse work force and helping staff achieve a better balance between their home and work responsibilities.

Damages

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster further to the answer of 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 963W, on damages, what the basis was of each of the claims; and if he will make a statement. [34397]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The basis of each of the four injury claims settled by the Department during 2004–05 was as follows:

1. A personal injury claim for damages of £65,629.30 was in respect of an accident that occurred on an outside training activity arranged by the National School of Government at Sunningdale Park.

2. A personal injury claim for damages of £6,258.70 was in respect of an accident that occurred at the Emergency Planning College, Easingwold.

3. A personal injury claim for damages of £2,125.00 was in respect of an accident that occurred at 22–26 Whitehall.

4. A personal injury claim for damages of £700.64 was in respect of an accident that occurred at 70 Whitehall.

In all cases, the amount of damages was arrived at following, and in accordance with legal advice from the Treasury Solicitor.

Departmental Assets

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster pursuant to the answer of 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 963W, on departmental assets, if he will make a statement on the nature of the five items of art and antique furniture referred to; and what the estimated value is of *(a)* each item and *(b)* each of the freehold properties referred to. [33746]

Mr. Jim Murphy: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 50W.

Departmental Tendering Policy

Martin Horwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what his policy is on including *(a)* ethical and *(b)* environmental factors in tenders for services. [33326]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Procurement in the Cabinet Office is conducted in accordance with Government policy applying to ethical and environmental standards within the overarching policy of value for money. The policy reflects the principles of Community law. Requirements for both services and goods specify relevant environmental factors where appropriate.

Environmental Regulations

Colin Challen: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what mechanisms are in place to allow all interested parties to comment on regulatory simplification proposals concerning environmental regulations. [34001]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs published its initial regulatory simplification plan, 'Lifting the Burden', on the 29 November to allow all interested parties to comment. This signals the start of a process of dialogue between the Department and stakeholders. The initial plan identifies among other proposals, initiatives to reduce

the burden of environmental regulations on business. Each of these will, where appropriate, be subject to full consultation.

Health Bill

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will place in the Library a copy of the Better Regulation Task Force's report on the proposed regulatory system in the Health Bill. [34711]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Task Force has not produced a report on the proposed regulatory system in the Health Bill.

The Better Regulation Task Force (BRTF) is an independent body, set up to advise Government on action to ensure that regulation and its enforcement comply with the five principles of good regulation. The Cabinet Office, sponsors the BRTF but does not speak for it.

Operating and Financial Review

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if the Better Regulation Task Force contributed to the decision not to implement the Operating and Financial Review; and if he will make a statement. [34833]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Better Regulation Task Force is an independent body and has not published an opinion on the Operating and Financial Review (OFR).

Terrorism

Mr. Bone: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the work of the Civil Contingencies Secretariat in relation to terrorism. [34506]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Civil Contingencies Secretariat co-ordinates work to improve the United Kingdom's ability to respond to and recover from emergencies, including emergencies which arise from terrorism. It plays an important role in delivering the 'Prepare' strand of the Government's counter terrorism strategy.

PRIME MINISTER

Meetings

David Simpson: To ask the Prime Minister what meetings he has had with the *(a)* Democratic Unionist Party, *(b)* Ulster Unionist Party, *(c)* UK Unionist Party, *(d)* Social Democratic and Labour Party, *(e)* Alliance Party, *(f)* Sinn Fein and *(g)* the Prime Minister of the Republic of Ireland during the last 18 months. [34627]

The Prime Minister: I have had frequent meetings with political parties in Northern Ireland, and with the Taoiseach.

Public Sector Employees

Mike Penning: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the five categories of public sector employees with the highest rates of early retirement due to ill health in the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [33805]

The Prime Minister: The information requested is not held centrally.

TREASURY

Birth Statistics

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the number of women born in the early 1960s who have never given birth to a child; and if he will make a statement. [34211]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 6 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your request for an estimate of the number of women born in the early 1960s who have never given birth to a child. (34211)

Summaries of the estimated proportion of women that are childless in England and Wales are regularly published in the annual reference volume, Birth statistics FM1, copies of which are available in the House of Commons Library.

The table below shows the proportions and the numbers of women who are childless, for those born in each of the years 1960 to 1965. The proportions are estimated for England and Wales only. These are based on births that occurred up to the end of 2003, the latest year for which data are available. The numbers have been estimated by applying these England and Wales proportions to the United Kingdom population.

Estimated percentage and number of women who have not given birth to a child, by year of birth of the woman, United Kingdom, 2003

Year of birth of woman[1]	*Percentage of all women in cohort*[2,3]	*Number of women (000)*
1960	19	80
1961	20	87
1962	20	91
1963	20	96
1964	22	106
1965	22	105
All years 1960 to 1965	—	565

[1] The years of birth shown are, by necessity, approximate since births before 1963 are available only by calendar year of occurrence and age of mother at childbirth For instance, women giving birth in 2003 at age 42 could have been born in either 1960 or 1961; for convenience, however, they are recorded as belonging to the 1961 cohort.

[2] Percentages for England and Wales.

[3] Cohorts born in the early 1960s have yet to reach the end of their childbearing years (taken as age 45), although the proportions of women giving birth for the first time at ages 40 and over are low. For example, in 2003, 18 per cent. of the 1958 cohort were childless at age 45, the same as at age 40.

Great George Street (Refurbishment)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total cost of refurbishment of the offices in Great George Street was; what the final cost will be to public funds of the private finance initiative; and if he will make a statement. [34347]

John Healey: I refer the hon. member to the answers given by Financial Secretaries to the Treasury Ruth Kelly and Stephen Timms on 5 February 2002, *Official Report*, column 840W and on 13 December 2004, *Official Report*, column 868W. The figures relating to

100 Parliament street given in the reply of 13 December 2004 equate to a net present value of approximately £213 million at March 2002 prices.

Prostate Cancer

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many men have been diagnosed with prostate cancer in *(a)* Southend Primary Care Trust area, *(b)* Essex, *(c)* Hertfordshire, *(d)* Greater London and *(e)* England in each year since 1995. [34212]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 6 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning how many men have been diagnosed with prostate cancer in *(a)* Southend Primary Care Trust area, *(b)* Essex, *(c)* Hertfordshire, *(d)* Greater London and *(e)* England in each year since 1995. (34212)

The latest available figures for the incidence of prostate cancer are for the year 2003. Numbers of newly diagnosed cases in England and other selected areas, are given in the table below.

Number of newly diagnosed cases of prostate[1] cancer in England and other selected areas, 1995–2003

	Southend PCT	*Essex county*	*Hertfordshire county*	*Greater London*	*Number England*
1995	88	527	413	2,455	19,427
1996	88	590	378	2,399	19,794
1997	96	533	394	2,595	19,819
1998	78	591	392	2,653	20,276
1999	83	613	499	2,723	22,057
2000	108	741	521	2,771	24,017
2001	115	880	448	3,037	27,107
2002	94	796	430	3,055	27,267
2003	106	819	389	2,943	26,995
Total	856	6,090	3,864	24,631	206,759

[1] Prostate cancer is defined as code C61 in the international Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD10)

Source:
Office for National Statistics

Public Sector Pensions

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the current level of public sector pension liability. [34151]

Mr. Des Browne: We do not hold information centrally on the whole public sector pensions liability. The total liabilities of unfunded public service pension schemes as at 31 March 2004 were estimated to be £460 billion. This estimate is based on figures published in 2003–04 Resource Accounts. The Resource Accounts for all these schemes for 2004–05 are not yet ready.

The liabilities of the funded Local Government Pension Schemes across the UK at the latest valuation dates, mostly March 2004, were around £120 billion with assets of around £90 billion.

Tax Credits

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in respect of what proportion of tax credit claimants who have a reduced tax credit award due to the recovery of an overpayment the reduction is in response to an overpayment occurring in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06. [35338]

Dawn Primarolo: This information is not available.

Unregulated Products

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans his Department has *(a)* to protect consumers from unregulated products sold by banks and *(b)* to ensure that consumers are made fully aware of which products are regulated and which are not; and if he will make a statement. [35852]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Financial Services Authority (FSA) regulates all banks and financial services providers operating in the UK. The FSA has a statutory obligation to protect consumers and is responsible for policing the regulatory perimeter and for drawing attention to where the boundary lies. FSA rules require banks to explain to customers that a particular product or service is regulated by the FSA.

The FSA Handbook includes requirements that firms must ensure that they should not make any misleading statements to a client, whether expressly or by implication, that its affairs, or any aspect of them, have the approval of the FSA. This does not, of course, prevent firms from indicating that they are authorised and regulated by the FSA, in conjunction with selling products regulated by the FSA.

In addition to FSA regulation, the Banking Code is a voluntary code which applies to the large number of banks that subscribe to it. It covers some regulated services, such as deposit-taking, and some unregulated services, such as foreign exchange services. The existence of the Banking Code is one of the reasons why the FSA has not introduced significant additional conduct of business regulation except where required by European legislation.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Council Property Discounts

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many local councils in England no longer give a 50 per cent. council discount for *(a)* empty homes and *(b)* second homes. [33502]

Mr. Woolas: As at November 2004, the latest date for which data are available, 209 local authorities in England did not give a 50 per cent. council tax discount for empty homes and 158 local authorities did not give a 50 per cent. council tax discount on second homes.

The data are as reported on CTB1S forms submitted by billing authorities to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister each year.

Council Tax

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate the Government have made of the effects on revenue of council tax collection rates being less than 100 per cent. in the most recent year for which figures are available. [33498]

Mr. Woolas: In 2004–05, the latest year for which data are available, local authorities in England collected in-year £17.1 billion of council tax out of a possible £17.7 billion. This represents a collection rate of 96.6 per cent. and is the fifth consecutive annual improvement in this figure. However, collection continues once the financial year to which council tax relates ends. In 2004–05 for instance, authorities collected £368 million that related to previous years.

Councillors (Pensions/Income)

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many councils offer pensions for their councillors.[33485]

Mr. Woolas: The information requested is not held centrally, and could only be provided at disproportionate cost. I understand that the Local Government Pensions Committee of the Employers' Organisation for local government conducted a survey of English local authorities in 2004, seeking details of their decisions on giving councillors access to the local government pension scheme. The results of the survey can be found in LGPC Circular 155 dated April 2004, available on the Employers' Organisation website at: www.lg-employers.gov.uk.

Fire and Rescue Services

Justine Greening: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many fire and emergency call-outs were handled from fire stations based in the London borough of Wandsworth in each year since 1997, broken down by fire station location. [34997]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Information on emergency call-outs to fires and other incidents broken down by London borough and fire stations within boroughs is not available centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Justine Greening: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many fire and rescue emergency call-outs took place in the London borough of Wandsworth in each year since 1997, broken down by parliamentary constituency. [34999]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Information on emergency call-outs to fires and other incidents broken down by London borough and parliamentary constituency is not available centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Justine Greening: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total cost was of fire and rescue services based in London in each year since 1997, broken down by London borough; how much of that expenditure was accounted for by manpower costs in each case; and if he will make a statement. [35000]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The information requested for London is tabled as follows. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not collect or hold this information broken down by London borough.

£000

	Total expenditure on fire services by London fire and civil defence authority/ Greater London authority 1997–98 to 2003–04	*Cost of fire service employees*
1997–98	290,323	257,558
1998–99	303,660	267,725
1999–2000	308,179	273,865
2000–01	318,516	281,350
2001–02	339,680	292,611
2002–03	364,517	314,814
2003–04	349,940	295,998

Source:
ODPM Revenue Outturn (RO) data

John Mann: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many call-outs for fires there were at each fire station in *(a)* Nottinghamshire, *(b)* South Yorkshire and *(c)* Derbyshire in the last three years. [35094]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Information on emergency responses at fire stations within fire and rescue service areas is not available centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Local Government Employees

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when his Department plans to publish the conclusions of its review of political restrictions of employees in local government. [33487]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister intends to publish these conclusions shortly.

Local Strategic Partnerships

Bob Russell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what monitoring he undertakes of the operation of local strategic partnerships; and if he will make a statement. [32515]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has commissioned an extensive independent research programme to evaluate the operation of Local Strategic Partnership (LSPs). The main LSP research has been running for over three years and it includes a survey of all LSPs in 2002 and 2004 and in-depth case studies in different areas across the country. The full research programme can be found in the ODPM's website at: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1136876. The final report of this phase of the evaluation will be published in the new year.

In addition, since 2004 all LSPs in receipt of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund resources have been required to develop a performance management framework. This is a self assessment process based on a framework of three core requirements—the review of outcomes, partnership working and improvement

planning. To ensure the process is robust, regional Government offices have undertaken annual reviews with those LSPs, challenging their assessments to ensure they are an accurate reflection of performance. Government offices provide the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister with a report on each of the 87 LSPs in September each year.

London Underground (Fire Safety)

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 11 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 842W, on London Underground (Fire Regulations), if he will make a statement on the Government's plans to revise legislation dealing with general fire safety on the London Underground. [33212]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Government have, with the support of all sides of the House, brought forward a reform of general fire safety legislation in the form of the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 (SI 2005 No. 1541). The Select Committees that considered the draft order (the Regulatory Reform Committee and the Delegated Powers and Regulatory Reform Committee in another place) considered that continuance of the necessary protections afforded by the Fire Precautions (Sub-surface Railway Stations Regulations 1989 (as amended) by the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order 2005 could be demonstrated by guidance. The Government are firmly of the view that all necessary protections are either continued or enhanced by the new regime. However, in the light of the consideration given by the hon. and noble Members of the Committees, the Government decided to withdraw revocation of the 1989 regulations until such time as guidance was in place which shows how the protections are continued.

Although the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is convinced that the case is made, we always listen to concerns about fire safety. We therefore propose to run the new regime in tandem with the old so that ample evidence of the efficiency and broad ranging nature of the new regime can be shown. Once that evidence has been gathered we expect to proceed to remove the 1989 regulations. However, the evidence shows there to be a gap, or a problem we have not foreseen, then we will work to make sure any such gap or risk is fully addressed before the 1989 regulations are removed.

We believe the Regulatory Reform (Fire Safety) Order, addressing as it does all general fire safety risks and placing prevention of fire and mitigation of the effects of fire as of equal standing to safe evacuation is the right way forward. However, the safety of the public using and staff working on the underground railway systems is of vital importance and it is not something we will compromise.

Lyons Inquiry

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the Lyons inquiry remit includes *(a)* reviewing the financial case for two-tier local government and *(b)* the merits of unitary local authorities. [33496]

Mr. Woolas: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member on 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 813W.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the decision to broaden the Lyons inquiry's remit to include local government pay and salaries. [33503]

Mr. Woolas: The extended remit of Sir Michael Lyons' independent inquiry was announced on 20 September, and a copy of the extended terms of reference was made available in the Library of the House. The remit includes consideration of the mechanisms in place to manage pressures such as pay. There has been no decision to broaden this remit.

Ministerial Travel

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much has been spent in each year from 1 May 1997 on ministerial travel, broken down by *(a)* provision and running costs of vehicular transport, *(b)* first class travel by rail, *(c)* standard class travel by rail, *(d)* first class travel by air, *(e)* club or equivalent class travel by air and *(f)* economy class travel by air. [27677]

Jim Fitzpatrick: All Ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the 'Ministerial Code and Travel' by Ministers, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

(a) My hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary at the Cabinet Office has asked Roy Burke, chief executive of the Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA) to write to the hon. Member with details of the costs of ministerial vehicles provided to departments in 2004–05. Copies of his letter will be made available in the Library of the House.

For information for the financial years 2000–01 to 2003–04 I refer the hon. Member to the letters from the chief executive of the GCDA to the hon. Member for Buckingham (John Bercow) dated 10 January 2005 and to the then hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs dated 13 September 2003. Copies of these letters are available in the Library of the House.

(b) and *(c)* During the financial year 2004–05, expenditure on rail travel by Ministers in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was £17,772. Information on the class of tickets obtained is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Detailed information in respect of rail travel taken by ministers since the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created on 29 May 2002 until 2003–04 can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

(d), *(e)* and *(f)* In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. These report information for the financial years 1995–96 to 2004–05. Information for 2005–06 will be published as soon as it is ready after the end of the current financial year.

During the financial year 2004–05, expenditure on domestic flights by ministers in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was £4,378. Information on the class of tickets obtained is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Detailed information in respect of domestic air travel taken by Ministers since the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was formed on 29 May 2002 until 2003–04 can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list, for each year since 1995, the number of flights, including helicopter flights, taken by Ministers within his Department for UK and overseas visits; on how many occasions *(a)* charter flights were used and *(b)* first and club class tickets were obtained; and if he will indicate who accompanied the Ministers on each trip. [27809]

Jim Fitzpatrick: All ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the 'Ministerial Code and Travel' by Ministers, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

In respect of overseas travel by Ministers, since 1999 the Government have published an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The list indicates when non-scheduled flights were used-and shows how many officials accompanied ministers in those circumstances. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. These report information reaching back to 1995–96. Information for 2005–06 will be published after the end of the financial year.

During the financial year 2004–05, Ministers in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have taken 19 domestic flights. Detailed information in respect of flights taken by Ministers since the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created on 29 May 2002 until 2003–04 can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Revaluation

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to allow local councils to revalue properties which have been extended for the purpose of calculating council tax; and if he will make a statement. [35091]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no plans to allow local councils to revalue properties which have been extended. This is the statutory responsibility of listing officers employed by the Valuation Office Agency. Properties will be placed in a higher band for council tax purposes only after a sale and only where the increase in value merits this.

Sustainable Communities Plan

Mr. Stewart Jackson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance his Department provides to *(a)* regional planning bodies and *(b)* regional assemblies on (i) the allocation of funds for capital programmes and (ii) co-ordination with local authorities covered by the sustainable communities plan. [33474]

Mr. Woolas: Regional assemblies, who are also the regional planning bodies, comprise members from local authorities in their region and other regional stakeholders. They have no responsibilities for allocating funds to bodies in their regions.

In July 2005 the Government invited the regional bodies, the Government Offices, regional development agencies and the regional assemblies, to between them provide advice on regional funding allocations. Guidance on preparing advice issued at the time is available on the HM Treasury's website at:

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/Consultations_and_Legislation/devolvingdecision_making/regional_funding_allocations.cfm

Torbay Mayor

Mr. Steen: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister following the affirmative referendum on a Torbay mayor in September, what consultative and other processes were needed to implement the proposal; and how long after the referendum the post of mayor was established. [32164]

Mr. Woolas *[holding answer 29 November 2005]:* Before holding a referendum on whether to have a directly elected mayor, a local authority is required to draw up and consult its electorate and other interested parties on proposals for its governance arrangements.

The referendum on whether Torbay should have a directly elected mayor was held on 14 July 2005. Torbay implemented the proposals endorsed by that referendum result immediately following the mayoral election on 20 October 2005.

Valuation Office Agency

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2063W, on council tax revaluation, whether the Valuation Office Agency continues *(a)* to collect and *(b)* to collate (i) dwelling house code data and (ii) value significant code data following the postponement of the English council tax revaluation. [33449]

Mr. Woolas: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on the 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2063W.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

British Technology Group Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the operation of the British Technology Group Act 1991. [28270]

Alan Johnson: The British Technology Group Act 1991 was a paving measure to provide for the privatisation in early 1992 of the British Technology Group, a body formed in 1981 by an amalgamation of two public bodies known as the National Research Development Corporation and the National Enterprise Board.

Several of the provisions of the 1991 Act, including those dealing with the nomination of the new privatised company[1] and the arrangements whereby the Government would acquire a shareholding in that company[2] were repealed by the Statute Law (Repeals) Act 2004. Also repealed were provisions for extinguishing certain

outstanding reserves and liabilities of the two public bodies[3], financial provisions relating to the new company[4], a provision as to the status of shares in the new company for trustee investment purposes[5] and a provision relating to parliamentary scrutiny of orders made by the Secretary of State[6].

[1] Section 1(2) and (5). In schedule 1, paragraph 1.

[2] Sections 3 to 7

[3] Section 2

[4] Sections 8 (2) in part; 8 (3) and 9

[5] Section 13

[6] Section 14 (2) (reference to the repealed order making power of Section 6)

Business Start-ups (Women)

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the impact of changes to Phoenix funding on his target of 20 per cent. of business start-ups being undertaken by women by 2006, with particular reference to the Women's Employment, Enterprise and Training Unit in the Norwich North constituency. [33911]

Alun Michael: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State is confident that the target of 20 per cent. of businesses being female owned by 2006 will be reached.

The Phoenix Fund was introduced as a time-limited programme to help build good practice on business support for under-represented groups including women. The Small Business Service is working with the Regional Development Agencies to pull through this good practice to improve access to the full range of business support services for women.

Carbon Management Programme

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 527–8W, on carbon management programme, if he will place in the Library a copy of the Carbon Trust's survey report. [31831]

Malcolm Wicks: DTI have made arrangements for the Carbon Trust report to be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Climate Change

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the oral statement of the Energy Minister of 11 November 2005, column 621, on climate change, if he will make a statement on the £83.5 million for micro-generation installations since 2002; how this funding was split across the programmes run by his Department; when funding started under each programme; how much was granted under each micro-generation scheme for each year since their commencement; and how much funding granted under each micro-generation scheme is expected to be provided up to March 2007. [33963]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government have committed the following funding to microgeneration installations since 2000:

£10 million since 2000 on the PV Field Trials

£31 million since 2002 on the Major Demonstration PV programme

£12.5 million since 2003 on Clear Skies programme

£30 million recently announced for the Low Carbon Buildings programme which is due to start in April 2006, subject to state aid clearance. £1.5 million of which has been brought forward to extend the Clear Skies and PV programmes.

I regret that due to an administrative error, my statement on 11 November 2005 inadvertently referred to an incorrect date. Since 2000 the total committed to microgeneration installations was £83.5 million, as set out.

Coal Production

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on current coal production in the United Kingdom. [34796]

Malcolm Wicks: Coal production in the UK in the three months to September 2005, at 4.8 million tonnes, was 19.5 per cent. lower than in the corresponding period of 2004.

Deep mined production was down 27.7 per cent. and opencast production was down 12.4 per cent.

Common Fund for Commodities

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the outcome of the recent meeting to discuss the Common Fund for Commodities. [33944]

Ian Pearson: The Governing Council of the Common Fund for Commodities met on 29–30 November 2005 in Amsterdam. As well as a number of administrative and financial issues, the meeting also considered a report on the mid-term review of the Fund's five-year action plan 2003 to 2007.

Companies Act Regulations

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list meetings between his Department and the Treasury at which the decision to remove the obligation on businesses to publish operating and financial reviews was discussed. [35015]

Alun Michael: There are frequent meetings between DTI and the Treasury. Policy in relation to corporate governance and reporting frequently crops up directly or indirectly.

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department takes to ensure that consultancies do not claim excessive expenses while working for the Department and its agencies. [29058]

Alan Johnson: The Department fully supports the joint Management Consultancies Association (MCA), Institute of Management Consultancy (IMC) and Office of Government Commerce (OGC) statement of best practice document "Delivering world-class consultancy services to the public sector". This document emphasises the working relationships that the public sector client and consultant will seek to achieve in the development and execution of a consultancy contract.

The Department's standard Invitation to Tender (ITT) document requires potential consultants to provide documentary evidence of their proposed expenses, with which the Department must be satisfied prior to entering into contract. The Department's contract documentation stipulates that only travelling and other expenses that are properly and necessarily incurred in providing the services will be reimbursed.

I have asked the Department's Executive Agencies to respond directly to the hon. Member.

Letter from Desmond Flynn, dated 6 December 2005:

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has asked me to reply to you directly on behalf of The Insolvency Service in respect of your question (1813/2005) asking what steps the Department takes to ensure that consultancies do not claim excessive expenses whilst working for the Department and its agencies.

The Insolvency Service only allows for 'reasonable' expenses. Expenses submitted by consultants should generally be in line with amounts that we would pay our own staff in terms of travel and subsistence.

Letter from Claire Clancy, dated 6 December 2005:

I am responding to your recently tabled Parliamentary Question to the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on behalf of Companies House, which is an Executive Agency of the DTI.

When placing any contracts Companies House would include within the overall contract value details of allowable expenses. These would therefore be subject to the same value for money evaluation that is applied to the agreed daily rates.

Letter from Dr. Jeff Llewellyn, dated 6 December 2005:

The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has asked me to reply on behalf of the National Weights and Measures Laboratory (NWML) to your question regarding what steps the Department takes to ensure that consultancies do not claim excessive expenses whilst working for the Department and its Agencies.

NWML agrees fee rates, including expense rates, with consultants prior to commissioning work. All claims for payment, including expense claims, are checked for accuracy and reasonableness prior to payment.

Letter from Jeanne Spinks, dated 6 December 2005:

House of Commons Parliamentary Question 2005/1813

You asked the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry, what steps the Department takes to ensure that consultancies do not claim excessive expenses whilst working for the Department and its agencies.

The Employment Tribunals Service policy is that wherever possible consultancy services are provided through the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) approved "Catalist" arrangements. All the Service Providers under these arrangements are committed to a standard travel and subsistence policy, based on either OGC buying solutions rates for its public servants, or the individual customers rates.

Letter from Ron Marchant, dated 6 December 2005:

House of Commons Parliamentary Question: 2005/1813

I am responding to this parliamentary question, tabled on 14 November 2005, regarding What steps the Department of Trade and Industry takes to ensure that consultancies do not claim excessive expenses whilst working for the Department and its agencies.

All contracts issued to consultancies by the Patent Office have a clause in them specifying that reasonable or civil service level expenses only may be claimed. Any invoices submitted are checked by the contract manager and any claims considered to be excessive are disallowed.

Developing Countries (Trade)

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action is being taken to use the EU presidency to promote trade that will benefit developing countries. [33874]

Ian Pearson: The needs and interests of developing countries are at the heart of the current round of World Trade Organisation negotiations. The UK Government's priority for the WTO ministerial conference in Hong Kong is to secure to a package that is pro-development, helps build a more competitive European economy and allows a conclusion to the round by the end of 2006.

As presidency, the UK supports the European Commission in its role as negotiator, and is working with member states to ensure a flexible EU position that will help progress negotiations in the run-up to, and at, Hong Kong.

Electricity Prices

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the current price is of electricity per unit generated from *(a)* nuclear, *(b)* offshore wind, *(c)* onshore wind, *(d)* wave and *(e)* tidal energy. [33437]

Malcolm Wicks: The cost of producing electricity by generator class is a commercial matter for generating companies.

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the price is per unit of electricity generated from *(a)* gas-fired, *(b)* hydro and *(c)* coal-fired power stations. [34352]

Malcolm Wicks: The cost of producing electricity by generator class is a commercial matter for generating companies.

Energy Levy

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has received, and from whom, regarding the introduction of a levy on energy bills to assist with the development of nuclear power generation; and if he will make a statement. [34775]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* The Department has received no representations regarding a levy on energy bills to assist with nuclear power.

Energy Supplies

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the impact on carbon dioxide emissions of an increase in the use of gas and oil to supply energy demands. [35529]

Malcolm Wicks: I refer the right hon. Member to our published projections, which can be found on the DTI website, at http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/uep2004.pdf. (An addendum extending these projections to 2020 can also be found at http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/uep_addendum.pdf.) It is intended that these estimates will be revised and published in due course.

Enterprise Grants

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many small and medium-sized enterprises applied for a grant for research and development in 2004–05 in *(a)* the UK and *(b)* each region; how many applicants received funding; what the average value of a grant was; and what the total value of the funding allocated was. [33470]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* DTI grant for research and development is available to businesses in England while the Devolved Administrations offer their own forms of support to businesses undertaking research and development projects.

In 2004–05 grants for research and development worth a total of £30,401,452 were offered to 352 small and medium-sized businesses in England as shown on the following table:

Region	*Number of Applications*	*Number of Grants Offered*
East	98	65
East Midlands	102	22
London	75	47
North East	41	27
North West	155	51
South East	140	43
South West	84	19
West Midlands	52	29
Yorkshire and Humber	154	49
Total	901	352

The average level of grant support was £86,367.

Flexible Working Hours

Lynda Waltho: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what assessment he has made of the willingness of employers to offer family-friendly working hours to male employees; [33415]

(2) what recent estimate he has made of the number of male employees requesting family-friendly flexible working hours. [33416]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The "Second Work-Life Balance Study: Results from the Employers' Survey Main Report Working Employee Survey" (published October 2003) shows that 86 per cent. of employers, with five or more employees, had some type of flexible working provision available to their staff. Employers were not asked whether these provisions were made available to both male and female staff.

The "Second Flexible Working Employee Survey" (published April 2005) shows that over the past two years 10 per cent. of male employees have asked to work flexibly. 62 per cent. of these requests were fully accepted by employers, compared with 72 per cent. of requests from female employees. 43 per cent. of women, compared to 22 per cent. of men, cited childcare needs as the reason for requesting flexible working.

Fuel Poverty

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many *(a)* households were in fuel poverty and *(b)* vulnerable households were in fuel poverty in each of the last five years for which figures are available; and what proportion each represented of all households in (i) London and (ii) each London borough. [34724]

Malcolm Wicks: Figures for the number of households in fuel poverty in England are produced from analysis of the English House Condition Survey. From 2003, the survey is being carried out on a continuous rolling basis. Prior to 2001, however, this survey was conducted on a five-yearly basis. Hence, the number of households in fuel poverty is not available for all of the last five years. The figures for both all households and vulnerable households for 2001 and 2003 are available, with an estimate available for 2002, as detailed in the following table.

Fuel poverty figures for England: 2001—2003

(millions)

	2001	2002	2003
Number of households in fuel poverty	1.7	1.4	1.2
Number of vulnerable households in fuel poverty	1.4	1.2	1.0

Due to the sample sizes involved it is not possible to break the vulnerable category down further by local area. Similarly, it is not possible to provide details for any of the London boroughs. However, analysis of actual data for the years when the EHCS was carried out for each of the nine Government offices for the regions shows that, for London, figures for 2001 and 2003 are as follows:

Fuel poverty figures in the Government office for London region: 2001-03

	2001	*2003*
Number of households in fuel poverty	148,000	108,000
Total number of households in region	2,993,000	3,011,000
Percentage in fuel poverty	5.0	3.6

Independent Schools

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the recent Office of Fair Trading report on independent schools. [34150]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Office of Fair Trading is the United Kingdom's independent competition regulator. It has a duty to investigate and address anti-competitive conduct and enforce competition law. It has investigated the exchange of information between independent schools about the fees they charge. Its provisional findings are that fifty schools have breached chapter one of the Competition Act which prohibits anti-competitive agreements. This is a matter for the Office if Fair Trading. The Government have no substantive role in individual cases.

IT Projects

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many of the IT projects costing over £1 million in use in his Department and introduced since 1997 have been scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee; and if he will list them. [26612]

Alan Johnson: The Public Accounts Committee has not scrutinised any of the Department's IT projects since 1997.

Low Carbon Building Programme

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the latest position on obtaining EU approval for the Low Carbon Building Programme; and what the deadline is for submission of any future funding for approval by the EU under this scheme. [33952]

Malcolm Wicks: Officials are currently preparing a submission to the EU for the Low Carbon Buildings Programme state aid approval. We aim to have this clearance in time to start the programme in April 2006. There is no deadline for any future funding.

Miners' Compensation

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many hearing loss claims have been *(a)* submitted and *(b)* settled for miners from the Bassetlaw constituency. [35284]

Malcolm Wicks: In the Bassetlaw constituency, 1,603 hearing loss claims from miners have been registered of which 1,464 have been settled.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been paid in costs to the Union of Democratic Mineworkers for miners' hearing loss claims. [35340]

Alun Michael: The UDM has been paid £5.9 million in costs for handling 8859 settled miners' hearing loss claims.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many claims for vibration white finger have been *(a)* processed and *(b)* settled in each year of the scheme. [34801]

Malcolm Wicks: The following table provides the number of vibration white finger claims registered and settled to date each year since 1995.

	Registered	*Settled*
1995	1,202	—
1996	8,524	204
1997	9,300	1,117
1998	12,068	2,335
1999	23,631	6,313
2000	60,297	8,741
2001	18,311	14,218
2002	33,490	19,266
2003	2,694	27,662
2004	71	18,088
2005	23	14,819

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects the issue of crossover of claims relating to different conditions to be resolved in relation to claims under the miners' compensation scheme. [34862]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* Agreement in principle has been reached with the Claimant Solicitor Group (CSG) on how these claims should be processed. Revised examples of the complex calculation determining compensation were sent to the CSG on 14 November 2005. These incorporate all of the negotiated changes to the calculation. We await acceptance from the CSG. Once we have this, it will take 6 weeks to make the necessary system changes before offers can be made.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will take steps to recover from solicitors moneys paid from the public purse following the judicial ruling of October in the case of Walker *v.* UK Coal. [34863]

Malcolm Wicks: The judgement is currently being clarified and we are monitoring the position. If there have been any overpayments then action will be taken to recover them where the Department is so advised.

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many hearing loss claims involving Vendside Ltd have been *(a)* registered and *(b)* paid out since the beginning of the summer parliamentary recess 2005. [34867]

Malcolm Wicks: 56 hearing loss claims have been received from Vendside Ltd since 22 November 2005. None of these claimants have received payment yet.

Multi-Fibre Agreement

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the impact of the ending of the Multi-Fibre Agreement on *(a)* Taiwan, *(b)* Mauritius and *(c)* Costa Rica; and if he will make a statement. [28416]

Ian Pearson: The end of the MFA will bring significant benefits to the world economy over the longer term, but entail adjustment pressures for some producing countries. It is too early to assess the precise impact on individual economies.

National Minimum Wage

Kelvin Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 296W, on the national minimum wage, whether the 1.3 million figure quoted for those benefiting from the increase in the minimum wage refers to *(a)* individuals and *(b)* jobs. [34642]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The DTI estimated that 1.3 million individuals will be covered by the October 2005 uprating of the National Minimum Wage. This estimate was based on the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings 2004 taking into account earnings inflation from spring 2004 and October 2005.

Oil Stocks

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects the EU to repeal the directives requiring member states to keep minimum oil stocks, as stated in COM (2005) 535. [32896]

Malcolm Wicks: Currently, there are seven directives relating to oil stocking. Later directives amend paragraphs from the earlier versions. The proposal set out in COM (2005) 535 is to simplify the legislation by recasting these seven directives into a single directive

and says that it is the intention to do this at some stage in 2006. There is no intention or plan to reduce the level of EU emergency oil stocks.

Renewable Energy

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department is taking to provide continuity of grant support to *(a)* schools and *(b)* other community renewable energy projects pending the launch of the new low carbon buildings programme in financial year 2006–07. [32846]

Malcolm Wicks: £1.5 million has been brought forward from the £30 million for the low carbon buildings programme to minimise any potential funding gap between the existing and new programme. The Department is also looking to work in partnership with major private sector players in the energy field in order to expand the micro generation sector, with a particular emphasis on renewable energy technologies on schools.

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will provide additional funds to enable *(a)* schools and *(b)* other community buildings to benefit from renewable energy technologies. [33986]

Malcolm Wicks: £1.5 million has been brought forward from the £30 million for the low carbon buildings programme to minimise any potential funding gap between the existing and new programmes. We will continue to support school and community buildings renewable projects under the new programme, which will start in April 2006, subject to EU state aids clearance. The Department is also looking to work in partnership with major private sector players in the energy field in order to expand the micro generation sector, with a particular emphasis on renewable energy technologies on schools.

Secondments

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many staff in his Department are seconded from accountancy houses; and how many of his officials have worked on secondment to outside accountancy houses. [20554]

Alan Johnson: Departmental records show that DTI currently has nine people seconded from accountancy firms and three members of staff have worked on secondment to accountancy firms.

South West Regional Venture Capital Fund

Mr. Heathcoat-Amory: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many ventures have been backed by the South West Regional Venture Capital Fund; and what funds have been committed. [34420]

Alun Michael: The number of ventures backed by the fund is nine and in total £1.95 million has been committed.

Statutory Adoption Pay

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment has been made of the impact of paying statutory adoption pay for 26 weeks at £106 per week and statutory maternity pay at six weeks at a level of 90 percent. followed by 20 weeks at £106 per week on *(a)* the number of people coming forward to be adopters and *(b)* the impact of adoption on families of a reduced income; what plans he has to review the levels of payment; and if he will make a statement. [33601]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The number of adoptions of children from care increased by 38 percent. between 1999–2000 and 2004–05. In 2004–5 there were 3,800. Although assessing social workers do look into the income and money management skills of prospective adopters, they do not classify families on the basis of income and none of the statutory returns asks for this kind of information.

Statutory adoption pay (SAP) was introduced in 2003 as a measure of income replacement to help adopters to take time off work when a child is placed with them. Since its introduction the standard rate of SAP has been the same as the standard rate of statutory maternity pay (SMP) and maternity allowance (MA). The Work and Families Bill will enable us to increase the payment period of both maternity and adoption pay from the current 26 weeks to 39 weeks from April 2007 with an ambition to increase to one year by the end of this parliament. It is also our ambition to increase the flat rate of SAP, SMP, MA and statutory paternity pay over time.

SAP needs to be considered as part of the overall package of support for adoptive families. Adopters have a right to be assessed for financial support under the Adoption Support Services Regulations 2003 (which will be replaced on 30 December 2005 by the Adoption Support Services Regulations 2005). We have provided nearly £70 million of ring fenced grant to local authorities over the three year period 2003–04, 2004–05, 2005–06 to fund adoption support services and special guardianship support services. In addition, adoptive families will benefit from other support available to families, including working tax credit and child tax credit.

Tariffs

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what position he will be taking in the forthcoming Doha trade talks in Hong Kong on reducing agricultural tariffs. [34149]

Ian Pearson: The Government's long-term goal is to abolish progressively all barriers to agricultural trade in the forms of both tariffs and quotas. The Government aims to take an important step towards this goal through the Doha development agenda.

The European Commission negotiates in the World Trade Organisation on behalf of the European Union's twenty-five member states, within the parameters of a negotiating mandate laid out in a succession of council conclusions. The current EU offer on agriculture, representing an average tariff reduction of 38.9 percent., is close to the edge of the mandate.

Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the timetable is for the implementation of the waste electrical and electronic equipment directive; and what progress has been made to date on implementation. [34295]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government intend to make a policy announcement shortly on the implementation of this EU waste electrical and electronic equipment directive, including the timing of the WEEE regulations. The Government have been working towards practical implementation arrangements for the UK in extensive discussions with stakeholders. The Department has conducted three policy consultations in preparation of these regulations and development of the practical implementation arrangements. It has also consulted on proposals for cost recovery fees to cover the environment agencies' planned roles in relation to the registration of producers and monitoring of obligations, primarily producers' obligations, under the WEEE regulations. The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs and the Northern Ireland Office have conducted separate consultations on draft regulations to implement the directive's requirements for the permitting of WEEE treatment facilities. The Environment Agencies have jointly consulted on draft technical guidance for the treatment of WEEE.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will list *(a)* (i) retailers and (ii) producers of electrical goods, *(b)* trade bodies and *(c)* associated organisations which the Department consulted during the (A) drafting and (B) implementation of the waste electrical and electronic equipment directive. [34296]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has been in contact with the main affected sectors of business and other stakeholders both throughout the negotiation of the waste electrical and electronic equipment directive and since it was agreed and published in February 2003. Since the publication of the directive, the Department has conducted four public consultations in relation to its transposition and implementation, in March 2003, in November 2003, in July 2004 and in May 2005. There were 316 responses to the DTI's first consultation; 219 to the second; 225 to the third and 50 to the fourth. The lists of respondents to the first three consultations have been published on the DTI website at http://www.dti.gov.uk/sustainability/weee/ A summary of responses to the fourth consultation will be published on the website shortly.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to ensure that implementation of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive does not have an adverse impact on manufacturers of electrical goods and equipment, with particular reference to *(a)* profitability and *(b)* competitiveness. [34297]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government are committed to achieving an implementation of the EU Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive which delivers its environmental objectives whilst safeguarding the competitiveness of UK manufacturers of electrical and electronic equipment which falls within its scope.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether his Department plans to meet retailers and producers of electrical goods and equipment to discuss their concerns over the implementation of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive. [34298]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has had intensive discussions with retailers and producers over the arrangements for the implementation of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive. It expects to continue these.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the estimated recycling cost per electrical item is under the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive. [34299]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has not published an estimated recycling cost per item. The Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive covers a wide range of electrical and electronic equipment, which is highly diverse in nature and composition.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action his Department is taking to ensure that the cost of recycling items under the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive is transparent to *(a)* businesses and *(b)* consumers. [34300]

Malcolm Wicks: The costs of recycling waste electrical and equipment will be a matter for producers in the contractual arrangements they make with operators of recycling and other recovery processes on a commercial basis. The Government will implement the provisions of article 8 of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive which provides that the costs of recycling of old waste equipment from private households may be shown to consumers at the point of sale for a transitional period after the directive's implementation.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what his Department's estimate is of the tonnage of waste electrical and electronic equipment goods which will be processed in each of the next five years; and what tonnage he estimates will be goods manufactured by companies that are no longer in business. [34301]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has assumed, in its partial regulatory impact assessments for the UK implementation of the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive (which may be viewed on the Department's website at http://www.dti.gov.uk/sustainability/weee/), that total arisings of waste equipment (WEEE) from UK private households will be in the region of 1 million tonnes in 2006, according to the estimates published by the Industry Council for Electronic Equipment Recycling (ICER); and that the volume of WEEE arisings in the UK will rise by 4 per cent. each subsequent year, based on estimates in the European Commission's Explanatory Memorandum to the Directive. It is not know what proportion of this WEEE will result from equipment put onto the UK market by companies which have gone out of business.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he will take to ensure that manufacturers of electrical goods and equipment

will be allocated waste electrical and electronic equipment directive responsibilities on a fair and equitable basis. [34302]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department will be making an announcement shortly on the plans for the UK implementation of the waste electrical and electronic equipment directive.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the proportion of UK waste electrical and electronic equipment goods which will be recycled in *(a)* the United Kingdom, *(b)* other EU states and *(c)* elsewhere over each of the next five years. [34303]

Malcolm Wicks: The waste electrical and electronic equipment directive requires target levels of recycling to be achieved, which vary according to the different categories of waste equipment. The Department's partial Regulatory Impact Assessments for the UK implementation of the Directive, which may be viewed on the Department's website at http://www.dti.gov.uk/sustainability/weee/, take account of these targets. The Directive is to be reviewed in 2008 and its requirements, including the targets, are expected to be revised as a result.

The Department has made no estimates of levels of recycling in other member states; or for other countries outside the EU.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps are being taken to ensure that civic amenity sites are able to collect and separate waste electrical and electronic equipment for collection and transportation to recycling facilities. [34304]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government are facilitating the development of a retail compliance scheme, which, subject to Government approval, will offer funding to local authorities to upgrade their civic amenity sites to provide facilities for the collection of waste electrical and electronic equipment separately from the rest of the municipal waste stream.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to ensure manufacturers have proper access to civic amenity sites and designated collection facilities to enable them to fulfil their recycling obligations under the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive. [34380]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has facilitated discussions between representatives of local authorities and producers of a code of practice between site operators and producers collecting from the designated collection facilities for household WEEE.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps are being taken by his Department to inform consumers of the new recycling arrangements for waste electrical goods under the waste electrical and electronic equipment directive. [34381]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department expects that retailers will have obligations under the intended WEEE implementing regulations to inform consumers about the separate collection of WEEE for subsequent treatment and recycling; including about the local collection facilities and services available to them.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry why the waste electrical and electronic equipment directive's provision that manufacturers of electrical goods and equipment may make the cost of recycling historic equipment visible to the consumer is not being permitted in the UK. [34382]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government intend to implement the directive's provisions that producers may show, for a transitional period, the costs of recycling 'historical' waste electrical goods and equipment from private households to consumers at the point of sale of new equipment.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether steps are being taken by the Government to prevent profit-taking by third parties with no obligations under the waste electrical and electronic equipment directive. [34647]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government expect to implement the obligations under the waste electrical and electronic equipment directive on a basis which allows producers to procure treatment and recycling services for the waste equipment for which they have responsibility on a commercially contracted basis.

Wave Energy

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been spent in each year from 1980 to date on the research and development of wavepower; and what further sums are planned to be spent. [30923]

Malcolm Wicks: Spend on wave research under the Technology programme (and predecessors) is:

	£
1980–81	3,039,964
1981–82	3,947,412
1982–83	2,819,624
1983–84	715,109
1984–85	430,823
1985–86	264,109
1986–87	70,071
1987–88	180,170
1988–89	142,872
1989–90	137,043
1990–91	387,555
1991–92	467,100
1992–93	324,649
1993–94	195,693
1994–95	105,561
1995–96	42,441
1996–97	49,751
1997–98	—
1998–99	91,000
1999–2000	10,754
2000–01	332,488
2001–02	661,900
2002–03	748,335
2003–04	2,104,141
2004–05	334,651
2005–06 (to date)	130,752

Future funding under the Technology programme will be dependent on the quality and quantity of proposals submitted to the programme. Projects already approved already give rise to the following spend projections.

	£
2005–06[1]	644,000
2006–07	995,000
2007–08	764,000
2008–09	318,000

[1] Total spend

Research Council expenditure (rounded to the nearest '000) is as follows:

	£
1997–98	0
1998–99	157,000
1999–2000	175,000
2000–01	301,000
2001–02	606,000
2002–03	617,000
2003–04	830,000
2004–05	1,050,000

Note:
Figures dating back to 1980 could not be provided without disproportionate cost.

Under the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council's Supergen programme, £2.6 million was awarded to the Marine Energy Research Consortium. The award, which commenced in October 2003 for four years, will fund research into marine renewable energy conversion and delivery. The Research Councils also support energy research, including aspects of marine and tidal power, through the work of the UK Energy Research Centre, which has funds of £13 million for 2004–09. No firm plans exist at present for additional managed activity in this area, so in the near future Research Council investments will depend on the quality of bids through responsive mode; although EPSRC will consider the potential renewal of the Supergen Marine Consortium at the relevant time.

In addition the Government have put in place the £50 million Marine Renewables Deployment Fund that will support the continued development of the marine renewables sector. At the core of those proposals is a £42 million wave and tidal stream energy demonstration scheme.

Work and Families Bill

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations his Department received from small business organisations concerning the effects of the Work and Families Bill. [33545]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* We received over 200 formal responses to the "Work and families: choice and flexibility" consultation, which preceded the Work and Families Bill. Around a third of these were from individual employers and 18 of these were from small employers. In addition 26 employer groups, many of which represent small employers, responded. These include the Federation of Small Business, the Forum of Private Business and the Small Business Council.

A summary of the responses is available in Annex A of the Government Response to the consultation, a copy of which is available in the Libraries of the House. The individual responses are available on the Work and Families page of the DTI website.

Over 20 meetings were held during the consultation period with small business and their representatives, including a focus group.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Academy Schools

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the pay level is of the head of each established academy school; and what the average pay for heads in the public sector is. [35327]

Jacqui Smith: No reliable figures are held with respect to the pay level of head teachers in academy schools.

In March 2004, the latest information available, it is provisionally estimated that the average salary of full-time head teachers in maintained secondary schools was £60,330. The average salary for all head teachers in the maintained sector was £46,890.

Adult Education

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make it her policy to increase adult education funding in Essex to its highest historical real terms level. [31225]

Bill Rammell: On the 21 October, I wrote to all MPs setting out the Government's strategic direction for the learning and skills sector for the coming period. The purpose of the announcement was to ensure the 2006/07 funding allocations process began with a clear and concise message on the principles that will underpin funding over the next two years. While total funding going into the learning and skills sector will increase over the next two years there is a need to rebalance spending toward priority areas which include helping disadvantaged adults gain basic and Level 2 skills for employability and progression to Level 3.

We are also maintaining the value of Government funding for personal and community development learning through a specific safeguard of £210 million in 2006/07.

Funding allocations for adult education providers in Essex will reflect these priorities that build upon our funding investment across the whole lifelong learning and skills sector, which has seen Government funding for; FE, work based training for young people, adult skills and lifelong learning increase by more than £4 billion since 1997-equivalent to over 60 percent. in real terms.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what average percentage of their fees was paid by adult education students in each of the last five years; and what the estimate is of fees they will pay in *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07. [31231]

Bill Rammell: On the 21 October 2005, we made an announcement, setting out the Government's strategic direction for the learning and skills sector for the coming period. Our main purpose for doing so was to ensure the 2006/07 funding allocations process began with a clear and concise message on the principles that will underpin funding over the next two years. This follows record investment in Further Education; since 1997 total Government funding has risen by around 48 per cent. in real terms.

The Skills Strategy White Paper set out a vision for transforming the way in which the Learning and Skills Sector can support higher national investment in skills, which included a rebalancing of responsibilities so that the state, employers and individuals all contribute to the costs of their learning in line with the benefits they each receive. These funding principles do not affect the existing arrangements whereby my Department funds free tuition for all young people; those taking literacy and numeracy or aiming for their first full level 2; and learners receiving income based benefits, the pension (guarantee) credit and those on higher levels of the working tax credit.

In the last five years adult learners in Further Education (FE) were assumed to contribute 25 per cent. of the basic course cost of their learning unless fees were remitted because of the reasons stated above. This proportion increased to 27.5 per cent. in 2005/06 and will rise again to 32.5 per cent. in 2006/07 and 37.5 per cent. in 2007/08. In average terms this means a rise from an hourly rate of £1.42 to £1.94 by 2007/08.

The responsibility for setting and collecting fees rests with the college. However, we know that historically many FE providers choose to waive the fees for some of these 'fee-paying' learners:

In 2003/04, FE providers collected £152 million out of an 'expected' £261 million

In 2004/05, £159 million was collected out of an 'expected' £277 million.

In order to increase the levels of fees collected, from 2005/06 the LSC agreed a fee income measure with each FE funded provider. To assist providers in developing a strategic approach to fees policy, the LSC published a good practice guide to fee income earlier this year.

Clearly with the increase in fee assumption, it will be important that FE providers recover as much money as possible from learners as employers.

Alcohol Education

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether there are plans to increase alcohol education in schools; and if she will make a statement. [33482]

Jacqui Smith: The statutory National Curriculum Science Order requires that all pupils should learn about the effects of alcohol and other drugs. In addition, schools are expected to use the non-statutory frameworks for Personal Social Health Education (PSHE) and Citizenship at key stages 1 and 2, PSHE at key stages 3 and 4 and the Citizenship programme of study at key stages 3 and 4 as the context for developing drug and alcohol education further. It is for schools to decide how much curriculum time is necessary to meet these requirements.

We are supporting schools to deliver better alcohol education. In 2004, we issued all schools with new guidance on all aspects of drug education, including alcohol. We have invested in the development of the PSHE certificate for teachers which supports standards in the teaching of PSHE, including alcohol education. We have made up to 2,000 places available in both 2004–05 and 2005–06.

Together with the Home Office and Department of Health, we are supporting a national five year research programme called "Blueprint" to test the effectiveness of drug education initiatives in schools. It will make a significant contribution to developing a UK evidence base for drug, alcohol and tobacco education.

AS-levels

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has for AS-level examinations; and if she will make a statement. [34500]

Jacqui Smith: AS level examinations will continue to make up 50 per cent. of an A level. It will also continue to be certificated as a qualification in its own right.

Bullying

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what financial commitment her Department plans to make to combat bullying in schools in the next 12 months. [33420]

Jacqui Smith: Funding for anti-bullying work during the financial year 2005/06 is £1,145,000. Work during this period includes conferences and events to disseminate good practice, alongside the development of guidance and resources for schools.

This amount also includes funding for external organisations to undertake specific projects:

£600,000 has been provided to the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA) to sustain the momentum for change generated by the Make The Difference Conference series;

The Department has provided £200,000 to Parentline Plus to support their helpline for parents on anti-bullying issues.

Funding for CHIPS (ChildLine in Partnership with Schools) is £200,000. The CHIPS scheme encourages young people to set up programmes, with the help of ChildLine and their teachers, to support their peers and to create safe environments in which to learn.

The Department has also shown its continuing support for the Diana Memorial Award for anti-bullying, by contributing £50,000 of funding. The award highlights the achievements of young people trying to tackle bullying in their school or community.

Funding for anti-bullying work during 2006/07 is yet to be agreed.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance her Department issues to schools to encourage children to report acts of bullying. [34790]

Jacqui Smith: We attach a high priority to encouraging pupils to report bullying, and to supporting schools to encourage their pupils to do so.

A key message of our guidance pack for schools, "Bullying: Don't Suffer in Silence", is that children should report bullying to someone they trust. The pack also provides information on monitoring bullying through the use of school surveys drawn up with the help of pupils.

We have created anti-bullying postcards and posters in a variety of community languages to help pupils, especially newly arrived pupils, to report acts of bullying. These have been made available to schools through conferences and can be downloaded from the DfES website.

The anti-bullying Charter for Action, which was re-issued to each school in November 2005, includes suggestions for safe and effective reporting of bullying.

Information is made available directly to children through our public information films. 'Tell Someone' encourages children who are being bullied to tell someone, and not suffer in silence. The film 'I Am' uses celebrities to show young people that they are not alone if they are being bullied, and should tell someone. We have encouraged schools to use these films.

Education Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the operation of section 43 of the Education (No. 2) Act 1986. [29848]

Bill Rammell: We remain committed to the principles of freedom of expression and thought in universities and colleges as they are essential to modern democracy. The principles underpinning these are encapsulated in Article 10 of the European Convention on Human Rights as well as legislation more specific to particular education sectors. However, such freedoms also bring responsibilities, and we have to balance freedom of speech with the need to protect national security and the rights of citizens not to be put at risk from criminal and violent acts. We therefore continue to look to universities and colleges to uphold the safeguards for freedom of speech set out in legislation, and to take such action as they see fit to allow their students and staff to operate in safety on campus.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females were (i) charged and (ii) convicted of offences under section 466 of the Education Act 1996 in (A) Essex and (B) England and Wales in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; [33530]

(2) if she will make a statement on the operation of sections *(a)* 464, *(b)* 465 and *(c)* 466 of the Education Act 1996. [33531]

Jacqui Smith: Sections 464, 465 and 466 of the Education Act 1996 have been replaced by sections 158, 159 and 160 of the Education Act 2002. The main difference between the 1996 and 2002 provisions is that independent schools may no longer open unless they meet minimum standards which are set out in regulations made under the Education Act 2002.

Any proprietor who operates an unregistered school is doing so illegally and could face prosecution under section 159 of the 2002 Act, formerly section 466 of the 1996 Act. In the last 10 years there have been no prosecutions under section 466 of the Education Act 1996 or section 159 of the Education Act 2002.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the operation of sections *(a)* 7, *(b)* 8 and *(c)* 9 of the Education Act 1996. [33532]

Jacqui Smith: This Government are committed to improving levels of attendance at school. Figures published in September for 2004/05 show that the level of absences from school have fallen for the fourth consecutive years to a record low level. The equivalent of 12,500 more pupils are in school each day on average in 2004/05 than in 2003/04. There are 50,000 more pupils in school each day on average than would be the case if absence rates were still at 1996/97 levels.

This Government believe that, for most children, school is the right place in which to receive education. However, we respect parents' fundamental right, under section 7 of the Education Act 1996, to educate their children at home if they so wish. Where that happens, the parents must take responsibility for ensuring that the education provided is suitable and, for children of compulsory school age, is full-time. We have no plans to change this right.

We have no current plans to amend section 8 of the 1996 Education Act which sets out when a person is of compulsory school age.

Section 9 sets out the general principle that pupils are to be educated in accordance with their parents' wishes. The courts have ruled that, while local authorities must "have regard to the general principle that pupils are to be educated in accordance with the wishes of their parents ... ...", that this is subject to other considerations, and that there are many things to which the education authority may have regard and which may outweigh the wishes of (particular) parents'.

How this operates in relation to school admissions is that section 86 of the school Standards and Framework Act 1998 gives parents a right to express a preference for the school they want their child to attend, and to give their reasons for that preference. If a school is oversubscribed, then the school's published admission arrangements (or 'oversubscription criteria') are applied to determine which applicants should be offered the available places. Those who are unsuccessful have a statutory right of appeal to an independent appeal panel.

Education (Southend-on-Sea)

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what percentage of pupils in Southend-on-Sea achieved level 4 or above in 2005 in *(a)* English and *(b)* Mathematics at key stage 2; [34814]

(2) what percentage of pupils in Southend-on-Sea achieved level 5 or above in 2005 in *(a)* English and *(b)* mathematics at key stage 3. [34815]

Jacqui Smith: Information on the attainment of pupils in the 2005 key stage 2 and key stage 3 tests are published on the Department's research and statistics website in two Statistical First Releases (SFR). Figures for key stage 2 are available at: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/

rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000618/index.shtml. Figures for key stage 3 are available at: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsqateway/DB/SFR/s000599/index.shtml.

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils in Southend-on-Sea achieved five or more A*-C grades at GCSE in 2005. [34816]

Jacqui Smith: 1,229 pupils in Southend-on-Sea local authority achieved the level 2 threshold (the equivalent of five or more grades A*-C) in GCSE and equivalent qualifications in 2005 out of a total of 2,014 pupils, i.e. 61.0 per cent.

Notes:

1. These figures are provisional, and may be subject to change.

2. The coverage of these local authority level figures is maintained mainstream and maintained special schools only; including city technology colleges and academies but excluding hospital schools and pupil referral units where these occur within the local authority.

3. These figures relate to pupils at the end of key stage 4 in the 2004/05 academic year.

4. Figures include achievements of pupils in previous academic years.

5. These figures are adjusted for pupils recently arrived from overseas.

Education Funding

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her most recent estimate is of how much money is spent per child each year in *(a)* state schools, *(b)* private schools and *(c)* special schools. [32764]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not split its unit costs into *(a)* state schools, *(b)* private schools and *(c)* special schools. However, the available information for local authority maintained schools for 2003–04 is given in the following table.

	£
Primary	2,750
Secondary	3,550
Special schools	14,050

My Department does not collect information on the money spent per child at private schools.

Notes:

1. The information was taken from section 52 outturn statements for 2003–04, as reported by LEAs.

2. School based expenditure includes only expenditure incurred directly by local authority maintained schools. This includes the pay of teachers and school-based support staff, school premises costs, books and equipment, and certain other supplies and services, less any capital items funded from recurrent spending and income from sales, fees and charges and rents and rates.

3. In addition to any school based expenditure, combined local authority and school based expenditure per pupil also includes all elements of related central local authority expenditure and was £3,890 per pupil in England in 2003–04. It is not possible to disaggregate this figure into mainstream and special school costs and consequently this figure includes all expenditure on the education of children in local authority maintained establishments and any expenditure on pupils educated by the authority other than in maintained establishments.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the per pupil funding was in 2004–05 in *(a)* the East Riding of Yorkshire and *(b)* England. [33558]

Jacqui Smith: Total funding per pupil aged three-19 years (cash terms) for 2004–05 was £3,670 for East Riding of Yorkshire, and £4,030 for England.

Between 1997–98 and 2004–05, funding per pupil in East Riding increased by 34.3 percent. in real terms, compared with the England average of 34.4 percent. over the same period.

Notes:

Price base—Cash and real terms at 2004–05 prices, based on GDP deflators as at 28 September 2005.

Figures reflect relevant sub-blocks of education formula spending settlements. The cash figures include the pensions transfers to EFS and the Learning and Skills Council from 2003–04. The real terms series, and the increase quoted, exclude this transfer so that all years are comparable.

Total funding also includes all revenue grants in DfES departmental expenditure limits relevant to pupils aged three-19 years and exclude education maintenance allowances (EMAs) and education grants not allocated at an authority level.

The pupil numbers used to convert £ million figures to per pupil are those underlying the SSA/EFS settlement calculations plus PLASC three year-old maintained pupils and estimated 3–4 year-olds funded through state support in maintained and other educational institutions where these are not included in the SSA pupil numbers.

Rounding—Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Status—2004–05 figures are provisional as some grants have not yet been finalised/audited.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what response she has made to the representations made by the F40 group of local authorities on school funding. [33570]

Jacqui Smith: I met representatives of the F40 group of authorities in June 2005 and listened to their presentation about the funding model which the group supports, and subsequently wrote to the group's chair following my statement to the House of 21 July 2005 about the new school funding arrangements to be introduced from April 2006. My department has recently replied to the group's request for a further meeting about the funding model, indicating that officials will be happy to meet representatives of the group as part of the longer term review of the school funding arrangements announced in my statement of 21 July. We will announce in the new year the terms of reference for the review and our detailed proposals for engagement with individual local authorities, their representative organisations and special interest groups, including the F40 group, and with other key stakeholders.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 389W, on education funding, if she will make a statement on the benefits to private sector sponsors of contributing to academy start up costs; and when she expects those benefits to accrue. [33753]

Jacqui Smith: Sponsoring an academy is an act of philanthropic giving. Sponsors contribute up to 10 per cent. of the capital costs of a new academy (to a maximum of £2 million), but their contribution is not

just financial. More importantly they bring an experience of success, a personal commitment, energy, drive and ambition, as well as a whole new set of skills and experience. The 2005 PricewaterhouseCoopers evaluation found "strong confidence in the role of sponsors", with 78 per cent. of staff surveyed in academies agreeing that the sponsor brings expertise that would not otherwise be available to the academy, and 82 per cent. of staff agreeing that the sponsor's resources had a positive impact on pupils' learning.

The benefit that sponsors derive from their involvement in the programme is entirely personal and generally motivated by a desire to give something back to the community or from a sense of corporate responsibility.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people in each local authority are in receipt of the education maintenance allowance for 2005–06. [17814]

Phil Hope: The information requested has been placed in the House Libraries.

Failing Authorities

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the date of *(a)* inspection, *(b)* report and *(c)* receipt of action plan by her Department for each local education authority found to be failing by Ofsted in 2004–05; what the date was of second (i) inspection, (ii) report and (iii) receipt of action plan by her Department in each case; and what the date was of subsequent milestone events. [34217]

Jacqui Smith: Ofsted inspections since April 2004 have found the overall efficiency of two local education authorities to be unsatisfactory. An action plan from Torbay council received in December 2004 responded to Ofsted's September 2004 report of its May 2004 inspection. An action plan from North East Lincolnshire received in April 2005 responded to Ofsted's December 2004 report of its October 2004 inspection. Both authorities' education services will be inspected in 2006–07, in joint area reviews of children's services carried out by Ofsted with other inspectorates and commissions.

The Department issued a direction to North East Lincolnshire council on 1 June 2005, under the Education Act 1996, to contract with North East Lincolnshire Children First to provide assistance to the council in the delivery of its children's services. The first annual performance assessments of children's services, issued by Ofsted and the Commission for Social Care Inspection on 1 December 2005, judged North East Lincolnshire's education services to remain below minimum requirements, but its children's services, including education, to have good capacity to improve. Torbay's education services were found to meet minimum requirements, and children's services to have good capacity to improve.

Geography Focus Group

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 21 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1265W, on geography, whether she has received the report from the Geography Focus Group. [34832]

Jacqui Smith: The Geography Focus Group discussed their findings with Lord Adonis on 9 November, and put forward broad recommendations to improve the teaching and learning of geography. The Royal Geographical Society and Geographical Association, who lead the focus group are now developing more detailed proposals.

Higher Education

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps are being taken to ensure that the removal of the right to appeal of international students who apply for initial entry clearance will not disadvantage UK universities when competing in the overseas market of the UK higher education sector. [34564]

Bill Rammell: We are determined to ensure that UK universities remain attractive study destinations for international students. The current process of submitting an appeal and hearing a decision is bureaucratic and time-consuming and can sometimes drag on beyond the start date of a student's course. Under the new system, students who are refused a visa will be able to re-apply with the benefit of guidance and advice. This will be much faster and easier than at present.

In addition, the Home Office and UKvisas are working together to make sure that the quality of initial decision making on visa applications is of a high standard. UKvisas are enhancing the role of the Independent Monitor to review the standard of decision making on visas, improving the training for entry clearance officers, and are recruiting a network of regional managers to spread good practice.

Identity Cards

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the *(a)* total and *(b)* net cost of (i) integrating the proposed identity card scheme into her Department's IT systems and (ii) the ongoing operation of the scheme within her Department. [31107]

Bill Rammell: The Department for Education and Skills has, in consultation with the Identity Cards Programme, developed its current best estimate of the cost of using the ID Cards Scheme to support the services which it oversees and these costs have been incorporated into the business case. The Department is represented on the Ministerial Committee on Identity Cards which oversees the work on benefits planning and realisation.

In deriving these estimates account has to be taken of the types of use required to support the particular services which this Department oversees. Not all services will require a high degree of integration between the ID Cards Scheme and other IT systems. Where there

may be a need for integration, some costs can be absorbed into the usual cycles of system upgrades and technology refreshes.

We cannot release the detailed estimated costs for integrating IT systems and the ongoing operation of the Identity Cards Scheme within the Department and the services which it oversees at this stage as these elements may be acquired from the market. The estimates are therefore commercially sensitive and to release them may prejudice the procurement process and the Department's ability to obtain value for money from potential suppliers.

Learning and Skills Council

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been allocated to 14 to 19 skills and quality reform by the Learning and Skills Council in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07 and *(c)* 2007–08. [35185]

Bill Rammell: The Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is funded by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) through an annual Grant Letter that sets out the Government's key priorities for the LSC.

The following table sets out the information requested, as allocated to the LSC for 2006–07 and 2007–08 as part of the 2006–07 Grant Letter issued on 31 October 2005. Allocations for 2005–06 were included in the LSC document "Priorities for Success" October 2005.

£000

	Latest allocations 2005–06	2006–07	Planned expenditure 2007–08
14–19 Reform	128,248	98,250	101,950
Adult Skills Reform	166,825	202,977	214,276
Quality Reform	152,476	128,565	124,399
14–19, Skills and Quality Reform Total	447,549	429,792	440,625

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to her most recent grant letter to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in which funding blocks A to E replace the previous five funding blocks set out in the grant letter; and if she will break down the LSC budgets proposed in November 2004 by the same categories used for this year's budget. [30817]

Bill Rammell: The information requested on the LSC budgets proposed in the November 2004 grant letter, by the categories used in the 2006–07 grant letter which was issued on 30 October 2005 are as follows:

15 November 2004 grant letter

£ million

	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
Learning participation	6,696.4	6,840.5	7,123.8
School sixth forms	1,784.4	1,828.9	1,906.4
Local intervention and development	195.3	195.5	195.5
Capital	399.8	474.8	595.8
Administration	245.9	248.2	235.4
Total	9,322.0	9,587.9	10,056.9

Presented in 30 October 2005 grant letter format

£ million

	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
A. Participation	8,062.5	8,257.0	8,616.5
B. Learner support and development	613.8	607.9	609.1
C. LSC capital	399.8	474.8	595.8
D. Administration	245.9	248.2	235.4
E. AME expenditure	0.0	0.0	0.0
Total	9,322.0	9,587.9	10,056.9

The figures from the November 2004 grant letter have been overtaken by the inclusion of the education maintenance allowance (Block E—AME Expenditure) and a range of additional resource transfers to the LSC. Revised figures as in the 2006–07 grant letter, issued on 30 October, are shown in the following table.

£ million

	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
A. Participation	8,267.6	8,521.5	8,884.5
B. Learner support and development	817.5	704.8	728.0
C. LSC capital	393.8	468.8	595.8
D. Administration	254.8	252.2	239.5
E. AME expenditure	403.0	511.0	529.0
Total	10,136.7	10,458.3	10,976.8

The following table breaks down the learner support and development figures at Block B aforementioned.

£ million

B. Learner support and development	2005–06	2006–07	2007–08
Learner support funds	122	125	130
Other financial support	71	75	81
14–19, Skills and quality reform	460	430	441
Capacity and infrastructure	166	77	79
Total[1]	819	707	731

[1] Final total do not agree with the aforementioned table because of roundings.

The aforementioned table excludes AME expenditure (education maintenance allowance) which is a separate line (Block E) in the grant letter.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 599W, on the Learning and Skills Council, what the amount of funding was from each source referred to in the last 12 months for which figures are available; and why this funding is delivered via the Learning and Skills Council. [31258]

Bill Rammell: Further education colleges and other providers responsible for the delivery of post-16 learning opportunities offer a wide range of provision that is fully funded by the LSC.

They also offer provision where funding does not come from the LSC but comes directly from a range of sources including those in my earlier reply to the hon. Gentleman. The following table shows the volume of funding from each source for provision that is delivered by colleges but not funded by the LSC for the academic year 2004/05. Most of this funding is provided directly to providers by these organisations, or generated directly by the providers themselves, without reference to the LSC.

2004/05[1]	£ millions
Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE)	233.6
Tuition fees	328.9
Employer fees and contracts	77.4
Local education authority and schools	49.4
New deal	16.1
University for industry (UFI)	9.3
Other education contracts	144.6
Research grants	73.5
Catering, residences and conferences	97.7
Farming	11.8
Other income generating	104.4
Miscellaneous	140.9
Investment income and interest	38.0
Total	1,325.6

[1] Note that data for seven colleges (less than 2 percent.) have not yet been received, and these figures will be subject to audit by the colleges' financial statement auditors. Some change should therefore be expected

Literacy

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people in *(a)* Southend, *(b)* Essex, *(c)* Hertfordshire, *(d)* each London borough and *(e)* England she estimates were illiterate (i) at the last date for which figures are available and (ii) in each year since 2000. [34219]

Bill Rammell: The Skills for Life Survey: A national needs and impact survey of literacy, numeracy and ICT skills (DfES, October 2003) provides the latest estimates of literacy levels across England. The survey assessed the literacy, numeracy and ICT skills of around 8,000 adults aged 16 and above in England. The estimates are available to individual education authority area; however they are only available for 2003 and not every year since 2000.

The survey findings are shown in the tables following for the regions requested. The assessment levels correspond to the literacy and numeracy National Standards: these were introduced in 2002 to provide a framework for all adult screening tests, diagnostic tools, programmes of study and qualifications. Learners are assessed for levels of literacy from Entry Level 1 to Level 2. Level 2 is broadly equivalent to a higher grade GCSE (A*-C).'

(a) Southend-on-Sea

	Overall literacy 16 to 65-year-olds	
	Percentage	Number
All entry level or below	11	11,070
Level 1	43	41,400
Level 2 or above	46	44,410
	100	85,920

Source:
For population figures: Census 01 Skills for Life survey, 2003

(b) Essex

	Overall literacy 16 to 65-year-olds	
	Percentage	Number
All entry level or below	10	105,600
Level 1	41	414,700
Level 2 or above	49	490,900
	100	1,011,200

Source:
For population figures: Census 01 Skills for Life survey, 2003

(c) Hertfordshire

	Overall literacy 16 to 65 year olds	
	Percentage	Number
All entry level or below	7	42,750
Level 1	43	281,800
Level 2 or above	50	330,900
	100	655,450

Source:
For population figures: Census 01 Skills for Life survey, 2003

(d) London

	All entry level or below		Level 1 16 to 65-year-olds		Overall Literacy Level 2 or above	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Barking and Dagenham	19,340	19	47,690	47	33,800	34
Barnet	20,670	10	83,250	41	99,720	49
Bexley	8,695	6	71,530	52	57,550	42
Brent	34,400	19	62,360	35	82,950	46
Bromley	20,500	11	60,000	32	105,500	57
Camden	9,210	7	47,490	35	78,960	58
City of London	215	4	1,560	30	3,495	66
Croydon	27,500	13	96,410	45	90,290	42
Ealing	26,980	13	86,730	42	91,420	45
Enfield	26,500	15	75,510	43	74,310	42
Greenwich	22,380	16	61,070	44	54,950	40
Hackney	24,520	18	46,430	34	64,410	48
Hammersmith and Fulham	7,515	6	43,100	36	68,440	57
Haringey	26,620	18	49,230	33	73,470	49
Harrow	17,440	13	53,390	40	63,680	47
Havering	12,730	9	61,330	44	65,670	47
Hillingdon	22,870	15	55,600	36	76,080	49
Hounslow	21,400	15	58,430	41	63,380	44
Islington	9,395	8	48,720	40	64,290	53
Kensington and Chelsea	5,620	5	34,920	31	71,580	64
Kingston upon Thames	8,940	9	31,320	32	57,090	59
Lambeth	22,200	12	70,250	37	95,940	51
Lewisham	25,440	15	60,160	36	81,900	49
Merton	11,870	9	51,700	41	63,190	50
Newham	59,900	38	44,170	28	53,330	34
Redbridge	23,750	16	63,720	42	65,550	43
Richmond upon Thames	8,990	8	31,210	27	74,420	65
Southwark	30,740	19	57,010	34	77,500	47

(d) London

	Overall Literacy					
	All entry level or below		*Level 1*		*Level 2 or above*	
	16 to 65-year-olds					
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
Sutton	14,100	12	39,350	34	61,880	54
Tower Hamlets	24,240	18	48,300	37	58,680	45
Waltham Forest	22,690	16	66,510	46	55,920	39
Wandsworth	10,860	6	58,730	31	118,000	63
Westminster	12,290	10	41,060	32	75,440	59
London	925,975	19	1,640,600	34	2,204,970	46

(e) England

	Overall Literacy 16 to 65-year-olds	
	Percentage	*Number (million)*
All Entry level or below	16	5.2
Level 1	40	12.6
Level 2 or above	44	14.1
	100	31.9

Source:

For population figures: Census 01 Skills for Life survey, 2003

A copy of the survey report is in the House of Commons Library and on the DfES website: www.dfes.gov.uk

Oral Hygiene (Children)

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if the Government will fund the provision of toothbrushes and toothpaste to Sure Start nurseries in deprived areas; [34234]

(2) if the Government will support the Stop-the-Rot campaign to encourage nurseries to help prevent tooth decay in small children. [34237]

Beverley Hughes: Many Sure Start settings offer a diverse range of activities to improve oral health in very young children, for example, by issuing free toothbrushes and toothpaste packs to families, free information leaflets and advice sessions. This is in addition to the Department of Health's pilot scheme 'Brushing for Life' where Health Visitors are giving free packs containing a tube of fluoride toothpaste, toothbrushes and a leaflet on oral hygiene to families with children aged eight and 18 months living in areas with the highest level of tooth decay and in areas served by a Sure Start Local Programme where fluoride is not added to the water supply.

The pilot scheme has been the subject of a positive evaluation and, when the pilot concludes, primary care trusts wishing to participate in the scheme will be able to order packs through the NHS purchasing and supply authority's catalogue.

The Stop-the-Rot scheme and associated website was publicised in the November edition of Sure Start News which is a regular newsletter e-mailed to all Sure Start settings and other early years providers.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to encourage primary school children to brush their teeth at lunchtime. [34235]

Jacqui Smith: Promoting oral hygiene in children is a responsibility for the Department of Health, with whom we liaise and seek advice from in health matters. The Department of Health has not recommended that it is necessary for primary schools to encourage all pupils to clean their teeth at lunch.

Middle Schools

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which local education authorities operate a middle school system; how many middle schools there are; and which of these are for children aged nine to 13 years. [34604]

Jacqui Smith: As at January 2005 there were 24 local authorities in England that had a total of 367 middle schools, 235 of which were for children aged 9 to 13. The table lists the 24 local authorities and details of numbers of schools for each.

Maintained primary, middle and secondary schools: number of schools—January 2005—local authorities with middle schools

			Maintained primary, middle and secondary schools		
		Number of primary and secondary schools	*Number of middle schools1*	*of which: middle schools 9–13 1*	*Total number of schools*
820	Bedfordshire	163	40	40	203
873	Cambridgeshire	232	1	1	233
835	Dorset	158	16	16	174
310	Harrow	47	19	0	66
919	Hertfordshire	492	6	6	498
921	Isle of Wight	51	16	16	67
886	Kent	575	3	3	578
382	Kirklees	177	7	5	184
855	Leicestershire	270	10	0	280
826	Milton Keynes	82	17	0	99
391	Newcastle upon Tyne	83	6	4	89
926	Norfolk	388	49	0	437
392	North Tyneside	67	4	4	71
815	North Yorkshire	374	2	0	376
928	Northamptonshire	310	2	2	312
929	Northumberland	156	44	44	200
836	Poole	29	9	1	38

Maintained primary, middle and secondary schools: number of schools—January 2005—local authorities with middle schools

		Number of primary and secondary schools	Maintained primary, middle and secondary schools Number of middle schools1	of which: middle schools 9–13 1	Total number of schools
933	Somerset	254	9	9	263
860	Staffordshire	363	14	14	377
935	Suffolk	292	40	40	332
938	West Sussex	268	14	0	282
865	Wiltshire	245	3	2	248
868	Windsor and Maidenhead	55	4	4	59
885	Worcestershire	217	32	24	249

[1] School types derived from returns made by schools to the Department in the Annual Schools' Census.

Source:
Annual Schools' Census

New Deal

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what incentives are offered for people *(a)* to attend and *(b)* to complete the New Deal's Gateway to Learning scheme. [24419]

Margaret Hodge: I have been asked to reply.

When participants on new deal for young people (NDYP) and new deal 25 plus (ND25 plus) join the new deal, they enter a 'Gateway' period, lasting up to four months, in which a personal adviser works with them to improve their job prospects. At the outset, personal advisers consider whether it is appropriate to refer participants for a formal basic skills assessment and if a need is identified, participants can be referred to relevant provision aimed at addressing this.

The new deal for young people is mandatory for all 18–24 year olds who have been claiming jobseeker's allowance (JSA) for 6 months. New deal 25 plus is mandatory for people aged 25 and over claiming JSA for 18 months or 18 out of the last 21 months. During their time on the Gateway, participants continue receiving the same rate of benefit they were receiving prior to joining the Gateway.

Subsequent weekly Gateway interviews focus on moving people into work. Part of this process is the Gateway to Work course. Jobseeker's allowance (JSA) regulations state that it is mandatory for all NDYP customers, who are still unemployed by week four of the Gateway, to attend the two-week Gateway to Work course. ND25 plus customers can be required to attend the course if it is considered they will benefit from attendance. The two week course is designed to improve a person's employability and enhance their prospects of moving into full-time employment and off jobseekers allowance (JSA).

NDYP participants who do not secure a job before the end of the four month Gateway period must then enter one of the four NDYP Options: the Subsidised Employment Option; the Full Time Education and Training Option; the Voluntary Sector Option or the Environment Task Force Option, all of which are aimed at helping people into work and off JSA. ND25 plus participants must enter an Intensive Activity Period which can combine work experience, work-focused training and help with motivation and job search, to help people into employment and off benefit.

Popular Schools Expansion Programme

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many applications have been made under the popular schools expansion programme; and how many *(a)* have been (i) approved and (ii) rejected and *(b)* remain under consideration; [32311]

(2) what the total budget is for the popular schools expansion programme; and how much has been spent to date. [32312]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 28 November]:* The number of applications submitted to the Department for funding under the expansion of successful and popular school programme is set out in the following table:

	Number
Withdrawn	1
Under consideration	8
Rejected	6
Approved	7
Total applications	22

As the successful and popular schools is demand led, no separate budget has been allocated for this programme. Funding arrangements for the seven successful applications are being finalised.

Since the introduction of local decision making in September 1999 there have been, separate to this programme, over 450 approvals of proposals for primary and secondary school expansions.

Primary School Training Courses

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many users of the online application service for primary school training courses have reported that they have not been able to *(a)* contact the helpline, *(b)* submit applications online and *(c)* give references online; and what allowance will be made for applicants who have missed the deadline as a consequence of operational problems with the service; [34805]

(2) what the duration is of the contract with the Graduate Teacher Training Registry for the online application service for primary school teachers; what the value of the contract is; whether there are penalty clauses in the contract relating to the system being unavailable; and how many companies tendered for the contract to provide the online application system; [34806]

(3) what discussions she has had with the Graduate Teacher Training Registry about the online application system for those seeking to train as primary school teachers; [34808]

(4) if she will make a statement on the effectiveness of the online application system provided by the Graduate Teacher Training Registry for primary school training courses. [34813]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* The Graduate Teacher Training Registry (GTTR) contracts directly with initial teacher training institutions. There is no contract between GTTR and TDA for the online application service for primary school teachers. The application service is funded by payments from these member institutions and from applicant fees.

My Department and the Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) are aware of the recent difficulties that have been experienced at GTTR. The TDA has been in regular contact with the registry. It is satisfied that GTTR is now taking all the action it should to remedy the problems experienced earlier.

There were some initial difficulties when processing applications while the GTTR were bedding in a new IT system. These difficulties have now been resolved and measures have been established to ensure applications reach institutions as soon as possible. The server that handles the on-line applications is now running smoothly. GTTR is not experiencing any new operational issues at this stage, and the backlog is now being cleared. The great majority of applications are submitted on-line and the remaining paper applications are being turned around within five working days. It is not possible to say how many individual users experienced problems as multiple attempts may have been made by the same people to make contact, submit applications and give references.

GTTR will be providing additional help-line and technical support to enable applicants to submit their forms to meet a new deadline for primary applications, which has been extended by three days to midnight on 4 December. The extension will help applicants who would otherwise have needed to submit their applications by Thursday 1 December.

Private Members Bills

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to her answer of 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 393W, on private Members' Bills, whether the information was collected at any time; and if she will make a statement. [33881]

Jacqui Smith: As far as I am aware, the information has never been collected.

Reading

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many reading recovery teachers are employed in schools in England *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by local education authority; and how many schools are involved. [34744]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Information on reading recovery can be found on the Institute of Education website at the following address: http://ioewebserver.ioe.ac.uk/ioe/cms/get.asp?cid=9263.

School Budgets (Ribble Valley)

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in Ribble Valley are expected to have a budget deficit in the 2005–06 financial year. [34067]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not yet available. The Department is due to collect the section 52 outturn data relating to the 2005–06 financial year from October 2006.

School Care (Disabled Children)

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much money has been spent on the provision of extended school care for children with disabilities in each year since 1997 in *(a)* West Yorkshire, *(b)* Wakefield district and *(c)* Normanton constituency; and how much has been allocated in these areas in each of the next three years. [34540]

Jacqui Smith: My Department does not collect this information.

School Finance

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what funding has been allocated to *(a)* school sixth forms and *(b)* 16 to 19 further education for (i) 2005–06, (ii) 2006–07 and (iii) 2007–08 in relation to (A) Level 1, (B) Level 2, (C) Level 3 and (D) Level 4 qualifications; [33346]

(2) what funding has been allocated to 16 to 19 further education in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07 and *(c)* 2007–08 in (i) sixth form colleges, (ii) general further education and tertiary colleges and (iii) other colleges for (A) Level 1, (B) Level 2, (C) Level 3 and (D) Level 4 qualifications. [33347]

Bill Rammell: My Department allocates funds for post-16 education in school 6th forms and further education colleges to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) which is the planning and funding body for post-16 education and training in England.

For school 6th forms the LSC allocated £1.6 billion in 2005/06 to local authorities in England. A precise breakdown by level of qualification is not available but it is estimated that 90 per cent. of provision is at Level 3. Allocations for 2006/07 and 2007/08 have not yet been made.

For Further Education the LSC distributes funds regionally for each academic year. LSC Regions and local offices allocate funds to providers based on locally-agreed provider development plans, which are designed to reflect Government policy, priorities and targets. These funds are allocated in blocks to reflect activity supporting '16–18' and '19+' learners. There is considerable local flexibility to move funds around within the region each year and so it is not possible to

say at this stage how those funds will eventually be used to support learning at each 'Level'. However, information (from the Individualised Learner Record') shows that for the most recently completed academic year, 2004/05, '16–18' funds were used in the following way:

Use of Further Education funds 2004/05

	sub level 2	*Level 2*	*Level 3*	*Level 4 +*	£ *Total*
GFEC	28,127,000	26,625,000	47,896,000	1,336,000	103,984,000
Sixth Form Colleges	529,781,000	486,687,000	805,083,000	23,933,000	1,845,484,000
Other FE providers[1]	29,360,000	66,150,000	441,719,000	3,982,000	541,211,000
Total	587,268,000	579,462,000	1,294,698,000	29,251,000	2,490,679,000

[1] Includes Specialist Colleges and other providers of FE provision

Minimum standards of learner success (based on achievement and retention) for colleges and work based learning providers.

Education maintenance allowances designed to encourage young people to stay in learning by offering up to £30 per week payments for remaining at school or college.Payments and bonuses are stopped for absenteeism.

Adult Learning Grant (ALG) which is payable on the basis of satisfactory attendance at a course of learning, with the allowance being withdrawn if people do not attend.

School Location

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many primary age pupils are obliged to travel more than three miles to school; and how many did so in the school year before key stage 1 and 2 classes were limited to 30. [34130]

Jacqui Smith: The information available has been provided in the following table.

Number of pupils residing more than three miles[1] from the primary[2] school they attend—England

	Number and percentage
2002	
Number	124,439
Percentage	3.6
2005	
Number	135,533
Percentage	4.0

[1] Distances calculated are straight line.
[2] Includes middle deemed primary schools.
Source:
Annual School Census

It is not possible to address the second part of the question because information of this type has only been available from the Annual School Census since 2002.

School Non-attenders

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 127W, on school non-attenders, what mechanisms are in place to ensure that *(a)* 16 to 19 year olds and *(b)* adults on publicly funded courses do not absent themselves from those courses. [31257]

Bill Rammell: Attendance in learning over the age of 16 is voluntary. However our aim is that all young people should stay in learning up to age 19, and continue in learning throughout life, to secure the skills that they, and the economy, need. Participation and attendance in post-16 education and training depends on the quality, relevance, effectiveness and perceived value of the provision and outcomes for each learner alongside sound information, advice, guidance and pastoral care.

Improved retention and attainment is underpinned by general funding principles and individual incentives and sanctions-to earn free funding for leavers, an institution must ensure that they both complete the course and achieve their qualification aims. Among the incentives and sanctions are:

School Toilets

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) why the regulations governing school toilets in day and residential schools are different; [34822]

(2) what work the Department's School Building and Design Unit has undertaken to review the regulations governing toilets in day schools; [34825]

(3) what plans she has to review the regulations governing the design and maintenance of day school toilets to take account of her plans for extended schools. [34826]

Jacqui Smith: The Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 recognise the different needs of pupils in day and residential schools. A greater provision is required in the latter because washroom facilities must be located near to sleeping accommodation, with easy access, in addition to the facilities required convenient to teaching accommodation. Some of the daytime provision may count towards that required for boarders if it is in an appropriate location and offers good access to residential pupils.

The regulations do not specify the number of toilets that should be provided for staff and visitors, but do state that they should be separate from those provided for pupils. However, the Department's design team is producing new design guidance for extended schools. This does say that additional facilities may be needed to cope with a wider range of adult and child users, and gives the example of additional adult toilets being needed in a primary school. This should be published early in 2006. A review of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 has not been undertaken and is not currently planned.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the impact of the level of toilet provision in schools on the implementation of her policy on encouraging children to drink water. [34870]

Jacqui Smith: The requirements for toilet provision in schools are set out in the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999. A review of these requirements has not been undertaken and is not currently planned.

Schools Commissioner

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many staff will be employed by the Schools Commissioner; and what the Commissioner's annual budget will be. [35144]

Jacqui Smith: The Schools Commissioner will be a senior civil servant within the Department for Education and Skills. We envisage that the Schools Commissioner will be supported by existing DfES staff engaged in work connected with the Commissioner's areas of responsibility. The costs of the Commissioner will be met from existing DfES running cost and programme resources.

Science

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to encourage more students to study science at advanced level. [33943]

Jacqui Smith: The Government 10-year Science and Innovation Investment Framework outlines our plans to increase the number of young people choosing to study science, engineering and technology at A-level. We are taking this forward by improving teaching and learning through all school phases by:

introducing a new programme of study for science at key stage 4, leading to new GCSEs. The new programme maintains the breadth, depth and challenge of the current curriculum, while catering for a wide range of students' interests and aptitudes which will ensure that the science taught in schools inspires learners to pursue further study;

reviewing science at key stage 3, especially in relation to the new science programme at key stage 4;

providing innovative and exciting continuing professional development for teachers and technicians through the national network of Science Learning Centres;

improving teacher recruitment in science by increasing the value of the teacher training bursaries for science graduates and 'golden hellos' for new science teachers.

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* GCSE and *(b)* A level entries there were in science subjects from each specialist science school in each of the last 10 years, including years before the school acquired specialist status. [33057]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not readily available and can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Service Schools

Alison Seabeck: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions her Department has had with the Ministry of Defence on the publication of the key stage results of children of service personnel who transfer from service schools to the state sector. [34961]

Jacqui Smith: No discussions have taken place between my Department and the Ministry of Defence regarding the publication of key stage results of children of service personnel who transfer from service schools to the state sector.

Sexual Health (Sheffield)

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many NHS establishments in Sheffield declined to participate in the "Working Together to Safeguard Children" Protocols pilot on sexual health. [28652]

Mr. Byrne: I have been asked to reply.

There has not been a pilot of "Working Together to Safeguard Children" protocols in Sheffield.

Supply Teachers

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many supply teachers are on the register; and how many were on the register in each of the past five years. [34133]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not held centrally.

Schools have various ways of sourcing supply teachers depending on local conditions. They may maintain their own list, or use a local authority register or an independent agency.

Sweets

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance she has issued to schools on teachers using sweets to reward pupils' good behaviour or work. [34487]

Jacqui Smith: Our advice on whole school behaviour policy, published as part of the Secondary National Strategy tool kit for schools, does not recommend the use of sweets as a reward. It states:

> 'A more formal reward system of credits, merits and prizes can be used to recognise and congratulate all pupils when they set good examples or show improvement in their own behaviour or attendance. Letters to parents and carers and special privileges are among many particularly effective ways of demonstrating praise for good behaviour'.

Schools themselves are in the best position to choose the exact form of reward that positive behaviour merits.

Teacher Recruitment

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent assessment she has made of the impact of the local cost of living on teacher recruitment and retention. [34230]

Jacqui Smith: Recruitment and retention strategies continue to have a positive impact on the number of teachers in England, including London and the south east where cost of living and vacancy rates have always been higher. The latest published figures show a continuing decrease in the number of teachers leaving the profession, while the numbers joining is continuing to grow. In January 2005, 431,900 full-time equivalent regular teachers were employed in maintained schools in England, over 4,000 more than the same time last year.

Telecommunications Masts

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether she plans to change departmental guidance to schools on objections that schools may raise in connection with telecommunications masts. [34055]

Jacqui Smith: My Department has not issued any guidance to schools in relation to objections that schools may raise in connection with telecommunications masts. We are reviewing information on our Teachernet website about the Stewart Report, the Government response to it, and the Mobile Operators' Association advice, to see if we want to update any of this.

Water Coolers

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to audit the availability of mains-linked water coolers in schools; and if she will make a statement. [34824]

Jacqui Smith: The Department does not have any plans to audit water coolers in schools. Regulation 22 of the Education (School Premises) Regulations 1999 requires that every maintained school shall have a wholesome supply of water for domestic purposes, including a supply of drinking water. The regulation does not specify how drinking water should be provided for pupils. However, in our guidance note "Standards for School Premises" (DFEE 0029/2000), we say that those responsible should consider the pattern of demand within schools, which can be concentrated within quite short breaks.

Yellow School Buses

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent discussions she has held with the Secretary of State for Transport with regard to yellow school buses. [33880]

Jacqui Smith: The Secretary of State for Education and Skills has not held any discussions with the Secretary of State for Transport on the subject of yellow buses in recent months. However, my Department and the Department for Transport share the view that well-designed yellow bus schemes have the potential to reduce car dependency for journeys to school and the traffic congestion that results from this. We would anticipate that, subject to the will of Parliament, some local authorities might include proposals for yellow bus provision in their bids for the pathfinder schemes envisaged by the recent White Paper—Higher Standards, Better Schools for All.

WALES

Departmental Tendering Policy

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what his policy is on including *(a)* ethical and *(b)* environmental factors in tenders for services. [33344]

Mr. Hain: In June 2003 the Wales Office became a separate entity within the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) and shares their policies in line with guidance set by the EU Community law.

The Department acquires contracts in accordance with the general principles of EU Community law, which are non-discrimination, equal treatment, transparency, proportionality, and mutual recognition.

All Environment factors in contracts are considered on a case by case basis relative to the subject matter of the contract, and the requirements of EU Community law.

Freedom of Information

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many Freedom of Information applications his Department has received; how many have taken more than 20 days to process; and how many of these gave rise to complaints about the time taken. [31229]

Mr. Hain: Statistics about requests received under the Freedom of Information Act are published by the Department of Constitutional Affairs on a quarterly basis. In the first six months since January 2005 (when the Act came into force) the figures show that the Wales Office received 49 requests. 42 were answered within the 20 day deadline and four were answered within an agreed extended deadline.

The Wales Office has not received any complaints about the timeliness of responses to Freedom of Information requests.

Winter Deaths

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with his colleagues in the Cabinet and the Welsh Assembly regarding excess winter deaths of those aged over 65 years in Wales. [32086]

Mr. Hain: I regularly meet with the Assembly Ministers to discuss a range of issues such as tackling excess winter deaths of those over 65 in Wales.

The Welsh Assembly Government has policies and actions in place to reduce the impact of colder winter weather on the health of older people. For instance, it funds the Home Energy Efficiency Scheme, which provides the installation of central heating in homes, and runs the annual 'Keep Well This Winter' campaign. This campaign encourages older people to take extra measures to look after their health during the winter such as having the flu vaccination, eating properly and taking appropriate exercise, and by keeping warm and safe.

In addition, in winter 2004–05 over 464,000 households in Wales benefited from winter fuel payments of at least £200. Out of these households, 110,000 with someone aged over 80 received £300 winter fuel payment.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Airspace (Extraordinary Rendition)

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what *(a)* oral and *(b)* written representations he has made to his US counterpart on behalf of the European Union regarding

the use of EU airspace for extraordinary rendition flights of those accused of terrorist activities; and if he will make a statement. [33707]

Ian Pearson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 5 December 2005 (UIN 33818).

Burma

Mr. Binley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his policy is towards resolution RC-B6–0592/2005 of the European Parliament of 17 November on Burma; and if he will make a statement. [33401]

Ian Pearson: We agree with the European Parliament's conclusion in resolution RC-B6–0592/2005 that the UN has a vital role to play in Burma. We strongly support the UN Secretary General's efforts to promote national reconciliation and democratisation in Burma, and agree with his most recent 'good offices' report of 10 October. Human rights violations have been highlighted in successive highly critical UK co-sponsored UN resolutions on Burma, most recently at the UN General Assembly in November. These issues remain a focus for the UN Special Rapporteur for Human Rights in Burma, Professor Sergio Pinheiro, and the UN Secretary General's special envoy to Burma, Tan Sri Razali Ismail, whom we urge the State Peace and Development Council (SPDC) to allow to return to Burma.

We fully support US efforts to secure discussion of Burma by the UN Security Council. We believe that such a discussion, including covering the human rights situation, would increase the pressure on the Burmese regime to effect genuine change. It would send a powerful signal to the Burmese leadership that the UN Security Council—the body with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security—is concerned about the situation in Burma.

We believe that it is essential for the SPDC to enter into a constructive dialogue with all legitimate representative bodies, including Daw Aung San Suu Kyi and the National League for Democracy, and the ethnic groups to promote national reconciliation.

We share the European Parliament's concerns about the continuing detention of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. We have repeatedly called for her immediate release and that of all political prisoners in Burma, most recently in a statement on behalf of the European Union on 28 November.

Ethiopia/Eritrea

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are planning to take to respond to the tension between Ethiopia and Eritrea; and what action it plans to take to support the United Nations Security Council resolution imposing economic sanctions on the two nations if they do not return to the conditions of the peace plan signed in 2000. [33795]

Ian Pearson: We remain concerned at the continuing tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea over their disputed border. We continue to underline to both parties that there must be no return to war; that the decision of the Boundary Commission is final and binding, and must be implemented; and that they should engage in dialogue on all the issues that divide them.

United Nations Security Council Resolution 1640 (2005) allows Ethiopia and Eritrea 30 days to respond to the demands made of them in the resolution to withdraw troops from the border area, and for Eritrea to lift the ban on UN helicopter flights. After that period, the Security Council will consider imposing sanctions in the form of an arms embargo. We will continue to assess how an arms embargo would affect the situation, including the wider impact of an embargo, as the situation develops. We are working closely with UN and Security Council partners to find a way forward for this problem. The use of economic sanctions has not been specifically raised by Security Council members and we believe this action is unlikely to be proposed.

European Court of Human Rights

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what sanctions can be employed to ensure member states of the Council of Europe implement the judgments of the European Court of Human Rights. [33723]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: As I said in my reply to my hon. Friend the Member for Pendle (Mr. Prentice), on 14 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 642W, there are several courses of action available to the Council of Europe.

The Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers can adopt interim resolutions expressing concern with respect to the slow or non-execution of a judgment. Peer pressure is increased to encourage rapid compliance with the court's judgment. In the vast majority of cases, this is sufficient to ensure compliance.

At the request of the Committee of Ministers, the Chairman in Office can write to or hold meetings with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the respondent state.

The ultimate measure available to the Committee of Ministers is recourse to article 8 of the Council of Europe's statute: suspension of voting rights in the Committee of Ministers, or even expulsion from the organisation. But this is an extreme measure, which would prove counter-productive in most cases.

In order to strengthen the measures available, protocol 14 to the European Convention on Human Rights empowers the Committee of Ministers to bring infringement proceedings in the European Court of Human Rights against a state that refuses to abide by a judgment. We are urging all member states of the Council of Europe to ratify the protocol as soon as possible, as the UK has done, so that it can enter into force.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the member countries of the Council of Europe which are failing to comply with decisions of the European Court of Human Rights; and if he will make a statement on the UK Government's policy in respect of such failure to comply. [33725]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Council of Europe's Committee of Ministers is currently supervising the execution of judgments against 41 member states of the Council of Europe. They are:

Albania,
Andorra,
Austria,
Belgium,
Bulgaria,
Croatia,
Cyprus,
Czech Republic,
Denmark,
Estonia,
Finland,
France,
Georgia,
Germany,
Greece,
Hungary,
Iceland,
Ireland,
Italy,
Latvia,
Liechtenstein,
Lithuania,
Luxembourg,
Malta,
Moldova,
The Netherlands,
Poland,
Portugal,
Romania,
Russia,
San Marino,
Serbia and Montenegro,
Slovakia,
Slovenia,
Spain,
Sweden,
Switzerland,
the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia,
Turkey,
Ukraine and
the United Kingdom.

Responsibility for supervising the execution of judgments lies with the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe, and the UK works through the Committee of Ministers (where the UK is represented) to encourage full implementation of the court's judgments.

Former Residence (Cape Town)

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) whether the former residence of the British high commissioner in Cape Town is for sale; [34935]

(2) what the open market value is of the former residence of the British high commissioner at Upper Hillwood Road, Bishopscourt, Cape Town; [34991]

(3) what the total cost was of the repair and refurbishment of the Cape Town residence of the British high commissioner after the fire in 1999; and what proportion of the cost was met by *(a)* the high commission, *(b)* the Government and *(c)* third parties. [34992]

Ian Pearson: The Cape Town Residence of the British high commissioner is not in the sales programme. The open market value of the property when it was last valued in June 2005 was £1.57 million (Rand 19 million). The final account value for repair and refurnishing the Residence after the 1999 fire amounted to some £700,000. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office successfully claimed against third parties involved, receiving some £530,000 in compensation.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what his Department's rules are for the sale of former residences of British high commissioners overseas; and if he will make a statement. [34993]

Ian Pearson: I refer the hon. Member to the discussion of estate issues in the Government's response to the Foreign Affairs Committee report on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Report 2003-04 (Cm 6415), which is available in the Library of the House. Where properties are under-performing or unsuitable, selling and reinvesting is part of normal estate business.

Morocco-Spain Tunnel

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what funding is being provided by the EU to build a tunnel between Morocco and Spain; and if he will make a statement. [35300]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: No EU funding has been allocated to this project.

UK Overseas Posts (Disabled Access)

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the cost of providing access for disabled people to all UK overseas posts. [34373]

Ian Pearson: Information in the form requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. In all new Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) building projects, provision is made in the overall budget to ensure full accessibility to people with disabilities, both members of the public and FCO staff. In major refurbishment of existing buildings, improvements to access are made whenever possible, and provision made in the overall budget.

In addition, overseas posts are aware of their responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act Part III and have been instructed to review disabled access, make information about accessibility available and, where possible, make improvements. Where access is limited, posts seek alternative ways of providing accessible services.

West Papua

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to satisfy himself of the appropriate use of British-made arms equipment in West Papua; and if he will end the granting of licences for arms exports to Indonesia. [34176]

Ian Pearson: We follow up any credible allegations that British supplied military equipment has been used for human rights abuses. All export licence applications, including those for Indonesia, are rigorously assessed on a case by case basis against the Consolidated EU and National Arms Export Licensing Criteria taking account of the circumstances prevailing at the time.

World Trade Organisation

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what role he will play in the World Trade Organisations talks in Hong Kong. [33888]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary will not attend the World Trade Organisation Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong (13–18 December). He will be at the European Council in Brussels on 15 and 16 December.

The UK delegation at Hong Kong will be led by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Alan Johnson), whose Department leads on trade issues within the Government. He will be accompanied by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Margaret Beckett), my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn) and my hon. Friend the Minister for Trade (Ian Pearson). Representatives from a number of Select Committees of the House, will be part of the UK delegation. The Confederation of British Industry, the Trades Union Congress and development non governmental organisations will also be represented.

Zirconium Silicate (Iran)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when his Department became aware that the Bulgarian authorities at the beginning of September had intercepted a truck travelling from the UK to Iran containing zirconium silicate; when other United Kingdom authorities were alerted to this event; what the subsequent involvement of his Department in the investigation was; and if he will make a statement. [34699]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The truck was stopped on 31 August by the Bulgarian authorities. This was reported in the Bulgarian press on 2 September. Our embassy in Sofia informed the relevant authorities in London on 7 September. We arranged for the carrying out of necessary checks and confirmed on 28 October that the cargo was legitimate. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office therefore had no further involvement.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Damages

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list the 10 largest amounts of damages paid out by her Department in the last year for which figures are available, indicating in each case the nature of the claim. [27726]

Bridget Prentice: The 10 largest amounts of damages paid out by the Department during the financial year ended 31 March 2005 are included in the following table.

Reason for payment	*Type of payment*	*Date*	*Value (£)*
Court Service was alleged to have maladministered a case in which these costs arose—delay in payments from CFO, interest for delay, cost of solicitors to pursue the matter	Costs	14 September 2004	18,910.00
Maladministration of claim—weak arguments and adjourned hearings—led to additional loss/costs. Court lost Judge's notebook	Compensation	26 May 2004	15,922.71
Court failed to serve interim 3rd party debt order which led to successful maladministration order	Compensation and costs	8 July 2004	9,664.08
Strick liability arising out an accident in a lift which was properly maintained	Injury compensation	9 November 2004	9,644.00
Costs arose as a result of pursuing an appeal on behalf of clients. Failure to serve notice into court meant wrong courses of action taken	Compensation (fees)	20 May 2004	7,905.35
Worcester Combined Court Centre made errors in handling the case which resulted in the order	Wasted costs order	11 February 2005	7,413.21
Alleged poor investment decisions. Would not agree on inherent risk in the market. Payment is to dispose of potential litigation and costs	Special payment for the ex-sultan of Zanzibar due to loss of interest	16 March 2005	6,786.73
Delay in appeal being heard. Court did not get transcripts in time for the hearing. Appeal order was delayed	Costs	17 December 2004	6,323.84
The Department disputed some of the solicitors costs arising in this case	Compensation for wrongful imprisonment	24 June 2004	6,071.57
The caseworker failed to keep the Inland Revenue informed of the position regarding the administration of the estate	Liability for interest and penalties—late payment of CGT	4 March 2005	4,552.38

Departmental Estate

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what *(a)* land and *(b)* property her Department (i) owns and (ii) rents in each constituency; and if she will make a statement. [33254]

Ms Harman: My Department has:

No land owned freehold.

One property owned freehold. This is Gwydyr House, Whitehall, London which is occupied by the Wales Office.

This is in the Cities of London and Westminster Boro Constituency.

No land rented leasehold.

The following properties rented leasehold (by constituency):

Cities of London and Westminster Boro Constituency

4 Abbey Orchard Street, London SW1P

Clive House, 70 Petty France, London SW1H

Dover House, Whitehall, London SW1A

30 Millbank, London SW1P

Millbank Tower, London SW1P

Selbourne House, 54 Victoria Street, London SW1E

Southside, 105 Victoria Street, London SW1E

Steel House, 11 Tothill Street, London SW1

50 Queen Anne's Gate, London SW1H

Holborn and St. Pancras Constituency

81 Chancery Lane, London WC2

Conquest House, Theobolds Road, London WC1N

Islington North Constituency

Archway Tower, Junction Road, London N19

Newcastle-upon-Tyne Central Boro Constituency

Gateshead Interchange Centre, West Street NE8

Bristol West Boro Constituency

Tower House, Fairfax Street, Bristol BS1

Bristol North West Boro Constituency

Burghill Road, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol

Cardiff South and Penarth Boro Constituency

Discovery House, Scott Harbour, Cardiff CF10 4PJ

Manchester Central Boro Constituency

Sunlight House, Quay Street, Manchester M60

Leeds Central Boro Constituency

West Riding House, Albion Street, Leeds LS1

City House, New Station Street, Leeds LS1

Edinburgh North and Leith Burgh Constituency

50 Frederick Street, Edinburgh

Licensing Applications (Good Practice Guide)

Mrs. May: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will place in the Library a copy of the good practice guidance published by the Magistrates' Association and the Justices' Clerks Society in 1999 on the demand/needs test for licensing applications. [34503]

James Purnell: I have been asked to reply.

I am arranging for a copy of the 2001 updated version of the Justices' Clerks' Society good practice guide to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses. This guidance relates to the Licensing Act 1964 which was repealed on 24 November 2005.

Public Defender Service

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will publish the report commissioned by her Department into the public defender service; and if she will make a statement. [35083]

Bridget Prentice: Independent academic research has been carried out into the public defender service and the report of their findings will be published in the new year.

Race Equality Impact Assessments

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many race equality impact assessments her Department had completed in the period *(a)* April 2004 to March 2005 and *(b)* April 2005 to November 2005; and how many assessments in each period resulted in a change of policy. [32822]

Bridget Prentice: The Department Affairs completed 11 race equality impact assessments between April 2004 and March 2005 and two race equality impact assessments from April 2005 to date. No changes to policy were identified as being needed. A list detailing the policies that were assessed for race equality impact during the specified periods are listed at follows.

Parliamentary question: Mr. Keith Vaz (Leicester East)—race equality impact assessments

1. How many race equality impact assessments (REIAs) has your department completed between April 2004 and March 2005?

Number of REIAs completed—11

Which policies have you assessed the race equality impact for during this period? (Please include all regulatory impact assessments that have included race equality impact assessments.)

Policy name

1. Civil Legal Aid—final combined regulatory and race impact assessment (March 2005)
2. A single civil court?—partial RIA (February 2005)
3. Civil court fees—final RIA (November 2004)
4. Inquiries Act—final RIA (November 2004)
5. Increasing diversity in the judiciary—partial combined regulatory and race impact assessment (October 2004)
6. Variation of periodical payments—final RIA (September 2004)
7. A choice of paths: better options to manage over-indebtedness and multiple debt—partial RIA (July 2004)
8. Simpler conditional fee arrangements—partial RIA (June 2004)
9. Mental Capacity Act—final RIA (June 2004)
10. Criminal Defence Service Bill—partial RIA (May 2004)
11. Proposals for changes to publicly funded immigration and asylum work—partial regulatory and race impact assessment (March 2004)

What changes to policies have been made as a result of conducting REIAs?

Policy changes made—none made

2. How many race equality impact assessments (REIAs) has your department completed between April 2005 to date.

Number of REIAs completed—2

Which policies have you assessed the race equality impact for during this period? (Please include all regulatory impact assessments that have included race equality impact assessments.)

Policy name

1. Telephone hearings in civil proceedings July 2005
2. Makaton sign in courts October 2005

What changes to policies have been made as a result of conducting REIAs?

Policy changes made—none made

Sick Leave

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many of her Department's employees who are within one year of the official retirement age are on extended sick leave. [32587]

Bridget Prentice: The Department currently has one employee currently on extended sick leave who is also within one year of normal retirement age. The Department is committed to managing all sickness absence promptly and effectively, including absences of those near to normal retirement age, and to putting in place the recommendations of the recently published "Managing Sickness Absence in the Public Sector" to ensure that all such absence management is in line with current guidance and best practice.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Corporacion Fischel

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) whether during the period in which the Commonwealth Development Corporation had a shareholding in Corporacion Fischel Corporacion Fischel entered into an agreement with the Finnish company Instrumentarium to supply medical equipment to Costa Rica. [35298]

(2) whether the company O. Fischel R. was a controlled subsidiary of Corporacion Fischel during the period in which the Commonwealth Development Corporation had a shareholding in Corporacion Fischel. [35299]

Hilary Benn: Corporacion Fischel did not enter into an agreement with Instrumentarium during the period in which the Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC) had a shareholding in Corporacion Fischel.

The CDC is aware of two companies called O. Fischel R: one Costa Rican; the other Panamanian. The Costa Rican company was a controlled subsidiary of Corporacion Fischel, in which the CDC had a shareholding. The Panamanian company had no connection with Corporacion Fischel.

Departmental Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many staff in his Department have been relocated into London and the South East in each of the last five years for which records are available. [31758]

Mr. Thomas: This information is not held centrally. DFID has two headquarters offices in London and in East Kilbride, and offices in some 67 locations overseas. It is normal for a number of UK based staff to transfer between offices each year, mainly between headquarters and overseas. We do not hold a central record of these postings. We have not however, transferred any jobs into our London headquarters. Our relocation plans are in keeping with Government policy with 85 posts being relocated to our office in East Kilbride over the periods 2004–05 and 2005–06.

HIV/AIDS

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what action he is taking to ensure that International Monetary Fund conditions allow increases in spending of money provided by the IMF on health in countries fighting HIV/AIDS. [34783]

Mr. Thomas: DFID is working with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and other donors to improve the predictability of aid flows, the effectiveness of IMF signalling, and countries own expenditure management capacity. This will ensure that countries are better able to plan for increased spending in health and other key sectors identified in their Poverty Reduction Strategies, while maintaining the fiscal sustainability and macroeconomic stability which are essential to long term growth and poverty reduction.

DFID has supported a series of High Level Meetings on the health related Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) over the past 18 months. These meetings have brought together senior representatives of Ministries of Health and Finance from developing countries, donors and international organisations including the World Bank and the IMF. The meetings have looked to develop solutions to the systematic barriers to faster progress in realising the MDGs.

The IMF's focus is appropriately, on maintaining fiscal sustainability and overall macroeconomic stability, as an essential underpinning to planned Government programmes and economic growth. Within these objectives, DFID has worked with the IMF on the issue of creating 'fiscal space'—that is increasing the financial scope for countries to expand their allocations to provide critical services such as health and HIV/AIDS services. The IMF has led much of this work.

The UK has also worked with the IMF to improve its role in 'signalling' and donor co-ordination. The unpredictability of future aid flows from donors is a significant constraint on countries' ability to plan future spending, creating uncertainty about both overall budgets, and about the availability of resources to finance individual programmes, including in the health sector. The IMF has a role to play in supporting countries' own budget processes, and in working with donors to improve the predictability of their aid.

The UK is pushing for greater predictability and less volatility of aid and longer-term financial commitments. This would provide confidence to Ministries of Finance to establish more ambitious financial frameworks and take on the long term recurrent costs associated with, for example, scaling up comprehensive HIV/responses. Malawi is a good example where the IMF has worked effectively with the Ministry of Finance to support the implementation of an ambitious emergency human resource programme for health.

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department has taken over the last 12 months to ensure a long-term supply of affordable paediatric drugs for HIV in developing countries; what discussions he has had with the pharmaceutical industry on this; and if he will make a statement. [35204]

Mr. Thomas: The UK Government, led by DFID, has done a great deal of work to increase access to medicines for people in developing countries, including for children.

In 2004 we published the UK Government's policy and plans on increasing access to medicines, which focused on: support to developing countries to build health services; support to countries to understand and appropriately use the flexibilities contained in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) agreement that governs intellectual property rights; new work to increase investment in research and development (R and D) for diseases affecting developing countries; and direct engagement with the pharmaceutical industry to increase access. In DFID's 2004 HIV and AIDS Treatment and Care Policy, we made a commitment to focus on the needs of children, women and the poor.

In March of this year we published jointly with the Department of Health (DH) and Department for Trade and Industry (DTI) a 'good practice' framework, building on good practice in the pharmaceutical industry and the work of the World Health Organisation, the (WHO) and others to set out recommended actions companies could take around pricing, Research and Development investments and how they work in developing countries, to help increase access to medicines. The framework had clear recommendations around the importance of ensuring medicines, including ARVs, were available in appropriate paediatric formulations. In the context of this work, DFID has convened a series of meetings with the industry, at which this issue has been addressed.

The UK also played a key role in the 30 August 2003 decision by the WTO TRIPS Council to allow developing countries with no pharmaceutical industry of their own to import copies of patented medicines under compulsory licence in accordance with the provisions of the decision. This historic decision will help developing countries to negotiate with drug producers, and help to maintain access to cheaper copies, including for paediatric formulations where they exist.

The UK has also taken a lead internationally to support more research into treatments and vaccines for diseases affecting developing countries, including for children. In the UK's AIDS strategy "Taking Action" (2004) the UK committed to increase our support for research into: microbicides; treatments and new technologies for the poor, women and young people including children; and the social, economic and cultural impact of AIDS.

DFID continues to support Product Development Public Private Partnerships (PDPs) for the development of HIV vaccines. DFID has also funded research on the appropriate use of existing medicines in developing country settings including, clinical trials demonstrating the efficacy of co-trimoxazole prophylaxis in reducing mortality among children, and co-funding trials with the Medical Research Council (MRC) accelerating the development and evaluation of ARV treatment protocols that are simple to use, but remain safe, effective and relevant to the needs of people with HIV and AIDS, including women and children, in resource poor settings.

More does need to be done to ensure a long-term supply of affordable paediatric drugs for the treatment of HIV and AIDS in developing countries. We will therefore continue our work with the pharmaceutical industry, to support appropriate use of TRIPS and to increase R and D investment, and work to ensure that children are able to access the drugs they need in the formulations they need.

Montserrat

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans his Department has to re-house residents displaced by the volcanic activity in the south of the island of Montserrat. [33676]

Mr. Thomas: Between 1997 and 2001, DFID funded over 1,000 housing units in Montserrat for displaced residents. Further housing assistance, agreed with the Government of Montserrat (GoM) in October 2001, focused on provision of 200 serviced residential lots, sheltered housing for the elderly and mentally ill, a self-build materials grant scheme for poorer households, and refurbishment of temporary housing. Additional support, including the preparation of serviced lots and the construction of 60 houses, is being funded by the European Union.

Most displaced residents, who remained on the island, now have satisfactory accommodation. However, some still live in sub-standard conditions; and inadequate access to permanent housing is cited as one of the major factors deterring displaced Montserratians overseas from returning.

DFID officials held talks in Montserrat in November about the outstanding needs, especially improving housing for the most vulnerable and those still living in shelters. We will be reviewing our assistance in the light of those discussions.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what measures have been taken to reduce the impact of future eruptions from the Soufriere Hills volcano on development plans in Montserrat. [33677]

Mr. Thomas: Volcanic activity on Montserrat is monitored on a day to day basis by the staff of the Montserrat Volcano Observatory, which is run under contract by the British Geological Survey. Their reports are analysed at regular intervals by a Scientific Advisory Committee. The resulting information and advice is conveyed to the Governor and the Montserrat Government, as well as to residents, visitors and other interested groups. It is fully taken into account in all

development plans. The most obvious outcome has been the focusing of development activities in the 'safe zone' in the north of the island.

Turks and Caicos Islands

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to control the environmental impact of the tourist developments occurring on the Turks and Caicos islands. [33758]

Mr. Thomas: The responsibility for such issues rests with the Turks and Caicos Island authorities. Between 2001 and March 2005, however, we funded an Environmental Adviser to the Protected Areas Department of the Turks and Caicos Islands Government. His responsibilities included provision of advice on tourism development control and the formulation of policies relating specifically to development activities within protected areas. The Turks and Caicos Islands graduated from the need for UK development assistance in March of this year.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Absenteeism

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he is taking to reduce absenteeism in his Department. [24668]

Mrs. McGuire: The Department has taken a range of steps in line with the recommendations in the report from the Ministerial Task Force for Health, Safety and Productivity, "Managing Sickness Absence in the Public Sector", which was published in November 2004. These include:

The policies for dealing with sickness absence were revised and re-launched earlier this year;

Progress in reducing the levels of absence feature strongly in management discussions about performance;

A new IT system was introduced which provides managers with quicker and better data about absence levels, and action being taken;

Through use of the HSE's stress management standards, the Department is addressing the causes of stress;

A pilot is being run to test whether being more flexible in giving time off at short notice reduces the level of sickness absence;

We are exploring the scope for using incentives to reward good attendance.

Air Miles

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many air miles were accrued by ministerial travel in 2004–05, broken down by Minister; how many were *(a)* foregone and *(b)* donated to charity, broken down by charity; and whether air miles accrued by officials were required to be (i) foregone and (ii) given to charity. [17325]

Mrs. McGuire: Ministerial travel is conducted in accordance with the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers. I can confirm that no air miles were accrued, foregone or donated to charity through ministerial travel by this department in 2004–2005.

The Department's Travel and Subsistence Guidance is clear that any air miles accrued by officials should be used solely against future business travel wherever possible. However the vast majority of our business travel is booked through a third- party contract and no air miles are accrued through this service.

Benefit Claimants (Medical Examination)

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what factors underlay his decision to propose changes to the system of medical examination for benefit claimants; and if he will make a statement. [29335]

Mrs. McGuire: A range of proposals are still under consideration to ensure that the process of assessment provides the most appropriate outcome for benefit claimants.

Details of our proposals for welfare reform will be published in the forthcoming Green Paper.

Child Support

Jo Swinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the number of Child Support Agency cases which are being handled where the non-resident parent has yet to be assessed because their employer is being traced. [21106]

Mr. Plaskitt: The ability to trace an employer does not in itself prevent a calculation or assessment from being made. This is because, in terms of calculating maintenance payments, the onus is on the non-resident parent to provide the Agency with verification of earnings.

Where this does not happen, a default maintenance decision (for new scheme cases) or an interim maintenance assessment (for old scheme cases) may be imposed. If the non-resident parent does not comply in paying this, the Agency will attempt to trace the employer so that a Deduction from Earnings Order can be considered.

We do not currently have management information which records the volume of such trace work undertaken.

In the event that the Agency is unable to verify earnings or trace an employer, the default maintenance decision or interim maintenance assessment will remain in effect and the Agency will consider alternative methods for enforcing the maintenance owed.

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list departmental projects conducted by consultants in each year since 2000; what the cost was in each case; and what the total cost of employing consultants was in each year. [29094]

Margaret Hodge: Information on departmental projects conducted by consultants in each year since 2000 and the costs in each case is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate costs.

The total cost of employing consultants in 2000–01 is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate costs.

The total cost of employing consultants in each year for the remaining years is as follows.

£ million

	Management consultancy	*IT consultancy*
2001–02	23.79	70.67
2002–03	47.57	93.47
2003–04	223.35	83.37
2004–05	98.64	69.73

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps his Department takes to ensure that consultancies do not claim excessive expenses while working for the Department and its agencies. [29095]

Margaret Hodge: Expenses claims for consultants engaged by the Department are actively managed and are based upon the same arrangements as those of civil servants.

Consultants/Special Advisers

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* consultants and *(b)* special advisers were employed by his Department in each year since 1997; what the cost of each was in each year; and if he will make a statement. [27409]

Margaret Hodge: Consultants are not employed by this Department but are engaged under contractual arrangements. We are unable to provide an answer to how many consultants were engaged by this Department in each year since 1997 without incurring disproportionate cost.

The cost to the Department of consultants engaged in each year is given in the table. Please note DWP was formed in June 2001, therefore there is no expenditure for this Department prior to this date.

£ million

Description	*2001-02*	*2002-03*	*2003-04*	*2004-05*
Management consultancy	23.79	47.57	223.35	98.64
IT consultancy	70.67	93.47	83.37	69.73

Since 2003, the Government have published on an annual basis the names and overall cost of special advisers and the number in each pay band. For the most recent information I refer the hon. Member to the statement made by my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister on Thursday 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, 158–62WS.

Information on the numbers of special advisers prior to 2003 was provided at regular intervals and this information will be available in the Library of the House.

Correspondence

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, of 22 September 2005, reference POS (7) 10476/0058, which was acknowledged on 11 October 2005. [32463]

Margaret Hodge: Matthew Nicholas, the Acting Director for External Relations and Communications replied to the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood on the 28 November 2005 on behalf of the chief executive for Jobcentre Plus, Leslie Strathie.

Data Protection

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many enforcement notices have been served on his Department by the Information Commissioner in connection with the Data Protection Act 1998 since it came into force. [20342]

Mrs. McGuire: No enforcement notices have been served on the Department.

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions which individual is responsible for developing and implementing his Department's Skills Development Plan. [23915]

Mrs. McGuire: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend, the former Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster on 2 November, *Official Report*, column 1074W.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many people are employed by his Department *(a)* at each of its sites and *(b)* by each (i) agency and (ii) directorate of his Department at each of its sites along the Fylde coast; [19191]

(2) how many jobs are planned to be lost from his Department along the Fylde coast; and which *(a)* agencies and *(b)* sites these job losses will affect. [19192]

Mrs. McGuire: The number of people employed on the Fylde coast by agency and corporate centre directorates by site is shown in the following table.

Business and work force plans continue to be developed across the Department. At this time information on any planned job losses on the Fylde coast is not available.

Site	*Town*	*Agency/Unit*	*Staff*	
			Headcount	*Full-time equivalent*
Fleetwood Road North	Blackpool	Jobcentre Plus	18	15
Queen Street	Blackpool	Jobcentre Plus	62	57
Marton Mere	Blackpool	Jobcentre Plus	333	310
Mexford House	Blackpool	The Pension Service	252	241
National Savings Buildings	Blackpool	Jobcentre Plus	27	24
Norcross	Blackpool	Disability and Carers Service	786	725
Norcross	Blackpool	Finance Directorate	884	831
Norcross	Blackpool	Human Resources	202	182
Norcross	Blackpool	Programme and Systems Delivery	9	8
Norcross	Blackpool	Debt Management	86	80
Norcross	Blackpool	Jobcentre Plus	32	30
Norcross	Blackpool	The Pension Service	3	3

Site	Town	Agency/Unit	Staff: Headcount	Staff: Full-time equivalent
Peel Park	Blackpool	Communications	34	33
Peel Park	Blackpool	Finance	17	17
Peel Park	Blackpool	Human Resources	4	4
Peel Park	Blackpool	Programme and Systems Delivery	98	94
Peel Park	Blackpool	The Pension Service	47	46
Tydesley Road	Blackpool	Jobcentre Plus	51	48
Wardreck Hill	Blackpool	Disability and Carers Service	2,476	2,189
		Debt Management	60	57
Government Buildings	Lytham St. Annes	Disability and Carers Service	31	31
Government Buildings	Lytham St. Annes	Child Support Agency	357	295
Government Buildings	Lytham St. Annes	Finance Directorate	34	33
Government Buildings	Lytham St. Annes	Human Resources	8	8
Government Buildings	Lytham St. Annes	Information Division	10	9
Government Buildings	Lytham St. Annes	Programme and Systems Delivery	72	68
Government Buildings	Lytham St. Annes	Work, Welfare and Equality Group	18	17
Government Buildings	Lytham St. Annes	Jobcentre Plus	572	545
Government Buildings	Lytham St. Annes	The Pension Service	93	91
Westmorland House	Lytham St. Annes	Jobcentre Plus	38	37
Beacon Road	Poulton Le Fylde	Disability and Carers Service	91	75

Notes:
1. Figures are point in time at 31 August 2005.
2. Temporary staff are included.
3. Full-time equivalent expresses part-time hours as a proportion of full-time hours.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what training in *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy is offered to employees of his Department. [21124]

Mrs. McGuire: The Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) makes a number of learning resources available to meet the work-related literacy and numeracy needs of its staff. These resources address specific business needs such as effective briefing and written communication with customers and are provided either as face-to-face courses or as blended learning solutions. All staff have a Personal Development Plan which is reviewed twice yearly with their manager and any development needs, including literacy and numeracy needs, are identified and addressed.

In addition, DWP has entered into a partnership with its main trade union, the Public and Commercial Services Union (PCS), to address the basic literacy and numeracy needs of its staff. Since March 2004 this has been the main focus of activity of the union learning representative (ULR) network that has been established within DWP.

ULRs encourage staff to assess their skills and support them to address any learning need they identify through a local college or Learndirect. The DWP is committed to help staff by providing any necessary time off to attend learning designed to bring their skills up to level 2 of the national qualifications framework.

The PCS has made provision for staff at our offices in Newcastle and Leeds to access learning to level 2 at their workplace. This type of internal provision is likely to increase as more staff assess their basic skills using an online diagnostic tool that will be available to them in the new year.

DNA Bioscience

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions which contracts of his Department and its agencies are being bid for by DNA Bioscience; and if he will make a statement. [30568]

Margaret Hodge: No contracts of DWP or its agencies are being bid for by DNA Bioscience.

Gershon Review

Mr. Francois: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what progress has been made, in terms of *(a)* headcount reductions and *(b)* cost savings, in achieving the efficiency objectives set for the Department by the Gershon review. [21292]

Mrs. McGuire: Progress was reported in Budget 2005 and in the departmental annual reports. Further progress will be reported in the autumn performance reports and at aggregate level in the pre-Budget report.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many full-time equivalent employee reductions there have been in his Department as a result of the Gershon review; what cost savings relating to IT projects were achieved; what value of efficiency savings *(a)* were achieved in 2004–05 and *(b)* are expected to be achieved in 2005–06; and if he will make a statement. [24333]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 3 November 2005]:* Staffing within the Department at the end of September 2005 was 116,417 full-time equivalents, an overall reduction in headcount of 14,215. In order to meet the efficiency challenge, the Department has implemented business change programmes and projects that are enabled by changes to our IT systems. These programmes and projects have provided savings of around £150 million for 2004–05. The Department has an efficiency target for 2007–08 but no intermediate target for 2005–06.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much has been claimed in incapacity benefit in Milton Keynes since 2000. [20827]

Mrs. McGuire: The available information is in the table.

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Incapacity benefit paid in Milton Keynes

		£ million
	Nominal terms	*Real terms (2005–06 prices)*
2000–01	15	18
2001–02	16	18
2002–03	17	18
2003–04	17	18
2004–05	17	18

Notes:
1. The Milton Keynes expenditure is the sum of the expenditure in Milton Keynes South West and North East Milton Keynes constituencies.
2. Expenditure is rounded to the nearest £ million.
3. Benefit expenditure and case load information is published on the internet at: www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd4/expenditure.asp.

Source:
Department for Work and Pensions, Information Directorate 5 per cent. sample Department for Work and Pensions, Benefit expenditure tables.

Edward Miliband: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many incapacity benefit claimants there are in Doncaster, North; how many claimants there were in each year since 1984; and what proportion of the working age population this represented in each year. [29336]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is not available in the format requested. A breakdown of figures by parliamentary constituency is not available prior to 1997. Working-age population estimates are not available by parliamentary constituency. Figures broken down by local authorities are available from 1995 together with working-age population estimates.

The available information is in the tables.

Incapacity benefit and severe disability allowance claimants in the Doncaster, North parliamentary constituency

	Number of claimants
May 1997	7,600
May 1998	7,100
May 1999	6,600
May 2000	6,100
May 2001	6,300
May 2002	6,200
May 2003	6,100
May 2004	6,000
May 2005	5,600

Source:
DWP Information Directorate, five per cent. samples from 1995 to 1999 and Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data thereafter.

Incapacity benefit and severe disability allowance claimants in the Doncaster metropolitan borough council area and as a percentage of the working-age population of the borough

	Number of claimants	*Percentage*
May 1995	24,100	13.8
May 1996	24,500	14.1
May 1997	23,500	13.5
May 1998	21,800	12.6
May 1999	20,300	11.8
May 2000	19,500	11.3
May 2001	19,900	11.6
May 2002	19,600	11.3
May 2003	19,300	11.1
May 2004	19,100	10.9
May 2005	18,300	10.4

Notes:
1. The figures for 1995 to 1997 have been produced using the 5 per cent. sample data and have been rated up proportionally using the Great Britain WPLS 100 per cent. IB/SDA totals.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. 'Claimant' figures include all incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disability allowance (including IB credits only cases).
4. The population estimates used for the local authority are relevant to the dates shown above.

Source:
DWP Information Directorate, five per cent. samples from 1997 to 1999 and Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) 100 per cent. data thereafter. ONS population estimates.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many claimants of incapacity benefit were medically examined in each year since 1997 [29337]

(2) how many applicants for incapacity benefit *(a)* were medically examined as part of their claim and *(b)* received benefit in each year since 1997. [29338]

Mrs. McGuire: The total number of claimants of incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance who were medically examined is shown in the following table.

	Exams
September 1999 to August 2000	397,284
September 2000 to August 2001	402,302
September 2001 to August 2002	509,831
September 2002 to August 2003	524,894
September 2003 to August 2004	467,256
September 2004 to August 2005	483,084

Notes:
1. Figures for the number of medical examinations performed are only available for complete years from September 1999.
2. Volumes include severe disablement allowance cases which cannot be identified separately.

Initial awards of benefit are normally made on the basis of medical evidence from a GP rather than a medical examination. Medical examinations take place at a later date, according to the person's condition and likely duration of incapacity, to decide whether or not they remain incapable of work and whether or not benefit can continue. Income support may continue for other reasons after a person has been found to be no longer incapable of work.

Information about how many of the people examined were receiving benefits is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Independent Living Taskforce

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when the Independent Living Task Force will be established; whether it will include expertise on the provision of housing for disabled people in its membership; what its terms of reference will be; and if he will make a statement. [29027]

Mrs. McGuire: The Prime Minister's strategy unit report "Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People", a copy of which is in the Library, recommended a Task Force should be established by December 2005. We are now planning to establish a Task Force for independent living by spring 2006. This has enabled us to focus immediate activity on setting up

an office for disability issues and selecting an advisory group to inform the development of a national forum for organisations of disabled people. The membership and terms of reference of the Task Force will be announced when it is established.

Jobcentre Plus

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what provision is made for *(a)* notification and *(b)* consultation before the closure of a Jobcentre Plus office. [28694]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 6 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question regarding notification and consultation on office closures. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

All office closures are currently managed as part of the rollout of the new Jobcentre Plus service. Consultation with local stakeholders is an integral part of the planning process for rollout. Local managers are required to share their early plans for new service delivery arrangements with a wide range of local stakeholders and the communication will describe any proposals for site closures. The manager replies to comments and views received during the consultation. We try to respond positively to alternative proposals, but we do have to operate an efficient service and I am sure you will understand that we are not always in a position to meet everyone's expectations.

Jobcentre Plus managers write again to inform stakeholders of firm plans, explaining if necessary why they may have changed from those initially circulated and will also explain the reasons behind the changes. Where a site is planned for closure, the manager will write again around six weeks before the site closes to remind stakeholders of the new arrangements being put in place.

The consultation process is a mandatory one that takes place before implementation activity progresses into a detailed design phase. The consultation exercise should be seen in the context of broader ongoing communications with stakeholders as part of our routine business.

I hope this is helpful.

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many jobcentres including Jobcentre Plus offices, have *(a)* opened, *(b)* closed and *(c)* been relocated in each of the past three years. [28703]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 6 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question regarding the number of offices we have opened, closed and re-located in the past three years. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

The information on the number of offices that have opened and closed each year can be found in the table below.

Operational year (April to March)

	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005[1]
Offices opened	157	223	115	112
Offices closed	[2]105		130	59

[1] From 1 April 2005 to 4 November 2005.
[2] A combined closure figure is given for 2002–03 and 2003–04 as it is not possible to accurately separate figures for these years.
[3] From 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2004.

The number of offices opened includes those sites we have refurbished and sites we have built from new or newly acquired. We do not have figures for the number of offices being relocated because we are closing Jobcentres and social security offices and introducing an entirely new Jobcentre Plus service supported by new processes and modern IT and telephony. Where a site is closing, our staff are likely to relocate to the new offices and contact centres. This has occurred in Daventry where the former Jobcentre has closed to be replaced by a Jobcentre Plus office in a new location.

The total number of offices opened to date to support delivery of the new service is 663. This total includes the original 56 Pathfinder offices opened in the autumn of 2001. Rollout will be substantially complete next summer. When complete, customers will have access to our service in around 1,000 locations. Around 880 of these will be Jobcentre Plus sites. The remainder will be locations where we deliver services in conjunction with partner organisations. This flexible approach to service delivery might, for example, include locating a touch-screen Jobpoint and telephone in Local Authority premises, or delivering information and advisory services through third party premises.

I hope this is helpful.

Mr. Anthony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what consultation with customers was undertaken prior to implementation of Jobcentre Plus's Customer Management System. [30355]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to my hon. Friend.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 6 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning what consultation with customers was undertaken prior to the implementation of the Customer Management System (CMS). This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

It may be helpful if I explain that CMS is an Information Technology system used by staff in our contact centres to gather information from customers when they make a claim to benefit. To make a claim the customer calls a contact centre where CMS is used. Contact centre staff ask the customer a series of questions to assess their potential eligibility to Jobcentre Plus benefits and then arrange to call the customer back at a mutually agreed time, to assist in completion of a claim form. This removes the need for customers to complete a lengthy claim form and instead allows the customer to provide information by telephone.

Jobcentre Plus did not consult with customers about the introduction of CMS as it is an IT system used by staff. However, we do conduct an annual customer satisfaction survey which canvasses the views of our customers across the full range of our services, including the channels we provide. The surveys give us a clear picture of how our services are perceived by customers, including how well delivered they are, and how easy or difficult they are to access. These provide baseline information on customer expectations and satisfaction and also provide the basis for tracking, over time, how customer perceptions of the service change as Jobcentre Plus implementation is rolled out, helping to drive the process of performance improvement.

The results of the 2004 survey were published on 30th September 2004. The 2005 survey commenced in September. In addition, representatives from Jobcentre Plus routinely speak to groups and have meetings with stakeholders in order to better understand customer perception.

I hope this is helpful.

Mr. Anthony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the total cost has been of staff re-training associated with the implementation of Jobcentre Plus's Customer Management System to date; [30356]

(2) what the total cost has been of consultancy fees associated with the implementation of Jobcentre Plus's Customer Management System to date; [30357]

(3) what the cost has been of the Information Technology element of Jobcentre Plus's Customer Management System to date; and what the predicted final cost is; [30451]

(4) what the overall cost has been of implementing Jobcentre Plus's Customer Management System to date. [30452]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 6 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions about the costs of implementing the Customer Management System (CMS). This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

The total cost of re-training staff associated with the implementation of Jobcentre Plus' CMS is £2.7m up to 31 October 2005.

You asked about the total consultancy fees associated with the implementation of CMS. To date the Agency has spent £2.5m on consultancy support for this specific project.

The IT element of CMS has incurred a cost to date of £205m against a predicted total cost of £289m for development and live running through to 2012/2013.

As at 31 October 2005, the overall total cost of implementing CMS is £243.6m.

I trust this information is helpful.

Mr. Anthony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost is of an *(a)* in-bound and *(b)* out-bound call to contact centres using Jobcentre Plus's Customer Management System; and what the cost of each was prior to the implementation of that system. [30358]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to my hon. Friend.

Letter from Leslie Strathie, dated 6 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning the cost of calls to contact centres using the Customer Management System (CMS). This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

It may be helpful if I first explain that to make a claim, the customer calls a contact centre. Contact centre staff ask the customer a series of questions to assess their potential eligibility to Jobcentre Plus benefits and then arrange to call the customer back at a mutually agreed time, to assist in completion of a claim form. This removes the need for customers to complete a lengthy claim form and instead allows the customer to provide information by telephone.

With regard to the cost of the initial call to all Jobcentre Plus contact centres, a local BT rate 0845 number is available. Customers using mobile telephones or other landline networks are charged at their network provider's normal tariff for 0845 calls. Customers can also use "warm phones" in local Jobcentre Plus offices to make this call free of charge.

The average length of the inbound call is 11 minutes. BT call prices for 0845 numbers vary dependant on the time the customer calls, and can range from 1p to 3p per minute. Based on this information the cost of the inbound call would be on average between 11p and 33p.

In order to gather all the information for the customers claim to benefit, the outbound call is made from the contact centre to the customer. There is no cost to the customer for this call.

Prior to implementation of CMS, customers wishing to claim social security benefits were required to either telephone a local office or visit an office to request a claim form. It would then be necessary for them to complete the form and return it by post or take it back to an office. If there was any need for further information, forms would be sent back to customers, who would then need to re-submit them, prior to their entitlement to benefit being established. Individual customer circumstances vary, as did standards of self-completion of forms and, therefore, the cost of this process for individual customers would vary greatly. It would particularly depend on the extent to which further information was needed following initial submission of claim forms.

I hope this is helpful.

Learndirect

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many cases have been referred by Jobcentre Plus to *(a)* learndirect and *(b)* private sector organisations for the supply of equivalent training; what proportion of each have (i) returned to employment and (ii) re-registered for jobseeker's allowance within 12 months; and what evaluation he has conducted of the effectiveness of learndirect courses in fitting people for employment. [33429]

Margaret Hodge: The information requested in not available.

At local level, Jobcentre Plus works in partnership with many different intermediary organisations that can help jobless people move from welfare to work and independence. University for Industry (Ufi) learndirect is one such organisation. Ufi learner surveys show that over 80 per cent. of jobseekers feel their learndirect learning will lead to a new job.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much his Department spent on in-house training on *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy (i) in total and (ii) per head in each year since 2002. [23359]

Mrs. McGuire: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many employees in his Department requested training to improve their *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills in each year since 2002. [23401]

Mrs. McGuire: To date some 1,435 staff have taken screening tests offered by Union Learning Representatives—ULRs. The information available does not allow us to identify how many of those screened requested help to improve their literacy or numeracy skills in particular.

Not all staff will approach ULRs for support. Learning needs may be identified during the course of the bi-annual review, for all staff, of their Personal

Development Plan with their line manager. Figures are not available for the number of staff requesting help with their literacy or numeracy skills via this route.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he is taking to promote uptake of the national tests in adult literacy and numeracy among employees in his Department. [23444]

Mrs. McGuire: The promotion of basic literacy and numeracy skills for all staff is integral to the Department for Work and Pensions' Skills Development Plan.

The plan assumes that 10 per cent. of staff who choose to address a literacy or numeracy need will go on to take the national tests and subsequently demonstrate their competency to level 2 on the national qualifications framework.

Since March 2004, basic literacy and numeracy has been the main focus of activity of the union learning representative (ULR) network that has been established within the Department. ULRs encourage staff to assess their skills and support them to address any learning need. Part of this process is to make staff aware of the availability of the national tests.

Where provision has been made for staff to access learning to level 2 at their workplace, the national tests are also available.

Lyons Review

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in his Department *(a)* were relocated in 2004–05 and *(b)* are expected to be relocated in 2005–06 as a result of the Lyons review of public sector relocation; to which locations they have been relocated; and if he will make a statement. [24640]

Mrs. McGuire: *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* The basis of the department's relocation strategy resulting from the Lyons review is to relocate posts rather than people. Information on the number of posts relocated, and expected to be relocated, and the locations concerned is contained in the following tables.

Posts relocated between 1 June 2003 and 31 December 2004

Number of posts	*Location*
212	Blackpool
304	Cwmbran
420	Liverpool
551	Wrexham
303	Newcastle
145	Pembroke Dock
40	Dundee
68	Sheffield
198	Makerfield
77	Bradford

Total: 2318

Posts relocated between 1 January 2005 and 31 October 2005

Number of Posts	*Location*
26	Annesley, Grimsby, Liverpool and Peterlee
225	Pembroke Dock
249	Blackpool
74	Plymouth, Bristol and Edinburgh
80	Taunton

Posts relocated between 1 January 2005 and 31 October 2005

Number of Posts	*Location*
31	Halifax
40	Bridgend
61	Derby

Total: 786

Further planned relocations from 1 November 2005 to 31 March 2006[1]

Number of posts	*Location*
15	Blackpool
74	Taunton
73	Pembroke Dock
261	Derby
108	Bridgend
54	Dundee
25	Sheffield/Leeds

Total: 610

[1] As with all plans, these are subject to change.

Milton Keynes

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much funding was allocated by his Department to Milton Keynes for *(a)* capital projects and *(b)* revenue funding in each of the last five years. [23501]

Hemel Hempstead

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much funding was allocated by his Department to Hemel Hempstead constituency for *(a)* capital projects and *(b)* revenue funding in each of the last eight years. [25739]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is not available to the requested level of detail. I refer the right hon. Member to the answer provided by the Financial Secretary to the Treasury on 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 988W.

National Minimum Wage

Ms Katy Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many employees in his Department were affected by the rise in the national minimum wage on 1 October. [28971]

Mrs. McGuire: There are no staff within the Department for Work and Pensions who were affected by the rise in the national minimum wage.

New Deal

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the introduction of quarterly interviews for lone parents of children over 14 years under the New Deal programme; how many departmental staff are involved in these interviews; and what funding has been allocated. [26817]

Margaret Hodge: Quarterly work focused interviews (WFIs) were introduced in October 2005 for lone parents claiming income support (IS) with a youngest

child aged at least 14. For lone parents who remain on IS until their youngest child reaches 16, this will involve a series of up to eight work focused interviews over a two year period, which is six more than under previous arrangements. The interviews aim to help as many lone parents as possible move into work, or closer to the labour market, before their child reaches 16 by providing information, advice and guidance on work opportunities and the range of help on offer.

We estimate a total expenditure of approximately £4.3 million on this initiative during 2005–06, £0.7 million of which represents the cost of an anticipated increased participation in new deal for lone parents resulting from the WFIs.

Potentially all Jobcentre Plus lone parent advisers could be involved in delivering these quarterly work focussed interviews, but funding for the initiative is based on a planning assumption of the equivalent of an additional 65 full-time staff for the period October 2005 to March 2006 or 130 for a full year.

Note:

1. Expenditure and staffing figures are planning assumptions based on anticipated volumes of lone parents participating in quarterly WFIs.

Office for Disability Issues

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when the Office for Disability Issues will be established; and if he will make a statement. [29026]

Mrs. McGuire: The Office for Disability Issues was launched on 1 December. The Office for Disability Issues will provide a new cross-Government focus on disability, helping to ensure that Government Departments work together more effectively to deliver improved outcomes for disabled people.

Older Workers

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps his Department is taking to encourage employers to employ older workers. [32757]

Margaret Hodge: We are encouraging employers to employ older workers through our Age Positive campaign and with leading business organisations through the Be Ready guidance campaign.

Age Positive is using publications, websites, exhibitions and awards initiatives to promote good practice standards. Employers large and small are supporting Age Positive as Champions, sharing their positive employment practices, and reporting the business benefits of employing older workers as part of an age-diverse workforce-higher retention rates, lower absenteeism, increased motivation, greater flexibility and a wider pool of skills.

We are working with leading business organisations in the Age Partnership Group to develop and promote the 'Be Ready' national guidance campaign. We launched the campaign in May this year, with a newsletter mailed to 1.4 million employers offering a range of guidance materials. Next spring we will be offering a further wave of guidance products. We will continue working alongside our business partners, such as ACAS, to help employers to prepare for age legislation, which is due in October 2006.

The Be Ready and Age Positive websites, featuring practical information and employer case studies, are attracting over 100,000 visits per month.

Pension Reform

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the latest report of the Pensions Commission; and if he will make a statement on the Government's plans for pension reform. [33632]

Mr. Timms: The Government welcome the broad framework of the Pensions Commission's proposals and options and believe they are the right basis for the debate to come.

As far as the specific recommendations are concerned, the Government are ruling nothing in and nothing out. Ministers have asked the Pensions Commission to continue their involvement in the public debate over the next few months. The Government will work towards the publication of a White Paper in the spring which will set out their response.

Pensioners

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in *(a)* Southend, *(b)* Essex, *(c)* Hertfordshire, *(d)* Greater London and *(e)* England and Wales (i) are of pensionable age and (ii) receive a state pension; and what the equivalent figures were in (A) 1992, (B) 1996, (C) 1997, (D) 1998, (E) 2001 and (F) 2004. [33655]

Margaret Hodge: Such information as is available is in the following tables.

Southend-on-Sea local authority

	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Pensioner population	34,900	34,500	34,300	34,400	34,300	n/a
People receiving a state pension	33,500	33,300	33,600	33,400	33,300	33,200

Essex

	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Pensioner population	251,100	253,800	257,400	261,300	265,800	n/a
People receiving a state pension	244,000	246,200	249,300	253,500	257,900	261,600

Hertfordshire

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Pensioner population	179,800	180,700	181,700	183,400	184,800	n/a
People receiving a state pension	176,500	175,800	177,100	178,800	180,600	182,200

London Government office region

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Pensioner population	1,042,600	1,037,700	1,031,900	1,035,700	1,033,100	n/a
People receiving a state pension	971,600	967,500	961,000	957,100	953,600	950,200

England and Wales

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Pensioner population	9,577,600	9,623,300	9,685,100	9,785,600	9,882,100	n/a
People receiving a state pension	9,227,900	9,271,700	9,320,100	9,403,600	9,505,100	9,593,400

n/a = not available.

Notes:

1. State pension age is 60 for a woman and 65 for a man. State pension does not have to be claimed at state pension age. A person can also stop claiming it once they have claimed it.
2. A woman may not be entitled to a state pension based on her own national insurance contributions when she reaches her state pension age. She may be able to get a state pension based on her husband's contribution record but will have to wait until he starts claiming it.
3. Local authorities are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant Office for National Statistics (ONS) postcode directory.
4. The figures for March 2000 and March 2001 are based on data from the 5 per cent. samples. These figures have been adjusted to make their totals consistent with the later WPLS data. These figures are subject to a degree of sampling variation.
5. The figures for May 2002 to May 2005 are directly from the WPLS 100 per cent. data.
6. The pensioner population figures are the ONS mid-year population estimates.
7. All figures are rounded to the nearest 100.
8. The data are taken from extracts of PSCS as at 31 March and 31 May for the appropriate years.
9. The total figures for Hertfordshire and Essex are composed of the sum of the relevant local authorities shown in notes 10 and 11. Due to overlap in geographical boundaries, these figures may not include all cases within these counties.
10. The local authorities for Essex are: Basildon; Braintree; Brentwood; Castle Point; Chelmsford; Colchester; Epping Forest; Harlow; Maldon; Rochford; Tendring; Uttlesford.
11. The local authorities for Hertfordshire are: Broxbourne; Dacorum; East Hertfordshire; Hertsmere; North Hertfordshire; St Albans; Stevenage; Three Rivers; Watford; Welwyn Hatfield.
12. The pensioner population is defined as the sum of all females aged 60 or over and all males aged 65 or over.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate—Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data and 5 per cent. samples. Office for National Statistics Mid-year population estimates.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what proportion of pensioners were eligible for *(a)* housing benefit, *(b)* council tax benefit and *(c)* pension credit on the latest date for which figures are available; and what the forecasted figures are for 2050 assuming that eligibility rules remain the same. [35203]

Mr. Timms: The latest estimates of the number and proportion of pensioners entitled to the main income-related benefits relate to financial year 2002–03 (before the introduction of pension credit). Estimates for housing benefit, council tax benefit and minimum income guarantee—the predecessor to pension credit—can be found in the DWP report entitled "Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take-Up in 2002–03". Copies of the publication are available in the Library.

Estimates of the number of people entitled to pension credit will be published on 19 December 2005 and will include the first six months of pension credit. Estimates for the full year 2004–05 are expected to be published in May 2006.

The numbers entitled to income-related benefits in the future will depend on a wide range of factors including the ways Governments choose to uprate benefits. The following table shows entitlement estimates if the current uprating approaches are continued in the future.

Table 1: Indicative estimates of entitlement to income related benefits in 2050

	Entitled households (million)	Entitled individuals (individual)	Proportion of individuals over pension age entitled (percentage)
Pension credit	8.8	12.3	70
Housing benefit	2.0	2.4	15
Council tax benefit	5.1	6.8	40

Notes:

1. Entitlement estimates are subject to a wide range of uncertainty; they are rounded to the nearest 100,000 and the proportions of individuals over pension age are rounded to the nearest 5 per cent.
2. Individuals entitled include a small number of partners below state pension age.
3. The pension credit projections assume the continuation of the current uprating of the standard minimum guarantee by earnings, although the Government is not committed to this beyond 2008.

4. Estimates of the number of households and individuals eligible for pension credit, housing benefit and council tax benefit in the future are available for Great Britain. These are based on a long term version of the Department's Policy Simulation Model, which uses Family Resources Survey data for 2003–04 projected forward into the future to estimate the extent of eligibility for each pensioner household on the survey.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Beverley and Holderness received overpayments of pension credits in 2003–04; what the total sum overpaid was; and how much of this has been written off. [33456]

Mr. Timms: One person was overpaid pension credit in the Beverley and Holderness constituency during the financial year 2003–04, amounting to £126.82. Information relating to the amount written off is not available at the constituency level.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what research he has evaluated on the long-term sustainability of pension credit. [33458]

Mr. Timms: The long-term sustainability of pension credit depends on the decisions of successive Governments about the level at which it is set and the entitlement rules that apply. However, the Government have undertaken to increase the guarantee credit in line with average earnings until 2008.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in the East Riding of Yorkshire were entitled to pension credit in the most recent month for which figures are available. [33559]

Mr. Timms: The information requested is not available.

The latest available estimates of the number of pensioners entitled to the main income-related benefits relate to financial year 2002–03 and predate the introduction of pension credit. They are available on a national basis only, as estimates cannot be reliably disaggregated into lower geographies. Estimates for minimum income guarantee—the predecessor to pension credit—can be found in the DWP report entitled "Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take-Up in 2002/2003". Copies of the publication are available in the Library.

Estimates for pension credit will be published on 19 December 2005; this publication will include the first six months of pension credit. Estimates for the full year 2004–05 are expected to be published in May 2006.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners in Tamworth constituency were entitled to an income-related benefit in each year since 1997; and what proportion of pensioners claimed this benefit in each year since 1997. [29292]

Mr. Timms: The information requested is not available.

Estimates of the number of pensioners entitled to the main income-related benefits are available on a national basis only. These can be found in the DWP report series: "Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take-Up"; copies of which are held in the Library.

The following table contains the number of pensioners in receipt of pension credit introduced in October 2005.

Pension credit recipients in the parliamentary constituency of Tamworth

	Number of recipients
October 2003	2,600
October 2004	3,800
June 2005	3,900

Notes:

1. Caseloads are rounded to the nearest hundred therefore totals may not sum.
2. Pension credit (PC) replaced minimum income guarantee (MIG) on 6 October 2003. Existing MIG recipients were automatically converted onto pension credit on that date (assuming they still met the eligibility criteria)
3. Data from the Generalised Matching Service (GMS) 100 per cent. scans taken on 17 October 2003, 15 October 2004 and 10 June 2005. All figures have been rated up to give month-end estimates.
4. These figures are early estimates. Operational processing times mean that a number of claim commencements and terminations are not reflected in the figures. The final figures incorporated within the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) will take account of such cases.
5. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.

Source:

Information Directorate 100 per cent. data

Pensions

Mr. Forth: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions at what age *(a)* male and *(b)* female civil servants become eligible for the state pension. [33913]

Mr. Timms: The state pension age for all citizens is 65 for men and 60 for women born on or before 5 April 1950. However, from 2010 the state pension age for women will begin to increase and will equalise at age 65 by 2020 for all citizens.

Anne Moffat: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many female pensioners in East Lothian are in receipt of the full basic state pension. [34006]

Mr. Timms: The number of female pensioners in the East Lothian parliamentary constituency who are in receipt of a full basic state pension as at 31 March 2005 is 6,000.

Notes:

1. Data are taken from five per cent. extract of Pension Service computer system, therefore figures are subject to a degree of sampling variation. They are also adjusted to be consistent with the overall caseload from the Work and Pension Longitudinal Study.
2. The figure for the number of recipients is rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. A full basic state pension (£79.60 in 2004–05) is paid to those who fully satisfy the contribution conditions either in their own right or where applicable, on the basis of their late or former spouse's contributions.
4. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant Office for National Statistics postcode directory.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate five per cent sample.

Jim Sheridan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many female pensioners in Paisley and Renfrewshire, North are in receipt of the full basic state pension. [34311]

Mr. Timms: The number of female pensioners in the Paisley and Renfrewshire, North parliamentary constituency who are in receipt of a full basic state pension as at 31 March 2005 is 5,200.

Notes: 1. Data are taken from five per cent. extract of Pension Service computer system, therefore figures are subject to a degree of sampling variation. They are also adjusted to be consistent with the overall caseload from the Work and Pension Longitudinal Study.

2. The figure for the number of recipients is rounded to the nearest hundred.

3. A full basic state pension (£79.60 in 2004–05) is paid to those who fully satisfy the contribution conditions either in their own right or where applicable, on the basis of their late or former spouse's contributions.

4. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant Office for National Statistics postcode directory.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate five per cent. sample.

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the minimum income guarantee was for pensioners in each of the five years before it was replaced; and what the value of the pension credit has been in each year since its inception. [34491]

Mr. Timms: The information is in the tables.

1998 to 2003 Income support/minimum income guarantee

£

	Single			*Couple*		
	60–74 years	*75–79 years*	*80 years and over*	*60–74 years*	*75–79 years*	*80 years and over*
April						
1998	70.45	72.70	77.55	109.35	112.55	117.90
1999	75.00	77.30	82.25	116.60	119.85	125.30
2000	78.45	80.85	86.05	121.95	125.35	131.05
2001	92.15	92.15	92.15	140.55	140.55	140.55
2002	98.15	98.15	98.15	149.80	149.80	149.80
2003	102.10	102.10	102.10	155.80	155.80	155.80

Note:

From April 2001 the rates were levelled up (to the previous over 80/disabled level) and income support for people over 60 became 'MIG'.

Pension credit—guarantee credit

£

	Single	*Couple*
October 2003	102.10	155.80
April 2004	105.45	160.95
April 2005	109.45	167.05

Note:

Pension credit was introduced from October 2003.

Predictive Diallers

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many calls were made from call centres in his Department in 2004–05 using predictive diallers; how many such calls resulted in contact being made with the recipient without a Government agent available to talk to them; and what assessment he has made of the likely impact of Ofcom's policy on silent calls on the use of predictive diallers in departmental call centres. [28168]

Mrs. McGuire: No DWP contact centres currently use predictive diallers.

One of DWP's debt management centres did use a predictive dialling system during 2004–05. The total volume of calls made using the predictive dialling system is not available, nor are figures available for the number of 'silent calls' members of the public would have received as a result of the use of this system. This system was withdrawn from use in April 2005 in preparation for a new IT system.

Debt management have reviewed the position in light of Ofcom's policy on silent calls. A new telephony system is due for operational implementation in debt management from January 2006. Current plans are that predictive dialling will then be replaced by outbound dialling campaigns in which the system will only make an outbound call if an agent is available to take that call.

Private Members' Bills

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on what occasions since 1997 Ministers from his Department have *(a)* authorised parliamentary counsel to assist in preparing amendments to private Members' Bills on behalf of other private Members and *(b)* authorised officials to instruct parliamentary counsel to prepare amendments which were subsequently passed to private Members. [20138]

Mrs. McGuire: The information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Retread Tyres

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many vehicles for which the Department is responsible are fitted with retreaded tyres. [17983]

Mrs. McGuire: All vehicles used by departmental officials are supplied in accordance with the Departmental Procurement Policy and are fitted with new tyres.

Cars used by Ministers, the Permanent Secretary and the chief executive of Jobcentre plus are provided by the Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA). For information on the use of retread tyres on vehicles provided to the Department by the GCDA I refer the hon. Member to the letter of 11 October 2005 which he

received from the chief executive of the GCDA, reference UIN15087 & UIN15088. Copies of this letter are available in the Library.

Staff Relocations

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2479W, what plans there are to relocate staff to frontline duties between 2004–05 and 2008–09. [18860]

Mrs. McGuire: As part of the Department's plans to meet the efficiency challenge, we are increasing the number of posts that have regular, direct contact with customers by 10,000 by March 2008, The increase in posts will occur principally within Jobcentre Plus and they will be resourced through a combination of existing staff within the Department and new recruits. As at the end of September 2005, the Department had created and resourced around 4,000 new customer-facing posts.

Telephone Helplines

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many telephone calls were made to each helpline operated by the Department and its agencies in each month from April 2003 to September 2005; and how many of these calls *(a)* received an engaged tone, *(b)* were abandoned by the caller, *(c)* were handled and *(d)* had another outcome; and if he will make a statement. [24543]

Mrs. McGuire: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Video Conferencing Units

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many video conferencing units are installed in *(a)* the Department and *(b)* each agency of the Department; what percentage of offices have these facilities in each case; and what plans he has to increase the number. [14254]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is as follows:

(a) There are currently 236 video conferencing units (VC) installed across the Department, of which 214 are portable units and 22 are fixed.

(b) A breakdown by building and agency is in the table.

Business/Agency	*Number of buildings*	*Number of VCs installed*	*Number of buildings with VC unit*	*Percentage of buildings with facilities*
Corporate and Shared Services	57	74	30	53
Job Centre Plus[1]	1,564	70	52	3
The Pensions Service	69	63	31	45
The Appeals Service	33	15	12	36
Child Support Agency	146	13	10	7
Debt Management	17	1	1	6
Total	1,886	236	136	7

[1] VC figures for Disability and Carers Service are now included in the totals for Job Centre Plus, since the VC units concerned are administered together.

Some buildings are occupied by more than one business unit so may have been counted more than once. All of our business units are free to utilise the VC facilities across all sites. Some offices have more than one unit installed.

There are no current plans to increase the number of video conferencing units further across the Department.

HEALTH

Ashford and St. Peter's NHS Trust

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will assess the impact of the delay in the implementation of payment by results on the financial position of Ashford and St. Peters' NHS Trust; [28613]

(2) if she will assess the cumulative impact of the delay in implementation of payment by results for non-foundation hospitals on the aggregate financial position of NHS trusts within the Surrey and Sussex strategic health authority area. [28614]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

Blood Stocks

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the level of blood stocks available to NHS hospitals in *(a)* Southend Primary Care Trust area and *(b)* England. [20706]

Caroline Flint: The NHS Blood and Transplant Authority (NHSBT)[1] is responsible for managing blood supplies in England and North Wales.

Blood stocks are currently good and NHSBT have been meeting demand for blood from hospitals. All NHSBT stock is available to any hospital in England and North Wales. Blood stocks are continually reviewed and redistributed as necessary across the country to ensure that all orders for blood are met.

The table shows red cell stocks as at 30 November 2005.

[1] From 1 October, the National Blood Service and UK Transplant were merged to form the new organisation NHSBT.

Total red blood cell stocks

	Red cell stocks
Number of validated units	38,875
Equivalent number of days supply	6.10

In addition to NHSBT stocks, each hospital blood bank will keep an appropriate

Carbon Monoxide Poisoning

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what training is provided to ambulance personnel on identifying injury caused by carbon monoxide poisoning. [28957]

Mr. Byrne: Ambulance emergency medical technician and paramedic qualifying training includes recognition and treatment of poisoning, including reference to carbon monoxide. It is also covered by the clinical practice guidelines for use in United Kingdom ambulance services, produced by the Joint Royal Colleges Ambulance Liaison Committee.

Care Homes

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will bring forward legislation to provide security of tenure in *(a)* local authority and *(b)* other publicly funded care homes; and if she will make a statement. [29719]

Mr. Byrne: It is important for people who need and want residential care to be accommodated in appropriate settings. Homes may close for different reasons, including deregistration of poor quality homes. It is also only appropriate for a person to remain in a care home for as long as it meets their needs. It would not therefore be practicable or appropriate to give care home residents security of tenure.

We are concerned to ensure that residents' rights and welfare are protected when home closures take place or residents need to move to a new home, by ensuring care home contracts are fair and local authorities have procedures in place to ensure care home closures are handled with the minimum of disturbance.

Cheshire and Mersey Strategic Health Authority

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what opportunities will be afforded to hon. Members to influence the reconfiguration plans of Cheshire and Mersey strategic health authority. [32914]

Mr. Byrne: The Cheshire and Merseyside strategic health authority (SHA) reports that all hon. Members in the area have been sent details of the work being undertaken to enable all NHS trusts in its area to achieve foundation trust status. This includes the aims and objectives of the work it is taking forward. Arrangements are also in place for the SHA chief executive to meet with hon. members so that they have the opportunity to raise issues and discuss progress with her directly.

Chief Medical Officer

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what overseas visits the Chief Medical Officer has made in the last two years; where his interests are recorded; what meetings he has had with the Prime Minister in the last two years; and which of the chief scientific advisers to Government Departments he has met in the last 12 months. [24390]

Jane Kennedy: Details of overseas visits made by the Chief Medical Officer (CMO) for England, Sir Liam Donaldson, during the period 1 November 2003 until 31 October 2005 are shown in table 1.

His meetings with the Prime Minister in the same period and his meetings with the chief scientific advisers to Government Departments during the period 1 November 2004 until 31 October 2005 are set out in table 2. In the day-to-day progress of his work the CMO meets or hears the views of a wide range of scientists who advise Government Departments on policy and risk. These extensive contacts have not been itemised.

His interests are recorded on the Department of Health's Register of Interests, held by the Department's Senior Civil Service Unit.

Table 1

Date	*Destination*	*Event*	*CMO's role*
2003			
20–21 November	Rome	European Union (EU) CMC's meeting	UK Representative
2004			
19–23 January	Geneva	World Health Organization (WHO) Executive Board Meeting	Head of UK delegation
24 February (½ day)	Madrid	Spanish Ministry of Health: Launch of Agency for Quality	Keynote Speaker
11–12 March	Dublin	EU CMO's meeting	UK Representative
25–26 March	Dublin	Medical Director Representatives Meeting	Keynote Speaker
2–6 April	Washington, DC	Meeting of Academic Medical Centers	UK Representative
30 April	Geneva	UK bilateral accountability meeting with the World Health Organization	Head of UK delegation
11 May	Reykjavik	Sixth Futures Forum, European Meeting	Keynote Speaker
15–21 May	Geneva	World Health Assembly	Head of UK delegation
29 May to 2 June	New York	International Meeting on Obesity	Keynote Speaker
10 June	Rotterdam	200 years of Health Law Conference	Keynote Speaker
		Fact-finding visit to Erasmus Hospital, Rotterdam, addressing MRSA issues	
23–24 June	Dublin	Royal College of Surgeons Meeting	Keynote Speaker
		WHO Expert Meeting on Patient Safety	Chair
14–19 July	New York	Commonwealth Fund Meeting	Head of UK delegation
25–26 July	Poland	Council of Europe and Polish Society for Quality Conference	Keynote Speaker
6–7 September	Copenhagen	WHO European (EURO) Regional Committee Meeting	Head of UK delegation and Meeting Chair

Table 1

Date	*Destination*	*Event*	*CMO's role*
2003			
14–19 September	Shanghai	WHO Western Pacific (WPRO) Regional Committee Meeting	Head of UK delegation
		First Meeting of the World Alliance for Patient Safety (jointly organised by the Chinese Ministry and WPRO)	Chair
22 October	Amsterdam	International Society for Quality in Health Care (ISQua) Meeting	Keynote Speaker
26–29 October	Washington, DC	Commonwealth Fund Meeting	Accompanying the UK Minister
		Launch of the World Alliance for Patient Safety	Chair
16–18 November	The Hague	EU CMO's Meeting	UK Representative
24–28 November	Kuwait	WHO Eastern Mediterranean Region Patient Safety Conference	Keynote Speaker
2005			
16–20 January	Africa	WHO-organized visit to Kenya and South Africa	Head of delegation
23–25 January	Geneva	WHO Executive Board Meeting	Head of UK delegation
16–18 March	Luxembourg	EU CMO's Meeting	UK Representative
5 April	Luxembourg	EU Presidency Conference on Patient Safety	Keynote Speaker
6 April	Brussels	EU Health Subgroup Meeting	Chair
8 April	Paris	World Health Congress	Keynote Speaker
14 April	Warsaw	Council of Europe Meeting	Keynote Speaker
29 April	Geneva	WHO Expert Meeting on Infection Control and Hand Hygiene	Keynote Speaker
15–19 May	Geneva	World Health Assembly	Head of UK delegation
9–10 June	San Diego, CA	Institute for Healthcare Improvement Conference on Patient Safety	Keynote Speaker
22–25 August	East Coast, USA	Series of fact-finding hospital visits	
		Launch of the WHO Collaborating Center on Safety Solutions	Chair
		Harvard Quality Colloquium	Keynote Speaker
12–13 September	Romania	WHO European Regional Committee Meeting	Head of UK delegation
16 September	Stockholm	National Conference on Patient Safety	Keynote Speaker
26 September	Geneva	International Meeting on Drug Monitoring Centres	Keynote Speaker
6–7 October	Austria	EU, Gastein Summit	Head of Delegation
13 October	Geneva	Launch of Global Patient Safety Challenge	Keynote Speaker
29 October to 5 November	USA	Yale Conference on Chronic Diseases	Keynote Speaker Fact-finding visit
		Yale School of Public Health	Chair and Keynote Speaker
		Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality/ WHO Research Summit	Head of UK delegation
		Commonwealth Fund 2005 International Symposium	Meeting with President
		American Hospital Association Institute of Medicine	Meeting with President

The Chief Medical Officer had contact with the Prime Minister in the period 1 November 2003 until 31 October 2005 as follows:

Date	*Type of contact*	*Topic*
15 October 2005	Telephone call	Pandemic flu
20 October 2005	Meeting	Pandemic flu

The Chief Medical Officer had contact with the Chief Scientific Advisers in the period 1 November 2004 until 31 October 2005 as follows:

David Harper—Chief Scientist, Department of Health

Sir David King—Chief Scientific Adviser, Department of Trade & Industry

Debby Reynolds—Chief Veterinary Officer, Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs

Date of Meeting	*Chief Scientific Adviser*
4 October 2004	David Harper
4 October 2004	David Harper
7 October 2004	David Harper
11 October 2004	David Harper
13 October 2004	David Harper
13 October 2004	David Harper
18 October 2004	David Harper
18 October 2004	David Harper
19 October 2004	David Harper
1 November 2004	David Harper
3 November 2004	David Harper
3 November 2004	David Harper
3 November 2004	David Harper
8 November 2004	David Harper
9 November 2004	David Harper
10 November 2004	David Harper
15 November 2004	David Harper
19 November 2004	David Harper
19 November 2004	David Harper
22 November 2004	David Harper
22 November 2004	David Harper
6 December 2004	David Harper
6 December 2004	David Harper
13 December 2004	David Harper
13 December 2004	David Harper
14 December 2004	David Harper
15 December 2004	Sir David King
15 December 2004	David Harper
5 January 2005	David Harper
10 January 2005	David Harper
10 January 2005	David Harper
12 January 2005	David Harper
19 January 2005	David Harper

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Date of Meeting	Chief Scientific Adviser
21 January 2005	David Harper
31 January 2005	David Harper
31 January 2005	David Harper
2 February 2005	David Harper
2 February 2005	David Harper
7 February 2005	David Harper
14 February 2005	David Harper
15 February 2005	Debby Reynolds
22 February 2005	Sir David King
22 February 2005	David Harper
23 February 2005	David Harper
1 March 2005	David Harper
3 March 2005	David Harper
10 March 2005	David Harper
14 March 2005	David Harper
14 March 2005	Sir David King
4 April 2005	David Harper
19 April 2005	David Harper
20 April 2005	David Harper
20 April 2005	David Harper
25 April 2005	David Harper
26 April 2005	David Harper
3 May 2005	David Harper
4 May 2005	David Harper
9 May 2005	David Harper
1 June 2005	David Harper
1 June 2005	David Harper
20 June 2005	David Harper
21 June 2005	David Harper
27 June 2005	David Harper
30 June 2005	David Harper
30 June 2005	David Harper
4 July 2005	David Harper
6 July 2005	David Harper
8 July 2005	David Harper
13 July 2005	Sir David King
13 July 2005	David Harper
13 July 2005	David Harper
14 July 2005	Sir David King
18 July 2005	David Harper
18 July 2005	David Harper
19 July 2005	David Harper
26 July 2005	Sir David King
27 July 2005	Sir David King
29 July 2005	David Harper
30 August2005	David Harper
5 September 2005	David Harper
6 September 2005	Sir David King
23 September 2005	David Harper
30 September 2005	David Harper
10 October 2005	David Harper
10 October 2005	David Harper
14 October 2005	Debby Reynolds
14 October 2005	David Harper
17 October 2005	David Harper
18 October 2005	David Harper
20 October 2005	Sir David King
20 October 2005	Sir David King
21 October 2005	David Harper
21 October 2005	David Harper
24 October 2005	David Harper
28 October 2005	David Harper
28 October 2005	Debby Reynolds
Other	
24 February 2005	Dinner for Chief Scientific Advisers for all Government Departments

Children's Hospices

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much public funding children's hospices received in each of the last five years. [30388]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not collect information on the funding of children's hospices and palliative care services for children.

Children's hospice services are funded from a number of sources, including services commissioned by primary care trusts based on their assessment of children's needs and their priorities. They are best placed to make decisions on the local need for palliative care and are able to take into account the needs of individual families' and their preferences. There is no ceiling to the amount of funding which the national health service can provide.

The Department continues to encourage children's hospices to engage actively with local NHS bodies over the contribution hospices can make to the overall pattern of palliative care commissioned for children and young people in their localities.

Our manifesto pledge to increase funding for end of life care will also include children who have life-threatening or life-limiting conditions.

Contagious Diseases

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what contingency plans her Department has in place to prevent individuals who have contracted a highly contagious disease from passing that disease to others. [33321]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 1 December 2005]*: The national health service has facilities and procedures in place for caring for people with infectious diseases in ways which minimise the risk of infecting others, and a wide range of advice is available to the public on how they can avoid spreading infection. In cases of last resort, local authorities have powers in certain circumstances under infectious disease legislation to apply to a justice of the peace for orders requiring a person suffering from a specified disease to be removed to, and detained in, hospital.

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what powers her Department has to enforce the isolation in the interests of public safety of an individual who has contracted a contagious disease. [33322]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 1 December 2005]*: Powers under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 and associated regulations for the most part rest with local authorities. Local authorities have powers, in certain circumstances, to apply to a justice of the peace for orders requiring a person suffering from a specified disease to be removed to, and detained in, hospital (sections 37 and 38 of the Act and the Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 1988).

The diseases specified are, in the Act: cholera, plague, relapsing fever, smallpox, and typhus; and, in the regulations, acquired immune deficiency syndrome (with section 38 applying in a modified form); acute encephalitis; acute poliomyelitis; anthrax; diphtheria; dysentery (amoebic or bacillary); leprosy; leptospirosis;

measles; meningitis; meningococcal septicaemia (without meningitis); mumps; paratyphoid fever; rabies; rubella; scarlet fever; tuberculosis of the respiratory tract in an infectious state; typhoid fever; viral haemorrhagic fever; viral hepatitis; and whooping cough.

Dentistry

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of five year olds in Tamworth constituency have no decayed, filled or missing teeth. [29379]

Mr. Byrne: From the last national health service survey in 2003–2004, 78.8 percent., of five year-old children in the Burntwood, Lichfield and Tamworth primary care trust area were found to have no decayed, missing or filled teeth.

Departmental Legislation

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by her Department from May 1997 up to and including April 2005, broken down by Act. [27592]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 11 November 2005]:* For criminal offences created by legislation sponsored by the Department in the 2002–03 and 2003–04 sessions I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 9 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 1614–15W to the hon. Member for Winchester (Mr. Oaten). The following are criminal offences created in other legislation sponsored by the Department in the period specified.

The Health Act 1999

Section 39—evading charges payable under the new section 122C of the NHS Act 1977 or securing the inappropriate remission, reduction or repayment of any charges due under the Act

Schedule 3, paragraph 6

Regulation of Healthcare and Associated Professionals etc—the power to make Orders in relation to the regulation of Healthcare and Associated Professionals may not be exercised to create a criminal offence, except an offence punishable on summary conviction with a fine not exceeding the amount specified as level 5 on the standard scale.

The Food Standards Act 1999

Section 11(7)—improperly disclosing a trade secret by an authorised person entering premises to carry out observations

Section 11(8)—Intentionally obstructing an authorised person exercising powers of entry, taking samples or inspecting and copying records

Failing without reasonable excuse to provide such assistance as the authorised person may request

Intentionally or recklessly providing false or misleading information

Section 14—improperly disclosing a trade secret by an authorised person who has entered premises for the purposes of monitoring enforcement action.

Section 16—intentionally obstructing an authorised individual from entering relevant premises, or from taking samples, or from inspecting and copying records

Failing without reasonable excuse to meet a reasonable request for information, records or assistance

Intentionally or recklessly providing false or misleading information.

Care Standards Act 2000

Section 11(1)—Carrying on, managing or establishing an agency without registration under the Care Standards Act

Section 24—Failing to comply with conditions

Section 25—Contravening regulations[1]

Section 26—Falsely describing establishments and agencies

Section 27—Making false statements in applications

Section 28—Failing to display certificate of registration

Section 31—Offences relating to inspections by persons authorised by registration authority

Section 52—Contravening regulations[1]

Section 61—Misuse of the title "social worker" etc

Section 75—Obstructing the work of the Children's Commissioner for Wales

Section 79—Amendment of Children Act 1989[1]

Section 89—knowingly applying for, offering to do, accepting or doing any work in a care position when included on the list of adults deemed unsuitable to work with vulnerable adults

Schedule 3, paragraph 5

Offences in relation to child-minding and day care for young children

Health and Social Care Act 2001

Section 60—Power to make regulations relating to control of patient information[1]

Section 63—Extension of prescribing rights, amending section 67 of the Medicines Act 1968, inserting an offence of prescribing, directing or administering a medicinal product in contravention of a condition imposed by an order under section 58 of the Medicines Act 1968.

Human Reproductive Cloning Act 2001

Section 1—placing in a woman a human embryo which has been created otherwise than by fertilisation

Tobacco Advertising and Promotion Act 2002

Section 2—Prohibiting tobacco advertising;

Section 3—Advertising: Newspapers, periodicals etc;

Section 8—Displays

Section 9—Prohibition of free distributions

Section 10—Prohibition of sponsorship

Section 11—Brandsharing[1]

Section 15—Obstruction etc of officers

Adoption and Children Act 2002

Section 9—a power to provide for an offence in regulations[1]

Section 15—obstructing inspections, etc

Section 30—offences in relation to removal of children who are or may be placed by adoption agencies

Section 31

Section 33

Section 34

Section 35

Section 36—Restrictions on the removal of children in non-agency cases

Section 41—Breach of restrictions on removal

Section 59—Disclosure of information in relation to a person's adoption

Section 83—failing to comply with requirements in adoptions with a foreign element

Section 85

Section 93—breaching restrictions under section 92 (restrictions on arranging adoptions, etc)

Section 94—breaching restrictions on who may prepare a report re adoption

Section 95—making or receiving certain payments

Section 124—Breaching restrictions on advertising in relation to adoption (section 123)

Section 129—Inappropriate disclosure of information on the Adoption and Children Act Register

Section 132—Amendment of Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978, new section 29A, breaching of various enactments of the Adoption and Children Act 2002

Section 133—Amendment of Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978 section 50A, breaching requirements on bringing a child into the United Kingdom.

[1] Represent provision entitling the making of regulations which may create offences.

Note:

Offences created in subordinate legislation have not been listed.

Digital Hearing Aids

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in the *(a)* Adur, Arun and Worthing primary care trust area, *(b)* West Sussex and *(c)* England have been fitted with a digital hearing aid through the NHS; and what estimate she has made of the numbers remaining in each area to be switched over from analogue aids. [33108]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally. The modernising hearing aid services programme estimates that approximately 500,000 people have now been fitted with digital hearing aids.

Disabled Care

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will bring forward legislation to ensure that a national standard of care is available to all disabled people based on nationally agreed criteria for assessing individual needs and risks; and if she will make a statement. [29715]

Mr. Byrne: There are a range of different models for assessing people's needs across different client groups and in different local authorities. In taking forward the Green Paper 'Independence, Wellbeing and Choice', we will consider the extent to which needs assessment could be streamlined.

Under the Care Standards Act 2000, all care homes in England are regulated by the Commission for Social Care Inspection in accordance with statutory regulations and national minimum standards, to ensure consistency and improve the quality of life and level of protection for the most vulnerable people in society.

East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to increase the funding of the East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust; and if she will make a statement. [32143]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* The Department does not allocate funding to national health service trusts. Primary care trusts (PCTs), with their specific local knowledge and expertise, are now responsible for the commissioning of all health services and, to reflect this responsibility, funding is allocated to PCTs. Funding for NHS trusts is therefore dependant on the level of services they are able to contract with commissioning PCTs.

Significant levels of resources have been made available to the NHS. The latest round of revenue allocations to PCTs, covering the period 2006–07 and 2007–08, represents £135 billion investment in the NHS. Over the two years covered by this allocation PCTs will receive an average increase of 19.5 per cent.

Each NHS trust has a statutory duty to break-even over a three-year period. While the financial situation for 2005–06 is challenging, the trust has a financial recovery plan in place and is forecasting to break-even in the current financial year.

Expenses Claims

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether *(a)* hospital consultants, *(b)* general practitioners and *(c)* nurses are entitled to make an expense claim for their travelling costs to attend NHS hospitals; and if she will make a statement. [27983]

Mr. Byrne: The NHS Employers organisation is now responsible for maintaining and publishing pay and terms and conditions of national health service staff. The information requested can be found on their website at www.nhsemployers.org.

For consultants appointed before 2003 details of entitlements to expenses can be found in the 2002 terms and conditions handbook for Hospital Medical and Dental Staff and Doctors in Public Health and the Community, in paragraphs 277 to 308.

For consultants appointed after 2003 the entitlements are within the 2003 Consultant Contract, Schedule 21. Alternative provisions may be made locally.

Copies of both sets of terms and conditions can be found in the Library.

For those general practitioners on a general medical service contract, any payment for travelling expenses will be by agreement between the two parties concerned. There is no provision in the GMS contract relating to payment for travel expenses.

The NHS terms and conditions handbook, which applies to staff, including nurses, employed on the new Agenda for Change pay system contains information on entitlement to expenses in chapter three. A copy is also available in the Library.

Finished Consultant Episodes

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many finished consultant episodes there were in *(a)* 1994–95 and *(b)* 2004–05 where the primary diagnosis was coded as (i) F10, (ii) K70 and (iii) T51 for each strategic health authority for those aged (A) over 18, (B) those under 18, (C) those under 16 and (D) those under 14 years. [18656]

Caroline Flint: The nearest approximation to the data requested is shown in the table.

Count of finished consultant episodes (FCEs) for primary diagnosis F10, K70 or T51—broken down by age and strategic health authority. Data for all NHS hospitals in England, data years 1996–97 and 2003–04

Sum of FCEs

		1996–97				
		Age				
SHA		*Less than 14*	*14–16*	*16–18*	*Greater than 18*	*Total*
Q01	Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire SHA	60	34	22	966	1,082
Q02	Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire SHA	86	52	4	622	764
Q03	Essex SHA	47	21	3	748	819
Q04	North West London SHA	31	23	4	1,226	1,284
Q05	North Central London SHA	46	17	3	886	952
Q06	North East London SHA	47	8	5	987	1,047
Q07	South East London SHA	45	22	10	1,018	1,095
Q08	South West London SHA	66	37	2	878	983
Q09	Northumberland, Tyne and Wear SHA	132	80	34	1,649	1,895
Q10	County Durham and Tees Valley SHA	158	84	28	1,073	1,343
Q11	North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire SHA	77	43	50	968	1,138
Q12	West Yorkshire SHA	141	60	41	1,573	1,815
Q13	Cumbria and Lancashire SHA	148	80	50	2,450	2,728
Q14	Greater Manchester SHA	178	78	34	3,075	3,365
Q15	Cheshire and Merseyside SHA	211	123	60	3,647	4,041
Q16	Thames Valley SHA	38	24	13	1,014	1,089
Q17	Hampshire and Isle of Wight SHA	59	36	27	1,253	1,375
Q18	Kent and Medway SHA	69	40	12	858	979
Q19	Surrey and Sussex SHA	90	59	23	1,692	1,864
Q20	Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire SHA	93	45	21	1,449	1,608
Q21	South West Peninsula SHA	72	35	33	1,066	1,206
Q22	Dorset and Somerset SHA	37	35	14	990	1,076
Q23	South Yorkshire SHA	95	47	26	872	1,040
Q24	Trent SHA	119	61	30	2,160	2,370
Q25	Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland SHA	68	28	6	774	876
Q26	Shropshire and Staffordshire SHA	106	42	16	1,113	1,277
Q27	Birmingham and the Black Country SHA	105	61	22	2,339	2,527
Q28	West Midlands South SHA	97	63	27	1,523	1,710
Q99	Wales	12	4	3	99	118
S	Scotland	2	—	1	21	24
U	England—not otherwise specified	—	3	3	365	371
X	Foreign (including Isle of Man and Channel Islands)	1	5	1	43	50
Y	Unknown	30	17	10	1,257	1,314
Z	Northern Ireland	—	—	—	18	18
	Grand total	2,566	1,367	638	40,672	45,243

		2003–04				
		Age				
SHA		*Less than 14*	*14–16*	*16–18*	*Greater than 18*	*Total*
Q01	Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire SHA	89	52	19	2,193	2,353
Q02	Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire SHA	83	48	7	1,136	1,274
Q03	Essex SHA	40	21	8	1,234	1,303
Q04	North West London SHA	51	31	10	1,770	1,862
Q05	North Central London SHA	33	27	3	1,214	1,277
Q06	North East London SHA	56	27	7	1,505	1,595
Q07	South East London SHA	48	36	12	1,729	1,825
Q08	South West London SHA	73	73	7	1,223	1,376
Q09	Northumberland, Tyne and Wear SHA	71	41	15	2,062	2,189
Q10	County Durham and Tees Valley SHA	75	62	16	1,544	1,697
Q11	North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire SHA	153	86	31	1,644	1,914
Q12	West Yorkshire SHA	121	53	27	2,061	2,262
Q13	Cumbria and Lancashire SHA	152	81	41	2,816	3,090
Q14	Greater Manchester SHA	211	106	34	3,854	4,205
Q15	Cheshire and Merseyside SHA	205	133	49	5,368	5,755
Q16	Thames Valley SHA	78	37	11	1,253	1,379
Q17	Hampshire and Isle of Wight SHA	93	70	37	1,829	2,029
Q18	Kent and Medway SHA	103	36	18	1,029	1,186
Q19	Surrey and Sussex SHA	155	106	17	1,822	2,100
Q20	Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire SHA	94	66	27	1,795	1,982
Q21	South West Peninsula SHA	110	72	43	2,000	2,225
Q22	Dorset and Somerset SHA	46	34	12	1,016	1,108
Q23	South Yorkshire SHA	56	38	16	1,498	1,608
Q24	Trent SHA	140	79	23	3,034	3,276
Q25	Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland SHA	56	33	11	1,482	1,582
Q26	Shropshire and Staffordshire SHA	126	58	6	1,567	1,757
Q27	Birmingham and the Black Country SHA	139	83	40	2,833	3,095
Q28	West Midlands South SHA	87	58	9	1,446	1,600
Q99	Wales	10	2	—	151	163
S	Scotland	2	1	4	59	66
U	England—not otherwise specified	11	5	7	832	855
X	Foreign (including Isle of Man and Channel Islands)	2	6	4	82	94
Y	Unknown	15	13	4	555	587
Z	Northern Ireland	—	—	—	24	24
	Grand total	2,784	1,674	575	55,660	60,693

Notes:
F10—mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol
K70—alcoholic liver disease
T51(A)—toxic effect of alcohol
1. The data only cover 2003–04 because the 2004–05 data will not be ready for release before December 2005.
2. The data shown are only for 1996–97, rather than 1994–95, for two reasons: international classification of diseases (ICD) 10 codes as requested are not applicable for 1994–95 because ICD10 was only introduced in 1995–96. Attempts to back reference the codes to the ICD9 code list do not reveal a comparable data set. Secondly, strategic health authorities (SHAs) were introduced from 2002–03 and we have done a mapping exercise to apply the new boundaries back to 1996–97. Before this point, SHA breakdowns are not applicable. As such, 1996–97 has been presented as the earliest year where both diagnosis and geographical conditions can be met.

Frenchay and Southmead Hospitals

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many letters her Department has received regarding the proposed reconfiguration of Frenchay and Southmead hospitals; and how many of these supported the retention of Frenchay as a major acute hospital site. [34205]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* As at 22 November 2005, the Department had received 706 letters about the proposed reconfiguration of Frenchay and Southmead hospitals.

While the majority of letters voiced general support for the retention of services at Frenchay hospital, there were many different points of views as to how this might best be achieved.

Hospital Mergers

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the potential effect the mergers of hospitals across Liverpool and Southport and Ormskirk will have on patient choice. [32902]

Mr. Byrne: National health service trusts in Liverpool, Sefton, Southport and West Lancashire have begun formal discussions to review the configuration of trusts in the area in order to determine whether the current organisational structure is best placed to deliver the best possible services to meet the needs of patients. Cheshire and Merseyside strategic health authority advises that it has not pre-determined the outcome of the work and any conclusions will be pursued if they are demonstrably in patients' interests.

Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust

Ms Diana R. Johnson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the future capital investment programme is for the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust. [31428]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 30 November 2005]:* The trust's confirmed capital investment programme to 2009–10 is as follows:

	£ million
2005–06	30
2006–07	[1]58
2007–08	[2]59
2008–09	11
2009–10	4
Total	162

[1] Including £25 million private finance initiative.
[2] Including £35 million private finance initiative.

These cost-totals include the £75 million oncology and £45 million cardiac/elective surgical developments under way at Castle Hill hospital.

Hull Royal Infirmary

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many acts of *(a)* verbal and *(b)* physical abuse have been recorded against staff at the Hull Royal Infirmary since 1997. [32955]

Mr. Byrne: The information is shown in the table.

National health service hospital and community health services: recorded incidents, on staff, of violent attacks and assaults in the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals Trust in each specified period

		Number of reported violent incidents
RWA	Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals Trust	
	2000–01	246
	2001–02	401
	2002–03	336

Notes:
1. Covers 1 April to 31 March for the specific years.
2. This data collection was discontinued in 2003.
Source:
Survey of Violence, Accidents and Harassments in the NHS

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many beds were operational at Hull Royal infirmary in each year since 1997. [32977]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not available at hospital level.

Informal Carers

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many informal carers are registered with social services departments, broken down by local authority area. [33266]

Mr. Byrne: This information is not collected centrally.

Intensive Care Units

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many intensive care units there were in NHS hospitals in England *(a)* in 2001 and *(b)* at the latest date for which figures are available. [28279]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not collect information on the hospitals which have intensive care units.

Necrotising Fasciitis

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many people *(a)* contracted and *(b)* died of necrotising fasciitis in each year since 1997; [27990]

(2) how many *(a)* NHS staff and *(b)* patients caught necrotising fasciitis in each year since 1997. [27991]

Mr. Byrne: The information is not available in the format requested. The information available is as follows.

There are two main types of necrotising fasciitis. One type caused by group A streptococci (GAS) and the other type by a mixed infection of aerobic and anaerobic bacteria.

The Health Protection Agency (HPA) began a study of severe GAS infections through enhanced surveillance as part of a European surveillance initiative (strep-EURO) on 1 January 2003. Preliminary analyses show that in 2003 and in 2004, 5 per cent. of cases of severe GAS infections manifest as necrotising fasciitis. Overall, 37 per cent. of cases of necrotising fasciitis were reported to have died within seven days of initial diagnosis. Data on the occupations of cases have not yet been analysed.

The information in table 1 is available from hospital episode statistics (HES) data. These counts only relate to admitted in-patients and do not represent the counts of all people contracted with this condition.

Table 1. Number of finished consultant episodes and patients where the primary diagnosis—Fasciitis, not elsewhere classified (ICD-10= M72.5) in NHS hospitals in England, 1997–98 to 2003–04

	Finished consultant episodes	*Patient counts*
1997–98	316	219
1998–99	362	233
1999–2000	384	239
2000–01	502	318
2001–02	431	269
2002–03	510	298
2003–04	595	360

Notes:

1. An FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one health care provider. Please note that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.
2. Patient counts are based on the unique patient identifier is derived based on patient's date of birth, postcode, sex, local patient identifier and NHS number, using an agreed algorithm. Where data are incomplete, HESID might erroneously link episodes or fail to recognise episodes for the same patient. Care is therefore needed, especially where duplicate records persist in the data. The patient count cannot be summed across a table where patients may have episodes in more than one cell.
3. The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the hospital episode statistics (HES) dataset and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.
4. Figures are grossed for both coverage and missing/invalid clinical data, except for 2003–04, which is not yet adjusted for shortfalls.

Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics

The information in table 2 shows the number of deaths where necrotising fasciitis[1] was mentioned on the death certificate in England and Wales from 1997 to 2004[2].

Notes:

[1] Cause of death was defined using the codes below from the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) for the years 1997 to 2000, and Tenth Revision (ICD-10) from 2001 onwards, together with a search of the death certificate text to identify deaths where necrotising fasciitis was mentioned: ICD-10-M72.5 ICD-9: 729.4

[2] Figures are for deaths occurring in each calendar year.

Table 2

	Number of Deaths
1997	97
1998	103
1999	109
2000	125
2001	110
2002	112
2003	160
2004	130

Source:
Office for National Statistics

NHS Finance

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS trusts have not met the requirement to break even over a five year period. [28615]

Mr. Byrne: Ashford St. Peters' national health service trust is the only NHS trust that has not met the requirement to break even over a five-year period.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 266W on NHS Finance, how the size of the uplift will be calculated. [28693]

Mr. Byrne: The uplift will be calculated dependant on the size of the underspend and the point at which during the financial year, the underspend is declared.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 266W, on NHS Finance, when in the course of a financial year her Department typically set control totals for strategic health authorities. [28695]

Mr. Byrne: Financial plans are agreed at the start of the financial year. Control totals are set during the year where it becomes apparent that national health service organisations are unable to deliver against their financial plans.

NHS Hospital Trusts (Public Consultation)

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance she issues to NHS hospital trusts concerning the nature and duration of public consultation exercises related to proposals to reconfigure services. [29398]

Mr. Byrne: The Department has issued:

"Strengthening Accountability: Involving Patients and the Public—Policy Guidance Section 11 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001 (February 2003) and Overview and Scrutiny of Health—Guidance (July 2003)."

These advise that it is good practice for consultation to follow Cabinet Office guidelines, which state that full consultation should last for a minimum of 12 weeks. Both documents are available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/publications.

NHS Students Grant Unit

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what percentage of bursary applications to the NHS Students Grant Unit in 2005 have failed to meet the processing target of 20 working days; [29320]

(2) what percentage of inquiries to the NHS Students Grant Unit in 2005 by *(a)* telephone, *(b)* writing and *(c)* e-mail have failed to receive a response within 20 working days; [29321]

(3) what procedures the NHS Students Grant Unit has in place to monitor the response rates to *(a)* telephone, *(b)* writing and *(c)* e-mail inquiries; [29322]

(4) what the average waiting time is for telephone inquiries to the NHS Students Grants Unit. [29323]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 17 November 2005]:* The following information has been provided by the NHS Pensions Agency.

35 per cent. of applications for bursary payments in academic year 2005–06 have failed to meet the processing target of 20 working days. However, as at 16 November 2005, 94 per cent. of students have been paid.

Since the beginning of the academic year 2005–06, all written correspondence and telephone inquiries received by the Student Grants Unit has received a response within 20 working days. All e-mail inquiries have received an acknowledgement and update from the unit within 20 working days of receipt.

The unit has introduced four additional e-mail addresses that are query specific, in order to filter types of inquiry and improve response times.

The unit obtains daily and weekly reports of telephone call volumes and response rates.

The unit collates weekly reports on volumes of written correspondence and e-mail inquiries that includes the number of those cleared, within and outside of 20 working days.

There is technology in place that enables the unit to record telephone activity. From the start of the academic year 2005–06 to date, the average waiting time for telephone inquiries on hold on the student helpline number is approximately five minutes. Due to the complexity of many of the inquiries an operator spends approximately five minutes handling each call.

There are also separate dedicated telephone lines for universities who are able to contact their designated Student Grant Unit colleagues direct.

NHS Trust Finances

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what were the *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2003–04 financial positions reported for each English NHS trust; and if she will make a statement. [28386]

Mr. Byrne: A copy of the 2003–04 and 2004–05 audited financial positions for all national health service trusts is available in the Library.

NIHCE

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects the revised proposals for a rapid appraisal system for life-saving drugs by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence to be *(a)* issued for consultation and *(b)* implemented. [24139]

Jane Kennedy: I announced on 3 November 2005 proposed changes to enable the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) to produce faster guidance on life-saving drugs. This new single technology appraisal (STA) process has already been implemented, on an interim basis, with NICE starting work on five topics as a first tranche.

On 11 November 2005, NICE published a consultation document on the new STA process. The consultation will end on 6 February 2006. A copy of the consultation document is available on NICE's website at www.nice.org.uk.

Nurses

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department *(a)* is taking and *(b)* plans to take up to 2008–09 to recruit nurses. [28597]

Mr. Byrne: The Government has substantially increased the national health service work force and numbers entering training. The number of nursing posts in the NHS continues to expand—there are over 390,000 nurses in the NHS and there are 78,660 or 25 per cent. more qualified nurses employed in the NHS than there were in 1997.

Responsibility for recruiting and retaining the healthcare work force locally, including nurses, has been devolved to local employers. The national strategies are already in place to support trusts to recruit and retain staff, promote training and development and redesign their work forces.

Obesity

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures she is implementing to improve the provision of obesity treatment by primary care organisations. [21094]

Caroline Flint: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence has been commissioned to prepare definitive guidance on the prevention, identification, management and treatment of obesity. This is due in early 2007.

Meanwhile, as part of its wider obesity public service agreement programme, the Department is assisting primary care trusts (PCTs) in improving their obesity services by developing guidance on the following tools; an obesity care pathway, a tool to assist health professionals, a weight loss guide and height and weight guidance for primary school children. These will be published in December 2005-January 2006.

As an enhanced role for better coordination between the regional tiers and sub-regional tiers of administration, the Department exercises a performance management function for strategic health authorities and PCTs.

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research she has evaluated on the obesity treatment provided by primary care organisations. [21096]

Caroline Flint: We recently reviewed evidence on the effectiveness of obesity interventions in developing our primary care quality and outcomes framework bid for new adult obesity quality indicators. Although there is limited research on the treatment of obesity by primary care organisations preliminary indicative results from the counterweight programme, an evidence-based weight management model, show that implementation of a structured model for weight management is feasible and effective in the primary care setting. The Department has commissioned the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence to prepare definitive guidance on the prevention, identification, management and treatment of obesity which is due in early 2007.

Payment by Results

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost has been to Barking, Havering and Redbridge NHS Trust of implementing the payment by results programme. [18006]

Jane Kennedy: There are no data available centrally that identify the cost of implementing the payment by results programme.

PCT/SHA Finances

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list in descending order the deficit or surplus of each *(a)* primary care trust and *(b)* strategic health authority at the most recent date for which the information is available; and what the change in funding per head of population since 2000 is in each case. [29956]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Pension Liabilities

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate has been made of total pension liabilities in *(a)* England and *(b)* Durham following the reorganisation of primary care trusts. [29437]

Mr. Byrne: The total value of pension liabilities for the NHS pension scheme as at 31 March 2005 is £127.9 billion, subject to audits.

The NHS pension scheme covers the whole of England and Wales. A breakdown by individual organisations or area is not available as the scheme is a national scheme.

Primary Care Trusts

Mrs. Dean: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made of the likely impact of the reorganisation of primary care trusts on the commissioning of specialist services, with particular reference to renal services; [29008]

(2) what steps are planned following the reorganisation of primary care trusts to ensure that services which may be under-prioritised by commissioners are effectively provided, with particular reference to renal services. [29009]

Mr. Byrne: A review into commissioning arrangements for specialised services has been set up and asked to report in spring 2006. My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, will consider the review group's recommendations at that point. A key objective of the review is to assess the potential impact of national health service system reform on specialised services, including renal services, so as to ensure that proposals keep specialised services commissioning in step with wider NHS reforms and generate consistent arrangements across the country.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients from Ribble Valley were treated by Lancashire primary care trust in Lancashire hospitals in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05. [33044]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 29 November 2005]:* The available information requested is shown in the table.

Count of finished consultant episodes (FCE) and patients by selected providers of treatment primary care trust responsible for patient in Hyndburn and Ribble Valley and Preston national health service hospitals in England, 2003–04

Provider code	*Provider description*	*FCE*	*Patient counts*
RXL	Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Hospitals NHS Trust	1,249	950
RJX	Calderstones NHS Trust	6	[1]—
RXR	East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust	32,187	17,649
RW5	Lancashire Care NHS Trust	857	631
RXN	Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust	36,820	22,638
RTX	Morecambe Bay Hospitals NHS Trust	109	94

[1] Due to reasons of confidentiality, figures between one and five have been suppressed.

Notes:

1. An FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one health care provider. Please note that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.

2. Patient counts are based on the unique patient identifier hospital episodes statistics identification (HESID). This identifier is derived based on patient's date of birth, postcode, sex, local patient identifier and NHS number, using an agreed algorithm. Where data are incomplete, HESID might erroneously link episodes or fail to recognise episodes for the same patient. Care is therefore needed, especially where duplicate records persist in the data. The patient count cannot be summed across a table where patients may have episodes in more than one cell.

3. Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data, that is, the data is ungrossed.

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Health and Social Care Information Centre

Primary Care Trusts (Oxfordshire)

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate her Department has made of the likely redundancy costs of *(a)* reconfiguring primary care trusts (PCT) in Oxfordshire into a single PCT and *(b)* awarding the contracts to manage such a PCT to the private sector. [20397]

Caroline Flint: In July, we asked strategic health authorities (SHAs) to engage their stakeholders to develop proposals which could then be subject to consultation. The draft proposals from the SHAs were submitted to the Department and have been assessed by an independent external panel against published criteria. The panel has offered its initial comments to Ministers.

These are currently being considered and we will write to SHAs shortly. No decisions on the final configuration of primary care trusts (PCTs) will be taken until after the three-month public consultation exercise, to begin in December. It would not be possible to provide accurate estimates of likely redundancy costs until the final configurations are known.

It is important to note that Thames Valley SHA's proposal to outsource the commissioning function of the newly proposed Oxfordshire PCT will not be considered as part of the consultation process. This is because we want the new PCTs, not the existing organisations, to make decisions on how they handle their responsibilities.

Primary Sclerosing Cholangitis

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made of the prevalence of primary sclerosing cholangitis in *(a)* England and *(b)* Gloucestershire; [29612]

(2) what steps she is taking to raise awareness amongst health professionals of primary sclerosing cholangitis. [29611]

Mr. Byrne: Estimates on the prevalence of primary sclerosing cholangitis (PSC) in England range between 20 to 90 cases per million of population. No estimates have been made for the prevalence of PSC in Gloucestershire.

The Department is not responsible for setting curricula for health professional training. However, we do share a commitment with statutory and professional bodies that all health professionals are trained, so that they have the skills and knowledge to deliver a high quality health service to all groups of the population with whom they deal. Post-registration training needs for national health service staff are determined against local NHS priorities, through appraisal processes and training needs analyses informed by local delivery plans and the needs of the service.

Road Traffic Accidents

Kitty Ussher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the relationship between ambulance journey times to hospital intensive care units and survival rates following serious road traffic accidents. [26123]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 29 November 2005]:* Data is not collected centrally on road traffic accidents attended by national health service ambulances and no assessment can be made of the relationship between ambulance journey times and the eventual transfer to hospital intensive care units and survival rates following serious road traffic accidents.

Social Services (Young Adults)

Mr. Neil Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many younger adult clients per 10,000 younger adults were seen by social services in *(a)* Inner London local authorities, *(b)* Outer London local authorities, *(c)* English metropolitan authorities outside London, *(d)* Wigan Metropolitan borough council area, *(e)* Salford city council area, *(f)* Knowsley metropolitan borough council area, *(g)* South Tyneside council area, *(h)* Leeds city council area and *(i)* Wolverhampton city council area in 2004–05. [29474]

Mr. Byrne: The following table shows the number of adults aged 18 to 64 who were assessed and/or reviewed per 10,000 population by councils with social services responsibilities (CSSRs) in 2003–04 for the areas requested.

Number of adults aged 18–64 who were assessed and/or reviewed per 10,000 population by councils in 2003–04

Councils with social services responsibilities	*Number of new clients who have been assessed[1] by councils per 10,000 population*	*Existing clients who have been reviewed[2] by councils per 10,000 population*
Inner London		
Camden	45	55
Greenwich	68	67
Hackney	11	[3]
Hammersmith and Fulham	75	76
Islington	38	33
Kensington and Chelsea	125	244
Lambeth	15	100
Lewisham	132	114
Southwark	148	146
Tower Hamlets	46	111
Wandsworth	33	54
Westminster	65	110
City of London	95	281
Outer London		
Barking and Dagenham	68	137
Barnet	41	26

Number of adults aged 18–64 who were assessed and/or reviewed per 10,000 population by councils in 2003–04

Councils with social services responsibilities	*Number of new clients who have been assessed[1] by councils per 10,000 population*	*Existing clients who have been reviewed[2] by councils per 10,000 population*
Bexley	165	205
Brent	184	116
Bromley	115	122
Croydon	36	125
Ealing	32	30
Enfield	32	76
Haringey	34	78
Harrow	38	38
Havering	13	112
Hillingdon	8	49
Hounslow	64	87
Kingston-upon-Thames	91	152
Merton	45	60
Newham	6	105
Redbridge	51	88
Richmond upon Thames	39	77
Sutton	22	55
Waltham Forest	83	67
Metropolitan districts		
Barnsley	84	203
Birmingham	60	85
Bolton	95	142
Bradford	48	103
Bury	46	46
Calderdale	25	34
Coventry	63	56
Doncaster	52	36
Dudley	46	83
Gateshead	86	78
Kirklees	58	153
Liverpool	39	83
Manchester	43	86
Newcastle upon Tyne	79	80
North Tyneside	66	151
Oldham	94	96
Rochdale	22	103
Rotherham	46	79
Sandwell	43	82
Sefton	41	66
Sheffield	95	39
Solihull	31	80
St. Helens	56	137
Stockport	44	36
Sunderland	39	162
Tameside	160	277
Trafford	71	81
Wakefield	28	87
Walsall	18	50
Wirral	51	94
Wigan	40	60
Salford	47	60
Knowsley	40	[3]
South Tyneside	81	249
Leeds	36	50
Wolverhampton	39	60

[1] An "assessment" is defined as the first assessment for a new client. All subsequent assessments which include a reassessment will be defined as a review.
[2] A "review" is an examination of the client's needs for an existing client and must include a (formal) reassessment, irrespective of whether it was a scheduled or unscheduled review.
[3] Data not available.
Source:
RAP proforma A1

Specialised Services Commissioning

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how the forthcoming review of specialised services commissioning will fit into the wider reorganisation of primary care trusts and strategic health authorities; and if she will make a statement; [28361]

(2) what the timetable is for the review of specialised services commissioning; [28648]

(3) whether the recommendations from the forthcoming review of specialised services commissioning will be binding on all primary care trusts. [28649]

Mr. Byrne: The review looking into commissioning arrangements for specialised services has been asked to report in spring 2006. The review will assess the potential impact of national health service system reform on specialised services and treatments, ensure that proposals keep specialised services commissioning in step with wider NHS reforms and generate consistent arrangements across the country.

Waiting Lists/Times

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many operations have been rescheduled because of lack of resources over the last eight years. [28599]

Mr. Byrne: The number of rescheduled operations is not collected centrally.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Accident Data

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether minimum data have been set for the collection of data by IT systems relating to home accidents in *(a)* accident and emergency departments and *(b)* minor injury units in Northern Ireland, as specified under Action 13 of the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety Home Accident Prevention Strategy 2004–09. [33563]

Mr. Woodward: A minimum dataset has been agreed by DHSSPS in conjunction with the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (RoSPA) in Northern Ireland for the collection of information by IT systems on patients who attend accident and emergency departments and minor injuries units as a result of home accidents.

Apple Production

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to promote apple production in County Armagh. [34552]

Angela E. Smith: There are no measures to promote apple production anywhere in Northern Ireland. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development provides a range of support measures to existing producers throughout Northern Ireland, including financial support through the EU Producer Organisation Scheme, research and development and industry training and technology transfer programmes.

Assets Recovery

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how money recovered by the Assets Recovery Agency in Northern Ireland has been distributed. [35336]

Mr. Woodward: The proceeds of all assets recovered under the Proceeds of Crime Act and earlier legislation are paid to the Consolidated Fund and an element is dispersed for a variety of asset recovery purposes under the auspices of the Home Office. For example, the Police Service of Northern Ireland has received £270,000 in incentive payments under a police incentive scheme introduced in 2004–05. Additional financial investigators in the Police Service of Northern Ireland are also being funded with £240,000 over two years from recovered assets receipts.

From 2006–07 all asset recovery agencies including the Police Service of Northern Ireland will be able to get back 50 per cent. of the assets they recover and are encouraged to invest it in boosting asset recovery.

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how the money allocated to the new assets recovery incentive scheme in Northern Ireland will be distributed. [35337]

Mr. Woodward: From 2006–07, under a new incentive scheme all asset recovery agencies in England, Wales and Northern Ireland will be able to get back 50 per cent. of the assets they recover. There are no conditions attached on how the money should be spent but agencies are encouraged to invest a portion in boosting asset recovery and, where appropriate, in local crime fighting projects.

Autism

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the number of individuals aged 16 years and above in the Province with autistic spectrum disorders; and how many of these are estimated to be deemed of school age. [34648]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not available.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what provision is made in the Province for those aged 16 years and above who suffer from autistic spectrum disorders. [34649]

Mr. Woodward: Health and social services boards and trusts provide a range of mainstream and specialist health care services for children and adults with autism including diagnostic and assessment services, family support services, respite services, date care services, befriending schemes, mental health services, learning disability services and specialist services contracted from voluntary organisations such as PAPA (Parents and Professionals and Autism) and PEAT (Parents' Education as Autism Therapists).

Car Parks

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps *(a)* Translink and *(b)* each Northern Ireland Department is taking to encourage departmental employees in Northern Ireland to use public transport to and from their workplace. [31453]

Mr. Woodward: Translink has advised me that it operates a corporate commuter initiative which encourages both public and private sector employees to use public transport to and from their workplace. Under this, Translink works in partnership with several Northern Ireland Departments and other Government bodies and provides incentives such as subsidised public transport and personalised travel plans.

The Travelwise scheme operated by the Roads Service provides advice about alternatives to car use, including the use of public transport. It has promoted the scheme to all Northern Ireland Departments. In addition to these measures, Northern Ireland Departments may offer advances of salary to assist staff with the purchase of season tickets.

Confiscated Computers

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many computers have been confiscated in relation to offences reported to *(a)* East Belfast District Command Unit and *(b)* Castlereagh District Command Unit in each year since 1998; how many reports led to (i) prosecution and (ii) conviction; and what this figure is as a percentage of the total. [31990]

Mr. Woodward: No central record is maintained to identify the number of computers confiscated in a particular District Command Unit. To obtain this information would involve a manual trawl of records at disproportionate cost. Statistics relating to prosecutions and convictions resulting from the confiscation of computers is not recorded.

Cardiac Care

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many trained medical *(a)* doctors and *(b)* nurses specialising in cardiac care there were in each hospital in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [31971]

Mr. Woodward: The information required is provided in the following tables.

Number of trained medical (a) doctors and (b) nurses specialising in cardiac care employed within the NI HPSS by hospital as at September 2001

	Doctors		*Nurses*	
Hospital	*Headcount*	*Whole-time equivalent*	*Headcount*	*Whole-time equivalent*
Altnagelvin Hospital	2	2.00	3	2.80
Belfast City Hospital	6	6.00	n/a	n/a
Causeway Hospital	1	1.00	1	0.85
Craigavon Area Hospital	2	2.00	4	3.75
Downe and Lagan Valley Hospitals	1	1.00	n/a	n/a
Mater Infirmorum Hospital	1	1.00	8	7.68
Daisy Hill Hospital	2	1.00	2	1.86
Royal Group of Hospitals	14	13.64	39	36.52
Tyrone County Hospital	1	1.00	n/a	n/a
Erne Hospital	1	1.00	n/a	n/a
Ulster Hospital	3	3.00	4	4.00
Mid-Ulster Hospital	0	0.00	2	2.00
Antrim Area and Whiteabbey Hospitals	4	3.91	n/a	12.91
Total	38	36.55	n/a	n/a

Notes:

1. The number of nurses specialising in cardiac care was not available (n/a) for Belfast City Hospital, Downe Hospital, Lagan Valley Hospital, Erne Hospital and Tyrone County Hospital. Only whole-time equivalent nursing figures were available for Antrim Area Hospital.
2. Doctor figures include the following grades: consultant and associate specialist.
3. Nursing figures include qualified nursing staff Grade F and above only.
4. Totals have been left blank (n/a) where some figures were not available.

Source:

NI HSS Trusts

Number of trained medical (a) doctors and (b) nurses specialising in cardiac care employed within the NIHPSS by hospital as at September 2002

	Doctors		*Nurses*	
Hospital	*Headcount*	*Whole-time equivalent*	*Headcount*	*Whole-time equivalent*
Altnagelvin Hospital	2	2.00	4	3.80
Belfast City Hospital	6	6.00	n/a	n/a
Causeway Hospital	1	1.00	1	0.85
Craigavon Area Hospital	2	1.27	5	4.39
Downe and Lagan Valley Hospitals	1	1.00	n/a	n/a
Mater Infirmorum Hospital	1	1.00	10	9.68
Daisy Hill Hospital	2	1.00	2	2.00
Royal Group of Hospitals	15	14.64	42	39.52
Tyrone County Hospital	1	1.00	n/a	n/a
Erne Hospital	1	1.00	n/a	n/a
Ulster Hospital	3	3.00	4	4.00
Mid-Ulster Hospital	0	0.00	2	2.00
Antrim Area and Whiteabbey Hospitals	4	3.91	n/a	12.01
Total	39	36.82	n/a	n/a

Notes:
1. The number of nurses specialising in cardiac care was not available (n/a) for Belfast City Hospital, Downe Hospital, Lagan Valley Hospital, Erne Hospital and Tyrone County Hospital. Only whole-time equivalent nursing figures were available for Antrim Area Hospital.
2. Doctor figures include the following grades: consultant and associate specialist.
3. Nursing figures include qualified nursing staff Grade F and above only.
4. Totals have been left blank (n/a) where some figures were not available.

Source:
NI HSS Trusts

Number of trained medical (a) doctors and (b) nurses specialising in cardiac care employed within the NIHPSS by hospital as at September 2003

	Doctors		Nurses	
Hospital	*Headcount*	*Whole-time equivalent*	*Headcount*	*Whole-time equivalent*
Altnagelvin Hospital	3	3.00	4	3.80
Belfast City Hospital	6	6.00	n/a	n/a
Causeway Hospital	1	1.00	2	1.85
Craigavon Area Hospital	4	3.01	5	4.55
Downe and Lagan Valley Hospitals	2	2.00	2	1.85
Mater Infirmorum Hospital	1	1.00	10	9.68
Daisy Hill Hospital	2	1.00	2	2.00
Royal Group of Hospitals	15	14.60	62	57.62
Tyrone County Hospital	1	1.00	n/a	n/a
Erne Hospital	1	1.00	n/a	n/a
Ulster Hospital	3	3.00	6	3.30
Mid-Ulster Hospital	0	0.00	2	2.00
Antrim Area and Whiteabbey Hospitals	4	3.91	n/a	13.93
Total	43	40.52	n/a	n/a

Notes:
1. The number of nurses specialising in cardiac care was not available (n/a) for Belfast City Hospital, Erne Hospital and Tyrone County Hospital. Only whole-time equivalent nursing figures were available for Antrim Area Hospital.
2. Doctor figures include the following grades: consultant and associate specialist.
3. Nursing figures include qualified nursing staff Grade F and above only.
4. Totals have been left blank (n/a) where some figures were not available.

Source:
NI HSS Trusts

Number of trained medical (a) doctors and (b) nurses specialising in cardiac care employed within the NIHPSS by hospital as at September 2004

	Doctors		Nurses	
Hospital	*Headcount*	*Whole-time equivalent*	*Headcount*	*Whole-time equivalent*
Altnagelvin Hospital	3	3.00	4	3.80
Belfast City Hospital	6	6.00	28	26.78
Causeway Hospital	1	1.00	2	1.85
Craigavon Area Hospital	3	2.01	24	21.24
Downe and Lagan Valley Hospital	2	2.00	4	3.60
Mater Infirmorum Hospital	1	1.00	10	9.48
Daisy Hill Hospital	2	1.00	2	2.00
Royal Group of Hospitals	14	13.64	64	60.25
Tyrone County Hospital	1	1.00	n/a	n/a
Erne Hospital	1	1.00	n/a	n/a
Ulster Hospital	4	4.00	6	5.80
Mid-Ulster Hospital	0	0.00	2	2.00
Antrim Area and Whiteabbey Hospitals	4	4.00	17	13.76
Total	42	39.65	n/a	n/a

Notes:
1. The number of nurses specialising in cardiac care was not available for Erne Hospital and Tyrone County Hospital.
2. Doctor figures include the following grades: consultant and associate specialist.
3. Nursing figures include qualified nursing staff Grade F and above only.
4. Totals have been left blank (n/a) where some figures were not available.

Source:
NI HSS Trusts

Number of trained medical (a) doctors and (b) nurses specialising in cardiac care employed within the NIHPSS by hospital as at September 2005

	Doctors		Nurses	
Hospital	*Headcount*	*Whole-time equivalent*	*Headcount*	*Whole-time equivalent*
Altnagelvin Hospital	5	4.01	6	4.87
Belfast City Hospital	6	6.00	24	22.71
Causeway Hospital	1	1.00	14	10.84

Number of trained medical (a) doctors and (b) nurses specialising in cardiac care employed within the NIHPSS by hospital as at September 2005

	Doctors		Nurses	
Hospital	*Headcount*	*Whole-time equivalent*	*Headcount*	*Whole-time equivalent*
Craigavon Area Hospital	3	2.80	26	23.39
Downe and Lagan Valley Hospital	2	2.00	4	3.60
Mater Infirmorum Hospital	3	2.60	12	11.48
Daisy Hill Hospital	2	1.00	2	2.00
Royal Group of Hospitals	17	15.83	65	60.65
Tyrone County Hospital	1	1.00	8	6.92
Erne Hospital	1	1.00	10	6.70
Ulster Hospital	4	4.00	6	5.80
Mid-Ulster Hospital	0	0.00	2	2.00
Antrim Area and Whiteabbey Hospitals	3	3.00	15	12.81
Total	48	44.24	194	173.77

Notes:
1. Doctor figures include the following grades: consultant and associate specialist.
2. Nursing figures include qualified nursing staff Grade F and above only.

Source:
NI HSS Trusts

Cardiomyopathy

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been diagnosed with cardiomyopathy in the Province in the last five years, broken down by age. [34650]

Mr. Woodward: The number of people diagnosed with cardiomyopathy in Northern Ireland is not available.

Information is available on the number of cardiomyopathy sufferers admitted as in-patients to hospitals in Northern Ireland. The following table details the number of admissions to hospital with a primary or secondary diagnosis of cardiomyopathy by age band, for each of the last five years available. It should be noted that any individual could have been admitted to hospital more than once over the course of a year or over a number of years and would therefore be counted more than once in the table.

Age bands	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
0–9	23	24	35	50	23
10–19	9	15	15	9	9
20–29	27	36	20	33	21
30–39	56	79	62	66	56
40–49	90	85	78	113	121
50–59	98	109	134	125	132
60–69	113	113	112	106	125
70–79	67	59	75	89	81
80+	18	32	30	37	25
Total	501	552	561	628	593

Note:
Information is supplied by age band in order to avoid potential disclosure of personal information.

Source:
Hospital In-patients System DHSS and PS.

Child Support Agency

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the *(a)* effectiveness and *(b)* improvement on its predecessor of the Child Support Agency system introduced in 2003. [34560]

Mr. Hanson: The Great Britain Child Support Agency's chief executive, Stephen Geraghty, is currently undertaking a root and branch review of the Agency. He will report to Ministers in Great Britain and will make announcements shortly. I will decide what action to take in Northern Ireland in the light of these announcements.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects Northern Ireland residents on the old Child Support Agency system to be transferred on to the new system. [34561]

Mr. Hanson: In line with the Child Support Agency in Great Britain, the Northern Ireland Child Support Agency has been processing new applications using the new computer system and the new legislation since March 2003.

The introduction of the new computer system has not been without its problems. Therefore, existing cases will be transferred to the new scheme only when the Minister for the Department of Work and Pensions is satisfied that the new computer system is working well. No decision has been made as to when this will happen.

Crime Clear-up Rates

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the clear-up rate was for *(a)* burglary, *(b)* car theft and *(c)* possession of illegal

drugs in each district command unit in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [31941]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is set out in the following tables:

Burglary offences—clearance rate

	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	Percentage 2004–05
Northern Ireland	14.4	10.2	9.9	12.2	14.8
Antrim	8.4	4.7	5.2	5.7	8.2
Ards	7.2	8.3	8.4	9.9	10.7
East Belfast	18.8	8.9	4.9	13.1	10.2
North Belfast	15.8	5.9	8.2	10.7	12.4
South Belfast	13.6	11.3	10.9	12.6	14.2
West Belfast	20.9	15.0	13.7	13.4	16.2
Carrickfergus	17.8	7.1	16.5	20.4	23.2
Castlereagh	9.8	3.8	3.7	13.5	17.3
Larne	24.6	14.2	18.3	18.3	11.0
Lisburn	9.9	12.3	7.1	8.1	12.1
Newtownabbey	16.5	5.0	5.9	6.8	7.8
North Down	14.9	8.8	10.1	11.7	19.8
Armagh	10.4	11.6	20.7	16.0	18.2
Banbridge	18.8	11.7	11.5	10.4	27.0
Ballymena	26.9	23.6	12.3	14.2	14.1
Ballymoney	20.2	24.2	15.3	12.0	18.1
Coleraine	12.7	9.2	10.5	14.6	23.1
Cookstown	19.7	17.3	10.2	20.1	44.5
Craigavon	13.2	5.5	8.3	13.2	9.9
Dungannon and South Tyrone	16.8	11.9	7.4	17.0	17.2
Down	6.7	9.1	11.2	12.3	19.6
Fermanagh	12.3	8.8	7.5	11.6	10.4
Foyle	15.5	13.1	14.1	15.3	17.3
Limavady	14.7	10.1	12.8	12.6	14.1
Magherafelt	12.0	9.1	8.3	13.1	15.4
Moyle	14.5	10.2	16.2	10.5	23.4
Newry and Mourne	13.0	9.0	6.1	7.8	12.1
Omagh	10.9	11.7	10.8	11.1	17.0
Strabane	15.2	21.8	31.3	19.1	28.6

Theft/unauthorised taking of motor vehicle offences—clearance rate

	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03[1]	2003–04[1]	Percentage 2004–05[1]
Northern Ireland	11.4	8.6	11.1	15.8	16.9
Antrim	15.0	6.5	6.5	10.1	18.5
Ards	12.1	13.8	13.1	26.7	17.2
East Belfast	10.9	7.2	9.1	22.8	17.4
North Belfast	9.8	4.9	8.8	10.2	9.6
South Belfast	7.8	4.4	6.0	7.9	7.4
West Belfast	7.9	7.4	4.6	7.1	9.7
Carrickfergus	10.1	6.5	12.7	24.0	35.7
Castlereagh	9.2	6.2	5.6	16.5	17.5
Larne	17.6	22.3	22.4	26.7	17.5
Lisburn	7.8	8.3	8.9	6.6	18.8
Newtownabbey	8.5	4.5	7.7	15.0	15.4
North Down	6.8	9.3	14.2	27.3	40.4
Armagh	29.1	26.7	19.5	21.3	20.3
Banbridge	20.0	15.7	22.4	18.0	31.3
Ballymena	33.3	18.8	22.6	30.0	27.3
Ballymoney	13.6	11.4	46.5	48.1	43.5
Coleraine	14.9	12.6	28.0	21.1	24.7
Cookstown	22.7	36.8	16.7	59.3	34.0
Craigavon	20.9	8.7	13.6	16.6	23.2
Dungannon and South Tyrone	19.8	19.0	16.0	21.4	16.2
Down	12.2	8.0	21.0	14.1	15.4
Fermanagh	21.4	21.4	14.1	17.3	17.0
Foyle	18.8	14.3	19.2	23.9	25.1
Limavady	22.7	22.2	37.1	37.2	34.8
Magherafelt	17.8	22.4	22.7	41.4	27.3
Moyle	24.2	11.8	25.5	35.7	30.4
Newry and Mourne	16.6	8.4	8.9	12.9	12.5
Omagh	10.6	22.1	22.2	50.0	47.7
Strabane	21.1	29.9	21.8	34.0	38.1

[1] From 1 April 2002, most attempted thefts/unauthorised taking of motor vehicles are recorded as vehicle interference due to a change in the Home Office Counting Rules.

Drug non-trafficking offences—clearance rate

	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	Percentage 2004–05
Northern Ireland	87.3	76.3	67.7	70.5	71.8
Antrim	74.1	19.0	52.6	42.6	54.5
Ards	94.7	60.0	60.5	67.9	66.7
East Belfast	84.2	100.0	66.7	86.7	76.0
North Belfast	95.8	73.8	68.8	70.1	76.7
South Belfast	80.3	84.8	59.4	76.1	79.5
West Belfast	114.0	72.4	71.6	63.3	86.5
Carrickfergus	82.1	55.2	72.3	60.7	89.3
Castlereagh	105.9	71.4	74.2	72.5	77.1
Larne	90.0	111.1	83.3	65.7	158.3
Lisburn	89.6	102.9	56.6	82.7	65.7
Newtownabbey	89.3	70.6	69.0	76.5	68.2
North Down	75.0	92.7	82.4	69.3	66.7
Armagh	91.1	92.0	67.4	82.8	86.4
Banbridge	85.0	50.0	74.5	88.1	58.1
Ballymena	95.2	84.6	65.9	74.5	73.8
Ballymoney	92.9	200.0	72.7	100.0	90.9
Coleraine	70.2	56.5	77.6	69.7	60.3
Cookstown	100.0	66.7	65.0	54.8	59.7
Craigavon	94.4	65.1	48.4	43.3	63.8
Dungannon and South Tyrone	96.3	78.3	83.0	89.4	82.1
Down	73.1	65.0	52.7	76.7	85.9
Fermanagh	57.7	90.5	85.3	45.2	46.6
Foyle	75.0	79.7	68.9	71.3	67.2
Limavady	61.9	41.2	46.7	57.9	49.3
Magherafelt	109.1	100.0	56.7	81.1	94.6
Moyle	100.0	50.0	120.0	33.3	50.0
Newry and Mourne	76.0	80.6	76.3	66.7	78.8
Omagh	106.5	94.3	66.7	58.3	64.1
Strabane	85.0	90.0	85.7	90.9	79.2

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* burglaries, *(b)* vehicle thefts, *(c)* assaults, *(d)* violence against the person offences and *(e)* violent crimes have been reported to (i) East Belfast District Command Unit and (ii) Castlereagh District Command Unit in each year since 1998; how many reports led to (A) prosecution and (B) conviction; and what this figure is as a percentage of the total. [31992]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested in relation to the number of offences reported to East Belfast and Castlereagh DCU's in each year since 1998 is contained in the following tables. Data relating to prosecutions and convictions for these type of offences are currently only available in the period 2000 to 2003 (2000 and 2003 being the earliest and most recent dates for which this information is available). Prosecutions and convictions cannot be linked to offences reported, therefore it is not possible to provide a meaningful percentage of one against the other.

East Belfast District Command Unit

	Burglary	Theft/unauthorised taking of motor vehicle	Assaults	Offences against the person	Total violent crime
1998–99	1,214	418	704	834	1,017
1999–2000	1,099	538	789	960	1,155
2000–01	963	587	780	913	1,093
2001–02	1,026	611	826	952	1,201
2002–03	1,174	640	1,010	1,317	1,609
2003–04	913	267	1,058	1,269	1,504
2004–05	748	213	923	1,168	1,344

Castlereagh District Command Unit

	Burglary	Theft/unauthorised taking of motor vehicle	Assaults	Offences against the person	Total violent crime
1998–99	485	306	299	353	441
1999–2000	446	379	345	392	457
2000–01	499	325	330	374	459
2001–02	634	434	468	534	645
2002–03	648	284	447	536	677
2003–04	578	182	462	545	648
2004–05	313	143	433	521	591

East Belfast DCU

	Burglary		Vehicle Theft		Assault	
	Prosecutions	Convictions	Prosecutions	Convictions	Prosecutions	Convictions
2000	66	57	3	3	52	34
2001	42	33	1	1	67	57
2002	39	31	0	0	47	35
2003	44	40	0	0	54	41

	Violence against the Person		Violent Crime	
	Prosecutions	Convictions	Prosecutions	Convictions
2000	92	68	116	88
2001	81	69	100	86
2002	86	69	109	85
2003	116	97	136	115

Castlereagh DCU

	Burglary		Vehicle Theft		Assault	
	Prosecutions	Convictions	Prosecutions	Convictions	Prosecutions	Convictions
2000	10	10	0	0	39	28
2001	14	12	0	0	29	23
2002	24	20	0	0	32	24
2003	11	11	0	0	29	18

	Violence against the Person		Violent Crime	
	Prosecutions	Convictions	Prosecutions	Convictions
2000	55	44	62	50
2001	45	38	54	45
2002	43	35	48	39
2003	48	37	54	42

Note:
Prosecutions and convictions data are based on the police district command unit in which an offender's address falls.

Drug Offences

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people were *(a)* cautioned and *(b)* convicted in relation to a drugs offence in each district command unit in Northern Ireland, broken down by age group, in each of the last five years. [31945]

Mr. Hanson: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Housing

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he has taken to assist first time homebuyers in Northern Ireland. [34547]

Mr. Hanson: The Department for Social Development provides assistance to first time buyers through the Co-ownership Scheme which helps those on marginal incomes to become home owners. The Department has recently increased its funding level by £23 million over the next three years to provide almost £39 million and this will help support around 2,400 applicants over the period.

The social housing house sales scheme also makes an important contribution in providing an opportunity for those in the social rented sector to become home owners. The scheme was extended to housing association tenants last year.

Cyclists

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cyclists were *(a)* injured and *(b)* killed in road traffic accidents in each district command unit in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [31978]

Mr. Woodward: The following tables provide details of how many cyclists were injured and killed in road traffic accidents in Northern Ireland during the period 1998—2004 (1998 being the earliest date for which this data is available and 2004 the most up-to-date data).

Seriously injured

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total
Antrim	2	1	3	1	3	2	0	12
Ards	1	1	4	2	2	3	3	16
Armagh	1	0	1	1	1	1	1	6
Banbridge	1	1	0	1	0	0	2	5
East Belfast	3	3	3	3	1	1	1	15
North Belfast	0	3	1	3	1	0	1	9
South Belfast	5	6	3	2	3	2	3	24
West Belfast	4	2	4	2	0	2	0	14

Seriously injured

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total
Ballymena	1	2	1	1	0	1	1	7
Ballymoney	0	0	1	0	1	2	0	4
Carrickfergus	2	1	1	1	0	1	0	6
Coleraine	1	2	1	0	1	1	1	7
Cookstown	0	0	2	1	1	0	0	4
Craigavon	5	2	2	4	3	3	2	21
Castlereagh	3	1	2	1	1	2	0	10
Dungannon and S Tyrone	0	0	1	3	0	1	1	6
Down	3	1	2	1	2	0	1	10
Fermanagh	2	1	2	1	0	0	0	6
Foyle	2	4	0	3	1	2	2	14
Larne	0	3	0	1	0	1	0	5
Limavady	1	2	2	1	0	2	0	8
Lisburn	3	1	2	3	3	5	2	19
Magherafelt	0	0	1	0	1	0	1	3
Moyle	0	1	3	0	0	0	1	5
Newtownabbey	4	3	0	2	1	0	2	12
North Down	0	1	2	2	1	1	2	9
Newry and Mourne	7	4	4	3	0	1	0	19
Omagh	0	4	3	0	0	2	0	9
Strabane	2	1	1	0	0	0	0	4
Total	53	51	52	43	27	36	27	289

Slightly injured

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total
Antrim	7	5	8	5	5	2	2	34
Ards	15	9	9	5	2	7	4	51
Armagh	3	6	4	6	0	2	1	22
Banbridge	1	2	5	3	1	2	4	18
East Belfast	21	20	13	7	6	15	6	88
North Belfast	20	21	17	11	9	8	7	93
South Belfast	22	18	13	13	14	16	14	110
West Belfast	7	8	11	5	7	8	6	52
Ballymena	6	6	3	3	5	3	6	32
Ballymoney	0	3	2	0	0	2	0	7
Carrickfergus	7	3	8	4	4	4	3	33
Coleraine	13	5	8	6	9	11	7	59
Cookstown	4	6	7	4	3	2	2	28
Craigavon	7	12	7	12	7	7	16	68
Castlereagh	14	13	8	5	4	4	8	56
Dungannon and S Tyrone	4	6	4	1	0	3	2	20
Down	7	8	3	7	8	5	6	44
Fermanagh	5	3	3	4	3	4	2	24
Foyle	12	10	10	7	6	9	8	62
Larne	7	2	3	3	2	2	2	21
Limavady	6	3	3	4	3	7	1	27
Lisburn	22	14	14	13	10	14	5	92
Magherafelt	1	2	1	1	3	0	0	8
Moyle	7	0	0	5	3	0	1	16
Newtownabbey	10	7	20	10	2	6	2	57
North Down	13	9	7	10	10	5	6	60
Newry and Mourne	12	9	7	7	6	3	5	49
Omagh	4	3	5	3	4	4	4	27
Strabane	8	4	7	3	3	0	1	26
Total	265	217	210	167	139	155	131	1284

Killed

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total
Antrim	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Ards	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Armagh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Banbridge	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
East Belfast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Belfast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
South Belfast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
West Belfast	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ballymena	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Ballymoney	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0

	Killed							
	1998	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*Total*
Carrickfergus	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Coleraine	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	2
Cookstown	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
Craigavon	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Castlereagh	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Dungannon and S Tyrone	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Down	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Fermanagh	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Foyle	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	2
Larne	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
Limavady	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Lisburn	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Magherafelt	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Moyle	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newtownabbey	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
North Down	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Newry and Mourne	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	3
Omagh	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
Strabane	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Total	7	1	4	2	3	2	2	21

Eating Disorders

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the number of individuals who have travelled from the Province to St. George's hospital in London for *(a)* assessment and *(b)* treatment for eating disorders in each of the last five years. [34651]

Mr. Woodward: Information on the number of individuals who have travelled from Northern Ireland to St George's hospital in London for *(a)* assessment and *(b)* treatment of eating disorders from 2000–01 to 2004–05 is outlined in the following table:

Financial year	*Number of patients travelling to Northern Ireland to St. George's hospital in London for*	
	(a) Assessment	*(b) Treatment*
2000–01[1]	5	5
2001–02	12	3
2002–03	11	7
2003–04	11	11
2004–05	4	18

[1] Information for Northern Ireland Health and Social Services Board is not available for 2000–01

Source:
Health and Social Service Boards

Electronic Human Resources Services

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will widen the Gateway Review of the Electronic Human Resources contract procurement procedure planned for December into an independent peer review of the whole process for this contract. [34414]

Angela E. Smith: The e-HR project has been subject to five reviews under the peer review process allied to the Office of Government Commerce (OGC) Gateway process:

		Date
Gate 0	Strategic Assessment	November 2002
Gate 1	Business Justification	February 2003
Gate 2	Procurement Strategy	May 2003
Gate 2a	Health Check Review	December 2003
Gate 2b	Health Check Review	June 2004

The peer review process has been conducted in accordance with OGC Gateway guidance, led by an OGC member of staff and supported by public sector panel members independent of the e-HR project and who are trained in carrying out Gateway Reviews.

A further three reviews will be carried out, these are:

		Date
Gate 3	Investment Decision	December 2005
Gate 4	Readiness for Service	—
Gate 5	Benefits evaluation	—

The procurement process has been undertaken in accordance with European Union procurement law and the Department of Finance and Personnel has been guided by best procurement practice as recommended by the Office of Government Commerce and Central Procurement Directorate (Department of Finance and Personnel).

The purpose of the forthcoming Gate 3 review will be to confirm whether the recommended investment decision is appropriate before the contract is placed with a supplier or partner. It will also be to seek assurances on the processes used to select a supplier and assess whether the process has been well managed; whether the business needs are being met; that both the client and the supplier can implement and manage the proposed solution; and that the necessary processes are in place to achieve a successful outcome after a contract award.

The peer review scheduled for December will be conducted in accordance with OGC Gateway guidance and consequently will not be widened.

High Hedges

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to introduce legislation to tackle problem high hedges in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [35316]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of the Environment's recent public consultation to collect information about the number of nuisance high hedges in Northern Ireland supports the need for legislation to address this issue and the Department will take that legislation forward when a place can be secured in the legislative programme.

Fraud and Forgery

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* fraud and *(b)* forgery offences have been reported to (i) East Belfast District Command Unit and (ii) Castlereagh District Command Unit in each year since 1998; how many reports led to (A) prosecution and (B) conviction; and what this figure is as a percentage of the total. [31989]

Mr. Woodward: The following tables detail how many fraud and forgery offences have been reported to East Belfast and Castlereagh DCU's in each year since 1988 together with the number of prosecutions and convictions relating to fraud and forgery offences in the period 2000 to 2003 (2000 being the earliest date and 2003 the most current date for which this information is available). As prosecutions and convictions data cannot be linked to offences reported data, it is not possible to provide a meaningful percentage of one in relation to the other.

East Belfast District Command Unit

	Deception	*Forgery and counterfeiting*	*Making off without payment*	*Other frauds*	*Total fraud and forgery*
1998–99	210	17	91	2	320
1999–2000	239	32	111	3	385
2000–01	294	42	184	5	525
2001–02	229	25	256	0	510
2002–03	279	15	180	8	482
2003–04	94	3	137	5	239
2004–05	83	11	152	6	252
Total	1428	145	1111	29	2713

Castlereagh District Command Unit

	Deception	*Forgery and counterfeiting*	*Making off without payment*	*Other frauds*	*Total fraud and forgery*
1998–99	89	15	133	1	238
1999–2000	107	22	189	1	319
2000–01	90	10	172	1	273
2001–02	342	38	294	1	675
2002–03	169	36	182	3	390
2003–04	107	7	131	1	246
2004–05	75	3	54	2	134
Total	979	131	1155	10	2275

East Belfast DCU

	Fraud		*Forgery*	
	Prosecutions	*Convictions*	*Prosecutions*	*Convictions*
2000	6	1	1	1
2001	5	5	4	4
2002	11	9	6	6
2003	12	10	1	1
Total	35	30	12	12

Castlereagh DCU

	Fraud		*Forgery*	
	Prosecutions	*Convictions*	*Prosecutions*	*Convictions*
2000	8	6	0	0
2001	4	3	2	2
2002	9		3	2
2003	7	7	2	2
Total	28	24	7	6

Notes

Prosecutions and convictions data is based on the police district command unit in which an offender's address falls

Illegal Drinking Dens

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many illegal drinking dens have been closed down in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years; [32229]

(2) how many people have been prosecuted for operating illegal drinking dens in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [32230]

Mr. Woodward: The Police Service of Northern Ireland does not hold a central record of the number of illegal drinking dens closed down in Northern Ireland in

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each of the last 10 years. To obtain this information would involve a manual trawl of historical records at disproportionate cost.

The closest prosecution information available relates to offences for selling or supplying intoxicating liquor in unlicensed premises or unregistered clubs, or permitting persons on unlicensed premises.

The following table provides the number of persons prosecuted for liquor law offences during the period 1994—2003 (the latter being the most up-to-date data presently available).

Persons prosecuted for specific liquor law offences[1]

	Number of prosecutions
1994	12
1995	9
1996	10
1997	5
1998	5
1999	6
2000	1
2001	1
2002	4
2003	3

[1] Includes prosecutions for offences relating to selling or supplying intoxicating liquor in unlicensed premises or unregistered clubs, or permitting persons on unlicensed premises.

Juvenile Ill Health

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland under the age of 20 years have been found to have *(a)* high cholesterol levels, *(b)* high blood pressure, *(c)* heart conditions and *(d)* diabetes in each of the last 10 years. [34553]

Mr. Woodward: Information is not available on the number of people in Northern Ireland who have been found to have the aforementioned conditions. However, information is available on the number of admissions to hospital where high blood pressure, heart conditions and diabetes have been diagnosed.

(a) There is no information available on the number of people found to have high cholesterol. It has not been possible to identify patients suffering from high cholesterol who have been admitted to hospital.

(b) The following table provides figures on the number of admissions to hospital with a primary or secondary diagnosis of hypertension (high blood pressure) for each of the last ten years for which figures are available.

Admissions for hypertensive diseases (high blood pressure)[1]

2004–05	26,185
2003–04	22,209
2002–03	19,637
2001–02	19,757
2000–01	17,012
1999–2000	12,695
1998–99	11,498
1997–98	10,542
1996–97	10,376
1995–96[2]	7,358

(c) The following table provides figures on the number of admissions to hospital with a primary or secondary diagnosis of coronary heart disease for each of the last ten years for which figures are available.

Admissions for ischemic heart diseases[1]

2004–05	34,938
2003–04	31,656
2002–03	30,846
2001–02	32,824
2000–01	32,639
1999–2000	27,847
1998–99	28,068
1997–98	28,319
1996–97	29,231
1995–96[2]	26,075

(d) The following table provides figures on the number of admissions to hospital with a primary or secondary diagnosis of diabetes for each of the last ten years for which figures are available.

Admissions for diabetes[1]

2004–05	19,778
2003–04	32,366
2002–03	17,446
2001–02	18,534
2000–01	16,876
1999–2000	14,956
1998–99	12,751
1997–98	12,610
1996–97	12,183
1995–96[2]	10,092

[1] Discharges and deaths are used as an approximation for admissions. It should be noted that any individual could have been admitted to hospital more than once over the course of a year or over a number of years and would therefore be counted more than once in the tables.

[2] Discharges from hospital during 1995–96 have the final diagnosis coded in accordance with the 9th revision of the International Statistical Classification of Diseases, Injuries and Causes of Death (ICD-9). Discharges from all other years are coded in accordance with ICD-10.

Lakeview Hospital, Derry

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on medical staffing levels at Lakeview hospital, Derry. [33970]

Mr. Woodward: Recruitment of staff is a matter for individual health and social services trusts taking into account factors such as service needs, available resources and in keeping with the need to maintain high quality services. Lakeview hospital has been experiencing difficulties recently recruiting a Consultant Psychiatrist, and the Trust has taken steps to minimise any adverse impact and is making every effort to recruit a replacement.

The numbers in training in the relevant specialty have been increased in recent years to provide candidates for Consultant vacancies as they arise. Trusts need to take all necessary steps to ensure their posts are attractive to potential candidates.

Motoring Offences

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females were convicted of motoring offences in each district command unit in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years for which figures are available, broken down by offence. [31979]

Mr. Hanson: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what provision exists in Northern Ireland for the prosecution of drivers from the Irish Republic who have been identified as *(a)* driving (i) illegally and (ii) without tax and insurance and *(b)* parking illegally. [32253]

Mr. Woodward: Drivers of vehicles in Northern Ireland, where the driver is not resident in Northern Ireland, or where the vehicle is not registered in the United Kingdom, are subject to the provisions of the Road Traffic (Northern Ireland) Order 1981.

A community licence holder (i.e. a person who holds a licence issued by any of the member states of the European economic area—EEA) may drive a vehicle which that licence authorises him to drive, provided he is not disqualified from holding or obtaining a licence in Northern Ireland (e.g. he may be subject to a disqualification imposed by a NI court). However, that person is not so authorised where the licence is not valid in the state which issued it (e.g. the RoI authorities may have imposed a disqualification—this would prevent that person from applying for an NI licence or from driving on the basis of the disqualified RoI licence). Article 15A of the Order refers.

A person from outside the United Kingdom driving in Northern Ireland must be insured or secured against third party risks as prescribed by article 90 of the Order, and to the standard prescribed by article 92 of the 1981 Order. Under article 181 of the Order, police have the power to arrest without warrant and detain a person resident outside the UK for committing an offence under article 90 until he enters into a recognisance under the Magistrates Courts (Northern Ireland) Order 1981 to appear before a magistrates court to answer a complaint charging that offence.

Failure to comply with any of the requirements specified aforementioned is an offence. These offences, and the punishments associated with them, are specified in schedule 1 to the Road Traffic Offenders (Northern Ireland) Order 1996.

Vehicles that are parked illegally are issued with a non-endorsable fixed penalty notice (FPN) irrespective of the country of origin. However, it is not possible to summons to court the owners of vehicles resident in the Republic of Ireland for the non-payment of FPNs.

Neurology

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many neurologists were employed by the NHS in Northern Ireland on the last date for which figures are available. [34777]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is provided in the following table.

Number of neurologists employed within the NI HPSS by trust as at November 2005

Trust	*Headcount*	*WTE*[1]
Altnagelvin Group HSS Trust	1	1.00
Craigavon Area Hospital Group HSS Trust	1	1.00
Royal Group of Hospitals Group HSS Trust	13	12.91
Total	15	14.91

[1] WTE = Whole-time Equivalent.

Source:
NI HPSS Trusts.

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his most recent assessment is of how many neurologists are required by the NHS in Northern Ireland. [34778]

Mr. Woodward: Current numbers of consultant neurologists are in line with the recommendations of the Review of Adult Neurological Services published in 2002. This recommended that there should be 10 consultant neurologists in post by 2003 and 16 by 2008. However, the position is reviewed annually and it is recognised that further increases may be required to take account of ongoing service developments.

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to increase the number of neurologists employed by the NHS in Northern Ireland. [34779]

Mr. Woodward: The recruitment of staff is a matter for individual health and social services trusts taking into account factors such as service needs and available resources. The Department has a role in ensuring that sufficient suitably qualified staff are available to meet the needs of the service. There are currently five specialist registrars in training who are expected to be available to fill consultant posts over the next six years.

Obesity

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to tackle obesity in *(a)* adults and *(b)* children in Northern Ireland. [34554]

Mr. Woodward: Obesity is being tackled principally through policies and programmes to increase levels of physical activity, particularly among those who are least active, and by encouraging healthy eating. An advertising campaign, Get a Life Get Active, to encourage people to undertake regular physical activity, and a community grants programme have been introduced as part of Northern Ireland's cross-departmental physical activity strategy, Be Active-Be Healthy. In addition, the Health Promotion Agency, Food Standards Agency and local health and social services boards, with the support of partner organizations, have developed a range of programmes to encourage active living, promote healthy eating and to support people to make healthy choices.

The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety also supported the development of guidelines by the clinical resource efficiency support team (CREST) on the management of obesity in secondary care. The

CREST guidelines, which were published in June 2005, include advice on the assessment and management of obesity in both children and adults.

The Northern Ireland Priorities and Budget 2005–08 report established a cross- departmental public service agreement target to stop the increase in levels of obesity in children by 2010. In August 2004, a taskforce initiative was established under the aegis of the ministerial group on public health to examine options for tackling childhood obesity and to make recommendations on how the stop the rise in levels of obesity in children. The recommendations of the fit futures taskforce will be published early in 2006 and will inform revised strategies and action plans on food and nutrition and physical activity.

Paramilitary-related Exiles

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people are estimated by the security forces to have been exiled from Northern Ireland by paramilitary organisations in each of the last 10 years. [32138]

Mr. Woodward: I have been advised by the PSNI that no reliable record has been made on the number of people exiled from Northern Ireland as a result of paramilitary intimidation, as not all incidents have been reported.

However, in evidence to the NI Affairs Committee, a Christian organisation, 'The Maranatha Community' claims to have dealt with c. 4,500 persons between 1980 and 2005. Since July 2003 they have dealt with 77 cased which as been in the region of over 144 to 145 persons. Website address:

www.maranathacommunity.org.uk

You may also find the following contacts a useful source of information:

The Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Resettlement of Offenders, reference the 'Base 2 Project' for resettlement:

(NIACRO)

Amelia House of Commons

No. 4 Amelia Street

Belfast

BT2 7GS

Telephone 02890 302157

and

Victims Unit

Office of the Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM)

Castle Buildings

Stormont

Belfast

Telephone Free phone Number 08081273333.

Parole

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many of those eligible for parole *(a)* were granted parole and *(b)* broke the conditions of parole in Northern Ireland in each year since 1998. [31996]

Mr. Woodward: The term 'parole' in Northern Ireland is taken to refer to home and resettlement leave.

2,931 periods of home and resettlement leave were granted from prison establishments throughout the 2004–05 financial year. Of that number, four failed to return and all currently remain at large.

It is not possible to provide information on the number of prisoners who broke the conditions of home and resettlement leave, other than those unlawfully at large, as this data are kept on individual prisoner files and is not centrally collated. This is also applicable for preceding years. Numbers granted parole in previous years were similarly not centrally collated.

Securing the information requested for the preceding years could be achieved only at a disproportionate cost.

Passports

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average waiting time was for a *(a)* new passport, *(b)* replacement passport, *(c)* new full or provisional driving licence and *(d)* replacement driving licence in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [34558]

Angela E. Smith: The information is as follows:

Passports

It is not possible to separate the average waiting times for new passports and replacement passports. However the average waiting times for all straightforward, single, properly completed applications processed at the Belfast Passport Office for the last five years are:

	Turnaround (Days)
2000–01	4.1
2001–02	3.8
2002–03	4.3
2003–04	4.3
2004–05	4.6
2005–06[1]	4.3

[1] To date

Belfast Passport Office processes all Northern Irish passport applications and in addition to this processes any applications from the Brighton and Hove, East Sussex and West Sussex area. Work transfers between regional offices commenced in March 2005 and since this date Belfast have processed an additional 45,000 applications from various other catchment areas.

Driver licensing

Performance is not recorded separately for each category of driving licences issued and is reported in percentages not average waiting times. It excludes those applications which need further scrutiny for medical or conduct reasons.

	Percentage in 9 days	*Percentage in 10 days*
2000–01	93	—
2001–02	94	—
2002–03	80	—
2003–04	—	94
2004–05	—	90

Planning Applications

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps are being taken *(a)* to process area plans and *(b)* to expedite the processing of outstanding planning applications. [35335]

Angela E. Smith: All aspects of the development control process have been reviewed to identify areas for efficiencies including internal procedures, arrangements for council consultations, and working with other statutory bodies. ePIC the central e-planning project will allow online applications and provide a facility for applicants and objectors to track application progress. New legislation will also tackle delaying factors in the process.

The planning service has an ambitious programme to provide complete and up to date development plan coverage for Northern Ireland and has made considerable progress in implementing this challenging programme. Within the past three years the Planning Service has published three adopted plans and four draft plans, including the draft Belfast metropolitan plan 2015. Collectively, this covers 16 of the 26 council areas in Northern Ireland. Draft plans for a further eight council areas are under preparation. The remaining two council areas are already covered by up to date adopted area plans.

Through the modernising planning processes the planning service has an ongoing programme to improve and streamline the plan process. The planning service will continue to keep the process and programme under review and will seek where possible to improve procedures and practices in order to deliver area plans efficiently in accordance with planning and environmental legislation and policy and in general conformity with the regional development strategy.

Police

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many police officers use bicycles while patrolling in each Police Service Northern Ireland district. [31955]

Mr. Woodward: The number of bicycles on issue to each DCU as of October 2005 is detailed in the table.

Patrolling by bicycle is just one patrol method used by DCUs across Northern Ireland. The bicycles may be used by more than one officer, at different times of the day-shift.

No central record of officers who use bicycles to patrol is held.

Bicycle allocation

DCU	*Quantity of bicycles*	*Station*
Antrim	2	Antrim
Ards	2	Newtownards
Armagh	2	Gough Barracks
Armagh	2	Armagh
Ballymena	3	Ballymena
Ballymoney	2	Bally money
Banbridge	2	Banbridge
Carrickfergus	2	Carrickfergus
Castlereagh	2	Castlereagh
Coleraine	2	Coleraine
Cookstown	2	Cookstown
Dungannon	2	Dungannon
East Belfast	2	Strandtown
Fermanagh	2	Enniskillen
Foyle	2	Strand Road
Larne	2	Larne
Limavady	2	Limavady
Lisburn	2	Lisburn
Lurgan	2	Portadown
Lurgan	2	Lurgan
Magherafelt	2	Magherafelt
Moyle	2	Bally castle
Newry and Mourne	2	Ardmore
Newtownabbey	4	Newtownabbey
North Belfast	4	Antrim Road
North Down	2	Bangor
Omagh	2	Omagh
South Belfast	2	Musgrave Street
South Belfast	4	Ballynafeigh
South Belfast	2	Lisburn Road
Strabane	2	Strabane
Total[1]	69	—

[1] Bicycles purchased to date.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans there are to rationalise the number of police district command units in Northern Ireland before completion of the review of the public administration; and if he will make a statement. [35045]

Mr. Woodward: A working party, headed by the Assistant Chief Constable responsible for change management, is currently considering the future structure of the Police Service of Northern Ireland. This work will take time to complete.

No final decisions have been made with regard to timeframe for implementation of any agreed changes. Any proposals will require careful consideration, and will be subject to consultation with the Policing Board.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average length of service was of police officers in Northern Ireland in *(a)* 2005 and *(b)* 1995. [34447]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is provided in the following table.

RUC/PSNI—average service data

Rank	*December 1995*	*Years 2005*
ACPO	33.3	25.48
Chief Superintendent	32.3	26.28
Superintendent	28.19	24.44
Chief Inspector	24.5	23.24
Inspector	21.4	21.09
Sergeant	15.09	18.42
Constable	13.47	14.02
Overall Regular	15.03	14.31
FT Reserve	9.6	18.36

Prostate Cancer

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much money has been ring fenced for research into treatment for prostate cancer over the last five years in Northern Ireland. [32106]

Mr. Woodward: There have been no funds allocated by the DHSS&PS R&D Office for research into treatment for prostate cancer over the last five years in Northern Ireland.

Radioactive Waste

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what the procedure is for notification of instances of dumping of radioactive waste at sea to *(a)* Parliament, *(b)* relevant local authorities, *(c)* relevant local NHS boards, *(d)* local industries that may be affected and *(e)* local residents; [22766]

(2) if he will list the sites where radioactive waste has been dumped in the Irish Sea over the last 10 years. [22794]

Angela E. Smith: I understand from my right hon. friend the Secretary of State for DEFRA that, in-line with Government policy there has been no disposal of solid radioactive waste at sea since 1982. Any need to notify instances of disposal of radioactive waste at sea has therefore not arisen. In the unlikely event that such unauthorised disposals did arise, these would need to be reported to the appropriate environmental regulator as they would be in breach of the Radioactive Substances Act 1993, and therefore would constitute an illegal act. The environmental regulator in Northern Ireland would be the Environment and Heritage Service; in England and Wales, the Environment Agency; and in Scotland, the Scottish Environment Protection Agency.

Road Accidents

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children have been *(a)* injured and *(b)* fatally injured while crossing roads outside schools in the past five years. [32102]

Mr. Woodward: The information is unavailable in the format requested. The Police Service of Northern Ireland records details of road traffic collisions by road name and not specific locations e.g. schools.

Seat Belts

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the seat belt wearing rate was in each province in Northern Ireland *(a)* in the last period for which figures are available and *(b)* in each month since 1990. [34754]

Angela E. Smith: Seat belt surveys are carried out by the Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency on behalf of the Department of the Environment. The series began in 1994 and was conducted biannually, in April and October, until 1997 from when it has been conducted in April only. The survey was again carried out in both April and October in 2001 on a one off basis to inform the launch of a new seatbelt publicity campaign. The nature of the data collection means that it is not possible to provide figures at a sub-regional level. The following table provides details of seat belt wearing rates in each year since the surveys began in 1994.

Northern Ireland seat belt surveys 1994–2005

	Percentage of car occupants wearing seatbelts			
	Driver	*Front Seat*	*Back Seat*	*Overall wearing rate percentage*
April 1994	88	88	52	82
October 1994	86	86	53	82
April 1995	85	86	50	80
October 1995	84	83	49	78
April 1996	85	85	51	80
October 1996	86	86	54	81
April 1997	85	86	56	81
April 1998	87	88	61	84
April 1999	86	86	62	83
April 2000	87	87	65	84
April 2001	86	86	67	84
October 2001	88	89	71	87
April 2002	90	89	72	88
April 2003	90	89	75	88
April 2004	91	90	77	89
April 2005	93	92	81	91

Sexual Offences and Robberies

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* sexual offences and *(b)* robberies have been reported to (i) East Belfast District Command Unit and (ii) Castlereagh District Command Unit in each year since 1998; how many reports led to (A) prosecution and (B) conviction; and what this figure is as a percentage of the total. [31988]

Mr. Woodward: The following tables show the number of sexual offences and robberies reported to East Belfast and Castlereagh DCU's in each year since 1998 together with the number of prosecutions and convictions relating to sexual offences and robberies in the period 2000 to 2003 (2000 being the earliest date and 2003 the most recent date for which this information is available). As prosecutions and convictions data cannot be linked to offences reported data, it is not possible to provide one as a meaningful percentage of the other.

Table 1: Number sexual offences and robberies reported

	East Belfast sexual offences	*East Belfast robberies*	*Castlereagh sexual offences*	*Castlereagh robberies*
1998–99	85	98	54	34
1999–2000	71	124	26	39
2000–01	48	132	35	50
2001–02	69	180	51	60
2002–03	51	241	43	98
2003–04	68	167	37	71
2004–05	104	72	21	43
Total	496	1014	268	395

Table 2: Number of persons prosecuted and convicted for sexual offences and robbery

	East Belfast DCU			
	Sexual Offences		*Robbery*	
	Prosecutions	*Convictions*	*Prosecutions*	*Convictions*
2000	9	5	15	15
2001	7	6	12	11
2002	9	2	14	14
2003	5	3	15	15
Total	30	16	56	55

	Castlereagh DCU			
	Sexual Offences		*Robbery*	
	Prosecutions	*Convictions*	*Prosecutions*	*Convictions*
2000	5	4	2	2
2001	5	4	4	3
2002	2	2	3	2
2003	3	2	3	3
Total	15	12	12	10

The data in table 2 are based on the police district command unit in which an offender's address falls.

Smoking Ban

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what assessment he has made of the impact on health inequalities of implementing the proposed ban on smoking in enclosed public places in Northern Ireland; [34723]

(2) what assessment he has made of the impact on health inequalities of implementing an *(a)* comprehensive and *(b)* partial ban on smoking in enclosed public places. [35006]

Mr. Woodward: Evidence from elsewhere suggests that, in addition to protecting the public and employees from exposure to second-hand smoke, comprehensive controls help to reduce smoking prevalence which is greater among lower socio-economic groups. During the course of my fact-finding visits to Dublin and New York in July, I was struck by the strength of the argument that partial controls would, in effect, create a two-tier work force whereby some employees would be protected and others would not.

There is widespread support for comprehensive controls in Northern Ireland with local trades' unions stressing the need to protect all of their members in the hospitality sector, many of whom are among the lower paid.

Sudden Cardiac Death

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the national service framework recommendations on sudden cardiac death; and what plans he has to implement them in the Province. [34652]

Mr. Woodward: The Department has not formally adopted the national service framework on coronary heart disease (NSFCHD), but recognises the need, as outlined in chapter 8 of the NSFCHD, to provide timely treatment to patients with irregular heart rhythm or who are at risk of sudden cardiac death. Many of these patients are young and may suffer from inherited cardiac disorders.

Services for people with inherited cardiac disorders are provided by consultants at the Regional Genetics Centre, Belfast City hospital, and a cardiologist at the Royal Group of Hospitals who has particular expertise in this area. Staff at the two trusts work together to provide quality care to patients and families affected by inherited cardiac disorders. They are currently exploring the potential of developing a more integrated service in line with recommendations contained in chapter 8 of the NSFCHD.

Talented Athlete Initiative

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what consideration has been given to introducing a programme in the Province similar to England's talented athlete support scheme. [33271]

Mr. Hanson: Athletes in Northern Ireland can access funding to support their development through their Governing Bodies in two ways:

(1) By inclusion in the athlete support scheme operated by the lottery.

(2) Under the Governing Body plan submitted to Sports Council for Northern Ireland's sports development unit.

The Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure, with Sports Council for Northern Ireland, is presently considering further arrangements for the identification of sporting talent. This is being addressed in the context of the strategy for sport and the Northern Ireland strategy for London 2012 Olympics and Paralympics.

Taxis

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average waiting time is in Northern Ireland for a taxi licence plate to be issued following a successful public service vehicle test. [34559]

Angela E. Smith: The average waiting time for issuing taxi plates following a successful public service vehicle test is eight days.

Water Rates

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how the system of water rates will be based on the level of local rates levied on a domestic property. [33494]

Mr. Woodward: Water charges will not be based on the level of local rates levied on a domestic property. However, it is planned that domestic water charges will be introduced from April 2007 on the basis of a hybrid charging regime. This will mean that separate charges for water and sewerage services will be based on a standing charge, together with a variable charge based on the discrete capital value of the property. The charges will be levied and collected by the water company and will be entirely separate from local rates.

The Valuation and Lands Agency (VLA) is currently valuing all domestic properties in Northern Ireland as part of the reform of the domestic rating system. The

capital value used in the calculation of water and sewerage charges will be the valuation determined by VLA.

Water Service Telemetry Centre

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what changes there have been in the number of staff working at the Water Service telemetry centre in Derry in each of the last three years; and what plans he has to re-locate the Water Service telemetry operations to one site. [33974]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Water Service (Mrs. Katherine Bryan) has been asked to write to the hon. Lady in response to this question.

Letter from Mrs. Katherine Bryan, dated 6 December 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about what changes there have been in the number of staff working at the Water Service telemetry centre in Derry in each of the last three years, and what plans he has to re-locate the Water Service telemetry operations to one site (33974). I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Water Service.

Water Service has four telemetry centres, based in Londonderry, Belfast, Ballymena and Craigavon, which monitor water and sewerage installations across Northern Ireland. There has been no change over the last three years to the number of Water Service staff working in the Londonderry telemetry unit based at Altnagelvin.

Following a review of telemetry operations, Water Service decided to centralise the telemetry function on one site to achieve efficiencies and standardisation of practices. This will be introduced through a phased approach with the four units reducing to two at Londonderry and Belfast in early 2006 and centralisation on one site in early 2007. The site for the centralised telemetry operation has not yet been identified. In conjunction with this centralisation the hardware and software of the telemetry monitoring system will be upgraded.

The centralisation of telemetry services will provide significant benefits for Water Service and its customers including standardised telemetry practice, improved monitoring services and savings on manpower costs.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 7 December 2005

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

HIV/AIDS

6. **Mark Lazarowicz:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what actions his Department is taking towards delivery of the 2010 target for universal access to antiretroviral treatment for HIV and AIDS agreed by the G8 at Gleneagles and confirmed at the UN World Summit. [34888]

Mr. Thomas: Together with UNAIDS we will co-chair a Global Steering Committee on Scaling Up Towards Universal Access, the first meeting will be held in January 2006 to plan the steps to achieve universal access. The Committee will deliver this plan to the high level UN General Assembly Special Session in June 2006.

13. **Michael Gove:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to tackle HIV/AIDS in the developing world. [34896]

Mr. Thomas: Over the next three years the UK will spend at least £1.5 billion to implement the UK strategy "Taking Action". This year, the UK has made AIDS a centrepiece of our G8 and EU presidencies, focusing on the importance of more and better aid for AIDS, maintaining HIV prevention momentum, and scaling up towards universal access to AIDS treatment by 2010.

As EU President the UK hosted a high-level meeting that launched the EU Statement on HIV Prevention for an AIDS Free Generation. The UK will co-chair with UNAIDS, the Global Steering Committee on scaling up towards universal access to enhance international action to meet the G8 and World summit agreement on AIDS.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what action his Department has taken to ensure delivery of the 2010 target for universal access to antiretroviral treatment for HIV and AIDS agreed by the G8 at Gleneagles and confirmed at the UN World summit; [33998]

(2) what steps his Department is taking to ensure delivery of the 2010 target for universal access to antiretroviral treatment for HIV and AIDS agreed by the G8 at Gleneagles and confirmed at the UN World summit. [33989]

Mr. Thomas: Gleneagles secured an important agreement

> "to develop and implement a package for HIV prevention, treatment and care, with the aim of as close as possible to universal access to treatment for all those who need it by 2010"'

Progress has been swift since Gleneagles. The universal access commitment was also agreed by members states at the Millennium summit in September. The UK convened a rapid follow-up meeting (2 September), bringing together members of the G8, developing countries, civil society, together with the Joint United Nations Programme for HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the World Health Organisation (WHO), the World Bank and UNICEF to start mapping out how to deliver against the commitment.

The 2 September meeting showed a strong, shared commitment to joint action and agreed that efforts must:

> be country-owned and country-led;
>
> develop a package which balances treatment, prevention and care—a comprehensive response is essential to achieve the ambitious 2010 goal;
>
> situate actions to achieve Universal Access in wider efforts to eradicate poverty, strengthening broader services, including health systems;
>
> involve all key players: civil society, private sector, donors and affected countries.

UNAIDS have been tasked with co-ordinating efforts and have now set up a Global Steering Committee (GSC), co-chaired by the UK and UNAIDS. The GSC will meet for the first time in Washington DC on 9/10 January 2006 and is expected to report to the High level UN General Assembly Special Session in mid 2006.

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to tackle HIV/AIDS in the developing world. [34820]

Mr. Thomas: The UK has made a strong commitment to tackling HIV and AIDS in the developing world. Globally we are the second largest bilateral funder of AIDS-related activities. Last year saw the publication of the UK's Strategy "Taking Action: The UK's strategy for tackling HIV and AIDS in the developing world". This commits DFID to spending at least £1.5 billion over the next three years, to step up the international response to AIDS, including spending to at least £150 million to meet the needs of children affected by AIDS. This year, the UK has made AIDS a centrepiece of our G8 and EU presidencies, focusing on the importance of more and better aid for AIDS, maintaining HIV prevention momentum, and scaling up towards universal access to AIDS treatment by 2010, with the ultimate aim of achieving an AIDS-free generation.

We secured a landmark agreement at Gleneagles

> "to develop and implement a package for HIV prevention, treatment and care, with the aim of as close as possible to universal access to treatment for all those who need it by 2010."

Progress has been swift since Gleneagles. The universal access commitment was also agreed by member states at the Millennium summit in September. The UK convened a rapid follow-up, bringing together members of the G8, developing countries, civil society, together with the Joint United Nations Programme for HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), the World Trade Organistaion (WHO), the World Bank and UNICEF to start mapping out how to deliver against the commitment.

UNAIDS have now set up a Global Steering Committee (GSC), co-chaired by the UK and UNAIDS. The GSC will meet for the first time on 9–10 January 2006 to discuss and prepare a plan of action to be considered at the high level UN General Assembly Special Session in June 2006.

In September 2005, the UK hosted the third and final Replenishment conference for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, chaired by UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan. The Secretary of State confirmed that the UK is doubling support for the global fund in 2006 and 2007 to £100 million in each of these two years. The UK's pledge amounted to 10 per cent. of the US $3.7 billion pledged to the global fund for the two-year period by international donor. The amount pledged by 29 donors represents more than half of the global fund's total resource needs for the two-year period.

The global fund conference also addressed the context within which the global fund operates. These discussions built on the 'Three Ones' principles and the UK co-hosted 'Making the Money Work' meeting, which had established a global task team (GTT) to improve AIDS co-ordination among multilateral and international donors. As a result of the GTT, the UK expects significant improvements in how the UN and international donors such as the global fund work together to support countries develop and lead effective responses to AIDS. To support this work, the UK doubled our contributions to UNAIDS for the next two years.

EU Ministers met in London on 30 November under the UK presidency, confirmed their commitment to increased prevention by issuing a statement on a vision for an AIDS free generation—the first pan-European pledge of its kind. The statement backs efforts to give people around the world better access to condoms and effective information. It advocates a comprehensive and evidence-based approach to HIV prevention including sexual and reproductive health information and services, harm reduction programmes for injecting drug users and reliable access to sexual reproductive health commodities.

For World AIDS day, the UK also published a cross-governmental briefing paper on harm reduction: "Tackling drug use and HIV in the developing world". This confirms the UK Government's commitment to harm reduction as an important part of the overall HIV prevention strategy in countries with serious HIV epidemics among injecting drug users, as well as in countries without serious HIV epidemics where harm reduction interventions help maintain low prevalence rates.

As part of our commitment towards stepping up efforts on HIV prevention, DFID announced on World AIDS day (1 December) that it is giving an extra £20 million to the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative, and £7.5 million to the International Programme on Microbicides. This re-affirms the UK's long-standing commitment to developing new prevention technologies, and brings our total investment in mircobicides to over £50 million.

G8 Commitments

7. **Ms Diana R. Johnson:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to implement the development commitments made at the G8 summit; and if he will make a statement. [34889]

Hilary Benn: The Government attach considerable importance to seeing that the Gleneagles commitments are fully implemented.

On Africa, we have already seen good progress on debt relief, tackling preventable diseases and HIV/AIDS, and promoting investment and infrastructure. But there is a great deal more still to do, so we are working closely with our G8 partners, other donors and African governments.

10. **Albert Owen:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how his Department intends to turn the commitments made at the G8 summit into action on development. [34893]

Hilary Benn: The Government attach considerable importance to seeing that the Gleneagles commitments are fully implemented.

On Africa, we have already seen good progress on debt relief, tackling preventable diseases and HIV/AIDS, and promoting investment and infrastructure. But there is a great deal more still to do, so we are working closely with our G8 partners, other donors and African governments.

WTO Negotiations

8. **Helen Goodman:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what development outcomes he aims to secure from the World Trade Organisation negotiations in Hong Kong. [34891]

Hilary Benn: The World Trade Organisation ministerial meeting being held next week in Hong Kong is an opportunity to make real progress on the Doha Development Round. We will be working hard to achieve the best possible result. We want an outcome which leads to global economic growth, including through better access to markets for developing countries, and in particular for the poorest nations in the world. We also want an outcome which reflects the Millennium Development Goals, and which allows the DDA to be completed during 2006.

Afghanistan

9. **Mr. MacDougall:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the humanitarian situation in Afghanistan. [34892]

Hilary Benn: Afghanistan has made remarkable progress over the last four years and with strong commitment from the Government of Afghanistan and the international community has moved away from a predominantly humanitarian situation. To date 3.5 million refugees have returned home, the number of functioning health clinics has increased by 60 per cent., and over 5 million children are now in school. Many Afghans however remain vulnerable. During the winter in particular many suffer the effects of nature, lacking basic elements of protection. The Government of Afghanistan have begun contingency planning and drawn up a work plan to help minimize the impact of this winter upon the most vulnerable through the provision of basic relief supplies. In line with Afghanistan's needs, DFID's support has evolved from

a humanitarian focus to supporting the Government in creating the conditions for sustainable development and poverty reduction.

14. **Mr. Llwyd:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much his Department spent in the re-building of the infrastructure in Afghanistan in each year since 2002; and if he will make a statement. [34897]

Hilary Benn: Since 2002, DFID has committed £35 million in support of the development of infrastructure in Afghanistan: £17 million of support through the National Solidarity Programme for small scale rural infrastructure; and £18 million to the National Rural Access Programme for roads construction and maintenance. Of this, £3 million was spent in 2004–05, £27 million will be spent in 2005–06 and £5 million is planned to be spent in 2006–07. Support to larger scale infrastructure is not a major focus of DFID's programme: we believe other donors are better placed to do it than DFID.

Latin America

11. **Chris Bryant:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his Department's funding for Latin America in 2005–06. [34894]

Mr. Thomas: DFID expects to provide £10.3 million to Latin America in 2005–06 through its bilateral programme and £36 million through centrally funded activities. In addition, DFID contributes to the expenditure of multilateral organisations in the region (£91 million in 2003, the last year for which data are available).

DFID's Regional Assistance Plan for Latin America 2004–07 sets the framework for its bilateral programme involvement in the region (copies are available in the Libraries of the House). Funding in 2005–06 comprises of regional programmes (£3.5 million) to tackle regional issues such as HIV/AIDS and to improve the impact of the Inter-American Development Bank and World Bank on poverty; and bilateral programmes in Nicaragua (£3.8 million), Bolivia (£1.5 million) and Brazil (£1.5 million). Programmes in Bolivia and Brazil are in their final year.

DFID centrally funded activities benefiting Latin America in 2005–06 include over £10 million for UK non-governmental organisations (NGOs) through the Civil Society Challenge Fund and the additional regional allocation for six Partnership Programme Arrangement NGOs; at least £1 million of research programmes; debt relief of £23 million; humanitarian relief of £250,000; and co-financing of the Global Conflict Reduction Pool (a total of £1.8 million from all Government Departments).

Gaza

12. **Mrs. Riordan:** To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to assist the Palestinian Authority to reopen the airport at Gaza. [34895]

Hilary Benn: The Government fully supports the work of the Quartet Special Envoy, James Wolfensohn, to ensure that Israeli Disengagement is a success. Mr. Wolfensohn has identified six priority areas for joint Israeli and Palestinian work on movement and access, which include the construction of an airport for Gaza. We welcome the 15 November agreement between the Palestinian Authority and the Government of Israel and their commitment to continuing discussions about restoring the airport. To lend support, the UK has seconded two experts to the Special Envoy's team to help move forward progress on Gaza disengagement.

Africa

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to improve food *(a)* productivity and *(b)* security in Africa on a sustainable basis. [33987]

Hilary Benn: DFID has always recognised the importance of agriculture to reducing poverty. A new DFID agricultural policy paper will be launched on shortly which will set out how we will do more and improve the benefits to poor people.

Examples of current support include:

Agricultural research to develop new technologies. We currently spend some £25 million per year on this.

Expansion of infrastructure to link producers to markets. Three out of five rural Africans live in areas with good agricultural potential but little access to markets. For example, we are providing $20 million to the Infrastructure Consortium for Africa, which will enable G8 and multilateral donors make more effective infrastructure investments.

Increasing public expenditure on agriculture and rural development such as crop and livestock services through support to Governments' central and agricultural budgets.

DFID has responded quickly to address hunger in the immediate term in Africa. This year we have provided £64 million through the UN, other agencies and some of the Governments in the region. Zimbabwe, Malawi, and Zambia are the worst-affected countries, although Mozambique, Lesotho and Swaziland also face shortages.

DFID is also helping to build longer term food security. For example, we are currently supporting a programme for 5 million people affected by chronic hunger in Ethiopia with £25 million per year. This programme provides regular payments of cash and food to 5 million chronically hungry people. This meets their immediate food needs but is also designed to help them climb out of poverty in the longer term, as it allows them to become more productive by purchasing assets such as seeds, goats or oxen, knowing they will still have a safety net in times of crisis. DFID proposes to scale up this national safety net approach for those affected by hunger in Malawi, Zambia, Lesotho, and Kenya over the next year.

Asian Tsunami

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent progress has been made in the relief effort for the areas affected by the Asian tsunami of December 2004; and if he will make a statement. [34543]

Mr. Thomas: The relief phase of the response has ended, and the international community is now supporting the affected Governments as they work towards the longer-term recovery and reconstruction of affected areas.

The UK allocated £75 million for the immediate humanitarian relief effort following the tsunami. A total of £68.7 million of this has been committed, while the remainder has been set aside for disaster risk reduction projects.

DFID allocated £65 million to meet reconstruction needs in the tsunami affected countries. From this allocation £31 million has been committed to the Multi Donor Trust Fund in Indonesia, of which £6 million has so far been paid out. A further £5 million has been committed for technical assistance in Indonesia to help ensure timely, accountable and equitable provision of reconstruction assistance and rebuilding of livelihoods. A total of £2 million has been committed to Sri Lanka to help speed up implementation of reconstruction programmes and to ensure equitable distribution of assistance, and £1.5 million of this has been allocated to the North East Provincial Council to increase their capacity to deliver services to affected communities.

A total of £3 million has been committed to India to provide technical assistance aimed at ensuring effective, transparent and equitable programming of tsunami reconstruction efforts. The use of the balance will depend on evidence of where this funding can be most appropriately used.

Bilateral Aid

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much and what proportion of his Department's spending on bilateral aid has been allocated to *(a)* Africa, *(b)* Sub-Saharan Africa, *(c)* Iraq and *(d)* Afghanistan in each year since 1997. [34842]

Hilary Benn: Details of DFID's spending on bilateral aid to Africa, Sub-Saharan Africa, Iraq and Afghanistan in each financial year since 1997 are set out in the following table along with the proportion that each represents of DFID's bilateral aid programme.

Bilateral aid to Africa, South of Sahara, Afghanistan and Iraq: 1997–98–2004–05

	£ (000)	As a percentage of total DFID bilateral aid
Africa		
1997–98	345,013	33.09
1998–99	445,966	38.39
1999–2000	493,779	37.12
2000–01	641,951	45.62
2001–02	575,912	8.10
2002–03	736,425	41.11
2003–04	710,820	36.25
2004–05	867,477	40.45
Of which: South of Sahara		
1997–98	332,793	31.92
1998–99	432,290	37.21
1999–2000	484,083	36.39
2000–01	626,024	44.49
2001–02	532,506	35.23
2002–03	699,759	39.06
2003–04	671,584	34.25
2004–05	825,228	38.48

Bilateral aid to Africa, South of Sahara, Afghanistan and Iraq: 1997–98–2004–05

	£ (000)	As a percentage of total DFID bilateral aid
Iraq		
1997–98	3,351	0.32
1998–99	5,749	0.49
1999–2000	6,585	0.50
2000–01	9,545	0.68
2001–02	7,760	0.51
2002–03	18,853	1.05
2003–04	209,313	10.68
2004–05	49,107	2.29
Afghanistan		
1997–98	6,873	0.66
1998–99	3,873	0.33
1999–2000	5,262	0.40
2000–01	7,047	0.50
2001–02	49,996	3.31
2002–03	74,546	4.16
2003–04	79,683	4.06
2004–05	79,589	3.71

Source:
Statistics on International Development

Commonwealth Development Corporation

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the total amount of compensation paid to *(a)* UK and *(b)* foreign employees of CDC/the Commonwealth Development Corporation has been since 1997; if he will list the cases concerned; and how much was awarded in each case. [33806]

Hilary Benn: There were four deaths of Commonwealth Development Corporation (CDC) employees in service during this period, all due to medical conditions. They received normal death-in-service payments of four times their salary, spouse pension and child allowance where appropriate. There were five medical retirements of CDC employees during the period, who received accelerated medical pensions from the CDC pension scheme. The exact details of these cases are confidential.

One employee left the CDC with a stress related illness and received a compensation payment of £10,300.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the team-building exercises undertaken by CDC/the Commonwealth Development Corporation since 1997; and what the cost was of each such exercise. [33807]

Hilary Benn: I refer the member for Hemel Hempstead to the reply given on 4 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 1775W.

Information prior to 2002, covering the former Commonwealth Development Corporation from 1997 to 1999, and CDC Group plc since 1999, is not readily available. There has been no expenditure on team-building by the CDC since June 2004.

Departmental Expenditure

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much the Department and its agencies have spent on *(a)* the design and production of new logos and *(b)* employing external (i) public relations and (ii) graphic design agencies in each year since 2000, broken down by project. [33221]

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Mr. Thomas: The Department for International Development (DFID) has spent nothing on the design and production of new logos; or on public relations in the years in question. Spending on graphic design agencies are as follows:

£

	2003-04	2004-05	2005-06
Booklets	156,087	866,305	140,033
Departmental report	83,439	54,566	58,180
Posters	905	1,679	—
Developments magazine	283,285	314,454	288,835
Web	—	2,406	—
Total	523,716	1,239,410	487,048

Owing to changes in the DFID accounting system figures for the years 2000–01 to 2002–03 could be extracted only by incurring a disproportionate cost.

Departmental Projects

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many projects his Department is engaged in; in which developing countries; and at what total cost. [34656]

Hilary Benn: DFID's Performance Reporting Information System for Management (PRISM) contains details of our current portfolio of projects and programmes. There are currently over 3,300 projects/programmes shown as operational on the system. The total commitment value of these projects/programmes is £9 billion.

Within the portfolio we have projects/programmes operational in 130 countries. There are also a number of projects/programmes focused on regions and in some cases these will benefit countries not included above.

Note:

The figures given exclude core funding provided by DFID to multilateral agencies.

Information on the amount of money spent in different countries by year can be found in DFID's annual publication 'Statistics on International Development'. The 2005 edition was published in October and is available from DFID's website address at: www.dfid.gov.uk and in the Libraries of the House.

Departmental Tendering Policy

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his policy is on including *(a)* ethical and *(b)* environmental factors in tenders for services. [32335]

Mr. Thomas: DFID expects to let all its contracts in accordance with ethical principles, and would consider any case where evidence to the contrary was presented. All DFID initiatives over £1 million are automatically subject to environmental screening processes. DFID purchasing staff and procurement agents are required to follow DFID's environmental procurement policy, which is in line with UK policy on sustainable procurement.

Free Trade

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to promote free trade; and if he will make a statement. [34821]

Mr. Thomas: The UK Government are committed to the development of an open and rules-based international trading system that fulfils its potential to contribute to the reduction of poverty in poorer countries. Our key policy commitments on trade and development, as well as our objectives for the current Round of multilateral trade talks, are set out in the Government's White Papers, Making Globalisation a Force for Good (July 2004) and Eliminating World Poverty: Making Globalisation Work for the Poor (December 2000). The UK Government are working hard to support the poorest and most vulnerable producers, be it through multilateral negotiations in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) or regional trade agreements such as the Economic Partnership Agreements.

The UK Government do not support forced liberalisation or unfettered free trade but trade that is fair as well as free. The UK Government supports the view that developing countries need to decide on the timing, pace and sequencing of any market opening in line with their own national development and poverty reduction plans. In the context of the WTO negotiations we are firmly committed to ensuring that developing countries are given appropriate flexibility to adjust to trade reforms.

In the longterm, the removal of trade barriers, if managed properly, can help developing countries gain better access to developed country markets and more competitively priced inputs. By increasing Aid for Trade, (AFT) the UK hopes to help poorer countries seize the opportunities presented by more open markets. DFID will treble its support to £100 million a year by 2010 to help boost poor countries' capacity to trade. This shows the UK re-affirming the commitment at the G8 summit to help developing countries trade their way out of poverty.

At the WTO ministerial in Hong Kong we are working with international partners to deliver on the ambition of Doha and build on G8 commitments. The UK Government are working to achieve an outcome that delivers real gains for developing countries, including the poorest.

Global Fund

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with his G8 colleagues about funding for the Global Fund since the London conference on 5 and 6 September 2005, what assessment he has made about the level of money pledged to the Global Funds as a result of the London conference; what firm pledges have been received from donor countries to the Global Fund who were unable to make commitments at the London conference; and if he will make a statement on the UK's commitment to the Global Fund. [33994]

Mr. Thomas: Since the London Replenishment Conference for the Global Fund, the UK has continued discussions with G8 partners, through G8 officials'

meetings, to ensure that the Gleneagles commitment to the Global Fund is met. We will also re-double our efforts to make Global Fund resources work better and demonstrate good results. This is crucial if the Global Fund is to widen its funding base and achieve the longer term sustainability it needs.

At the London conference, donors pledged US$ 3.7 billion for the two-year period 2006–2007, more than half the estimated US $7 billion needed to replenish the Global Fund for this period. This is a significant achievement which has enabled all existing Global Fund projects to continue plus provided funding for a small number of new projects. The Replenishment conference also focused on improving the Global Fund performance at global and country level. To make the Global Fund's money work effectively, the UK also pledged at the Replenishment conference, to double our contribution to the Joint United Nations Programme for HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) from £8 million to £16 million for the financial year 2005–6. Replenishment of the Global Fund is an on-going process. A follow-up Conference will be held in June 2006 to secure additional pledges.

Donors who were unable to make pledges at the London conference (due to their funding cycles) included Canada, the US and the EC. Since the conference, Canada announced a firm pledge of Can$ 250 million (around US$ 213 million) (this was included in the US$ 3.7 billion pledging figure). The US House and Senate Conference Committee have now approved US$ 450 million for the Global Fund for 2006. This is US$150 million more than was anticipated in London. In addition, the US may appropriate more through the forthcoming Health and Human Services Bill. The European Commission's 2006 budget is still being finalised and the Financial Perspectives governing the budget from 2007 are yet to be agreed. Currently the European Union (including the Commission and members states) has pledged almost 60 per cent. of the commitments made at the conference to the Global Fund's finances for 2006 and 2007.

At the Replenishment Conference, the UK doubled its funding to the Global Fund from £51 million for 2006 and £51 million in 2007, to £100 million for 2006 and £100 million for 2007. Our contribution amounted to some 10 per cent. of the total US$3.7 billion pledged. Overall the UK has pledged 359 million (US$ 640 million) to the Global Fund over seven years (2002–08). DFID will continue to encourage donors to do as much as they can to substantially increase their contributions to the Global Fund.

Global Tariffs

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the likely implications for developing countries of President Bush's recent comments on reducing global tariffs. [34882]

Mr. Thomas: DFID would welcome moves to reduce tariffs, subsidies and other barriers to the free flow of goods and services. The UK has made assessments based on studies from the World Bank, the United Nations and the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) that suggest substantial gains for developing countries resulting from developed country liberalisation of agricultural and industrial trade. Of course, the level of gains for developing countries depends on the level of reform in developed country agriculture policies and liberalisation efforts undertaken by developing countries themselves. If the current round of trade talks are really to deliver their Development objectives, then clearly, as the Prime Minister has said, all sides need to move further and allow poor countries to trade their way out of poverty.

Humanitarian/Reconstruction Assistance

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much and what proportion of his Department's spending has been allocated to humanitarian and reconstruction assistance in *(a)* Africa, *(b)* Sub-Saharan Africa, *(c)* Iraq and *(d)* Afghanistan in each year since 1997. [34843]

Hilary Benn: The amounts and proportion of DFID spending allocated to humanitarian assistance in Africa, sub-Saharan Africa, Iraq and Afghanistan are shown in the table.

DFID does not centrally track specific expenditure on reconstruction assistance. It would incur a disproportionate cost for all country offices to undertake this analysis.

	Humanitarian assistance (£000)	*Total bilateral DFID spend (£000)*	*Proportion of spend as humanitarian assistance (percentage)*
(a) Africa			
1997–98	24,195	345,013	7
1998–99	46,251	445,966	10
1999–2000	32,001	493,779	6
2000–01	65,010	641,951	10
2001–02	44,218	575,912	8
2002–03	155,096	736,425	21
2003–04	124,188	710,820	17
2004–05	172,659	867,477	20
(b) Sub-Saharan Africa			
1997–98	23,952	332,793	7
1998–99	45,913	432,290	11
1999–2000	31,558	484,083	7
2000–01	59,208	626,024	9
2001–02	43,656	532,506	8
2002–03	154,352	699,759	22
2003–04	122,429	671,584	18
2004–05	170,727	825,228	21
(c) Afghanistan			
1997–98	6,685	6,873	97
1998–99	2,579	3,873	67
1999–2000	4,917	5,262	93
2000–01	6,563	7,047	93
2001–02	49,943	49,996	100
2002–03	44,219	74,546	59
2003–04	10,385	79,683	13
2004–05	7,067	79,589	9
(d) Iraq			
1997–98	3,351	3,351	100
1998–99	5,749	5,749	100
1999–2000	6,585	6,585	100
2000–01	9,545	9,545	100

	Humanitarian assistance (£000)	Total bilateral DFID spend (£000)	Proportion of spend as humanitarian assistance (percentage)
2001–02	7,760	7,760	100
2002–03	18,853	18,853	100
2003–04	110,052	209,313	53
2004–05	21,383	49,107	44

Maladministration

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many payments for maladministration have been made by *(a)* his Department, *(b)* its agencies, *(c)* its non-departmental public bodies and *(d)* other bodies for which his Department has responsibility in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [32242]

Hilary Benn: It is the policy of DFID to make financial redress for maladministration in accordance with the guidance set out in Chapter 18.7 and Annexes 18.1 and 18.2 of Government Accounting.

The number of payments made by DFID in each of the last five years is set out in the following table. It should be noted that of these cases, over the five year period, only six related to DFID operation, the remaining majority related to payments to pensioners and dependants through the Overseas Superannuation Department:

DFID	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Department	4	21	6	7	12
Agencies[1]	—	—	—	—	—
NDPBs[1]	—	—	—	—	—
Bodies sponsored by Department[1]	—	—	—	—	—

[1] DFID has no agencies, non-departmental public bodies, or other bodies for which it has responsibility, to be included in this report.

Malawi

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the UK has taken *(a)* to respond to (i) the food shortages and (ii) other humanitarian needs in Malawi and *(b)* prevent further food crisis in the country in 2006. [33988]

Hilary Benn: The UK Government have contributed £18.2 million to address Malawi's food shortages this year. These funds will pay for around 55,000 tons of maize with pulses and oil to provide a balanced diet. This food will be distributed with the help of non-governmental organisations on the ground to poor people whose harvests have failed and who do not have money to buy food. Our funds also paid options for the Government of Malawi on a further 60,000 tons of maize, the purchase of seeds for the harvest in 2006 and Government capacity building, including financing a logistics unit to distribute food on behalf of the Government.

On other humanitarian requirements, the UK Government are providing support to UNICEF for the treatment of severely malnourished children. In addition, the £100 million that the UK Government are contributing to the health sector over six years is helping to address related health problems, such as cholera outbreaks, which have been dealt with successfully.

The prospects for food production in 2006 depend principally on the weather, for which the long-term forecasts are encouraging. The UK and other donors are meeting with the Government of Malawi on 7 and 8 December to examine the effectiveness of existing policies for agriculture and safety nets and to identify new approaches that will be more effective in addressing the underlying problems through faster growth and better support to reduce chronic problems of hunger.

Millennium Development Goals

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the answer of 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 473W, on the Millennium Development Goals, by how much each of the targets are likely to be achieved or missed. [34734]

Mr. Thomas: Globally, the Millennium Development Goals (MDG) targets for reducing extreme poverty by half, for equal enrolment of girls and boys in primary school, and for halving the proportion of people without access to improved drinking water are on track to be met by 2015.

The target to halt and reverse the spread of HIV/AIDS is off track.

Progress towards the other targets is reported as 'lagging' by the United Nations Statistics Division. Progress is being made, but not fast enough to reach the targets by 2015.

For all the goals, progress is varied across the globe. Sub-Saharan Africa is not on track to meet any of the goals. The number of people living on less than $1 a day in Sub-Saharan Africa increased from 227 million in 1990, to 313 million in 2001, while numbers decreased from 936 million to 703 million in Asia, due to sustained growth in China and acceleration of the economy in India.

Pakistan

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the Government have taken to hasten the release of aid containers for the areas affected by earthquake from retention by Pakistani customs. [34542]

Mr. Thomas: DFID is not aware of any widespread concerns about aid being held up, although we are aware that a consignment from an Irish non-governmental organisation has been held up during the

customs clearance process. The United Nations are supporting the organisation concerned in approaching the Pakistan authorities to have the supplies cleared.

Race Equality Impact Assessments

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many Race Equality Impact Assessments his Department completed between *(a)* April 2004 and March 2005 and *(b)* April 2005 and November 2005; and how many assessments in each period resulted in a change of policy. [32823]

Mr. Thomas: The information requested is provided in the following table:

	Number of race equality impact assessments	*How many resulted in a change of policy*
April 2004 to March 2005	0	0
April 2005 to November 2005	1	[1]0

[1] Impact assessment currently underway—outcome still uncertain.

Sick Leave

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many of his Department's employees who are within one year of the official retirement age are on extended sick leave. [32593]

Mr. Thomas: None of DFID's employees who are within one year of the official retirement age are on extended sick leave. The official retirement age within DFID is 60, although staff may choose to serve on until age 65, subject to continued capability and satisfactory service. My Department is committed to managing sickness absence effectively and to putting in place the recommendations of the 2004 "Managing Sickness Absence in the Public Sector" report to reduce long-term sickness absence.

St. Helena

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the expenditure by the UK Government on conservation of St. Helena's biodiversity has been in each year since 1997. [34082]

Mr. Thomas: DFID does not keep statistics that separate out conservation of biodiversity from other conservation work on St. Helena.

DFID provides St. Helena with funding through both direct budget support (to fund the budget deficit) and through development aid projects. St. Helena Government's expenditure in each financial year on conservation is shown in the following table, and this includes DFID funding in the form of direct budget support.

£

	St. Helena Government conservation budget
1997–98	67,614
1998–99	68,821
1999–2000	66,977
2000–01	70,323
2001–02	69,373
2002–03	72,893
2003–04	76,818
2004–05	75,090

In addition, the joint DFID/FCO Overseas Territories Environment Programme (total budget £1.5 million over three years), a development aid project that covers all the UK Overseas Territories, spent £67,311 in 2004–05 and £41,000 in the current financial year on projects in St. Helena.

A number of development aid infrastructure projects funded by DFID on the island also contribute directly and indirectly to the conservation of the island's biodiversity: the Drip Irrigation Project (£198,000 over three years) and Water Development Phase II Project (£1.25 million over five years) being good examples. The development aid programme has also included projects on forestry, water catchment, fishing, flora conservation and rodent control during the period.

St. Helena has also received modest amounts of financial support for conservation from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Environmental Fund, the Worldwide Fund for Nature and the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Many activities under a United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) Tourism Project also involve aspects of conservation.

Trade Barriers

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to encourage the EU to reform its agricultural policies to remove the trade barriers affecting developing countries. [34441]

Mr. Thomas: The Government acknowledges the damaging impact that dumping and trade-distorting subsidies have on developing countries, particularly on their agriculture sectors. We fully support the commitment made at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Doha ministerial meeting in 2001, which agreed that agriculture negotiations would aim to achieve: substantial improvements in market access; reductions of, with a view to phasing out, all forms of export subsidies; and substantial reductions in trade-distorting domestic support.

The package of reforms to the EU's common agricultural policy (CAP) agreed in June 2003 and May 2004 mark a significant shift in the EU's agricultural policy. The de-coupling of subsidies from production should connect European farmers much more closely to the market and have real impacts on reducing excessive production, which harms developing countries. The Government will continue to be at the forefront of those pushing for further reform of the EU's agricultural policy and I welcome the fact that the EU Commission

has reaffirmed its commitment to ensuring that the EU plays a full and constructive role in the WTO agriculture negotiations. I also welcome the commitment in the WTO to agree to set an end date for all export supports.

The Doha Development Agenda and specifically the WTO ministerial conference in Hong Kong represent an important opportunity to make a significant contribution to reducing global poverty. The UK Government are working to achieve an outcome that delivers real gains for developing countries, including the poorest. These gains should include improved participation by developing countries in the world trading system, through substantially increased market access for developing countries and the dismantling of trade-distorting agricultural subsidies by industrialised countries.

UN Population Fund

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females are employed by the United Nations Population Fund in India; and what their core duties are. [34747]

Mr. Thomas: DFID does not provide funding in country to the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and as such does not have any influence on or knowledge of the numbers of staff it has. This question should therefore more appropriately be addressed to the UNFPA in India directly.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether the United Nations Population Fund is involved in sex selection abortions in India; and if he will make a statement. [34748]

Mr. Thomas: Sex selection abortions are illegal in India. The Pre-Conception & Pre-Natal Diagnostic Techniques (Prohibition of Sex Selection) Act and Rules 1994 (amended 2002) prohibit sex selection by any means, before or after conception.

The United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) in India has a mandate to promote gender equality and to address practices that harm women. As such the UNFPA is working closely with the Government of India to support them in implementing the Prohibition of Sex Selection Act.

The UNFPA's support takes the form of public advocacy campaigns targeted at policy-makers and the public in order to raise awareness of gender imbalance across India as a result of illegal sex selection practices. The UNFPA has been intensifying its awareness-raising efforts recently to include the media and entertainment industries.

Further information on UNFPA's work on this issue in India can be obtained by contacting them directly: www.unfpa.org

PRIME MINISTER

Correspondence

Sarah Teather: To ask the Prime Minister when he will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Brent East dated 7 July on behalf of Ms Susan Llewellyn. [33859]

The Prime Minister: My Office has informed the office of the hon. Member that the letter has not been received.

Departmental Tendering Policy

Martin Horwood: To ask the Prime Minister what his policy is on including *(a)* ethical and *(b)* environmental factors in tenders for his Office's services. [33339]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my Office forms part of the Cabinet Office. I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him on 6 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1128W by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office (Jim Murphy).

Donated Asset Reserve

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the 20 most expensive gifts he has received which are held as part of the donated asset reserve. [34357]

The Prime Minister: The Government has published an annual list of gifts received by Ministers in an official capacity valued at more than £140 since 2001. Copies of the lists are available in the Libraries of the House. The list makes clear which gifts are held by Government Departments.

Meetings

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Prime Minister when he last met the Prime Minister of Canada; and what was discussed. [34702]

The Prime Minister: I last met the Canadian Prime Minister, Paul Martin, at the G8 summit at Gleneagles in July. We discussed a wide range of issues including those on the G8 agenda: Africa, climate change and the Middle East Peace Process. For further details I refer my hon. Friend to the No. 10 website.

I also held a video-conference with the Canadian Prime Minister, in my capacity as presidency of the European Union, on 24 November. We discussed a range of issues including the Canada/EU strategic partnership. I refer my hon. Friend to the joint statement made after the conference. This is available on the No. 10 website.

Ministerial Pensions

Gregory Barker: To ask the Prime Minister (1) what the value of his ministerial pension is expected to be at the end of *(a)* November 2005, *(b)* December 2005 and *(c)* December 2006; and if he will make a statement; [34810]

(2) what the total cost of contributions to his ministerial pension has been since 1997; [34811]

(3) how much from public funds has been used to fund his ministerial pension in each month since 1997. [34812]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) on 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1245W.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Corporate Responsibility

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on her policies to promote corporate responsibility. [35031]

Mr. Morley: The Department for Trade and Industry has primary responsibility for corporate responsibility issues.

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) works to improve the UK's environmental performance, including that of UK business. This is a particularly important theme of DEFRA's strategic priority on sustainable consumption and production.

On the narrower issue of corporate responsibility, we will shortly publish "Environmental Key Performance Indicators: Reporting Guidelines for UK Business". These guidelines will assist companies in fulfilling their obligations for an enhanced business review under the EU accounts modernisation directive, and in producing sustainability, corporate responsibility or environmental reports.

DEFRA also promotes robust and credible environmental management systems (EMSs). In September 2005, we published a position statement setting out the qualities of a good EMS, and the steps Government are taking to encourage wider take up of these.

GM Crops

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the latest advice being offered by the Department is on separation distances between genetically modified (GM) and non-GM crops. [35105]

Mr. Morley: No GM crops are currently being grown in the UK. We will issue a consultation paper in due course on proposals to manage the co-existence of GM and non-GM crops. This will include proposed separation distances reflecting the latest scientific evidence.

Opinion Polls

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the *(a)* subject matter and *(b)* dates were of opinion survey research undertaken by the Department since its inception; if she will place copies of the results of each survey in the Library; which companies were used in conducting the research; and how much each was paid. [27919]

Jim Knight: Since inception, Defra's Communications Directorate has commissioned an omnibus tracking survey to measure public awareness of DEFRA, knowledge of its responsibilities and opinions on its performance.

Surveys conducted as follows;

Date	*Company*	*Cost (£)*
February 2002	Taylor Nelson Sofres	42,000
April 2004	Taylor Nelson Sofres	14,950
October 2005	Taylor Nelson Sofres	26,000

Copies of all three surveys will be available in the Library.

River Beds (Ownership)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the ownership status of a river bed is where both banks are in private ownership. [33891]

Mr. Morley: A riparian owner (a landowner with a frontage along a watercourse) is presumed to own the land up to the centre of the watercourse, unless it is known to be owned by others. If the watercourse flows through land where the owner owns both banks, then the presumption will be that that the owner owns the whole of the bed.

The presumption may be displaced by actual proof that the riparian owner does not own the bed. This may occur when the land adjoining the watercourse has been sold without the vendor conveying his part of the bed as a result of an oversight in conveyancing. Sometimes the bed itself may be bought separately from the adjoining land, perhaps to allow access by boat to other land owned by the purchaser. In other cases the ownership of the bed is vested in, for example, the navigation authority by a local Act of Parliament in order to give control over the use of the river.

School Milk

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs why the Rural Payments Agency's inspection report on the operation of the school milk subsidy scheme on the Isle of Wight has not been published; and if she will place a copy in the Library. [35440]

Jim Knight: The Rural Payments Agency (RPA) is dealing with a request for information under the Freedom of Information Act from the Dairy Products Champion for the south east region, which includes making available the inspection report of the school milk subsidy scheme on the Isle of Wight. The report will be made available in the next few days.

A copy of the report will be placed in the Library of the House.

SSSI Sites (Stroud)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list sites of special scientific interest in Stroud constituency. [35179]

Jim Knight: There are 25 sites of special scientific interest in the Stroud constituency. Details of those sites are set out in the following table.

Site	Area in Stroud constituency (ha)
Box Farm Meadows	8.29
Bull Cross, The Frith and Juniper Hill	40.51
Coaley Wood Quarries	4.96
Cotswold Commons and Beechwoods	518.05
Daneway Banks	16.95
Easter Park Farm Quarry	0.14
Edge Common	20.94
Frampton Pools	60.60
Haresfield Beacon	0.80
Hucclecote Meadows	2.39
Kingscote and Horsley Woods	14.64
Minchinhampton Common	193.98
Nibley Knoll	3.05
Purton Passage	4.79
Range Farm Fields	12.97
Rodborough Common	109.54
Rough Bank, Miserden	9.14
Selsley Common	39.87
Severn Estuary	644.68
Stinchcombe Hill	25.72
Strawberry Banks	5.08
Swift's Hill	9.48
Upper Severn Estuary	822.35
Woodchester Park	220.90
Wotton Hill	5.66
Total area (ha):	2795.50

MINISTER FOR WOMEN

Company Boards

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what steps she is taking to assist women in reaching more senior positions on company boards. [34645]

Meg Munn: Government take improving board effectiveness very seriously and that's why it is vital to encourage more women into the senior roles and ultimately, top executive positions. This year's female FTSE 100 report revealed that 78 FTSE 100 companies now have women directors, up 13 per cent. from last year.

However, there is still more work to be done which is why Government support initiatives such as the FTSE 100 cross company mentoring scheme—'Women Directors on Boards', which is backed by 29 Chairman and CEOs.

"Building Better Boards", published by the DTI one year ago, spells out the business case for diversity and the different ways in which companies can recruit and develop and a wider range of talent.

Non-working Mothers

Mr. Bone: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what measures the Government propose to take to encourage women to stay at home and look after their children rather than returning to work. [33640]

Meg Munn: Parents are the best people to make decisions about the interests of their children. The Government's role is to support families and to ensure they have meaningful choices about how they live their lives. The core aim of the Work and Families Bill is about helping to give children the best start in life and how to enable all families to have genuine choices about how they balance their work and family caring responsibilities.

The 2005 budget announced a commitment to increase the child element of child tax credit at least in line with average earnings up to and including 2007–08. It is currently worth up to £1,690 a year per child, benefiting 7 million children in 3.6 million families.

Pension Inequality

Stephen Hesford: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality what recent steps the Government have taken to tackle women's pension inequality. [35170]

Meg Munn: The Department for Work and pensions published a report entitled 'Women and pensions: The evidence' in November. This will inform the ongoing National Pensions Debate.

The Pensions commission published their report on 30 November 2005, and we will wish to analyse the evidence and consider the options and recommendations put forward by the commission and involve every section of our community as we work towards the publication of a White Paper in the spring.

This will help us to build on the achievements we have already made in lifting £1.9 million pensioners out of absolute low income 1.3 million of whom are women.

Student Loans

Mr. McGovern: To ask the Minister for Women and Equality whether the provision of student loans for postgraduate students will be covered by the clauses of the Equality Bill on age discrimination. [33959]

Meg Munn *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* There are currently no clauses in the Equality Bill on age discrimination. Age discrimination in the provision of goods, facilities and services is currently being considered as part of the Discrimination Law Review, announced in February. We expect to publish a Green Paper in late spring 2006.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Departmental Finance

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the real terms percentage increase in allocated resources for his Department *(a)* was for the period 1997–98 to 2004–05 and *(b)* is estimated to be between 2005–06 and 2007–08 (i) for each period and (ii) for each year. [31041]

Alan Johnson: The information requested is as follows.

(a) The real terms percentage increase in allocated resources for the Department of Trade and Industry for period 1997–98 to 2004–05 was 5 per cent.

(b) The estimated real terms increase in allocated resources for the Department of Trade and Industry between 2005–06 and 2007–08:

(i) is estimated to be 3 per cent. on average over the period 2005 to 2008; and

(ii) for each year is estimated to be a 7 per cent. increase in 2005–06 over 2004–05, a 1 per cent. increase in 2006–07 over 2005–06 and a 2 per cent. increase in 2007–08 over 2006–07.

Departmental Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many staff in his Department have been relocated into London and the South East in each of the last five years for which records are available. [31741]

Alan Johnson: The Department does not hold records on staff that have been relocated into London and the South East in each of the last five years. Following the Lyons Review of Public Sector Relocation and the Spending Review 2004 the Government set Departments targets to relocate 20,000 posts from London and the South East by 2010. The Department has committed to relocate 685 posts by 2010 and 194 posts had been relocated by end October 2005.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to relocate staff in his Department and related agencies into London and the South East. [31748]

Alan Johnson: The Department has no plans to relocate staff in the Department and related agencies into London and the South East. Following the Lyons Review of Public Sector Relocation and the Spending Review 2004, the Government set Departments targets to relocate 20,000 posts from London and the South East by 2010. The Department has committed to relocate 685 posts by 2010 and 194 of these posts had been relocated by end of October 2005.

Doha Trade Talks

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recommendations he will be proposing on agricultural tariffs to the Doha trade round talks in Hong Kong. [33641]

Ian Pearson: The Government's long-term goal is to abolish progressively all barriers to agricultural trade in the forms of both tariffs and quotas. The Government aims to take an important step towards this goal through the Doha Development Agenda.

The European Commission negotiates in the World Trade Organisation on behalf of the European Union's 25 member states, within the parameters of a negotiating mandate laid out in a succession of council conclusions.

Export Credits Guarantee Department

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many investigations into companies have been undertaken by the Export Credits Guarantee Department (ECGD) in each of the last five years; and what steps the ECGD takes following an allegation of corruption or bribery against a company to which it has provided guarantee support. [33930]

Ian Pearson: ECGD makes Inquiries appropriate to each case before providing support for a transaction. ECGD reports any allegations of wrongdoing, or other suspicious circumstances which come to its attention, to the appropriate investigatory authorities, where a decision can be made regarding investigation by the appropriate criminal investigative bodies. ECGD has made enquiries in two instances, in 2003–4 and 2004–5, where companies have been convicted or admitted to bribery.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many export credit guarantees have been entered into by subsidiaries of Halliburton since 2004; what the terms were of the deals for each of these guarantees; and if he will make a statement. [33932]

Ian Pearson: I refer the hon Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Twickenham (Dr. Cable) on 22 February 2005, *Official Report*, column 556W. ECGD has not provided any guarantees for subsidiaries of Halliburton since 2004.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for which transactions related to agent's commissions the Export Credit Guarantee Department (ECGD) requested an independent value for money check in each of the last 10 years; which countries were involved in each such transaction; what the value of each of the relevant contracts was; which exporters were involved in the transactions; and what conclusion the ECGD reached in each case. [33962]

Ian Pearson: ECGD does not carry out independent value for money checks of the amount of agent's commission. Where there is agent's commission payable, in respect of transactions for which ECGD support is being requested, the Department has a system in place for checking the legality of any such agent's commission and whether the amounts involved conform with normal market practice in the country concerned. ECGD also reserves the right to ask further questions of the exporter if the level of the agent's commission appears excessive compared to the services being provided.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the sum is of Nigeria's debt to the UK Export Credits Guarantee Department which is scheduled to be removed by arrears payments and buy-backs by Nigeria and cancellation by the Government by April 2006; what the purpose of the loans was; and who the original lenders were. [34178]

Ian Pearson: The total debt owed to ECGD by Nigeria, which is the subject of the latest debt agreement, is £3.4 billion plus US$1.8 billion.

The majority of this debt, relating to a number of large capital goods contracts and diverse smaller, short-term business, accrued during the 1980s debt crisis. Because it arose from ECGD support for many thousands of contracts and hundreds of exporters, details about individual contracts could be supplied only at disproportionate cost.

Female Business Women

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department is taking to encourage women to start their own businesses. [34693]

Alun Michael: In every area it is the role of the local Business Link to advise and signpost women to the range of help and support that is now available to them. The Government are developing the economic argument for Women's Enterprise and earlier this year published the booklet, "Promoting Female Entrepreneurship", which captures headline facts and has been used to stimulate thinking across Government and the regional development agencies.

The Government have been working with partners within the Business Support arena to improve understanding of the support requirements of female entrepreneurs. This has resulted in a training programme for Business Link advisers called 'the Case', which is currently being rolled out and completes early next year.

In October 2004 the Government reinforced their commitment to Women's Enterprise development with joint Hewitt/Brown formation of the Women's Enterprise Panel. The panel has: (i) developed an action plan to achieve a target of 20 per cent. female business ownership; and (ii) made a recommendation to Government to establish a National Women's Enterprise Task Force.

The Government are working with the British Bankers Association to raise awareness of the full range of finance options available to female entrepreneurs.

There is now a cross-Regional Development Agencies Group on Women's Enterprise. We also have an ongoing programme of work with RDAs and Black and Minority Ethnic women's networks to ensure that women from ethnic minority communities have improved access to Business Support.

To give just one local example, in Coventry, Leigh-Anne Kirby and Lisa Tedds with help from Business Link, the Women's Business Development Agency and the Prince's Trust have successfully set up their Children's Activity Centre business called Monster Mayhem.

There are over 40,000 more women in self-employment now than in spring 1997.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the number of companies with women on their boards. [34694]

Meg Munn: The Female FTSE figures for 2005 were published in November and showed an increase in the number of women on the boards of FTSE 1,000 companies. This index revealed that 78 companies have women on their boards and reflects an increase of 13 per cent. since 2004. Women now make up 10.5 per cent. of board members compared to 5.8 per cent. in 2000.

Similar information for other companies is not available.

Flexitime Rules

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proportion of staff in his Department have flexitime included as a provision of their contract of employment. [28731]

Alan Johnson: Staff appointment contracts set out the total number of hours that staff are required to work and do not include specific provisions for flexitime working. It is a matter for local agreement how these hours are worked, either on the flexibility of start and finish times or allowing staff to work a more formal flexible working hours scheme-so long as an agreed central core time is worked each day and conditioned hours worked each week. Since it is a matter of local agreement, the Department does not keep a central record of those staff who work under a formal flexible working hours scheme. Information on each member of staffs local flexible working arrangements could therefore only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Literacy and Numeracy

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many employees in his Department requested training to improve their *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy skills in each year since 2002. [23414]

Alan Johnson: Figures for literacy and numeracy take up in the Department are not held centrally. These items are discussed and dealt with locally in each group within DTI. Individuals discuss and review their training and development needs with their line managers as part of the performance management process. Any skills gaps in literacy or numeracy are identified and the appropriate help in a number of ways, for example, through training courses, on the job training or the Skills for Life Programme at an external learning establishment. Staff can also approach their union learning representative for advice and sources of help on how to improve their literacy and numeracy.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much his Department spent on in-house training on *(a)* literacy and *(b)* numeracy (i) in total and (ii) per head, in each year since 2002. [23437]

Alan Johnson: The Department does not run any specific in-house training on basic literacy or numeracy skills although courses in finance and in writing skills which will cover literacy and numeracy are available. DTI training budgets are devolved among groups, therefore figures for how much DTI spends on in-house training are not available.

Ministerial Travel

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on how many occasions since 7 July 2005 he has used the London Underground in connection with his official duties. [35020]

Alan Johnson: None. Just as before 7 July 2005, I walk to official engagements where possible and use the Government Car Service when necessary.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he will answer questions *(a)* 26315, *(b)* 26316 and *(c)* 26317 tabled by the hon. Member for Stratford-on-Avon on 3 November 2005. [33009]

Alan Johnson: I refer the hon. Member to his questions which were answered on 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2045W and 2 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 884W.

Small Firms Loan Guarantees

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the expenditure was on the small firms loan guarantees scheme in each financial year from 2000–01 *(a)* in total and *(b)* in each (i) region and (ii) county in (A) cash and (B) real terms; and what this was in (1) cash and (2) real terms expenditure per head of population. [34400]

Alun Michael: Expenditure on the small firms loan guarantee (SFLG) occurs when a borrower defaults and the participating lender affected makes a claim against the Government's guarantee.

The overall expenditure in each of the last five years is set out in table 1, both in cash terms and in real terms, ie reduced by the amount of the SFLG premiums collected from borrowers and recoveries arising from previous claims, as well as the real terms expenditure per head of population. Regional distributions of the percentage of cash costs for each of the last four years are provided in table 2.

Because of the way in which data are collated disproportionate cost would be incurred to provide county level expenditure and cost per head details for the whole of the United Kingdom.

Table 1: Annual SFLG expenditure 2001–05 before and after borrowers' premiums

	Cash cost (£ million)	*Premiums and recoveries (£ million)*	*Real (net) cost (£ million)*	*Real cost per head (pence/person)*
2000–01	34.435	9.244	25.191	42.6
2001–02	44.927	9.311	35.316	60.0
2002–03	50.316	9.590	40.726	68.4
2003–04	53.563	12.510	41.053	68.6
2004–05	58.720	18.360	40.360	67.5

Table 2: Regional distribution of annual SFLG cash expenditure 2001–05

Region	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*Percentage 2004–05*
London	9.64	12.92	10.39	10.30
South East	10.28	13.36	14.99	15.44
South West	10.96	7.41	10.35	9.75
East of England	10.39	12.49	10.57	8.69
East Midlands	7.65	4.91	8.16	7.14
West Midlands	7.62	9.71	9.83	9.17
North West	9.47	8.94	7.14	9.14
Yorkshire and Humber	6.54	8.24	6.50	7.54
North East	3.87	3.68	2.25	2.86
Scotland	17.11	12.92	16.91	14.21
Wales	6.29	4.87	0.39	5.45
Northern Ireland	0.16	0.55	2.51	0.29

Table nn: Annual regional distribution of SFLG loans by number and value

	2000–01		*2001–02*		*2002–03*		*2003–04*		*2004–05*	
Region	*Number*	*£ million*	*Number*	*£ million*	*Number*	*£ million*	*Number*	*£ million*	*Number*	*£ million*
London	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	607	49.5	912	65.7
South East	801	51.3	829	55.1	861	66.4	834	59.4	1,095	75.7
South West	475	24.5	444	25.1	370	23.7	642	41.4	748	46.3
East of England	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	[1]	532	36.6	671	47.4
East Midlands	863	47.7	770	46.4	655	42.7	410	26.8	491	31.0
West Midlands	406	20.3	369	20.6	357	22.5	498	30.3	636	39.7
North West	396	21.2	451	25.7	418	27.7	511	38.3	605	44.9
Yorks and Humber	320	18.3	334	18.6	297	19.3	447	33.9	565	37.4
North East	151	7.0	126	5.6	126	8.3	179	12.1	236	15.3
Scotland	621	36.4	698	44.2	558	38.1	789	48.8	643	42.7
Wales	243	10.4	211	9.7	218	14.7	354	21.3	344	21.6
Northern Ireland	36	3.4	37	3.9	56	5.9	46	3.7	44	4.0
Total	4,312	240	4,269	255	3,916	269	5,966	409	7,130	481
Average loan (£)	55,765		59,660		68,810		68,598		67,507	

[1] Figures for years up to and including 2002–03 combine London with South East and East of England with East Midlands.

Notes:

1. Loan values are rounded to nearest £100,000 for regional figures and nearest £ million for totals.
2. Prior to 1 April 2003 a guarantee rate of either 70 per cent. or 85 per cent. applied to SFLG loans dependent upon the age of the borrowing business. A single guarantee rate of 75 per cent. applied to all loans guaranteed from 1 April 2003 but the change in guarantee rate was not applied retrospectively to loans guaranteed prior to that date.

SFLG Cost: Liability Ratios

The ratios of the gross and net costs of SFLG to the extent of the Department's potential exposure (contingent liabilities) for 2003–04 were 8.5 per cent. and 6.5 per cent. respectively, based on gross and net expenditure on demands of £53.563 million and £41.053 million respectively during the year and liabilities assessed at £633.8 million as at 31 March 2004.

The ratios of the gross and net costs of SFLG to the extent of the Department's potential exposure (contingent liabilities) for 2004–05 were 7.7 per cent. and 5.3 per cent. respectively, based on gross and net expenditure on demands of £58.720 million and £40.360 million respectively during the year and liabilities assessed at £764.3 million as at 31 March 2005.

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The way in which liabilities are modelled has changed and so it is not possible to provide directly comparable ratios for earlier years.

Tariffs

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the cost to the British economy of tariffs on industrial goods. [34148]

Ian Pearson: There are many estimates of the cost of tariffs on industrial goods. These estimates suggest that global costs of tariffs on industrial goods exceed $100 billion. Precise estimate of the share of these global costs borne by the UK economy vary, but could be up to $5 billion.

World Trade Organisation

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action the Government plan to take at the World Trade Organisation talks in Hong Kong to ensure fair treatment for the world's poorest farmers. [34501]

Ian Pearson: The Government are committed to achieving an ambitious, pro-development package at the WTO ministerial conference in Hong Kong, which will allow for a successful conclusion to the Doha Development Agenda (DDA) by the end of 2006.

The DDA has the potential to deliver a freer and fairer trading system, benefiting farmers in developing countries and least developed countries through increased market access and the dismantling of trade-distorting subsidies by industrialised countries. The UK will press for poor countries to be given the flexibility to decide, plan and sequence trade reforms through effective special and differential treatment and, in the agriculture negotiations, designation of special products and use of a special safeguard mechanism.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Community/New Opportunities Funds

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will break down the cost of the administrative merger of the Community Fund and the New Opportunities Fund by main cost area. [35052]

Mr. Caborn: The break down of costs of the administrative merger of the Community Fund and the New Opportunities Fund are in the table.

Merger main cost area	*Cost (£)*
Consultation costs	745,854
IT changes	949,312
Termination payments	1,898,853
Professional fees	85,968
Property costs	1,226,486
Other costs	69,762
Total	4,976,235

Correspondence

Mr. Peter Ainsworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she will respond to the letter from the hon. Members for Croydon, South (Richard Ottaway) and for East Surrey dated 5 September regarding Kenley Airfield. [30474]

James Purnell *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* I replied to the hon. Members on 5 December with apologies for the delay in responding.

Damages

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1608W, on damages, if she will list those cases where the litigation has been brought to a Minister's attention owing to the *(a)* nature and *(b)* scale of the damages sought. [34391]

Mr. Lammy: This information could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Staff (Chronic Back Pain)

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what initiatives are being taken in her Department to help civil servants with chronic back pain. [34973]

Mr. Lammy: DCMS has a duty of care to all staff and provides staff with Desk Assessments to highlight any physical problems they may have, including back problems. The Department undertakes reasonable adjustments to physical features staff work areas, including desk, chair and IT equipment and alternative working patterns. If the back problem is more severe the Department arranges for a more specialised Occupational Health Desk Assessment to be carried out.

Digital Switchover

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps her Department is taking to increase awareness about digital switchover. [33626]

James Purnell: Digital UK, a not-for-profit organisation, has been set up to co-ordinate the UK's switch to digital television and will make sure that everyone is aware of what is happening and what they need to do. The switchover process will take place between 2008 and 2012, ITV region by ITV region. Digital UK launched its national switchover public awareness campaign in the national press in September. It has also set up a website and call centre for enquiries and leaflets, produced jointly with the Government, have been distributed to libraries, CAB offices and retailers across the UK. Digital UK plans to begin targeted regional campaigns three years prior to switching and communications activity is already underway in the borders region.

Additionally, the Government are continuing to run its own media campaign to inform consumers of the benefits of digital switchover and why it is happening.

To help make digital television options clear to consumers, the Government launched the digital switchover Certification Mark in 2004. It certifies products and services that are designed to help consumers through switchover. This helps to raise awareness of digital switchover, and is now visible in retailers across the UK and also on TV and recording equipment of most leading brands.

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps her Department is taking to increase awareness of digital switchover in the Leeds West constituency. [35135]

James Purnell: Digital UK, a not-for-profit organisation, has been set up o co-ordinate the UK's switch to digital television and will make sure that everyone is aware of what is happening and what they need to do. The switchover process will take place between 2008 and 2012, ITV region by ITV region. Digital UK launched its national switchover public awareness campaign in the national press in September. It has also set up a website and call centre for inquiries and leaflets, produced jointly with the Government, have been distributed to libraries, CAB offices and retailers across the UK. Digital UK plans to begin targeted regional campaigns three years prior to switching and communications activity is already under way in the Borders region.

Leeds West receives Yorkshire Television, which will switch over in 2011 and localised communications will start in 2008.

Additionally, the Government are continuing to run their own media campaign to inform consumers of the benefits of digital switchover and why it is happening.

To help make digital television options clear to consumers, the Government launched the digital switchover Certification Mark in 2004. It certifies products and services that are designed to help consumers through switchover. This helps to raise awareness of digital switchover, and is now visible in retailers across the UK and also on TV and recording equipment of most leading brands.

Licensing

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what advice and guidance her Department has given to local authorities on how premises licensed under the Licensing Act 2003 should be treated if they open for hours which are outside those permitted by virtue of their planning permission when their Licensing Act 2003 premises licence allows for them to open. [33169]

James Purnell: Guidance issued to licensing authorities under section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003, which was also circulated to every police chief constable, includes advice on the integration of planning and licensing regimes. It emphasises that applications for premises licences should normally be made by businesses with planning consent- should not be a re-run of the planning application; and should not cut across decisions taken by the local authority planning committee or following appeals against decisions taken by that committee.

The guidance also notes that the giving of a temporary event notice does not relieve the premises users from any requirements under planning law for appropriate planning permission where it is required.

The enforcement of planning law is a matter for individual local authorities.

Ministerial Travel

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport on how many occasions since 7 July she has used the London Underground in connection with her official duties. [35023]

Mr. Lammy: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has used the London Underground three times since 7 July in connection with her official duties.

Queen's Diamond Jubilee

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment her Department has made of the merits of linking London's 2012 Olympic games with celebrations for Her Majesty the Queen's diamond jubilee. [34438]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has not made any assessment of linking the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games with the Queen's diamond jubilee in 2012. Any announcement of plans will be made closer to the time.

Television Licences (Exemptions)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many businesses in Kettering constituency are exempt from requiring a television licence under the exemption scheme for people aged over 75 years. [34435]

James Purnell: The over-75 concession is not an exemption from the television licensing requirements but an entitlement to a free licence. It is available only to people aged 75 or over for their sole or main residence. It is not intended for business premises and there are accordingly no records of free licences issued for such premises.

Video Lending

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport who is responsible for regulating and inspecting libraries to ensure compliance with the age restrictions on videos for loan. [35597]

Mr. Lammy: The display and loan of age restricted items is the management responsibility of library authorities who are bound by the laws for sale or loan of age restricted items within the terms of the Video Recordings Acts 1984 and 1993. Enforcement is the responsibility of local trading standards departments.

CABINET OFFICE

Prime Ministerial Staff

Chris Grayling: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what proportion of posts in *(a)* the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit and *(b)* the No.10 Policy Unit (i) is occupied by non civil-servants and (ii) was filled after open competition recruitment processes. [32491]

Mr. Jim Murphy: There are no non-civil servants working in either the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit or the No.10 Policy Directorate. Permanent civil service appointments are filled in accordance with the requirements of the civil service commissioners' recruitment code and the civil service management code. The job of the head of the PMDU is currently the subject of an external open competition. Under the terms of the Civil Service Order in Council, special adviser appointments are exempt from the normal civil service recruitment processes.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Lenient Sentences

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General how many sentences were challenged for being unduly lenient in each year since 2000; and what the result was in each case. [34505]

The Solicitor-General: The following table shows the numbers of cases considered by the Law Officers as potential unduly lenient sentences in each year since 2001, and the outcomes.

Unduly Lenient Sentences[1]

ULS referral stage	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*[2]
Cases referred to the Law Officers	209	261	248	318	270
Cases referred to the Court of Appeal	120	112	86	105	78
Cases found to be unduly lenient	95	87	73	81	37
Cases where sentence increased	78	68	65	64	28
Cases not yet heard	0	0	0	0	14

[1] As of 1 December 2005.
[2] Part of year.

Prosecutions

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Solicitor-General how many prosecutions were dropped in each government region in England in each quarter since April 2004; what percentage of all cases each figure represents; what the total cost of cases dropped was; what the total cost of all cases was; and what the reason recorded on the Compass Case Management System was for each case dropped. [35413]

The Solicitor-General: I have placed in the House of Commons Library the number, percentage and costs of prosecutions dropped over the period from April 2004 to September 2005 in respect of magistrates courts cases and that of the Crown court. The detail is too lengthy to provide in a simple parliamentary answer.

Broad average costs of prosecutions dropped have been calculated by applying the CPS activity based costing model, using average staff input times which enable costs for dropped cases in the magistrates court and the Crown court to be calculated. The broad average cost to CPS of a case dropped in the magistrates courts is £208, and for a case dropped in the Crown court is £1,840. The cost figures represent the internal cost to the Service but do not include disbursements such as counsel fees or witness expenses.

The total cost of cases dropped over the 18 month period was £79 million. The cost of prosecuting all cases including cases dropped was approximately £450 million. Again, these figures exclude disbursements such as counsel fees and witness expenses.

TRANSPORT

0870 Numbers

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the occasions in the last five years on which 0870 telephone numbers have been used by his Department as contact numbers for members of the public; and how much revenue was received from the use of 0870 contact numbers in each of the last five years for which records are available. [24459]

Ms Buck: DfT HQ buildings do not have any centrally provided 0870 numbers. The following DfT Agencies do use 0870 numbers.

VOSA—have one 0870 number (0870 60 60 440) providing a national inquiry service which was activated on 21 November 2000. The revenue received until 15 April 2004 was on average £380 per calendar month. From 15 April 2004, VOSA have received £41,924.29.

MCA—have used only one 0870 number in the last five years—0870 600 6505—for the 'One Stop Shop' (also known as the 'Infoline'). This number is not revenue generating.

DVLA—have fronted over 50 public services with 0870 numbers during the last five years. Currently DVLA use 10 0870 numbers to front public services. Rebate figures for the last five years are as follows:

	Amount (£)
2000–01	76,763
2001–02	247,807
2002–03	656,164
2003–04	1,109,719
2004–05	2,285,528

DSA—have used the following numbers over the past five years:

0870 01 01 372—English Language Theory and Practical Test Booking Line

0870 01 00 372—Welsh Language Theory and Practical Test Booking Line

0870 01 02 372—Number used for faxed test bookings

0870 01 07 372—Minicom line for test bookings.

Income figures are only available back to 2003–04, as follows:

	Amount (£)
2003–04	908,536
2004–05	1,268,007
2005–06	[1]350,838

[1] To June 2005.

Accountancy Firms

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the *(a)* nature and *(b)* value was of all contracts, consultancies or other services placed with the accountancy firms (i) Deloitte and Touche, (ii) Ernst and Young, (iii) KPMG, (iv) PricewaterhouseCoopers and (v) other accountancy firms in (A) 2004–05 and (B) 2005–06 by the Department and its agencies. [25704]

Derek Twigg: A table showing the nature and value of the contracts/orders placed with the above accountancy firms has been placed in the House of Commons Library.

Airport Runways

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with Birmingham airport regarding the establishment of an *(a)* additional and *(b)* extended runway. [34706]

Ms Buck: The Secretary of State for Transport has not had any discussions with Birmingham airport regarding the establishment of either an additional or an extended runway since the publication of the Air Transport White Paper in December 2003.

Bedfordshire Transport Plan

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what funding the Government will provide to support the delivery of the Bedfordshire Local Transport Plan for 2006–07 to 2010–11; and if he will make a statement. [34483]

Ms Buck: The Government has announced indicative highways capital maintenance allocations for 2006–07. For Bedfordshire this figure is £6.001 million. It will announce the remainder of the 2006–07 settlement and finalised forward planning guidelines to 20010–11 soon.

Damages

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the 10 largest amounts of damages paid out by his Department in the last year for which figures are available; and what the nature of the claim was in each case. [27731]

Ms Buck: 10 largest amounts of damages paid out last year by this Department are:

	Damages	*£*
HA	Personal injury Drainage flooding	1,350,000
MCA	Damages for costs for fix vessel stability	550,000
DSA	Personal injury	392,000
HA	Personal injury, falling tree	250,000
MCA	Damages to cover costs for vessel survey	226,204
HA	Property Damage tree roots	140,000
DVLA	Early termination of contract (Planned Maintenance and Helpdesk)	98,000
MCA	Damages for cover costs for vessel survey	66,142
DVLA	Early termination of contract (Catering)	65,000
HA	Fatality Drainage/flooding	50,000

Departmental Contracts

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will list contractors based in other *(a)* EU member states and *(b)* states that (i) provided services to his Department between 1 September 2003 and 31 August 2004 and (ii) have provided services to his Department since 31 August 2005; and what the (A) nature and (B) cost of the work was in each case; [26757]

(2) if he will list contractors based in non-EU states that provided services to his Department between 1 September 2004 and 31 August 2005; and what the *(a)* nature and *(b)* cost of this work in each case was; [26758]

(3) pursuant to the answer of 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 88W, on European contractors, what the title and value of the contracts were in each case. [26811]

Ms Buck: Lists showing details of the contracts or orders placed with contractors based in non-EU and EU member states by the central Department and each Executive agency in the period 1 September 2003 to 31 August 2005 have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many contracts were signed by the Department in *(a)* 2005–06 to date and *(b)* 2004–05 for direct mail; and what the value was in each case. [27776]

Ms Buck: The DfT(C) has a central contract (shared with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister) for the provision of Storage and Distribution Services that started in January 2003.

Details of orders placed on that contract for direct mailings are as follows:

(a) 42 orders to the value of £77,540

(b) 73 orders to the value of £91,614

Where appropriate, agencies within DfT have their own local arrangements for the provision of direct mailing services tailored to their individual needs. Details are provided as follows:

	(a) 2005–06		*(b) 2004–05*	
Agency	*Number*	*Value (£)*	*Number*	*Value (£)*
Highways Agency	0	n/a	0	n/a
DVLA	0	n/a	0	n/a
VOSA	0	n/a	0	n/a

Agency	(a) 2005–06 Number	(a) 2005–06 Value (£)	(b) 2004–05 Number	(b) 2004–05 Value (£)
DSA	1	84,600	0	n/a
VCA	1	Less than 3,000	1	Less than 3,000
MCA	[1]	[1]	0	n/a

[1] Not available

Departmental Estate

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what *(a)* land and *(b)* property his Department (i) owns and (ii) rents in each constituency; and if he will make a statement. [33249]

Ms Buck: The requested information can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Finance

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the real terms percentage increase in allocated resources for his Department *(a)* was for the period 1997–98 to 2004–05 and *(b)* is estimated to be between 2005–06 and 2007–08 (i) for each period and (ii) for each year. [31032]

Ms Buck: The first year for which figures are comparable for the Department for Transport is 1998–99. The following table shows the real terms percentage changes in *(a)* out-turn between 1998–99 and 2004–05; and *(b)* plans between 2005–06 and 2007–08.

(a) Real terms percentage changes in total departmental expenditure limit (net of depreciation) out-turn 1998–99 to 2004–05

	Percentage increase between years	Percentage Percentage increase 1998–99 to 2004–05
1997–98 to 1998–99	—	—
1998–99 to 1999–2000	+9	+104
1999–2000 to 2000–01	-8	
2000–01 to 2001–02	+40	
2001–02 to 2002–03	+28	
2002–03 to 2003–04	+11	
2003–04 to 2004–05	+2	

(b) Real terms percentage changes in total departmental expenditure limit (net of depreciation) plans 2005–06 to 2007–08

	Percentage increase between years	Percentage Percentage increase 2005–06 to 2007–08
2004–05 to 2005–06	+7	—
2005–06 to 2006–07	+13	+4
2006–07 to 2007–08	-8	

Departmental Relocation

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to relocate staff in his Department and related agencies into London and the south-east. [31746]

Ms Buck: The Department has no plans to relocate staff, including those in our Executive agencies, based outside London and the south-east, into London and the south-east.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which buildings and sites used by his Department and related agencies *(a)* have ceased to be used in the last year and *(b)* will be closed under current plans for relocation. [31779]

Ms Buck: There are no buildings or sites that have ceased to be used in the last year as part of our relocation plans. The Vehicle and Operator Services Agency have reported that their occupation of Great Eastern House (Cambridge) will cease with effect from March 2006 as a result of the relocation of work to Bristol.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many staff in his Department have been relocated into London and the south east in each of the last five years for which records are available. [31780]

Ms Buck: The Department was formed in May 2002. Since then no staff have been relocated into London and the south east

Departmental Tendering Policy

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his policy is on including *(a)* ethical and *(b)* environmental factors in tenders for services. [33342]

Ms Buck: The Department for Transport follows Office of Government Commerce guidelines on ethical and fair trading, and the Office of Government Commerce and Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs joint note on environmental issues in purchasing, having regard to the rules and general principles of EU law deriving from the treaty of Rome and the Single European Act. These include non-discrimination, equal treatment, transparency, proportionality and mutual recognition, and apply to all procurement by public bodies.

Specific knowledge or expertise in the environmental field can be a legitimate criterion for assessing technical capacity in the selection of tenderers, and environmental factors or requirements may be included in conditions of contract or specifications where relevant to the contracted service and subject to compliance with European Community law.

Disabled People (Transport Access)

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he plans to include services which cater for disabled people unable to use public transport in the provisions for free travel from April 2006. [33211]

Ms Buck: The Government are committed to achieving an accessible transport system. We are implementing the transport provisions of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 so that public transport, including new trains, buses and coaches and newly licensed taxis will be accessible to disabled people, including those who need to travel in wheelchairs.

The statutory minimum entitlement for concessionary travel covers off-peak local bus services. Authorities will continue to have the discretion to extend the entitlement to community transport services and/or offer travel token schemes for taxi travel based on their judgment of local needs and circumstances and their overall financial priorities.

DVLA (Clamping Companies)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what information regarding car registration details the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency is entitled to provide to vehicle clamping companies; and if he will make a statement. [35092]

Dr. Ladyman: *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* DVLA is entitled under regulations to provide information from the vehicle register to those who can provide evidence of 'reasonable cause' to have it. Provisions regarding the release have been in force for over 40 years. Data from DVLA is not normally required for wheel clamping purposes. However, the name and address of a vehicle keeper is usually provided where criminal damage has been done to a wheel clamp.

I made a statement regarding a review of the release of information from the DVLA vehicle register on 2 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 50–51WS.

Identity Cards

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the *(a)* total and *(b)* net cost of (i) integrating the proposed Identity Card Scheme into his Department's IT systems and (ii) the ongoing operation of the scheme within his Department. [31115]

Ms Buck: The Department has not finalised current best estimates of the cost of using the ID Cards Scheme to support the services which it oversees. The Department is represented on the Ministerial Committee on Identity Cards which oversees the work on benefits planning and realisation.

Lamberhurst Bypass

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how much money was used to pay for the Lamberhurst bypass; and from which fund: [35302]

(2) what Government regional funds have been used to pay for the Lamberhurst bypass; and if he will make a statement; [35303]

(3) what funding was used to pay for the Lamberhurst bypass along the A21 in East Sussex; and if he will make a statement. [35304]

Dr. Ladyman: The estimated final cost of the A21 Lamberhurst bypass is £25.24 million. The funds allocated to the scheme were from the Government's 10-year Targeted Programme of Improvements (TPI).

The scheme was funded from the Highways Agency budget, which is part of the Department for Transport's voted expenditure.

No Government regional funds have been used to pay for the A21 Lamberhurst bypass.

Light Rapid Transit

Peter Viggers: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when a decision will be announced on the funding of the Fareham-Gosport-Portsmouth light rapid transit scheme. [33619]

Derek Twigg: I refer the hon. Member to the written statement I made about the scheme on the 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 16–17WS.

National Road Pricing

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what main forms of national road pricing the Department is considering. [34073]

Dr. Ladyman: I refer the hon. Member to the written statement made by my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Transport, on 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 3–4WS about the Transport Innovation Fund.

Olympics

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what account was taken of the potential call on resources of the transport infrastructure associated with the 2012 London Olympic games in his decision not to allocate funding to the *(a)* Merseytram, *(b)* South Hampshire rapid transit and *(c)* Leeds supertram schemes. [35213]

Derek Twigg: None.

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will introduce more user-friendly reporting of progress against 2004 public service agreement target 6. [29802]

Ms Buck: The Department provides regular performance updates against its outstanding public service agreement targets through its annual departmental report and its autumn performance report published in spring and autumn respectively. The 2005 departmental report (Cm6527), which is the most recently published, is available in the House Libraries and online at: www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_about/documents/divisionhomepage/038323.hcsp.

The DfT's 2005 autumn performance report is due for publication in mid-December and this will be the first time the Department has reported against its 2004 spending review targets.

Railways

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will list the *(a)* technical and financial contracts, *(b)* technical consultants used on a call-off basis and *(c)* financial consultants used on a call-off basis by (i) HM Railway Inspectorate and (ii) the Office of the Rail Regulator since 1 November 2003; what the nature of the assignment for each consultant was; and what the value of work done by each consultant was; [25699]

(2) if he will list the *(a)* technical and financial contracts, *(b)* technical consultants used on a call-off basis and *(c)* financial consultants used on a call-off basis by the Office of Rail Regulation since 5 July 2004; what the nature of the assignment for each consultant was; and what the value of work done by each consultant was. [25700]

Derek Twigg: Contracts let by HM Railway Inspectorate are a matter for the Department for Work and Pensions. Figures for the Office of Rail Regulation have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the *(a)* technical and *(b)* financial consultants used by the Strategic Rail Authority since 1 November 2003 on a call-off basis; what the total amount paid to each consultant was; and what the nature was of each project undertaken by each such consultant. [25702]

Derek Twigg: The information requested has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will list the *(a)* technical and financial contracts, *(b)* technical consultants used on a call-off basis and *(c)* financial consultants used on a call-off basis by his Department carrying out work relating to the railways since 1 November 2003; what the nature of the assignment for each consultant was; and what the value of work done by each consultant was; [25703]

(2) if he will list *(a)* the consultants used in connection with the transfer of the Strategic Rail Authority to DfT Rail, *(b)* the (i) private finance initiative and (ii) public-private partnership external consultants used by (A) his Department and (B) each of its agencies in each of the last two years and *(c)* the external consultants used by (1) his Department and (2) each of its agencies, excluding public-private partnership and private finance initiative contracts, in each of the last two years; and what the *(y)* nature and *(z)* cost of the work done by each consultant was in each case. [25705]

Derek Twigg: Tables have been placed in the Library listing:

1. DfT(C) PFI/PPP contracts in 2003–04 and 2004–05
2. DVLA PFI/PPP contracts in 2003–04 and 2004–05
3. HA PFI/PPP contracts in 2003–04 and 2004–05
4. DfT(C) non PPP/PFI contracts in 2003–04
5. DfT(C) non PPP/PFI contracts in 2004–05
6. DVLA non PPP/PFI contracts in 2003–04 and 2004–05
7. HA non PPP/PFI contracts in 2003–04 and 2004–05
8. MCA non-PPP/PFI contracts in 2003–04 and 2004–05[1]
9. VGA non-PPP/PFI contracts in 2003–04 and 2004–05[1]
10. VOSA non-PPP/PFI contracts in 2003–04 and 2004–05[1]

[1] MCA, VGA and VOSA had no PPP/PFI contracts in these financial years.

Each of the tables includes an indication, inserted for internal record-keeping purposes, of the nature of the work involved. In view of the number of entries, more specific descriptions could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Details of technical and financial contracts in the form requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many dismantled railway lines have been reopened since 2000; and at what cost in each case. [28278]

Derek Twigg: In England, approximately 12 miles of former freight line between Leeming Bar and Leyburn on the Wensleydale Railway were reopened for passenger use in 2003. A further five miles were re-opened in 2004. The work was funded by the Wensleydale Railway plc. The Department for Transport does not have information on the costs involved.

Some 10 miles of former railway alignment were re-opened for use as part of Croydon Tramlink in 2000, and approximately six miles as part of the Nottingham Express Transit in 2004. Separate costs for the elements of these projects relating to former railway alignments are not available.

In Scotland, Greenburn rail link opened in May 2004 at a cost of £6.3 million. This was funded by the Scottish Executive and Keir Mining. Through the Larkhall to Milngavie project, the Anniesland to Maryhill line re-opened in September 2005 and the line from Hamilton to Larkhall is expected to re-open in December 2005 at a total cost of £34.5 million. This project is mainly funded by the Scottish Executive, with contributions from Strathclyde Passenger Transport Executive and South Lanarkshire Council.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the costs of developing passenger services on the Coventry-Nuneaton railway line. [34704]

Derek Twigg: Services on the Coventry to Nuneaton line are among those that will be reviewed as we draw up the specification for the new West Midlands franchise. Consultations on the draft specification are expected to begin in the summer of 2006.

Roads

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made with initiatives to reduce road congestion. [34156]

Dr. Ladyman: Significant progress has been made putting measures in place to tackle congestion through targeted improvements and new methods of managing traffic. Since 2001 we have completed 32 major strategic road schemes. A further 15 major schemes are currently under construction, including widening of the M25 between Junctions 12 to 15 around Heathrow.

Uniformed Highways Agency Traffic Officers are now patrolling the motorway network in five regions of the country (West Midlands, South East, North West, North East, and East of England), having taken over some responsibilities from the police for managing incidents and keeping traffic moving. They now have powers to stop and direct traffic in live carriageways, and will be operational on all motorways by next summer.

Regional control centres are assuming responsibility for scheduling road works, monitoring road conditions, establishing diversion alternatives, setting variable message signs for real-time traffic management, and supporting traffic officers. Five regional control centres are currently operational, and all seven will be live by summer 2006.

Britain's first High Occupancy Vehicle (carpool) motorway lane will be trialled on the M1 between junctions 6A and 10 (St. Albans to Luton) in 2008, following widening of the motorway. As part of an Active Traffic Management pilot on the M42 corridor

between junctions 3a and 7 to the east of Birmingham, mandatory variable speed limits became operational in November, with other aspects of the pilot to follow in 2006, including strictly controlled use of the hard shoulder as a running lane, and access management. Both schemes will operate at peak times to help minimise delay and congestion for road users.

Transport Direct, the Government's real-time web-based travel information and journey planning service for public and private transport, allows travellers to check the likelihood of delays and see whether choosing a different route, departure time or transport mode might suit them better. The service has now recorded 2.5 million user sessions since formal launch in December 2004. The Highways Agency's "Traffic England" website is now operational with real-time information about traffic conditions on motorways and trunk roads.

The Traffic Management Act 2004 gave local authorities a duty and new powers to do all that is reasonably practicable to keep roads clear and traffic moving, including appointing traffic managers to manage local roads; powers to co-ordinate utility and telecoms companies' road works to minimise disruption, enforce parking and bus lanes, and some moving traffic offences from police.

In June the Government announced a Transport Innovation Fund to help local authorities develop local charging schemes. Up to £200 million per annum will be made available to support such schemes. Alistair Darling announced on 28 November that seven local authorities will share over £7 million in advance of the main fund to explore new ways to tackle local congestion.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on progress in reducing road congestion. [34968]

Dr. Ladyman: I refer the hon. Member to my answer given today, to the hon. Member for Windsor (Adam Afriyie) UIN 34156.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what the mean number of days was that road gritting took place in each county in England in 2004–05; [32468]

(2) what the costs of road gritting were in 2004–05, broken down by local authority; [32469]

(3) how many miles of roads were gritted *(a)* within 24 hours of the onset of wintry conditions and *(b)* in winter 2004–05, broken down by local authority area. [32648]

Ms Buck: This information is not collated centrally. The duration, amount, cost and timing of gritting will depend upon each local authority's individual winter service operational plan, and the weather conditions they experience.

The Department for Transport strongly recommends that local highway authorities carry out winter maintenance in accordance with Section 13 of "Well-maintained Highways: Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management" published by the UK Roads Liaison Group earlier this year.

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the percentage of daily journeys taken by road in the Leeds area from *(a)* 1980 to 1997, *(b)* 1997 to 2001 and *(c)* 2001 to the latest date for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [35143]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not available.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidance the Government have given local authorities on *(a)* the width of roads and *(b)* the width of parking spaces. [33492]

Ms Buck: The "Design Manual for Roads and Bridges" (DMRB) sets the design standards, including road widths, for motorways and other trunk roads throughout the UK. Where it is used for local road schemes, it has the status of guidance only, and it is for local highway authorities to decide on the extent to which it is used in any particular situation.

Guidance on the width of residential roads and footpaths is contained in "Design Bulletin 32: Residential Roads and Footpaths", and in "Places, Streets & Movement: A companion guide to Design Bulletin 32". In due course these two documents will be superseded by the "Manual for Streets", currently expected to be published by the Department for Transport in late 2006.

The dimensions for parking bays are specified in Schedule 6 to the "Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002" (SI No. 3113). Guidance on use of the markings for different categories of user is given in section 20 of Chapter 5 of the "Traffic Signs Manual". Bays for general use can be varied in width between 1,800mm and 2,700mm at the local authority's discretion, to take account of local conditions. These bays may also be marked wholly or partially on the footway if the traffic order provides for this. Bays for disabled badge holders are normally required to be a minimum of 2,700mm wide (3,600mm maximum), but this minimum may be reduced to 1,800mm in a case where, on account of the nature of the traffic using the road, the overall width of the carriageway is insufficient to accommodate a wider bay. Echelon parking bays, set at an angle to the kerb, are required to be between 2,000mm and 2,500mm in width.

Staff Discipline

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many employees have been dismissed by his Department in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [29135]

Ms Buck: Since the establishment of the Department for Transport in May 2002 the numbers of employees dismissed are:

	Number
2002	66
2003	82
2004	88
2005	85

The Department has procedures in place to deal with misconduct, unsatisfactory performance or attendance. The procedures are published in our internal Staff Handbook that is readily available to staff.

Stretch Limousines

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received on *(a)* licensing of and *(b)* other regulations relating to stretch limousines; and whether specific regulations apply to them. [34104]

Ms Buck: Over recent years we have received a number of representations from numerous individuals and organisations about the licensing, operation and use of stretch limousines. Many of those concerns were aired in the House of Lords Report Stage debate on the Road Safety Bill 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 122–26W. We are very much aware of the issues and concerns surrounding the operation of stretch limousines and officials are actively looking at what can be done to clarify the position for all parties.

Transport Staff (Abuse)

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many reported incidents of *(a)* verbal abuse and *(b)* physical attack on train drivers, guards and ticket inspectors there have been in each year since 1997. [31178]

Mr. Darling *[holding answer 22 November 2005]*: The number of crimes recorded for verbal abuse is not available as the British Transport police (BTP) does not record these offences separately. However, the number of crimes for fear or provocation of violence, harassment, alarm or distress and other public order offences is shown as follows. These numbers include all offences of verbal abuse.

The number of incidents of assaults on all rail staff while on duty, recorded by the BTP from April 1998, is also shown in the following table. A breakdown of these figures by train drivers, guards and ticket inspectors is not available.

BTP has recognised that staff assaults are a major concern for the train operating companies and their employees and subsequently view this crime as a policing priority. BTP continue to explore different methods of preventing and detecting staff assaults.

Number

	Public order offences	*Staff assaults recorded*
1998–99	420	1,225
1999–2000	566	1,433
2000–01	678	1,329
2001–02	692	1,438
2002–03	961	1,925
2003–04	1,011	2,240
2004–05	1,198	2,769

A change in counting rules occurred in 1998. This was built upon by changes in the National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS) in 2002. With the shift to a more customer focused approach and the recording of crime based upon the perception of the victim rather than the police satisfying themselves that a crime had taken place; it was inevitable that there would be a rise in the number of crimes recorded. This point was acknowledged by the Home Office in their publication, "Crime in England and Wales 2002/03".

Notes:

1. Data are not available prior to April 1998, as the comparison is not meaningful due to a change in Home Office counting rules.

2. It should also be noted that changes in the National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS) in 2002 led to a rise in the number of crimes recorded, with the biggest impact on the 'Violence against the person' grouping equating to an average 23 per cent. increase in this crime recorded by police forces across England and Wales.

Travel Subsidies

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent on subsidies for rail and bus travel in each of the last five years. [34705]

Derek Twigg: Central Government spending on bus and heavy rail services for the period in question are set out in the following table.

£ billion

	Bus	*Rail*
2000–01	1.1	1.2
2001–02	1.4	1.8
2002–03	1.9	2.5
2003–04	2.0	3.6
2004–05[1]	2.0	4.2

[1] Budget estimates

Spending on rail includes payments to franchised rail operators, grants to PTEs, grants to rail freight operators and capital grants to infrastructure operators.

The figures in the table for buses show spending in respect of English services—(following devolution, the Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly assumed responsibility for buses). The majority of bus subsidy in England (outside London) is funded by local authorities from their own resources, including the revenue support grant from Government. Local authorities also provide concessionary fares reimbursement to bus operators. Financial support for bus services in London is provided by the Mayor and Transport for London (TfL). The Department for Transport also provides rural bus subsidy grant (RBSG) and, to 2003–04, Urban and Rural Bus Challenge funding. The figures in the table show local authority and TfL expenditure on provision of bus services and concessionary fares on buses for each of the five years to 2004–05 as well the DfT's RBSG allocations bus challenge awards and capital investments in bus related projects.

Tyne and Wear (Financial Bids)

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library *(a)* the bid from Tyne and Wear authorities for support from the Transport Innovation Fund and *(b)* his response to the bid. [34376]

Dr. Ladyman: Both documents have been placed in the Library. All 33 applications for Transport Innovation Fund pump-priming, including that of the Tyne and Wear authorities, are available on the Department's website at: http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_foi/documents/divisionhomepage/610460.hcsp

UK Air Passengers

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the increase in UK passengers using no-frills carriers has been since 1998. [35240]

Ms Buck: Airlines commonly referred to as no-frills carriers include Ryanair, easyJet, bmibaby, Jet2, MyTravelLite, Thomsonfly and flyGlobespan.

In 1998 the total number of passengers using the no-frills carriers listed above (together with Debonair, which ceased operations in 1999) at UK airports was 7.7 million. This had risen to 53.4 million by the end of 2004. The number of UK based passengers travelling on these carriers rose from 4.4 million in 1998 to 37.9 million in 2004.

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the change in United Kingdom passenger numbers in *(a)* 2010, *(b)* 2020 and *(c)* 2030 if air fares were to remain constant in real terms compared with 2005. [35242]

Ms Buck: The only estimate that has been made was an illustrative sensitivity test included in Air Traffic Forecasts for the United Kingdom produced by DfT in 2000. This considered the impact of fares remaining constant in real terms throughout the 1998–2020 period in place of the central assumption of a 1 per cent. annual decline. This sensitivity test showed that passenger traffic at UK airports in 2020 would fall from the central forecast of 401 million to 301 million. However, this was based on the very simple assumption that a 10 per cent. rise in fares would lead to a 10 per cent. fall in demand. In practice, rising real incomes at home and overseas are likely to have a substantial positive impact on the demand for air travel.

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the annual reduction in air fares has been in the UK since 2000 for the *(a)* business, *(b)* leisure and *(c)* no-frills carrier sectors; and what assessment he has made of these figures in relation to the forecast assumptions contained in the Air Transport White Paper. [35243]

Ms Buck: The average fare paid on international no frills flights has dropped by 16 per cent. over the 2000–04 period. Other international leisure fares (excluding those included as part of a holiday package) have only fallen by 2 per cent. Average fares paid by international business passengers have fallen by 20 per cent. between 2000 and 2004, but this in part reflects the relative weakness of the long haul sector after 2000, and reduced use of premium cabins by business passengers on short haul flights. The headline reduction in fares in the national forecasts supporting the White Paper was on average a 1 per cent. fall per annum in real terms over the period 1998–2020.

TREASURY

Alcohol-related Deaths

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many deaths in which alcohol was the primary cause there were in each local authority area in each of the last eight years. [35462]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 7 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many deaths in the local authorities of England and Wales were primarily caused by alcohol. (35462)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2004. I am placing in the House of Commons Library, a table showing the numbers of deaths among residents of England and Wales where the underlying cause of death indicated a condition directly related to alcohol use in the years 1997 to 2004.

Benefits (Leeds, West)

John Battle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in Leeds West constituency were in receipt of *(a)* family credit, *(b)* working families tax credit, *(c)* disabled person's tax credit, *(d)* child tax credit and *(e)* working tax credit in each of the last eight years in which the credit was payable. [35130]

Dawn Primarolo: Estimates of the number of families who were receiving family credit broken down by region are not available. Estimates of the number of recipient families of working families' and disabled person's tax credits from 2001–2002 broken down by constituency appear in the quarterly WFTC and DPTC Geographical Analyses. These publications can be found on the Inland Revenue website, at:

http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm

Comparable estimates of the number of in-work families (broken down by families with and without children) in each region, local authority and constituency with tax credits for 2003–04 awards, based on final family circumstances and incomes for 2003–04, appear in the HMRC statistical publication "Child and Working Tax Credits statistics. Finalised Awards 2003–04. Geographical analyses."

More recent provisional estimates for in-work families, as at selected dates in 2004–05, in each such area appear in the publication "Child and Working Tax Credit Statistics Geographical Analyses."

Both of these publications can be found on the HMRC website at:

http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/cwtc-geog-stats.htm.

Breast Cancer

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of breast cancer patients lived for at least five years after treatment in the last period for which figures are available; and what the average such percentage is in the European Union. [34591]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the national statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell to Mr. David Amess, dated 7 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning what percentage of breast cancer patients live for at least five years after the treatment in the United Kingdom; and what the average such percentage is in the European Union. (34591)

An identical question was asked by Simon Hughes MP earlier this year. The answer was published in Hansard column 1240W on 7 February 2005. No further relevant data have been published since that answer.

British Film Industry

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what support the Government gave to the British film industry in *(a)* direct funding and *(b)* tax breaks in the last 10 years for which figures are available. [34248]

Dawn Primarolo: The tax costs of Sections 42 and 48 film tax relief are provided in the following table. These costs include substantial known avoidance that was closed down by anti-avoidance measures announced at the 2004 pre-Budget report.

(£ million)

	Section 42 relief	*Section 48 relief*	*Total*
1997–98	5	5	10
1998–99	10	40	50
1999–2000	20	80	100
2000–01	25	90	115
2001–02	35	120	155
2002–03	60	145	205
2003–04	95	190	285
2004–05	170	350	520
2005–06	220	340	560

The Government has also provided £448 million in direct funding to the UK film industry in the last 10 years. This figure includes:

£252 million National Lottery funding provided by the Arts Council between 1995 and 2001;

£19 million provided to the British Screen Finance Group between 1996 and 2000; and

£177 million National Lottery funding provided by the UK Film Council between 2000 and 2005.

Departmental Assets

Mike Penning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1571–72W, on departmental assets, if he will estimate the value of each item listed. [33669]

John Healey: HM Treasury's only immovable assets are:

1. the land and building at 1 Horse Guards Road (£92,450,000)

2. surplus freehold property at Honeypot Lane, Stanmore (OGC) (£13,000,000)

3. freehold premises at Thistle Street Edinburgh (OGC) (£2,570,000)

4. leasehold improvements to premises at Philpot Lane (DMO) (£464,000)

The 10 most valuable movable assets are:

1. Records Management system (Jigsaw) (£1,470,000)

2. Government Financial Management system (Coins) (£1,340,000)

3. HM Treasury internal accounts production system (Abacus) (£710,000)

4. Market risk system (DMO) (£559,000)

5. Exchequer Funds and Accounts treasury accounting system (Tripp) (£490,000)

6. Silver ink stand (one of set of three) (£200,000)

7. Silver ink stand (one of set of three) (£200,000)

8. Silver ink stand (one of set of three) (£200,000)

9. E-learning database (£160,000)

10. Cashflow forecasting software (DMO) (£128,000)

Values above are net book values as at 31 March 2005.

Departmental Estate

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what *(a)* land and *(b)* property his Department (i) owns and (ii) rents in each constituency; and if he will make a statement. [33258]

John Healey: The Treasury occupies 1 Horse Guards road in the constituency of the cities of London and Westminster, under a PFI agreement, and rents half a floor at a building in the constituency of Battersea.

Departmental Tendering Policy

Martin Horwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his policy is on including *(a)* ethical and *(b)* environmental factors in tenders for services. [33343]

John Healey: The Treasury and HM Revenue and Customs follow common procurement policies.

(a) Ethical factors:

Fair and Ethical Trading

There is scope under the Government's procurement policy and the EU procurement rules to encourage the inclusion of fair trade options in tenders for catering services and supply contracts, but under the EU rules, specifications cannot be framed exclusively in terms of fair trade requirements.

The opportunity to purchase Fair Trade goods is considered on a case-by-case basis, and in accordance with the OGC Guidance on Fair and Ethical Trading http://www.ogc.gov.uk/embedded_object.asp?docid=1001597

When tendering for services, staff follow the procurement guidance in Government Accounting Chapter 22 http://www.government-accounting.gov.uk/current/content/qa_22_4.htm. which requires Departments to preserve the highest standards of honesty, integrity, impartiality and objectivity in all dealings with suppliers and potential suppliers.

(b) Environmental factors:

The Treasury and HMRC are committed to Sustainable Development and the policy followed by both Departments on environmental purchasing is set out at http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/about/supguide.htm#11:

Environmental issues are included in the tender documents as appropriate and where a contract is deemed to have an environmental impact, there is a questionnaire that is issued to potential suppliers.

Drugs Overdose

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many deaths resulted from an overdose of *(a)* methadone, *(b)* heroin and *(c)* other classified drugs in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [35477]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 7 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many deaths resulted from an overdose of *(a)* methadone, *(b)* heroin and *(c)* other classified drugs in each of the last five years for which figures are available. (35477)

Figures readily available from death certification relate to deaths due to drug poisoning, not the total number that were attributable to drug use. These figures are produced from a special database which contains deaths where the underlying cause was drug poisoning. The most recent year for which figures are available is 2003. The table below shows the number of deaths due to drug poisoning where methadone, heroin/morphine or any drug controlled under the Misuse of Drugs Act were mentioned on the death certificate for the five years 1999 to 2003.

Number of deaths from drug-related poisoning[1] where methadone, heroin/morphine, or other controlled drugs were mentioned on the death certificate[2]
England and Wales: 1999–2003[3]

Calendar year	*(a) Methadone[4]*	*(b) Heroin/ morphine[4]*	*(c) Controlled drug excluding deaths with a mention of methadone or heroin/morphine*	*Any controlled drug mentioned[2]*
1999	298	754	414	1,498
2000	238	926	405	1,593
2001	207	889	338	1,447
2002	216	790	343	1,356
2003	175	591	264	1,052

[1] Cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes F11-F16, F18-F19, X40-X44, X60-X64, X85 and Y19-Y14.
[2] Some deaths may be counted in more than one category of this table, for example if heroin and methadone are recorded on the death certificate, the death will be recorded once under methadone, once under heroin and once under any controlled drug.
[3] Data are for deaths occurring in the calendar year.
[4] Source: Table 2 of the annual report: " Deaths related to drug poisoning: England and Wales, 1999–2003, published in Health Statistics Quarterly 25 in February 2005.

Earnings Statistics

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people earned *(a)* less than £5,000, *(b)* between £5,000 to £10,000, *(c)* between £10,000 to £13,000, *(d)* between £13,000 to £17,500, *(e)* between £17,500 to £27,000 and *(f)* over £27,000 in (i) 1988–89 and (ii) in each year from 2001 to 2004. [34679]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 7 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking how many people earned *(a)* less than £5,000, *(b)* between £5,000 to £10,000, *(c)* between £10,000 to £13,000, *(d)* £13,000 to £17,500, *(e)* between £17,500 to £27,000 and *(f)* over £27,000 in (i) 1988–89 and (ii) in each year from 2001 to 2004. (34679)

Currently average earnings are estimated from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), and are provided for full time employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey period was not affected by absence. This is the standard definition used for ASHE. The ASHE does not collect data on the self employed and people who do unpaid work.

The attached table shows the percentage of employees in the United Kingdom for each year between 2001 and 2004 earning between the specified pay bands. Annual pay has only been published since 1999; therefore I have been unable to supply data for 1988–89.

The ASHE, carried out in April of each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in the United Kingdom. It is a one per cent sample of all employees who are members of pay-as-you-earn (PAYE) schemes.

Percentage of employees[1] in the United Kingdom whose mean annual earnings are between specified amounts

	Less than £5,000	*Between £5,000- £9,999*	*Between £10,000- £12,999*	*Between £13,000- £17,499*	*Between £17,500- £26,999*	*More than £27,000*
2001	10.1	15.2	11.3	17.3	26.6	19.5
2002	9.9	14.4	10.9	16.8	26.0	22.2
2003	9.4	13.7	10.4	16.5	26.0	24.0
2004	9.1	13.1	9.7	15.9	25.9	26.4

[1] Employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay period was unaffected by absence
Source:
Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics.

HM Revenue and Customs

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff in HM Revenue and Customs have been redeployed to tax credit work in each month since January; what the total staffing of the tax credit department was in each quarter since Q1 2003; and if he will make a statement. [28997]

Dawn Primarolo: The number of full-time equivalent staff in post in the tax credit office, (TC) at the end of each quarter since April 2003 was around:

Quarter ending	*Staffing*
June 2003	3500
September 2003	3400
December 2003	3300

Quarter ending	Staffing
March 2004	3200
June 2004	2850
September 2004	2800
December 2004	2750
March 2005	2800
June 2005	2950
September 2005	2800

In addition to TCO employees extra staff are also employed to work on tax credits at certain times, depending on the variable tax credits workload, for example staff employed in HMRC contact centres. Such staff are not included in the aforementioned table , and figures for their staff are not readily available.

Income Tax

David Mundell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people in Scotland pay income tax. [35035]

Dawn Primarolo: The number of taxpayers in Scotland can be found on National Statistics table 2.2 'Number of income taxpayers, by country' on HM Revenue and Customs' website:
http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/income_tax/table2-2.xls

Mr. Maude: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has plans to increase the nil rate income tax band for trusts. [35150]

Dawn Primarolo: A £500 standard rate band was introduced in Finance Act 2005, below which trust income is subject to no more than the basic rate of tax. We keep all matters of taxation under review as part of the Budget process.

Mr. Maude: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he plans to introduce differential income tax rates for protective trusts, with particular reference to those formed under section 42 of the Landlord and Tenant Act 1987. [35151]

Dawn Primarolo: As announced in the Chancellor's pre-Budget report we are considering a relief for registered social landlords holding sinking funds in trust for tenants.

Infant Deaths

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many infant deaths there were in the UK in *(a)* the latest year for which records exist and *(b)* each of the preceding three years; and what the rate per 10,000 was for the last four years for which figures are available. [34688]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 7 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many infant deaths there were in the United Kingdom and the rate per 10,000 for the last four years that data are available. (34688)

The most recent year for which figures are available is 2004. Figures for the latest year are based on provisional number of occurrences in that year (published in the November edition of Health Statistics Quarterly). These update earlier provisional 2004 figures which were based on number of registrations. I refer you to the answer given in Official Report 437, 10th October, Column No. 299.

Figures requested for the years 2001–2004 are given in the table below.

Infant mortality, numbers and rates per 10,000 live births, United Kingdom, 2001–04[1]

	Number	Rate per 10,000 live births
2001	3,664	54.8
2002	3,497	52.3
2003	3,686	53.0
2004[1]	3,607	50.4

[1] Provisional.
Source:
Health Statistics Quarterly28, Table 2.1.

Inflation

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average rate of inflation was in each year since 1978–79. [34680]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 7 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question requesting the average rate of inflation in each year since 1978–79. (34680).

The information requested is shown in the table below which gives average annual inflation rates for the consumer prices index (CPI) and retail prices index (RPI).

The CPI is the main domestic measure of inflation for macroeconomic purposes in the United Kingdom. It forms the basis of the government's inflate target that the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee is required to achieve.

The CPI index is available from January 1996, with estimates available back to 1988.

The RPI is available from 1947 and its uses include the indexation of pensions, state benefits and index-linked gilts.

Both the CPI and RPI measure the average change from month to month in the prices of consumer goods and services purchased in the UK, although there are differences in coverage and methodology. These differences are summarised in the background notes to the Consumer Price Indices First Release in which these figures are published monthly. It is available to download from the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=868.

Average annual percentage change over 12 months[1]

	Retail prices index	Consumer prices index[2]
1978	8.3	n/a
1979	13.4	n/a
1980	18.0	n/a
1981	11.9	n/a
1982	8.6	n/a
1983	4.6	n/a
1984	5.0	n/a
1985	6.1	n/a
1986	3.4	n/a
1987	4.2	n/a
1988	4.9	n/a
1989	7.8	5.2
1990	9.5	7.0
1991	5.9	7.5
1992	3.7	4.2
1993	1.6	2.5
1994	2.4	2.0
1995	3.5	2.6

Average annual percentage change over 12 months[1]

	Retail prices index	*Consumer prices index*[2]
1996	2.4	2.5
1997	3.1	1.8
1998	3.4	1.6
1999	1.5	1.3
2000	3.0	0.8
2001	1.8	1.2
2002	1.7	1.3
2003	2.9	1.4
2004	3.0	1.3
2005	n/a	n/a

n/a = Not available.

[1] The annual average inflation rate is the percentage change in the annual average index from the previous year. The annual average index is defined as the arithmetic mean of the twelve monthly values from January to December for the year in question calculated using the published rounded monthly indices.

[2] Prior to 1997 the annual inflation rates for the CPI are estimates.

Maintenance Service Charges/Sinking Funds

Mr. Maude: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will publish internal guidance issued by the Inland Revenue in *(a)* 1998 and *(b)* 2000 aimed at clarifying the tax treatment of (i) maintenance service charges and (ii) sinking funds. [35153]

Dawn Primarolo: The information contained in the internal guidance issued by the Inland Revenue in 1998 and 2000 relating to the tax treatment of maintenance service charges and sinking funds, other than information whose disclosure would be likely to prejudice the assessment or collection of tax, has already been published by the Inland Revenue and may be found on the HMRC website.

Manufacturing

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many manufacturing jobs have been lost since May 1997. [34590]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the national statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 7 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question

about manufacturing employment. (34590)

While statistics for the number of jobs created or lost are not available, survey data allows us to provide a measure of the change in the number of jobs. Using the Workforce jobs series for the United Kingdom, the net decrease in the number of jobs in manufacturing from June 1997 to June 2005 was 1,078,000.

Politically Exposed Persons

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what measures the Government have put in place to require financial institutions to conduct enhanced due diligence on accounts of politically exposed persons with a view to detecting and reporting transactions which may involve proceeds of foreign corruption; and if he will make a statement. [35402]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Money Laundering Regulations 2003 require financial institutions along with all other regulated firms, to have adequate systems to prevent money laundering and terrorist financing including knowing your customer. The regulations are supported by the Joint Money Laundering Steering Group (JMLSG) Guidance, which state that enhanced scrutiny and monitoring needs to be conducted on politically exposed persons. This guidance is approved by the Treasury and therefore must be considered by a court in deciding whether a person has committed an offence. In assessing a firms' compliance with their anti-money laundering obligations, the Financial Services Authority will have regard to the relevant provisions of the JMLSG Guidance Notes for the Financial Sector.

The third money laundering directive includes a specific requirement that firms should have adequate systems in place to identify politically exposed persons and perform enhanced due diligence on them. The directive was adopted in October and will need to be implemented into UK legislation by the end of 2007.

Research and Development Tax Credits

John Battle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what proportion of small and medium-sized enterprises in Leeds constituency were eligible for research and development tax credits in the last five years; and what the take-up was. [35133]

John Healey: The information requested in relation to enterprises in Leeds is not available.

For information generally on take-up of research and development tax credits I refer the right hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Luton, South (Margaret Moran) of 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 991W, on tax credits.

Revenue Evasion

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the value of revenue evasion prevented by HM Revenue and Customs was in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05; what value of revenue evasion has been prevented in 2005–06; and how much related to customs duties in each case. [33646]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs do not maintain this information, and it would involve disproportionate cost to produce.

Sick Leave

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many of his Department's employees who are within one year of the official retirement age are on extended sick leave. [32591]

John Healey: There are no employees working in HM Treasury who are within one year of the official retirement age on extended sick leave

Southend West Economy

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* male and *(b)* female employees were engaged in (i) manufacturing and (ii) agriculture and fishing in Southend West constituency in (A) 1979, (B) 1983, (C) 1987, (D) 1997, (E) 2001 and (F) the last year for which figures are available. [34603]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the national statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 7 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about employment in the Southend West constituency. (34603)

The attached table shows the number of employee jobs in the manufacturing industry, in the Southend West parliamentary constituency for 1997, 2001 and 2003; the latest period for which information is available. Estimates for agriculture and fishing are not shown in order to avoid potential disclosure of information that is supplied in confidence under the 1947 Statistics of Trade Act. Figures at the parliamentary constituency level are not available for the earlier years requested.

Employee jobs in manufacturing and agriculture and fishing in Southend West parliamentary constituency: 1997, 2001 and 2003

	Manufacturing		*Agriculture and fishing*	
	Male	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
1997	1,496	654	[1]—	[1]—
2001	1,441	591	[1]—	[1]—
2003	1,196	487	[1]—	[1]—

[1] Estimates potentially disclosive due to small sample size.

Source:
AES (1997), ABI (2001, 2003).

Tax Allowances

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will list the tax allowances which are operative; [34675]

(2) what tax allowances have been abolished since 1997. [34677]

Dawn Primarolo: The main rates and allowances are set out each year in the Economic and Fiscal Strategy Report and Financial Statement and Budget Report. Copies of this are available in the House Library. More detailed information on individual tax allowances and reliefs with an estimate annual cost of at least £50 million can be found in the HM Treasury publication, "Tax ready reckoner and tax reliefs". Recent versions can be found on the HM Treasury website and historic copies are held in the House Library.

Information on minor tax expenditures and structural reliefs where the costs are less than £50 million is published on the HMRC website. Historic versions are published in "Inland Revenue Statistics".

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total cost was of tax allowances in terms of revenue foregone in each year since 1997. [34676]

Dawn Primarolo: Information on allowances and reliefs with an estimated annual cost of at least £50 million is published in the HM Treasury publication "Tax ready reckoner and tax reliefs". Recent versions can be found on the HM Treasury website and historic copies are held in the House of Commons Library.

http://archive.treasury.gov.uk/prebudget/Nov99/trr.pdf

http://archive.treasury.gov.uk/pbr2000/tax_ready.pdf

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/DAF/77/TRR01Draft6%20-%20final.pdf

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk./media/01A/FB/adtrr02.pdf

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk./media/D5D/B2/pbrQ3_trr_revised.pdf

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk./media/8F5/9F/pbr04tax_ready_182.pdf.

An updated version will be available on 5 December 2005.

Information on minor tax expenditures and structural reliefs where the costs are less than £50 million is published on the HMRC website. http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/tax_expenditures/menu.htm.

Historic versions are published in "Inland Revenue Statistics".

These tables only contain details relating to former Inland Revenue taxes. The data on minor tax expenditures and structural reliefs will be updated on 30 December 2005 and will cover all HMRC taxes.

All historic estimates were correct at the time of publication. These do not necessarily constitute a consistent time series for all allowances and reliefs.

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the cost of awarding credits through home responsibilities protection on a weekly basis; and how many *(a)* women and *(b)* men he estimates would benefit from such a change. [18646]

Dawn Primarolo: The available information is as follows:

Estimated cost of converting home responsibilities protection (HRP) into a weekly credit for people reaching state pension age from 2005–06, and estimated number of people who would benefit from such a change:

	£
Estimated additional gross expenditure in 2005–06	37,000,000
Estimated number of women who would benefit in 2005–06	160,000
Estimated number of men who would benefit in 2005–06	2,000

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he is taking to ensure cases of disputed overpayment of tax credits are resolved quickly; and what are the average processing times for cases referred to the disputed overpayments team. [28418]

Dawn Primarolo: I would refer the hon. Member to my statement to the Treasury sub-committee of 26 October 2005, HC 524-ii.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) in how many tax credit awards in 2003–04 income rose by *(a)* up to £1,000, *(b)* £1,000 to £1,999, *(c)* £2,000 to £2,499, *(d)* £2,500 to £2,999, *(e)* £3,000 to £3,499, *(f)* £3,500 to £3,999, *(g)* £4,000 to £4,999, *(h)* £5,000 to £5,999, *(i)* £6,000 to £9,999, *(j)* £10,000 to £14,999, *(k)* £15,000 to £19,999, *(l)* £20,000 to £24,999, *(m)* £25,000 to £29,999 and *(n)* over £30,000; [29982]

(2) in how many tax credit awards in 2003–04 where there had been an increase in income it would have been disregarded had the disregard been set at *(a)* £3,000, *(b)* £3,500 and *(c)* £5,000. [29983]

Dawn Primarolo: The following table shows the total number of tax credit awards in 2003–04 split by income rise in each specified band.

Income rise	*Number of awards (thousands)*
Up to £1,000	438.2
£1,000 to under £2,000	365.2
£2,000 to under £2,500	158.6
£2,500 to under £3,000	139.2
£3,000 to under £3,500	126.1
£3,500 to under £4,000	117.0
£4,000 to under £5,000	200.9
£5,000 to under £6,000	156.7
£6,000 to under £10,000	377.9
£10,000to under £15,000	197.4
£15,000 to under £20,000	85.5
£20,000 to under £25,000	43.2
£25,000 to under £30,000	24.3
£30,000 and over	34.4
All	2,464.6

Income rise is derived using 2001–02 and 2003–04 incomes used to finalise the award.

In response to the second question, the information requested has been derived from the above table. The number of tax credit awards in 2003–04 where there had been an increase in income, which would have been disregarded had the disregard been set at *(a)* £3,000, *(b)* £3,500 and *(c)* £5,000 is:

(a) 1.10 million

(b) 1.23 million

(c) 1.55 million

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for how many families their tax credit award would have fallen in 2003–04 had there not been the £2,500 disregard. [29985]

Dawn Primarolo: Around 1.5 million families would have had a reduction in entitlement for their tax credit award in 2003–04 if there had not been a £2,500 disregard.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many claimants of tax credits since April 2003 who have mistakenly paid back money to the Department for overpayments that were subsequently found not to exist had the money returned to them within *(a)* two, *(b)* four, *(c)* eight, *(d)* 16 and *(e)* 32 weeks. [31522]

Dawn Primarolo: This information is not available.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether his Department recovers overpaid tax credits where the claimant has launched an investigation of his tax credit case through the parliamentary ombudsman. [31524]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs deal with all complaints and disputes about the recovery of tax credits in accordance with their procedures.

Cases referred to the parliamentary ombudsman are considered in the same way as any other case.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer in how many tax credit awards, in Scotland, in 2003–04 income rose by *(a)* up to £1,000 to £1,999, *(b)* £2,000 to £2,499, *(c)* £2,500 to £2,999, *(d)* £3,000 to £3,499, *(e)* £3,500 to £3,999, *(f)* £4,000 to £4,999, *(g)* £5,000 to £5,999, *(h)* £6,000 to £9,999, *(i)* £10,000 to £14,999, *(j)* £15,000 to £19,999, *(k)* £20,000 to £24,999, *(l)* £25,000 to £29,999 and *(m)* over £30,000. [33022]

Dawn Primarolo: The following table shows the total number of tax credit awards in 2003–04 in Scotland, split by income rise in each specified band.

Income rise	*Number of awards (thousands)*
Up to £1,000	41.8
£1,000 to under £2,000	34.4
£2,000 to under £2,500	15.1
£2,500 to under £3,000	12.7
£3,000 to under £3,500	11.2
£3,500 to under £4,000	10.8
£4,000 to under £5,000	18.0
£5,000 to under £6,000	14.0
£6,000 to under £10,000	32.8
£10,000 to under £15,000	16.2
£15,000 to under £20,000	6.6
£20,000 to under £25,000	3.2
£25,000 to under £30,000	1.9
£30,000 and over	2.5
All	221.2

The income rise has been derived by using the 2001–02 and 2003–04 incomes which were used to finalise the award.

Taxation

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much was paid in direct and indirect taxation by companies with *(a)* fewer than 200 employees and *(b)* fewer than 100 employees in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [34674]

Dawn Primarolo: Figures on receipts from individual taxes are available in tables 2.1A to 2.1E in Financial Statistics published by the Office of National Statistics. www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/tsdtables1.asp?vbik=fsf.

It is not possible to apportion total tax receipts between corporate and individual taxpayers because a number of taxes (for example fuel duty) are paid by both companies and individuals.

VAT (Demolition Costs)

Chris Huhne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the revenue cost in *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07 of exempting demolition costs from value-added tax. [35076]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs does not collect data on VAT from individual goods and services. Supplies of demolition services are standard-rated for VAT. However, where demolition services are provided as part of a single supply contract for the construction of new zero-rated buildings and are supplied immediately before construction starts, the liability of the entire supply contract (including the demolition services) follows that of the zero-rated buildings. VAT charged in relation to demolition on most commercial developments will be reclaimed.

HMRC has no data on the amount of VAT charged on demolition services and is unable to identify developments where recipients are unable to reclaim VAT charged. As such, it is not possible to make such an estimate.

Vegetable Oil

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what fiscal measures his Department is taking to encourage the use of vegetable oil as an alternative fuel; [34611]

(2) what legal advice his Department has received on whether pure vegetable oil should qualify for the lower biodiesel rate of duty; [34612]

(3) if he will list the fuels that are classed as biofuels. [34613]

John Healey: A reduced rate of duty for biodiesel was introduced in July 2002 in recognition of its environmental benefits and its higher production costs than conventional diesel. Fuel produced from vegetable oil is eligible for this lower rate (currently 27.10 pence per litre) if it meets the legal definition of biodiesel for tax purposes set out in section 2AA of the Hydrocarbon Oil Duties Act 1979. As with all legislation, this definition was drawn up taking account of legal advice from the Government's legal advisers.

The term "biofuels" is not defined in legislation for tax purposes. It is a generic term covering energy products derived from biomass. A lower duty rate of 27.10 pence per litre is also applied to bioethanol (a petrol substitute).

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Academy Schools

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what proportion of existing heads of school were re-appointed when their school gained academy status. [35325]

Jacqui Smith: There are currently 27 open academies. Of these, seven appointed as principal a head from the predecessor school, or one of the predecessor schools, on opening. Two academies were built as brand new schools. The proportion of heads re-appointed is therefore 28 per cent. In many cases, appointing a new principal when the academy opens is an important part of bringing about the educational transformation needed.

Adult Education/Vocational Courses

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations she has received on the impact of funding changes by the Learning and Skills Council on *(a)* the numbers enrolling and *(b)* the level of fees charged for adult and community learning courses. [24373]

Bill Rammell: On the 21 October, I made an announcement, setting out the Government's strategic direction for the learning and skills sector for 2006/7 and 2007/8. Although more public funding will be going into the sector, we will focus funding even more strongly on key priorities of raising participation and achievement 14–19 and driving down the skills deficit in the adult workforce. I reaffirmed our commitment to safeguard the funding for personal and community development learning in mainstream further education and local authority funded adult education (adult and community learning) with a budget of £210 million in 2006/7.

I and ministerial colleagues have received representations on a number of issues, including enrolments and fees, from hon. and right hon. Members. We have also met with and received comments from the sector including principals and chief executives of colleges, other post-16 providers and from learners and representative organisations, including the Association of Colleges, the Local Government Association, the National Federation of Women's Institutes and the National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE).

We expect to have information available in the new year about the initial take-up of learning in 2005/06, and the Learning and Skills Council will publish this through a statistical first release in March 2006.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will increase funding for *(a)* adult education and *(b)* vocational courses. [35509]

Bill Rammell: The Government's Skills Strategy, reaffirmed in the White Paper published on 22 March, sets clear priorities for public funding to support the drive to ensure that employers have the skills they need to be successful, and individuals have the skills they need to be employable and personally fulfilled. Funding for Further Education (FE) increased by 4.4 per cent. in 2005/06 Funding for non-vocational learning opportunities for adults, delivered mainly through local authority adult education services, has also increased. In 2004/05 we provided over £207 million to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in support of this learning. This has risen to £210 million in 2005/06.

This funding will enable colleges and other providers to deliver a wide range of learning opportunities to meet the needs of adults in local communities but those who are able to do so will need to pay higher fees in the future. I set out the Government's priorities for the learning and skills sector and the impact on funding in 2006–07 and 2007–08 on 21 October and full details can be found in 'Priorities for Success' on the LSC's website.

Child Care

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she expects to be able to provide regulations to accompany the Childcare Bill. [33061]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 29 November 2005]:* We aim to publish some illustrative regulations on the key provisions in the new year. We are aiming to publish papers describing our intentions in respect of the early years foundation stage and the registration requirements for the general childcare register so that the Childcare Bill Standing Committee has them available when it looks at the relevant provisions of the Bill. We will undertake a full consultation before regulations are finalised.

Children Act

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she expects to publish information collected under the provisions of section 12 of the Children Act 2004. [34657]

Beverley Hughes: Section 12 of the Children Act 2004 gives the Secretary of State the power to make regulations to require the establishment and operation of an information sharing index or indexes. The purpose of an index is to improve early intervention by children's services to help children with additional needs. An index helps professionals to quickly identify the child they are working with and the services the child is receiving. This enables the professional to contact others working with the child, so they can then, where appropriate, share information to improve the provision of services for that child. An index would also enable quicker identification of children not receiving services they are entitled to such as education and primary health care.

In implementing any index approach, no information about any individual children would be published. The index would provide anonymised statistical information which might be used to assist with service planning and analysis at local and national level. Such information, when produced, would be publicly available, but we have no plans to produce or publish such information by a specific date.

Children's Centres

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she expects to announce which communities within *(a)* Gloucestershire and *(b)* Stroud will be nominated for the location of new children's centres. [35212]

Beverley Hughes: All local authorities have a target number of Sure Start Children's Centres and a target number of children under five to reach between 2006–08. Gloucestershire county council has been asked to develop 23 Sure Start Children's Centres to reach 18,291 children under five by March 2008. Decisions on the location of Sure Start Children's Centres and the communities to benefit from their services are a matter for local determination and will not be formally announced by my Department. Gloucestershire county council is expected to set out its plans for the location of their new children's centres by February 2006.

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what mechanisms are in place to assess the effectiveness of consultant-led projects in her Department; what sanctions are available to penalise consultants who run unsuccessful projects; how many projects conducted by consultants were assessed as unsuccessful in each year since 2000; and what sanctions were imposed in each case. [29114]

Bill Rammell: The planning, monitoring, control and delivery of programmes and projects in DfES is the responsibility of departmental management, not consultants and, therefore, all of the Department's programmes and projects are led by senior civil servants (acting as programme/project senior responsible owners). Consultants are engaged to assist in the successful delivery of these programmes and projects, and are subject to a raft of commercial, financial, procurement, technical and, programme and project quality assurance and standards. Additionally, the Office of Government Commerce's Gateway(tm) review process provides assurance at critical stages of a programme's or project's lifecycle.

Consultants who do not deliver the required services or advice to time, quality and cost, are subject to remedies appropriate to the shortcomings identified up to and including, as a last resort, contract termination and pursuit of damages.

From information held centrally, the Department is unaware of any programmes or projects that, in the years since 2000, could merit classification as unsuccessful as a direct result of consultants failing to deliver on their contract. No records are held centrally of sanctions applied to consultants engaged on DfES-led programmes and projects, and the information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Tendering Policy

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her policy is on including *(a)* ethical and *(b)* environmental factors in tenders for services. [33330]

Bill Rammell: Department for Education and Skills (DfES) expects to let all its contracts in accordance with moral principles, and would consider any case where evidence to the contrary was presented.

Environmental factors in contracts let by DfES have been considered on a case by case basis relative to the subject matter of the contract, and the requirements of European Union law.

The Department will be making use of the "Sustainable Procurement Toolkit" due to be issued shortly by DEFRA which will enhance further the consideration of environmental factors in public sector contracts.

Education Funding

Kelvin Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2075W, on education funding, what research was conducted to enable the decision to be made that *(a)* a basic food hygiene certificate, *(b)* emergency aid for appointed persons, *(c)* lifesaver for babies and children and *(d)* preparing for an emergency: The British Red Cross response courses have limited benefits in terms of progression for learners. [35274]

Bill Rammell: The Learning and Skills Council conducted in depth analysis of learners attending very short courses. The analysis indicated that, in the case of the basic food hygiene, emergency aid for appointed persons, lifesaver for babies and children and the British Red Cross response courses, only 147 of the 31,260 learners enrolled in 2004/05 went on to further learning in that year.

The Learning and Skills Council's document "Priorities for Success" set out the Government's intention that in future, food hygiene and other health and safety courses taken by those in work should be

fully funded by the employer wherever possible, in line with employers' statutory duty to meet the terms of relevant legislation. The LSC is consulting further on this proposition with key stakeholders. Where individuals are taking qualifications on their own account the expectation is that learners should cover the full cost, although colleges are of course still free to reduce or waive the course fee at their discretion. This is consistent with the principle set out in the Governments skills strategy that individuals should contribute more towards the cost of their learning in line with the benefits they receive. However, while the LSC will cease funding for very short courses below nine guided learning hours (excluding provision for personal and community development learning and learndirect courses), such learning may still continue if it is part of a larger programme that is more likely to lead to progression to further learning.

Extended School Services

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what provisions are being made to support extended services in schools in Leeds, West constituency. [35138]

Beverley Hughes: On 13 June 2005 my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State announced funding of £790 million over 2005–08 to support the development of extended services accessed in or through schools. £110 million of this was allocated in 2005–06 and Leeds local authority received £1,014,849. Of the £680 million to be allocated across 2006–08, £250 million will go direct to schools through the school standards grant and the formula for announcing each school's allocation for 2006–07 will be announced shortly. The remaining £430 million will be distributed to local authorities through the standards fund and the general sure start grant. Of this Leeds local authority will receive £2,144,841 in 2006–07 and £2,761,511 in 2007–08. Funding will be released to schools in accord[illegible] with each local authority's extended schools strategy.

Higher Education

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps are being taken by the Department to encourage graduates to work in higher education. [32760]

Bill Rammell: The responsibility for recruiting staff lies with higher education institutions (HEIs), as the employers. However, we have supported HEIs in developing their human resource capability through the rewarding and developing staff initiative (R and DS), which includes recruitment and retention as one of the priority areas for this funding. A recent evaluation carried out for the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) by KPMG identified that about £72.9 million (of the total £370 million R and DS funding 2001–02 to 2003–04) had been spent on recruitment and retention.

The Department has also implemented, through HEFCE, a "Golden Hello" programme of funding to encourage new entrants into teaching shortage subjects. Each "Golden Hello" is worth £9,000 to an individual, over three years.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been allocated to *(a)* full-time foundation degrees, *(b)* all foundation degrees, *(c)* full-time undergraduates and *(d)* part-time undergraduates (i) in total, (ii) for 18 to 21-years-olds and (iii) for over 21-year olds-by the Higher Education Funding Council for England in (A) 2005–06, (B) 2006–07 and (C) 2007–08. [35186]

Bill Rammell: The Higher Education Council for England (HEFCE) funds higher education institutions (HEIs) by way of block grant, and it is for each HEI how they allocate this within their own organisation. However, the allocation to HEIs makes assumptions about the pattern of student recruitment at each institution, and HEFCE are able, therefore, to provide a notional split between different programmes.

Figures for 2005–06 are shown in the following table. Although overall funding totals for the next two academic years were determined in the 2004 spending review, the allocation of this total between institutions is done annually by HEFCE, and allocations for years later than 2005–06 have yet to be made.

It is not possible to provide a notional allocation of funding by age: this is not a factor in determining grant allocations.

Notional HEFCE recurrent funding allocations for 2005–06

	£ million
Full-time and sandwich foundation degrees	103,910,188
All foundation degrees	171,159,771
Full-time and sandwich undergraduates	3,092,193,317
Part-time undergraduates	609,424,576

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of Higher Education Funding Council for England funding has been allocated to *(a)* medical students and *(b)* dental students for (i) 2005–06, (ii) 2006–07 and (iii) 2007–08. [35217]

Bill Rammell: The Higher Education Council for England (HEFCE) funds higher education institutions (HEIs) by way of block grant, and it is for each HEI how they allocate this within their own organisation. However, the allocation to HEIs makes assumptions about the pattern of student recruitment at each institution, and HEFCE are able, therefore, to provide a notional split between different programmes.

Figures for 2005–06 are shown in the following table, with overall allocations so that the proportion can be calculated. Although overall funding totals for the next two academic years were determined in the 2004 spending review, the allocation of this total between institutions is done annually by HEFCE, and allocations for years later than 2005–06 have yet to be made.

2005–06 FTS undergraduate FTEs

	Medicine	*Dentistry*
	26,006	3,277
Notional teaching grant for 2005–06 FTS UG FTEs[1]	255,920,856	37,828,961
Notional WP grant:	7,473,950	954,824
Full-time widening access	1,324,854	166,944
Full-time improving retention	5,821,791	733,600

2005–06 FTS undergraduate FTEs

	Medicine	*Dentistry*
Disability	327.306	54.280
Total notional grant	263,394,806	38,783,784
Proportion of teaching grant (percentage)	7	1

[1] Standard resource minus assumed fee income

Influenza Pandemic

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when her Department plans to issue interim advice regarding an influenza pandemic to local emergency planners in respect of schools. [34726]

Jacqui Smith: This Department is contributing to further government guidance that will be issued in due course. It will build on initial advice that was issued to Regional Resilience Directors last spring.

Law Students

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps her Department plans to take in response to the recent report by the Higher Education Funding Council for England that ethnic minority candidates face a significantly lower chance of receiving an offer to study law. [34928]

Bill Rammell: The report "Higher Education Admissions: Assessment of the Bias", by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) re-works a previous study from 2002 (based on 1996/07 data) that found that applicants from ethnic minorities were disadvantaged. It is good news that the re-examination of the data does not show the same biases in HE admissions as suggested by the original research. HEFCE did however find that ethnic minority applicants had lower chances of receiving an offer when applying to study law than would be expected given their predicted grades and other factors. A certain amount of caution needs to be attached to these findings, due to the age and other inadequacies of the data. It is important to look at what has happened more recently, and HEFCE's proposals for more research in this area will do so.

It is not acceptable for any bias to be found for any subject or minority group. While admissions are the sole responsibility of institutions, the Government do have a legitimate interest in the fairness of the admissions process. That is why Professor Steven Schwartz was invited to lead an independent review of the HE admissions system. That review found that admissions processes are generally fair but established a number of underpinning principles that the sector has been encouraged to adopt. The Department, as requested by Professor Schwartz, plans to undertake a follow-up review of progress in 2007/08.

Institutions must not be complacent and must strive to eradicate biases as they develop their fair admissions policies and practices. Research such as this and the follow-up work that HEFCE is recommending will help institutions address the problems identified.

Learning and Skills Council

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the implications for *(a)* the advice given to 16 to 18-year-olds and *(b)* the funding for the education of that age group of the restructuring of the Learning and Skills Council. [35452]

Bill Rammell: The LSC's proposed restructuring is designed to achieve better focus and more consistent delivery at a local level through the creation of 148 Local Partnership Teams. The provision of high quality advice and guidance will remain a key priority for the LSC, and the Local Partnership Teams will work with a range of partners, including services providing advice and guidance for 16 to 18-year-olds, to ensure an improved choice for learners. The LSC's funding priorities for 2006–07 and 2007–08 were published in its funding document "Priorities for Success" on 21 October 2005. Priority will be given to increasing the numbers of 16 to 18-year-olds engaged in learning and achieving a worthwhile qualification. These funding proposals allow for a significant increase in volumes for this age group.

School Care (Disabled Children)

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how extended schools will cater for children with disabilities in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wakefield district and *(c)* Normanton constituency. [34541]

Beverley Hughes: This Government want all schools to provide access to a core offer of extended services by 2010, with half of all primary and a third of all secondary schools doing so by 2008. We have made clear that children with disabilities and special educational needs must be able to access all the services. The needs of children in particular schools and areas will vary. It will be for individual local authorities, in discussion with all schools in their area, to take a strategic approach to developing access to the core offer through schools. Schools will need to work closely with parents to ensure that services are shaped around the needs of children and the wider community.

We are making funding available to all local authorities and schools up to 2008 to support them in setting up and embedding services in mainstream and special schools.

School Location

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the number of pupils attending state schools outside their own local education authority area each September since 2003. [34129]

Jacqui Smith: The information required to answer this question is not collected until January of each academic year. The information showing the position in the January of each year since 2002 is provided in the following table.

Percentage of pupils attending maintained schools outside of the local authority in which they reside[1]

	2002		2003		2004		2005	
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
Pupils resident in								
England	338,216	5.3	353,472	5.5	349,842	5.5	350,649	5.5
North East	9,730	2.9	10,128	3.0	10,173	3.0	10,061	3.0
North West	39,843	4.3	41,077	4.4	41,641	4.5	41,691	4.0
Yorkshire and Number	20,337	3.0	20,916	3.1	21,159	3.1	21,209	3.2
East Midlands	23,450	4.2	24,142	4.3	24,532	4.3	24,687	4.4
West Midlands	38,860	5.3	39,709	5.4	40,094	5.5	40,331	5.6
East of England	19,471	2.8	25,717	3.6	20,556	2.9	20,846	3.0
London	121,914	14.3	125,576	14.6	125,130	14.5	124,579	14.5
South West	22,935	3.8	23,370	3.8	23,459	3.8	23,939	4.4
South East	41,676	4.2	42,837	4.3	43,098	4.4	43,306	4.6

[1] Attending maintained primary and secondary schools (including middle deemed), CTCs and academies.

Source:
Annual School Census 2002–2005 Final.

School Places

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children did not receive their first choice *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school place in each local education authority in the most recent year for which information is available. [34807]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* Information on pupils who did not receive their first choice of a primary or secondary school place is not collected centrally. Local authorities are required to co-ordinate admissions to secondary schools and, as a result of that process, many will have this information available for those that applied for entry in September 2005. Where co-ordination took place prior to 2005, it may also be available for those years. Local authorities are required to co-ordinate admissions to primary schools for entry in September 2006.

Specialist Language Schools

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* GCSE and *(b)* A level entries there were in modern languages from each specialist language school in each of the last 10 years, including years before the school acquired specialist status. [33056]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not readily available and can only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Truancy

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the levels of truancy were in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* England in each of the last three years; and if she will make a statement. [35512]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested on truancy in Lancashire 2002/03 to 2004/05 can be found as follows. 2004/05 data are provisional: they are currently in the process of being checked by schools and, therefore, may change as a result of this process.

Percentage of half days missed due to unauthorised[1] *absence in maintained schools*

	Primary schools		*Secondary Schools*	
	Lancashire	*England*	*Lancashire*	*England*
2003/04	0.31	0.43	0.82	1.07
2004/05	0.32	0.41	0.88	1.13
2005/06	0.34	0.43	0.95	1.25

[1] Unauthorised absence includes other forms of absence such as lateness, holidays during term time not authorised by the school, absence where reason is not yet established and truancy.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to combat truancy. [35513]

Jacqui Smith: I refer my hon. Friend to the replies given on 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1216W to a question from the hon. Member for Romford (Andrew Rosindell) and on 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 623W to a question from the hon. Members for Buckingham (John Bercow) and for Romford.

In September 2005, I announced a drive against 'serial truants' in 146 secondary schools which account for one in five of all instances of unauthorised authorised absence across the country. This drive will provide an intensive package of support and challenge to truants and their families. We have now extended this drive to cover 200 secondary schools and an estimated 13,000 pupils.

Key workers in the 200 schools and their local authorities will draw up an individual action plan and work with each truant to improve their school attendance. Where appropriate, truants and their families will be given co-ordinated support from children's services to tackle wider issues such as drugs, mental health or parenting skills that might be contributing to their truancy. Key workers will also consider referring parents of the most persistent truants onto the 'Fast Track to Attendance' scheme and, unless the youngster's attendance improves over a 12 week period, the parents will face a penalty notice or prosecution.

Under-achievement

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the potential impact of the provision of mentoring upon underachievement by children from low socio-economic backgrounds. [26053]

Beverley Hughes: The scope and understanding of mentoring practice appears to vary widely depending on the intended aims of the programme. By and large, mentoring appears to have benefits on achievement, and generally such schemes are directed at those from low socio-economic groups almost by definition.

Our principle mentoring programme working with children from low socio-economic backgrounds is the learning mentor programme.

Excellence in Cities (EiC) is a targeted programme of support for schools in deprived areas of the country. Learning mentors are part of this programme, described by Ofsted (2003) as:

"the most successful and highly valued strand of the EiC programme".

Learning mentors are salaried non-teaching school support staff who work with school and college students and pupils to help them address barriers to learning. These barriers can be wide ranging and often very personal to the individual pupil. They include the need to develop better learning and study skills, personal organisation, difficulties at home, behaviour, bullying, or just general disaffection and disengagement from learning.

At present it is estimated that around 6,000 learning mentors are working in the secondary sector and 4000 in primary, funded through excellence in cities (EiC) provision. The numbers will be higher than this as an increasing number are being employed outside of EiC areas.

Learning mentors work with caseloads of pupils, largely on a 1:1 or small group basis, but also run clubs and "drop ins". They liaise closely with teachers and other support professionals, and often act as a supportive link between the family and school. One to one support may include developing coping strategies, enhancing motivation, raising aspirations and encouraging re-engagement in learning, taking account of a range of complex underlying issues that may impact negatively on learning and achievement (e.g. bereavement, lack of confidence/low self-esteem, low aspirations, mental health issues, relationship difficulties, bullying, peer pressure, family issues/concerns).

NFER (2004) Evaluation indicates positive impact of learning mentors on attainment outcomes for young people. Seeing a learning mentor was associated with a level of performance above that which might be anticipated from their prior attainment. In particular:

In low performing schools, young people who had seen a learning mentor in a low-performing school performed an average of 0.15 GCSE points better than their peers who had not seen a mentor.

In low performing schools, students with a learning mentor were also one and a half times more likely to have achieved five or more GCSEs at A* to C grades than young people with similar prior attainment and other characteristics who had not been mentored.

In high performing schools, mentees were three times more likely to have achieved three or more GCSEs at A* than those who had not seen a learning mentor

Regarding learning mentors' impact on behaviour, more than half of the identified group of 430 young people who had been mentored over two years demonstrated a positive change in either their attitudes (to school, to teachers and/or to learning) or their behaviour (in terms of improved attendance, punctuality and/ or completion of work).

In addition to their impact on academic performance, Ofsted (2003) found that:

"Learning mentors are making a significant effect on the attendance, behaviour, self-esteem and progress of the pupils they support".

Ofsted further reported that in 95 percent. of the survey schools, inspectors judged that the mentoring programme made a positive contribution to the mainstream provision of the school as a whole, and had a beneficial effect on the behaviour of individual pupils and on their ability to learn and make progress." (Ofsted 2003)

The behaviour improvement programme (BiP) evaluation report by the university of London, published in November 2005, states that "learning mentors were seen to fulfil one of the key roles in the programme and were highly valued by schools particularly at primary level. The BiP focuses on addressing behaviour and attendance issues in schools.

There are additional forms of mentoring provided within schools which are not provided by school learning mentors (employed by the school/local authority) e.g. peer and voluntary mentoring. There is also the work carried out by the mentoring and befriending foundation (ttp://www.mandbf.org.uk/).

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many troops have been contributed by each country contributing troops to Operation Enduring Freedom; and if he will make a statement. [27158]

Mr. Ingram: The UK contributes around 340 troops to Operation Enduring Freedom. The majority are either part of the Harrier GR7 detachment based in Kandahar or are conducting preparations for a possible UK deployment to southern Afghanistan. In addition, we provide an Afghan National Army Training Team which trains the NCO cadre of the Afghan Army, and there are a number of staff officers in the Coalition HQ.

The US provide information about other nations contributing troops and/or other support to Operation Enduring Freedom on the following website:

http://www.centcom.mil/Operations/Coalition/joint.htm

Any further information on numbers of troops currently deployed with Operation Enduring Freedom is a matter for the troop contributing nations.

Aircraft Carriers

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what percentage of the value of the aircraft carrier programme will be given to Swan Hunter. [34514]

Mr. Ingram: The decision on the ship build strategy for the two future aircraft carriers (CVF) and any associated contracts has yet to be taken but will form part of our main investment decision on CVF. This will happen when we are confident that the design is right, the contracts are right and we have sufficient understanding of cost, scheduling and risks involved.

Ammunition

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the *(a)* type and *(b)* quantity of ammunition which was acquired from outside the United Kingdom in 2004–05; and what the source was in each case. [24821]

Mr. Ingram: The information in the following table relates to general ammunition sourced directly from overseas for the financial year 2004–05. It does not include missiles, torpedoes or 'smart' munitions. The total figures provided amount to less than five per cent. of the volume of general ammunition purchased in 2004–05.

Description	*Country of origin*	*Quantity*
Mortar Bomb 60mm HE L 4A1 Fuzed M9815	Austria	3,600
Round 20mm Phalanx Mk 149 Mod 4	USA	60,000
Rocket 84mm AT4 CS HP L2A1 (ILAW)	Sweden	1,400
Round 9mm Practice Tracer AT4 (ILAW)	Sweden	350,000
Round 7.65 x 17mm Ball Carton DM11A1	German	100
Round 9mm Ball Carton (SX-2)	Germany	400
Round 9mm Plastic Blank Carton L2A1	Germany	170
Round 9mm Simunition Blue (ISD 01)	Canada	110
Round 9mm Simunition Red (ISD 01)	Canada	73
Round 12.7mm Raufoss MP Carton L1A1	Norway	5,520
Round 12.7mm Raufoss MP-T L3A1	Norway	3,000
Round 12.7mm Raufoss AP	Norway	17,640
Round 12.7mm Raufoss AP L4A1	Norway	12,120
Round 12.7mm Raufoss 4MP/1T LI A1/M17	Norway	15,500
Round 12.7mm Raufoss 1MP/1MPT/1API Belted	Norway	328,000
Round 40x53mm Practice Impact Marker DM18	Germany	35,776
Round 40x53mm HEDP S411 Linked	Singapore	3,616
Round 40x53mm Target Practice M946A2	South Africa	1,888
Round 40x53mm Practice Tracer M9914A1	South Africa	2,176
Mortar Bomb 60mm HE L4A1 Fuzed M9815	Austria	3,600
Mortar Bomb 60mm Illuminating M721 Fuzed M776	USA	544
14.5mm Artillery Training Round	Germany	10,000
105mm Illuminating Round	Sweden	4,261
Command Detonated Munition Claymore MI8	USA	6,144
Smoke Screening Grenade L84A2	Germany	30,240
Rocket Motor GTR-18 Smokey SAM	USA	3,024
Generator Smoke Training N5 Mk1	Germany	11,100
Round Anti-Riot L5A7	Germany	50,000
Round Anti-Riot L21A1	Germany	267,276
Attenuated Energy Projectile (AEP) L60A1	Germany	34,272

Details of ammunition sourced specifically for special forces have been omitted from the list for security reasons.

Army Uniform

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence who is responsible for the purchase of mess dress for *(a)* Senior Non-Commissioned Officers and *(b)* Warrant Officers on promotion to that rank. [29534]

Mr. Touhig: Mess kit for Non-Commissioned Officers (NCOs) is not mandatory uniform and is therefore not provided at public expense.

AWE Orion Laser

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will take steps to ensure that the plans for the AWE Orion Laser development at Aldermaston are tested by the normal planning process and that Crown immunity is not applied; and if he will make a statement. [34765]

Mr. Touhig: Under Crown exemption from planning legislation, the Ministry of Defence does not submit planning applications. In their place we use a consultation process under DOE Circular 18/84 which largely mirrors the statutory planning system. It is our normal policy to support any development proposals with the same level of background information that would be required under the statutory planning system.

The development at AWE Aldermaston is part of a scheduled programme of rebuilding works at the site. A range of background material has been submitted to West Berkshire council (the local planning authority) in support of these proposals mirroring the requirements placed on those which would be required of any private developer.

Chinooks

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place copies of the 14 annexes and nine enclosures listed on page 52 of the Chinook HC1 Airworthiness Review report, in the Library. [21752]

Mr. Ingram: I have placed a copy of the requested annexes and enclosures in the Library of the House. Third party information not relevant to the request has been withheld, together with a very small amount of information that relates to information supplied by bodies dealing with security matters.

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when each of the source software codes necessary for testing the airworthiness of the Chinook HC2 and Chinook HC2a helicopters was provided to his Department by the manufacturers in the US. [21753]

Mr. Ingram: Because of Intellectual Property Rights the source software codes have never been provided to the Ministry of Defence by the United States manufacturers.

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library copies of all *(a)* reports, *(b)* documents and *(c)* memoranda produced by or on behalf of Boscombe Down in 1988 concerning software in the Chinook HC2 helicopter. [21755]

Mr. Ingram: The mid-life update programme to produce the Chinook HC Mk 2 had not been initiated in 1988; there are therefore no relevant reports from Boscombe Down produced in that year.

Departmental Tendering Policy

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his policy is on including *(a)* ethical and *(b)* environmental factors in tenders for services. [33329]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence and the armed forces exist to defend the United Kingdom and its interests. MOD policy on procurement of goods, works and services will support sustainable development, including its environmental and social aspects, within the framework of the Government's procurement policy and its overarching aim of achieving value for money, and the EC procurement rules.

Falkland Islands

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost of the Falklands garrison has been in each of the last five years. [33905]

Mr. Ingram: The costs of maintaining the garrison in the Falklands for each of the last five years are as follows:

	£ million
2004–05	113.1
2003–04	110.6
2002–03	119.8
2001–02	115.3
2000–01	143.4

The reduction in costs from 2001–02 onwards is attributable, for the most part, to an adjustment to the accounts to reflect revaluations, resulting in a permanent diminution in the value of fixed assets.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many landmines in the Falkland Islands have been cleared in the last 10 years. [33907]

Mr. Ingram: Under the Ottawa Convention, the United Kingdom is required to clear all anti-personnel mines from its territory by March 2009. The only UK territory affected is the Falkland Islands. At present, only those landmines that are close to perimeter fences and may pose a danger to the civilian community are cleared. Within the last ten years, 274 anti-personnel mines and 69 anti-vehicle mines in this category have been destroyed.

Fire Fighting Duties

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence under what powers the Government have authorised the employment of members of the armed forces for fire fighting duties in the East Midlands area; and if he will make a statement. [29581]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 17 November 2005]:* There has been no recent strike in East Midlands; the hon. Member probably intended to refer to the current strike in West Midlands. Section 2 of the Emergency Powers Act 1964 provides the statutory basis for deployment of members of the armed forces on non-military tasks. This enables the Secretary of State for Defence to authorise, through issue of a Defence Council Order, deployment of members of the armed forces on 'urgent work of national importance'. The deployment of armed forces personnel to provide emergency fire cover in the West Midlands was authorised by Defence Council Order on 7 November 2005 following a request from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, in support of a request from the Chief Fire Officer of the West Midlands.

Flight Lieutenant MacDonald

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total cost to public funds has been to date of the court case Flight Lieutenant MacDonald *v.* Ministry of Defence. [34426]

Mr. Touhig: To date the Ministry of Defence's legal costs in the case involving Mr. MacDonald are £169,700 which includes counsel's fees. These costs reflect the legal complexity of the case brought by Mr. MacDonald.

Mr. MacDonald claimed he had been discriminated against unlawfully on grounds of sex, contrary to the Equal Treatments Directive 76/207/EEC and Section 6 of the Sex Discrimination Act 1976. On appeal to the House of Lords, the Law Lords handed down a unanimous judgment in favour of the Ministry of Defence on 19 June 2003 rejecting Mr. MacDonald's challenge to the interpretation of the Sex Discrimination Act 1976.

All attempts to settle the matter, including the offer to Mr. MacDonald to rejoin the Royal Air Force, have so far been unsuccessful.

Future Aircraft Carrier

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the latest dates would be to sign a main gate contract for the first Future Aircraft Carrier in order for it to be able to enter service in *(a)* 2012, *(b)* 2013, *(c)* 2014, *(d)* 2015 and *(e)* 2016. [33617]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* We are in discussion with companies over the details of the way in which the future aircraft carriers will be built and, the costs and the time-scales involved. While those discussions are ongoing, and until we have signed manufacturing contracts, which will be after the main investment decision, we are not prepared to speculate on in-service dates.

Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) Project

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress is being made on the second vessel to be built by Swan Hunter as part of the landing ships dock (auxiliary) project; and when he expects it to begin sea trials. [34028]

Mr. Ingram: Outfitting activities (for example, architectural work, furniture, pipework and deck coverings) on RFA Lyme Bay are continuing and sea trials are scheduled to commence in late 2006.

Panther Command and Liaison Vehicle

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* available payload and *(b)* personnel capacity will be of the (i) armoured and (ii) unarmoured Panther Command and Liaison Vehicle when fitted with Bowman. [34369]

Mr. Ingram: PANTHER is only being procured as an armoured Command and Liaison Vehicle. The BOWMAN fit is designed to provide a range of configurations to meet the needs of the User. PANTHER has been designed to be operated with a minimum crew of two, however it has the capacity to carry a crew of four in some roles. The payload capacity after fitting BOWMAN varies between 590kg and 1100kg, dependant upon configuration and functionality such as the Overhead Weapon Station.

Puma

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library copies of the Airworthiness Review report into the Puma aircraft. [21754]

Mr. Ingram: I have today placed copies of the Puma Airworthiness Review report from March 1996 into the Library of the House. Third party information not relevant to the request has been withheld.

RAF Bases

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will undertake a comprehensive strategic review of the defence capability of the 50 national defence airfields. [30984]

Mr. Ingram: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2055W.

Royal Navy

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will designate a new Royal Navy ship with the name HMS Shrewsbury. [35177]

Mr. Ingram: The Ships Names and Badges Committee has the task of assessing all the possible names for new ships before making their recommendation through the First Sea Lord and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence for final approval by Her Majesty the Queen.

The new class of Royal Navy destroyers (the type 45 or D class) are to bear names beginning with the letter 'D', so Shrewsbury cannot be a candidate for any of these. Similarly, the names for the new astute class of submarine will all begin with the letter 'A'. However, I shall ensure that Shrewsbury, of which there have been three ships previously with the name, who earned four battle honours, is among the names considered for future suitable vessels.

Service Medical Personnel

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many service medical personnel are deployed in *(a)* Iraq and *(b)* Afghanistan; and if he will make a statement. [30929]

Mr. Touhig: There are currently 240 UK medical personnel (health professionals) serving in Iraq and 12 in Afghanistan. These figures exclude Regimental Medical Assistants, who deliver first line medical care within their own regiments.

Service Schools

Alison Seabeck: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether children in service schools are tested and assessed in a way comparable to state schools. [34962]

Mr. Touhig: All service children's education (SCE) schools follow the statutory requirements and guidance on the national curriculum assessment arrangements as outlined in the Education Act 2000. This includes assessing pupils for the foundation stage profile and attainment at the end of all key stages. Older pupils undertake GCSE and "A" level examinations in common with English state schools.

Alison Seabeck: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the *(a)* test and *(b)* examination results of pupils at service schools are published; and whether pupils' records are transferred when they move into the state sector. [34963]

Mr. Touhig: All performance data on Service Children's Education (SCE) Agency schools is published internally to schools and the Agency Owner's Board, on which the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) is represented. In addition, SCE Head teachers are responsible for ensuring that a written report is provided to all parents, detailing their individual child's performance. Information on the overall performance of the school is also provided directly to parents by way of a formal Annual Report. As SCE does not come under the jurisdiction of the DfES, SCE's school results are not included in the 'Achievement and Attainment Tables' published by that Department. However, the overall performance of the Agency against its Key Targets, which includes achievement at Key Stages 1 to 3 and GCSE and 'A' level, is published each year in the Agency's Annual Report and Accounts, copies of which are available in the Library of the House.

SCE schools follow the statutory requirement to send specified pupil records to the receiving school. This is the case for all pupils moving to either a local education authority (LEA) maintained or independent school.

Trident

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 124W, on Trident, if he will ensure that opportunities are provided for full and

informed public and parliamentary debate prior to decisions being made on a replacement for the United Kingdom's Trident nuclear missile capability. [35333]

John Reid: The issue of the possible replacement of Trident has been raised on numerous occasions in the House of Commons, most recently during defence questions on 14 November and the 'Defence in the UK' debate on 17 November. I also discussed this issue with the House of Commons Defence Committee on 1 November.

Although decisions are likely to be necessary in the current Parliament they are still some way off and there will be many further opportunities for Parliament to debate the issue. It is too early to say what further formal or informal procedures might be used to underpin future decision-making by the Government in this area.

White Phosphorus

Mr. Carmichael: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the use of white phosphorus by the British Army. [33289]

John Reid: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given in another place on 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, column WA23, by my noble Friend Lord Drayson, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State for Defence Procurement.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Appointments

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the date of appointment was of each member of the *(a)* Civil Renewal Practitioners Group, *(b)* Criminal Records Bureau Consultative Panel, *(c)* Insurance Cover Working Group, *(d)* Race Equality Advisory Panel, *(e)* Steering Group on the Lawrence Enquiry Action Plan, *(f)* Task Force on Child Protection on the Internet, *(g)* Correctional Services Accreditation Panel, *(h)* Animal Procedures Committee, *(i)* Police Arbitration Panel, *(j)* Surveillance Commissioners, *(k)* Criminal Injuries Compensation Appeals Panel, *(l)* Asylum Support Adjudicators, *(m)* Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs, *(n)* Independent Police Complaints Commission and *(o)* Office of the Immigration Services Commissioner; what the length of appointment is in each case; how much has been claimed in expenses by each person; and what the cost of each body was in (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2004–05. [11951]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The information requested will be placed in the Library.

Asylum/Immigration

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many families subject to the pilot implementation of section 9 of the Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants) Act 2004 *(a)* are being supported as a family and *(b)* are receiving support for children only from their local authority. [31185]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* I have not been informed of any cases where, following a withdrawal of support by NASS because of lack of co-operation on a voluntary return, the local authority has made a formal decision to support the family as a unit.

There are a number of cases where a local authority is accommodating a family temporarily, pending an assessment of the children's needs under the Children Act. There are three cases where a local authority has decided to provide support to cover the children's needs only.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost of housing asylum seekers in *(a)* London, *(b)* Havering and *(c)* Romford was in the last five years. [33919]

Mr. McNulty: The information is not available in the precise format requested. Information on the costs of providing accommodation to asylum seekers supported directly by NASS for the years 2000–01—2003–04 is provided in the following table. Annual payments to local authorities by NASS from 1999–2000 can be found at:

http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/applying/national_asylum_support/stakeholders/finance.html

We are unable to provide information on the amount of grant used to pay for accommodation.

Costs of accommodation for asylum seekers supported directly by MASS

£ million

Financial year	*Expenditure on dispersal accommodation*	*Expenditure on emergency (initial) accommodation*	*Total expenditure*
2000–01	115	n/a	115
2001–02	247	n/a	247
2002–03	319	107	426
2003–04	343	96	439

n/a = Not available

Michael Jabez Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seekers have been prosecuted for document infringements under the rules introduced by the Nationality, Immigration and Asylum Act 2002. [34204]

Mr. McNulty: Section 2(1) of the Asylum and Immigration (treatment of Claimants etc.) Act 2004 makes it an offence for a person not to have, at a leave or asylum interview, an immigration document which is in force and which satisfactorily establishes his identity and nationality or citizenship. The offence contained in Section two is not included in the list of offences covered by Section 31 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999.

The figures for prosecutions could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, according to locally collated management information, which may be subject to change, there have been 350 convictions under Section two of the Asylum & Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc) Act 2004 since it came into force on 22 September 2004 until 20 October 2005.

Council Tax Valuation

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate the Government has made of the number of people fined in England and Wales since 1997 for intentionally delaying or obstructing a Valuation Office Agency representative who is conducting a council tax valuation inspection. [33153]

Mr. Woolas: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Brent, East (Sarah Teather) on 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2066W.

No such fine has been invoked to date.

Basic Command Unit Fund

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of the Basic Command Unit Fund funding stream from the Government Office for London was made available to the London borough of Croydon in 2004–05. [33876]

Hazel Blears: The Government Office for London was allocated £9,995,862 from the Basic Command Unit Fund in 2004–05, of which £352,141 was made available to the London borough of Croydon.

Cannabis Possession

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were *(a)* arrested and charged with and *(b)* convicted of cannabis possession in (i) the Southend Police Authority area and (ii) each other police authority area in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [33643]

Paul Goggins: The available information relates to the number of police cautions and court convictions within each police force area.

Table 1: Persons cautioned for cannabis possession offences in England and Wales by police force area, 1999–2003

Number of persons

Police force area	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
England					
Avon and Somerset	1,189	916	992	1,198	1,178
Bedfordshire	307	282	391	112	62
Cambridgeshire	556	452	438	418	342
Cheshire	564	445	458	384	447
Cleveland	441	310	257	316	352
Cumbria	602	474	440	422	403
Derbyshire	461	316	263	135	115
Devon and Cornwall	1,252	1,106	1,029	967	1,064
Dorset	388	438	323	328	373
Durham	85	357	449	500	437
Essex	907	700	619	701	688
Gloucestershire	554	615	567	597	558
Greater Manchester	2,267	1,765	1,717	1,780	1,959
Hampshire	1,341	1,150	1,156	1,154	1,284
Hertfordshire	548	561	576	629	625
Humberside	433	350	369	327	436
Kent	1,254	994	1,016	1,017	844
Lancashire	1,367	1,226	1,011	1,034	1,221
Leicestershire	448	370	294	107	410
Lincolnshire	138	62	263	268	257
London					
City of London	258	197	359	488	518
Metropolitan Police	12,432	9,804	8,768	11,246	10,637
Merseyside	1,963	1,201	975	1,200	1,198
Norfolk	543	448	390	419	341
Northamptonshire	509	432	421	523	453
Northumbria	2,282	1,921	2,073	2,573	2,583
North Yorkshire	422	194	61	57	37
Nottinghamshire	549	557	560	526	748
South Yorkshire	1,154	487	457	503	539
Staffordshire	528	739	956	1,297	1,230
Suffolk	539	422	369	507	537
Surrey	686	670	768	820	776
Sussex	1,014	909	1,095	1,368	1,188
Thames Valley	716	962	731	1,043	989
Warwickshire	411	326	310	338	501
West Mercia	972	1,011	1,028	1,101	1,009
West Midlands	2,497	2,206	2,127	2,479	2,815
West Yorkshire	1,362	1,017	851	1,192	1,202
Wiltshire	498	472	293	212	294
Wales					
Dyfed Powys	849	719	966	1,436	1,459
Gwent	1,041	773	800	691	683
North Wales	793	613	657	816	844
South Wales	975	1,071	1,010	722	940

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Correspondence

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter of 1 November from the hon. Member for Walsall, North regarding a constituent: reference: A1102564. [34881]

Mr. McNulty: I replied to my hon. Friend on 6 December.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister of State for Immigration will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, to the Immigration and Nationality Directorate of 12 July 2005 on behalf of Samreen Mahmood (nee Akhtar) (Home Office Reference M1254489/correspondence reference B16243/5). [35173]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 5 December 2005.

Criminal Justice and Public Order Act

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will bring forward proposals to amend section 34 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act 1994 to permit the courts to draw adverse inferences from the failure to mention facts in post-charge interviews for terror-related offences. [32904]

Hazel Blears: A detainee may not be interviewed about an offence after they have been charged with it or informed that they will be prosecuted for it unless the interview is necessary for the reasons set out in paragraph 16.5 of PACE Code C (Detention, treatment and questioning of persons by police officers).

We are considering whether such provision best suits the needs of achieving a successful outcome to an investigation and intend to publish a consultation paper on this issue in spring 2006. That paper will also consider the existing caution provided for in Code C, paragraph 16.5 and the potential for extending that to the caution given to a suspect during the pre-charge of the investigation.

Deaths in Custody

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people died while in the custody of the Essex Police Force in each of the last five years. [31432]

Hazel Blears: The total number of deaths in each of the last five years of people who have died during or following police contact is shown at annex A.

Annex A

	Fatal road accidents	*Fatal shootings*	*In or following police custody*	*Other types of police contact*
1999–2000	0	0	0	0
2001–02	0	0	0	0
2002–03	2	0	1	1
2003–04	2	0	1	0
2004–05	2	0	0	0

Deportees

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 40W, on deportees, whether the two individuals to which the Answer refers opposed the relevant extradition requests. [34243]

Mr. McNulty: The individual who was surrendered to Italy in 2002 did not oppose the decision to surrender him by way of Habeas Corpus, but did submit limited representations against his return. He also gave notice of his intention to seek a judicial review of the Secretary of State's decision to order extradition, but did not do so.

The individual who was surrendered to the Netherlands in July 2005 consented at the extradition hearing.

Domestic Violence

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what funding has been made available to support victims of domestic violence and their children in each year since 1997 in *(a)* England and *(b)* the Tees Valley. [32765]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information is as follows:

(a) Between 1999–2000 and 2003–04 the Home Office allocated funding for victims of domestic violence and their children through the violence against women (VAW) initiative within the crime reduction programme.

The allocated budget for England and Wales was: 2000–01—£5,000,000, 2001–02—£7,092,000, 2002–03—£6,355,000, 2003–04—£7,145,000 (£6 million allocated to VAW and £1 million allocated to a national awareness raising campaign. £145,000 was allocated for domestic violence victims with no recourse to public funds. 2004–05—£1,650,000 (£1.1 million allocated to regional directors fund for local delivery of support for victims of domestic violence and their children and £50,000 was allocated to implement the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004. £500,000 was allocated to a national awareness raising campaign. 2005–06—£1,500,000 other Government Departments also fund support for domestic violence victims and their children. For example, the supporting people programme provides housing-related support for victims and their children.

The spending on this programme is as follows: 2003–04—£57 million, 2004–05—£56.9 million estimated spend also, in 2003 the Government announced major investment in refuge provision in England in 2003–06. A total of £32.1 million capital has been allocated. Specifically relating to children of domestic violence victims, the 2004 Spending Review provided the Sure Start Unit with additional investment of £769 million by 2007–08 to 'provide additional childcare support for at least 2,000 particularly disadvantaged children.

(b) The North East Region only began receiving funding for domestic violence from 2001 when the violence against women initiative commenced. The Tees

Valley area comprises four CDRP/local authority areas. Funding for domestic violence within the Tees Valley is as follows: 2001–03—Middlesbrough was successful in bidding in the second tranche of violence against women initiative funding for £389,385 which was used to fund a successful one stop shop project—My Sister's Place which provides direct access, support and information to women experiencing or affected by domestic violence. 2003–04—Middlesbrough, was granted an additional year's funding of £57,802 from the VAW programme to continue My Sister's Place. During the same year Cleveland police were allocated £60,000. 2004–05—A total of £60,000 was allocated to the four areas to develop and pilot a perpetrator programme. 2005–06—£60,000 was allocated to continue and roll out the perpetrator programme to other localities in the Tees Valley area.

Drug Interventions Programme

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which areas are covered by the Drug Interventions Programme; and if he will make a statement. [33240]

Paul Goggins: The Drug Interventions Programme (DIP) provides a route out of crime and into treatment for drug misusing offenders, using their contact with the Criminal Justice System as an opportunity to engage them in treatment and support. The intensive elements of the programme, which include testing for class A drugs on charge for certain trigger offences, are operational in 97 basic command units (BCUs) (67 Drug Action Teams) within England and three drug/alcohol partnerships in Wales. Other key elements of DIP are delivered in all areas of England and are being rolled out in Wales.

The intensive areas are listed in table 1. Since the programme began, over 31,000 drug misusing offenders have entered treatment through DIP. Latest figures show that over 2,000 DIP clients entered treatment in October 2005 and that the programme is on course to achieving the target of 1,000 offenders per week entering treatment by March 2008.

From 1 December, the police in Greater Manchester, Nottinghamshire and South Yorkshire police force areas, are able to test for class A drugs on arrest for certain trigger offences as an alternative to on charge for those who test positive and require them to attend an assessment with a drug worker. These new powers will be expanded further on 31 March 2006. Acquisitive crime—to which drug related crime makes a substantial contribution—is going down and fell by 12 per cent. in the year to April 2005.

Table 1: DIP intensive areas

Police force	*DAT*
Avon and Somerset	Bristol
Bedfordshire	Bedfordshire
Cambridgeshire	Peterborough
Cleveland	Hartlepool Middlesbrough Stockton
Greater Manchester Police	Bolton Bury Manchester Oldham Rochdale Salford Stockport Tameside Trafford Wigan
Gwent	Newport
Humberside	Hull North Lincolnshire North East Lincolnshire
Leicestershire	Leicester
Merseyside	Liverpool
Metropolitan Police	Brent Camden Croydon Ealing Enfield Greenwich Hackney Hammersmith and Fulham Haringey Hounslow Islington Kensington and Chelsea Lambeth Lewisham Newham Redbridge Southwark Tower Hamlets Waltham Forest Wandsworth Westminster
Northamptonshire	Northamptonshire
Northumbria	Gateshead Newcastle-upon-Tyne Sunderland
North Wales	Colwyn Bay
Nottinghamshire	Nottingham City Nottinghamshire
South Wales	Cardiff Swansea
South Yorkshire	Barnsley Doncaster Rotherham Sheffield
Thames Valley	Oxfordshire Reading Slough
West Midlands	Birmingham Coventry Dudley Sandwell Solihull Walsall Wolverhampton
West Yorkshire	Bradford Calderdale Kirklees Leeds Wakefield

ECHR and ECJ Judgments

David Mundell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which domestic laws have been amended following judgment against the UK by the European Court of Human Rights and the European Court of Justice in the last 10 years. [30844]

Ms Harman: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

EU Travel Bans

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department further to the answer of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1748W, on EU travel bans, what mechanisms exist for *(a)* the Immigration and Nationality Directorate and *(b)* his Department to monitor compliance with travel bans. [34396]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate and the Sanctions Unit of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office liaise closely to ensure that the UK complies with its international obligations in respect of travel bans. Details of all those subject to EU, and UN, travel bans are placed on appropriate databases.

These databases are updated regularly and are available to UK immigration officials responsible for ensuring that those excluded individuals are refused leave to enter or remain in the UK. Section 8B(2) of the Immigration Act 1971 ensures that any leave to enter or remain in the UK is cancelled on becoming an excluded person.

Hunting

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what reports he has received of breaches of the Hunting Act 2004; and what steps were taken in response. [33350]

Hazel Blears: The investigation of reported breaches of the Hunting Act 2004 is a matter for the police. The Association of Chief Police Officers has issued guidance for police forces on the practical aspects of enforcing the Act and a training package.

Identity Cards

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department has conducted *(a)* research studies and *(b)* tests on the prevention of data leakage of contactless technology via skimming and eavesdropping in relation to the identity card scheme. [32084]

Andy Burnham: The identity card scheme will secure information on the identity card through a number of methods, including the use of anti-skimming technology. The identity cards programme has reviewed technical methodologies for anti-skimming measures for contactless cards which are compliant with International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) recommendations for machine-readable travel documents. It is also working with the Communications Electronics Security Group (CESG) as part of setting requirements for card and chip design. Ultimately, before the identity card can be launched, any card used by the scheme will undergo a full security accreditation to ensure that it is capable of protecting sensitive data to the appropriate level.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the *(a)* total and *(b)* net cost of (i) integrating the proposed identity card scheme into his Department's IT systems and (ii) the ongoing operation of the scheme within his Department. [31111]

Andy Burnham: The Home Office has developed its current best estimate of the cost of using the ID cards scheme to support the services which it oversees and these costs have been incorporated into the business case. The Ministerial Committee on Identity Cards which oversees the work on benefits planning and realisation, is chaired by my hon. Friend the Minister of State Tony McNulty and I represent the interests of Home Office and the services it oversees on the Committee.

In deriving these estimates account has to be taken of current and planned levels of investment in similar or related technologies and the types of use required to support the particular services which the Home Office oversees. Not all services will require a high degree of integration between the ID cards scheme and other IT systems. Where there may be a need for integration, some costs can be absorbed into the usual cycles of system upgrades and technology refreshes.

We cannot release the detailed estimated costs for integrating IT systems and the ongoing operation of the identity cards scheme within the Home Office and the services which it oversees at this stage as these elements may be acquired from the market. The estimates are therefore commercially sensitive and to release them may prejudice the procurement process and the Department's ability to obtain value for money from potential suppliers.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether his Department has conducted *(a)* research studies and *(b)* tests in accordance with national standards on basic access control on the durability of contactless chips and cards when they are subjected to regular swiping in order to disclose information kept on the card in relation to the identity card scheme. [32083]

Andy Burnham: The Identity Cards programme has conducted a review of studies into the use and durability of contactless chips and cards suitable for use in an identity cards scheme as well as wide-ranging market sounding survey to gain the views of a cross section of suppliers in the smartcard value chain.

This survey concluded that a ten year life for a contactless card was feasible. It should be noted that swiping, to enable basic access control, is only likely to be required when the card is used as an international travel

document. Indeed, more recent reader technologies use a camera to read the machine readable characters on a card or passport and therefore do not require the document to be swiped.

International Arrest Warrants

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 596W, to questions on international arrest warrants, (1) if he will consult *(a)* Parliament and *(b)* parties with an interest in the issuing of arrest warrants in international cases other than the Israeli Government on the issues raised by the case of General Almog; [35234]

(2) what changes to the procedure of dealing with arrest warrants in international cases are under consideration; and whether changes to the issuing of proposed arrest warrants in international cases will be reported to Parliament before a decision is made. [35235]

Andy Burnham: The Government are carefully considering the implications of this case. Procedures for issuing warrants in such cases are governed by section 25(2) of the Prosecution of Offences Act 1985. Any future proposals for amending this legislation would be submitted to Parliament in the usual way and would be open to public scrutiny.

KPMG Review

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer to question no. 19871, whether the Government plan to publish *(a)* the review of the recommendations of the KPMG report and *(b)* the Government's proposed actions arising therefrom; and when he expects the outcomes to be announced. [23090]

Andy Burnham: The summary of KPMG's report and the Home Office's proposed actions arising from it were both published on the 9 November 2005. As the results of further iterations of the cost estimates are published the Government will make clear where they have acted on the recommendations.

Migrant Workers

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of migrant workers to the UK from the EU's new accession countries are women. [33997]

Mr. McNulty: The accession monitoring report for May 2004—September 2005 sets out the number of citizens from East European member states of the EU who have applied for registration with the worker registration scheme during this period. This report is available on the Home Office website:

via:http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home/0/reports/accession_monitoring.htm

Section three of the report, "Age and Gender of Registered Workers", shows that during the period May 2004 to September 2005, 43 percent. of the migrants from the new EU member states who applied for registration with the scheme were women.

This proportion has varied over the period. During the first quarter after accession the proportion of women applying for registration was 47 percent. During the second quarter of 2005 the proportion was 40 percent.

Passport Costs

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost of *(a)* a standard (32 page) passport, *(b)* a frequent traveller (48 page) passport, *(c)* a child passport (five years validity) and *(d)* an emergency passport was in each year since 1980. [33642]

Andy Burnham: Passport fees relating to each year since 1980 are set out in the following table. The fees are those which were appropriate at 1 January each year. An emergency same day service was only introduced from November 2001 and five year child passports were introduced in October 1998, the table below reflects the price of amending a parents passport before 1999. The decrease in frequent traveller costs in 1991 was due to a reduction in book size from 94 pages to 48.

£

	Adult standard	*Adult same day*	*Adult frequent traveller*	*Child*
1980	11.00	—	22.00	—
1981	11.00	—	22.00	—
1982	11.00	—	22.00	—
1983	11.00	—	22.00	—
1984	15.00	—	30.00	4.00
1985	15.00	—	30.00	4.00
1986	15.00	—	30.00	4.00
1987	15.00	—	30.00	4.00
1988	15.00	—	30.00	4.00
1989	15.00	—	30.00	4.00
1990	15.00	—	30.00	4.00
1991	15.00	—	30.00	4.00
1992	15.00	—	22.50	4.00
1993	18.00	—	27.00	5.00
1994	18.00	—	27.00	5.00
1995	18.00	—	27.00	5.00
1996	18.00	—	27.00	5.00
1997	18.00	—	27.00	5.00
1998	18.00	—	27.00	5.00
1999	21.00	—	31.00	11.00
2000	28.00	—	38.00	14.80
2001	28.00	—	38.00	14.80
2002	30.00	75.00	40.00	16.00
2003	33.00	75.00	40.00	16.00
2004	42.00	89.00	54.50	25.00
2005	42.00	89.00	54.50	25.00

Penalty Notices

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many penalty notices for disorder have been issued for *(a)* theft and *(b)* criminal damage in each month since November 2004; and if he will make a statement. [33598]

Hazel Blears: Offences under section one of the Theft Act 1968, for retail theft under the value of £200 and section 1(1) of the Criminal Damage Act 1971, for destroying or damaging property under the value of £500 can attract a Penalty Notice for Disorder. Both offences were included into the PND scheme from 1 November 2004. The numbers of penalty notices issued by month are provided in the following table.

Number of penalty notices for disorder issued for certain offences by month, England and Wales, November 2004 to July 2005[1]

Year/month	*Destroying or damaging property (under £500)*	*Theft (retail under £200)*
2004		
November	451	873
December	651	1,145
2005[1]		
January	579	1,036
February	736	1,292
March	767	1,657
April	802	1,668
May	924	1,741
June	899	1,649
July	934	1,499
Total	5,641	10,542

[1] Data for 2005 are provisional

Source:

RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform

Police Reorganisation

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what secondary legislation will need to be passed in order to facilitate the proposed amalgamation of police forces. [32858]

Hazel Blears: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to a question from the hon. Member for Mid Worcestershire on 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1930W.

Ports

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans the Government have to increase the number of UK ports which are manned by immigration staff 24 hours a day. [34714]

Mr. McNulty: Immigration coverage of international flight arrivals is based upon a range of factors, including the nature and frequency of traffic and the numbers of passengers requiring leave to enter at each port. There are currently 41 manned ports, of which 16 are staffed 24 hours a day. Other ports are covered on a risk assessed basis. Officers are deployed to unmanned ports to meet specific arrivals where necessary.

The provision of advance passenger information by carriers under the e-Borders programme will increase the Border Agencies' ability to conduct risk assessments and deploy resources in a targeted manner. There are currently no plans to extend the number of UK ports which are manned 24 hours a day. We are however extending the Immigration Service mobile response capacity, based on intelligence, to respond to any new or emerging threats.

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures the Government have in place to record people who leave the UK through *(a)* UK ports, *(b)* UK airports and *(c)* the Channel Tunnel. [34715]

Mr. McNulty: UK Immigration Service checks at the embarkation control were put in place at key locations as an immediate response to the July attacks in support of the police. Since 15 September the Immigration service has operated intelligence led controls at major ports and this situation will continue in the medium term. In the longer term IND plans to introduce an electronic system of recording travellers in and out of the UK as part of the e-Borders programme.

Serious Organised Crime Agency

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made towards the establishment of the new centre for child protection on the internet affiliated to the Serious Organised Crime Agency; and if he will make a statement. [33238]

Paul Goggins: On 1 April 2005, the Home Secretary announced plans to create a new national centre to protect children from sexual exploitation and combat online child abuse. This new centre will be called Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre and is on track to open on 1 April 2006.

The centre will take over the existing functions of the National Crime Squad (NCS) Paedophile Online Investigation Team (POLIT) and the National Criminal Intelligence Service (NCIS) Serious Sex Offenders' Unit (SSOU) and those functions of the NCS National Hi-Tech Crime Unit (NHTCU) that are focused on tackling online child abuse. It will also deliver a range of new functions. The new centre will:—receive, assess and disseminate intelligence on paedophiles and other serious sex offenders;—undertake proactive investigations into high risk targets. This will include targeting travelling sex offenders and seizing the assets from those who profit from the trade in indecent images;—provide a 24/7 cybertip line for reporting online child abuse;—deliver innovative crime prevention and crime reduction initiatives to reduce the harm caused by online abuse.

This will include public awareness and education campaigns;—manage the national database of child abuse images; and—provide information, advice, training and support. This includes specialist advice and guidance to law enforcement.

The centre will be affiliated to the Serious and Organised Crime Agency (SOCA) and included in the SOCA governance arrangements but will have full operational autonomy. We know the only way to tackle these issues effectively is in partnership. Putting the different experts together for the first time in an operational centre will allow us to make a step change in the work we do to protect children.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the objectives are of *(a)* the chair, *(b)* the director general designate and *(c)* each of the four executive directors of the Serious Organised Crime Agency; and if he will make a statement. [34326]

Paul Goggins: Under the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005, the functions of the Serious Organised Crime Agency are to: *(a)* prevent and detect serious organised crime, and *(b)* contribute to the reduction of such crime in other ways and to the mitigation of its consequences, and it is the objective of the chair and the director general to deliver them. The objectives of each of the four executive directors is an operational matter for the director general designate.

Stop and Search

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the London boroughs which have established a local monitoring group to scrutinise the use of stop and search and stop and account; and if he will make a statement. [34342]

Hazel Blears: The Metropolitan Police Authority have informed me that 23 London boroughs have indicated that they have established a local monitoring group to scrutinise the use of stop and search and stop and account. The 23 boroughs are detailed in the following list.

Borough

Barking and Dagenham
Bexley
Brent
Bromley
Camden
City of Westminster
Croydon
Ealing
Greenwich
Hackney
Haringey
Islington
Kensington and Chelsea
Kingston upon Thames
Lambeth
Lewisham
Merton
Newham
Redbridge
Southwark
Sutton
Tower Hamlets
Wandsworth

Terrorism Bill (Police Lobbying)

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the police forces which recommended that judicial oversight be sought during pre-trial detention every seven days, referred to by the Prime Minister on 7 November. [30333]

Hazel Blears: The content of the Terrorism Bill was discussed with the Metropolitan police, which has lead responsibility for terrorism matters, and ACPO, which speaks on behalf of all police forces in England and Wales.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Fire Training

Lynne Jones: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission how many *(a)* hon. Members, *(b)* hon. Members' staff and *(c)* other staff working in the Palace of Westminster have attended fire training in each of the last three years; and what proportion of the total this represents in each case. [33298]

Nick Harvey: Over the last three years the numbers attending fire safety awareness training were as follows:

	Members	*Members staff*	*Staff of both Houses and contractors working on the estate*
2003–04			
Number	1	30	1,386
Percentage	0.3	2.72	54
2004–05			
Number	62	223	1,967
Percentage	10	20.2	93
2005–06 to date			
Number	0	11	840
Percentage	—	1	39

Further training will be carried out in 2005–06.

Parliamentary Estate (Lighting)

Peter Law: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Lynne Featherstone) of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 571W, on light bulbs, whether the Commission plans to increase the use of energy efficient *(a)* fluorescent tubes and *(b)* lamps used on the parliamentary estate to 100 per cent. [35794]

Nick Harvey: Subject to aesthetic and heritage issues in the Palace, fluorescent bulbs are replaced with energy efficient equivalents during the refurbishment of each area. When light fittings come to the end of their life they are similarly replaced with energy efficient bulbs. This is not feasible in Central Lobby or St. Stephens Hall due to the age and design of the chandeliers but in all other areas the replacement programme is expected to be complete by 2007.

Project Costs

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission if he will list the projects costing over £100,000 undertaken on behalf of the Commission since 1997; and what the cost was of each project. [34417]

Nick Harvey: I regret that I am unable to do so, in the absence of a clear definition of what constitutes a project for the purposes of this request. Within an annual Administration Estimate cash budget of over £150 million, there are many developments in the services and facilities provided which might or might not be defined as "projects". There have for example been over 250 readily identifiable works and IT-related projects since 1997, many jointly funded with the House

of Lords. Records of other projects and programmes are not held centrally, and compiling a comprehensive and authoritative list could be done only at disproportionate cost.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Criminal Cases (Competitive Tendering)

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will publish the advice provided by Frontier Economics to her Department in respect of its proposals to introduce competitive tendering in criminal legal aid; and if she will make a statement. [35084]

Bridget Prentice: We will consider the future of competitive tendering including publication of any advice we have received in light of the Carter report into legal aid procurement.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Departmental Tendering Policy

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his policy is on including *(a)* ethical and *(b)* environmental factors in tenders for services. [33345]

Mr. Plaskitt: It is the Department's procurement policy to *(a)* buy sustainable goods and services even if they cost more; *(b)* make sustainable procurement part of every commercial VFM decision which will be made on the basis of whole life costs; *(c)* undertake environmental risk assessments of contracting activities and *(d)* consider ethical and Fair Trade issues across the whole supply chain.

E-benefits Software

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what evaluation he has made of the use of e-benefits software in Rotherham; and if he will make a statement. [34285]

Jim Fitzpatrick: I have been asked to reply.

The e-benefits project is one of 22 local e-government national projects sponsored by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The project is led by Rotherham MBC. The project's software covers three benefits: housing benefit, council tax benefit and free school meals. These have been evaluated by ODPM, the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and Cabinet Office. Rotherham is currently working with the ODPM and a consortium of suppliers to make these products available commercially to other local authorities next year.

Financial Assistance Scheme

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the oral answer of 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 610, what progress has been made by the Financial Assistance Scheme Operational Unit; and whether he expects the first payments to be made by the unit by Christmas. [35486]

Mr. Timms: The Financial Assistance Scheme Operational Unit has been gathering information on pension schemes since 1 September. Over 250 schemes have been notified to FAS, of which 51 have so far been accepted as qualifying pension schemes.

The unit has now begun gathering data on individual members and hopes to be in a position to make initial payments to a number of members in December.

Jobcentre Plus

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many offers of *(a)* training and *(b)* other support have been made to individuals by Jobcentre Plus and subsequently rescinded for (i) budgetary or (ii) other reasons in the last 12 months. [28710]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 7 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question regarding how many offers of *(a)* training and *(b)* other support have been made to individuals by Jobcentre Plus, and subsequently rescinded for either budgetary or other reasons in the last 12 months. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

I assume that when referring to individuals that you are referring to staff members of Jobcentre Plus. On that basis, I can advise you that no offers of training or other support made to staff have been cancelled or rescinded during the last 12 months due to budgetary reasons. Some local training cancellations may have occurred due to operational reasons.

During 2004/05, 446,396 learning days were delivered to meet the needs of individual staff and the business of Jobcentre Plus. A further 521,220 learning days have been planned for delivery during 2005/06 across Jobcentre Plus, representing an average of 6 days per person for the year.

We also provide other support during the year which includes 'Working Together', our cultural change programme; use of our performance and development system to support staff development; our employee assistance programme; and leadership and manager development. All of these continue to be on offer.

Mr. Anthony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what consultations have been undertaken to assess the preferred method of contact for customers of Jobcentre Plus. [30359]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 7 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning what consultations have been undertaken to assess the preferred method of contact for customers. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Jobcentre Plus conducts an annual customer satisfaction survey which canvasses the views of our customers across the full range of our services, including the channels of contact we provide. The surveys give us a clear picture about how our services are perceived by customers, including how well delivered they are, and how easy or difficult they are to access. They also provide baseline information on customer expectations and satisfaction and the basis for tracking, over time, how customer perceptions of the service change as Jobcentre Plus implementation is rolled out, helping to drive the process of performance improvement.

The results of the 2004 survey were published on 30th September 2004. The 2005 survey commenced in September.

I hope this is helpful.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the pilots that have been conducted in the Canvey Job Centre in the last five years. [30382]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 7 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning pilots that have been conducted in Canvey Island Jobcentre Plus during the last five years. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

In answer to your specific question there have been two pilots conducted in Canvey Island Jobcentre Plus in the last five years. These pilots were not exclusive to Canvey Island Jobcentre Plus as they were run in Essex Jobcentre Plus District which covers Canvey Island.

From April 2004 Essex has been one of seven Jobcentre Plus districts delivering the Governments Pathways to Work pilot. The pilot targets help and support at customers claiming Incapacity Benefit by encouraging and promoting work where possible. As a result of the pilot, 1950 customers have been placed in work.

On 31 October 2005 the In Work Credit pilot was launched in Essex. The Credit gives extra help to lone parents, or parents whose partners are in receipt of Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance, when they start work provided they meet certain criteria. This pilot is expected to run until 30 October 2006.

Jobseeker's Allowance

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what was the average time taken by local contact centres in England to call back applicants for jobseeker's allowance following the initial application in the last period for which figures are available; and what the target is. [23071]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 28 October 2005]:* The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 7 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning the average time taken by local contact centres in England to call back applicants for Jobseeker's Allowance. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus. In answer to your specific question, we do not keep separate figures for specific benefits. Also, whilst we do not have an official target for calling back customers who have made an initial application via our contact centres, we do have a stated aim to call 90% of customers back in 24 hours.

Jobcentre Plus is undergoing a massive change programme. Change on this scale does create challenges in maintaining levels of service and it has put our business under some pressure in this transitional period. As a result many customers claiming working age benefits have not received their call-back within our stated timescales.

We have put in place robust measures to improve performance including temporary adjustments to streamline the business process and ramping up recruitment plans, supported by robust training programmes. The latest figures that we have available are for the second week of October when 9.8% of customers received their call-back within 24 hours and on average customers were being contacted within 2.6 days of their initial contact. While this is clearly not acceptable it is a significant improvement from an average of 4.9 days at the beginning of September. Please note that this figure applies to all working age benefits that are made through contact centres based in England. We remain confident that the week on week improvements in customer service we have seen since the beginning of September will continue.

Learning Providers

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent discussions *(a)* his Department and *(b)* Jobcentre Plus have held with representatives of learning providers concerning (i) prime contractor status and (ii) other means of improving the cost-effectiveness of education and training in job placement. [31939]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 7 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question asking what recent discussions *(a)* his Department and *(b)* Jobcentre Plus have held with representatives of learning providers concerning (i) prime contractor status and (ii) other means of improving the cost effectiveness of education and training in job placement. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Jobcentre Plus holds regular formal discussions and meetings with representatives of the Employment Related Services Association (ERSA), the Association of Learning Providers (ALP) and the Provider Liaison Group.

All these bodies represent the interests of all actual and potential providers of employment related services under contract to Jobcentre Plus. The role of prime contractors and cost effectiveness of employment—related services have both been discussed at these meetings. There are of course other more informal meetings and discussions held with individual learning providers where these issues may be raised.

I hope this is helpful.

Pensioners (Beverley and Holderness)

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many people in Beverley and Holderness he estimates will be entitled to pension credit in 2025; [33454]

(2) how many pensioners he estimates will be entitled to pension credit in 2025. [33460]

Mr. Timms: The numbers entitled to pension credit will depend on a wide range of factors including how Government choose to uprate benefits in the future. If the current uprating approaches are continued in the future, projections suggest 5.2 million households or 6.9 million individuals in Great Britain will be entitled to pension credit in 2025. Projections are not available at constituency level.

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100,000 and are subject to a wide range of uncertainty.

2. Individuals entitled include a small number of partners below pension age.

3. The projections account for the equalisation of state pension age between 2010 and 2020.

4. Estimates of the number of households and individuals eligible for pension credit are available for Great Britain. These are based

on a long term version of the Department's Policy Simulation Model, which uses Family Resources Survey data for 2003–04 projected forward into the future to estimate the extent of eligibility for pension credit for each pensioner household on the survey.

Pensions

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total value was of rebates for contracting out of the state second pension in each year since 2002–03; and if he will estimate the distribution of the value of the rebates for each income *(a)* decile and *(b)* quartile of the population. [34402]

Mr. Timms: The information is not available in the format requested. Such information as is available is in the table:

Estimated cost of national insurance contribution rebates

Tax year	*Occupational schemes*		*Personal pension and stakeholder pension schemes*	*£ million*
	Defined benefit	*Defined contribution*		*Total*
2002–03	6,300	600	3,500	10,400
2003–04	6,500	500	3,200	10,200
2004–05	6,600	500	3,000	10,100

Notes:
1. Figures are based on GAD estimates for the December 2005 pre-Budget report.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest £100 million.
3. Figures cover Great Britain only.
4. Figures are accruals basis and are in cash terms.

Source:
Government Actuary's Department (GAD).

Sir Malcolm Rifkind: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many occupational pension schemes have started the process of winding up since 1997; [22188]

(2) how many occupational pension schemes have started winding up since 1997. [27978]

Mr. Timms: In April 2005 the Pensions Regulator took over the register of occupational pension schemes from the Occupational Pensions Regulatory Authority (Opra).

Information in the following table was provided by the Pensions Regulator and shows the number of schemes that have entered winding up each year since 1997 and which had not yet completed winding up. The table does not contain schemes that started winding up in the time period given and have since completed wind up. The Pensions Regulator only holds the present status of a scheme so only those winding up at the moment are captured.

Effective date scheme status was changed on register to 'Winding Up'	*Number of schemes*	*Total membership*
1 April 1997 to 31 March 1998	103	2,958
1 April 1998 to 31 March 1999	127	3,612
1 April 1999 to 31 March 2000	2,940	52,926
1 April 2000 to 31 March 2001	1,058	30,192
1 April 2001 to 31 March 2002	1,450	42,823
1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003	1,148	54,738
1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004	1,197	51,478
1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005	560	53,192
Total	8,583	291,919

Notes:
1. A winding up scheme is one which has notified the Pensions Regulator that it has commenced winding up procedures.
2. Schemes are required to notify the Pensions Regulator of changes in scheme status as soon as is reasonably practical. This means that the data for the year ended 31 March 2005 is provisional.
3. The figures are based on information held on the register as at 14 October 2005. The effective date for the commencement of wind up is based on the last scheme status change date.
4. Total membership includes active, deferred and pensioner members. It is not possible to provide a breakdown of these numbers.
5. During 2005–06 the Pensions Regulator will continue with its plans to issue all occupational pension schemes that are registered in the UK a scheme return form. This will provide the Pension Regulator with access to enhanced data on schemes that are in the process of winding up in future years.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the take-up of stakeholder pensions; and what the average employee contribution to stakeholder pension schemes has been. [25236]

Mr. Timms: Stakeholder pensions are now an established pension product. Figures from the Association of British Insurers (ABI) show that at 30 June 2005 over two-and-a-half million stakeholder pensions had been sold since their introduction in April 2001.

Official figures for the 2003–04 tax year confirm that 99 per cent. of sales have been to people in work and that the majority of stakeholder pensions are being bought by those on modest incomes; over three-quarters (1,080,000) of stakeholder pension plans with contributions in them in that year were for workers earning under £30,000 a year and around two-thirds (790,000) were for those workers earning under £20,000 a year.

Stakeholder pensions form an integral part of the range of Stakeholder Savings Products introduced in April 2005 and will benefit from the Government's Consumer Awareness Campaign launched in September. The main objective of the campaign is to raise people's awareness of the Stakeholder Range of Products; what they are and how they can help people save and accumulate assets.

Information on employee contributions alone is not available. The average contribution to stakeholder pension schemes held by employees in the 2003–04 tax year was £1,290 pa. This includes employee, employer and minimum contributions. (The national insurance rebate).

Swimming

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many deaths of children under the age of 18 years resulted from *(a)* swimming accidents and *(b)* swimming accidents in swimming pools in each of the last 20 years. [35043]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is not available in the form requested.

Tables 1 and 2 set out figures obtained from the Health and Safety Executive and the Office of National Statistics respectively. The two sets of data are not directly comparable as they are based on different reporting arrangements. The HSE data in Table 1 are based on a reporting year from April to March and only include accidents arising from activities within the control of an employer. The ONS statistics at Table 2 are collected over the calendar year and include all deaths from drowning as recorded on death certificates.

Table 1: Fatal injuries to children aged one to 17 years involving swimming activities reported to the Health and Safety Executive and local authorities under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations 1995

1 April-31 March	*(a) Swimming activities*	*(b) swimming pools*
1996–97	3	2
1997–98	3	2
1998–99	1	—
1999–2000	2	2
2001–01	4	2
2001–02	3	3
2002–03	2	1
2003–04	3	3
2004–05[1]	3	3
Total	24	18

[1] Provisional

Notes:

Swimming activities are identified from HSE's accident coding framework using the following process classifications: for the period 1996–97—2000–01, 4520' Education—Swimming activities (indoor) (including pools, diving)', 5470 'Entertainment-Swimming activities (indoor) (including swimming pools, diving)1, 5480 'Water sports activities (not elsewhere classified) including beach; for 2001–02 onwards, 0815 'Swimming pool activities', 0818 'Water Sports, boating, motor, boat, mooring at marinas'.

Access to older data is not readily available and would require restoration of archived databases.

Table 2: Number of deaths in persons aged under 18 from (a) swimming accidents and (b) swimming accidents in swimming pools, England and Wales, 1984–2004—Office of National Statistics

Calendar year	*(a) Swimming accidents*	*(b) Swimming accidents in swimming pools*
1984	56	—
1985	48	—
1986	44	—
1987	28	—
1988	30	—
1989	70	—
1990	40	—
1991	23	—
1992	26	—
1993	21	—
1994	17	—
1995	24	—
1996	28	—
1997	24	—
1998	21	—
1999	26	—
2000	23	—
2001	12	3
2001	10	3
2003	14	2
2004	19	3

Notes:

Data selected using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth revision (ICD-9) between 1984 and 2000 for the codes listed as follows:

Swimming accidents:

E910.2—Accidental drowning and submersion while engaged in either sport or other recreational activity without diving equipment.

E910.3—Accidental drowning and submersion while swimming or diving for purposes other than recreation or sport.

E910.8—Accidental drowning and submersion, other specified.

Swimming accidents in swimming pools—It is not possible to identify accidents in swimming pools from the records for 1984 to 2000.

Data selected using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth revision (ICD- 10) from 2001 onwards for the codes is listed as follows:

Swimming accidents:

W67—Accidental drowning and submersion while in swimming pool.

W69—Accidental drowning and submersion while in natural water

W73—Other accidental drowning and submersion.

Swimming accidents in swimming pools:

W67—Accidental drowning and submersion while in swimming pool

NORTHERN IRELAND

Cash Machines

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of how many cash machines in Northern Ireland charge customers to withdraw money. [34548]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I have been asked to reply.

There are 949 free ATMs in Northern Ireland. All basic bank account holders and many current account holders can also withdraw cash over-the-counter at the Post Office and 'cash-back' is now widely available in supermarkets and shops.

The latest LINK figures for October 2005 show that there are 418 surcharging ATMs in Northern Ireland. However, as we set out in our response to the Treasury Select Committee on Cash Machine Charges, most surcharging ATMs in the UK are new machines, in locations where previously there was no ATM.

Civil Service

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many civil service posts in each Northern Ireland Government Department have been lost since 1 January. [33566]

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Angela E. Smith: It is assumed that this question relates to staff reductions in Departments announced in Fit for Purpose in October 2004.

The following table sets out the number of civil service posts in each of the 11 Northern Ireland Departments, and their agencies, lost from 1 January 2005 to 30 September 2005 (latest figures held) as part of the above staff reductions.

The figures do not relate to any reductions outside the Fit for Purpose exercise ie those in business areas that are funded externally from the NI Budget and those lost as a result of restructuring such as those related to the creation of the Water Service GoCo.

NICS funded posts lost in the period January 2005 to September 2005 under the Fit for Purpose exercise

Department	*Funded posts lost*
Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD)	160
Culture, Arts and Leisure (DCAL)	12.5
Education (DE)	27.5
Employment and Learning (DEL)	17.3
Enterprise, Training and Investment (DETI)	21
Finance and Personnel (DFP)	137
Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS)	23
Environment (DOE)	0
Regional Development (DRD)	102
Social Development DSD)	267
Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM)[1]	-1
Total	766.3

[1] While there has been a loss of four funded posts in OFMDFM during 2005, this was offset by a temporary intake of five staff to meet an urgent business need, giving a net increase of one for the full period.

Client Advice

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what guidelines exist for civil servants in Northern Ireland who receive client advice from a firm at a time when they might also be in a position to decide service contracts in which the same firm might have an interest. [34413]

Angela E. Smith: No specific guidelines exist for civil servants in Northern Ireland who receive client advice from a firm at a time when they might also be in a position to decide service contracts in which the same firm might have an interest.

All civil servants in Northern Ireland are, however, subject to Northern Ireland Government Accounting Guidance which among other issues sets out the general principles which apply to the acquisition of public works, supplies and services.

These principles are aligned to the 12 best value for money principles which govern the administration of public procurement in Northern Ireland.

One of the key principles is "Integrity" which addresses the issues of anti-corruption or collusion with suppliers and ensures that ethical standards of conduct are not compromised. Other relevant principles are transparency and fair dealing.

Under Northern Ireland Procurement Policy, procurement is undertaken by professionals within Centres of Procurement Expertise who oversee and manage the procurement process to ensure its compliance with regulations and the 12 guiding principles.

Domestic Electricity Costs

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost of electricity was to customers in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [33793]

Angela E. Smith: The annual electricity bills for a typical domestic customer, small to medium enterprise customer (SME) and large industrial customer, supplied by Northern Ireland Electricity in each of the last five years, are shown in the following table.

£

	2001	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
Domestic	309	309	309	318	328
Small to medium enterprise	1,560	1,560	1,560	1,644	1,770
Large industrial	320,000	320,000	320,000	337,000	360,000

The annual bills for the SME and large industrial customers are indicative only because a proportion of those customers purchase their electricity from other suppliers in the competitive market for which full cost details are not publicly available.

Electronic Human Resources Services

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the equality impact assessment (EQIA) of the policy for outsourcing Electronic Human Resources services; when a final EQIA document is to be published; how many drafts he has seen; and what other advice his Department has sought on the EQIA from *(a)* inside and *(b)* outside Government. [34415]

Angela E. Smith: It is intended to publish the final EQIA Report at award of contract. The final report will be published in line with the arrangement set out in the DFP Equality Scheme.

To date, no Northern Ireland Minister has received any draft versions of the EQIA Report. However, Lord Rooker has been fully briefed on the equality issues arising out of the EQIA.

An EQIA Consultation Document was circulated for consultation between August and October 2004. Views were sought from the following groups: NICS and NIO HR staff (via questionnaires and focus groups), NICS and NIO staff in general, the general public and around 110 Section 75 groups. Three of the Section 75 groups responded to the Consultation exercise: Northern Ireland Public Service Alliance (NIPSA), Equality

Commission for Northern Ireland (ECNI) and Northern Ireland Association for the Care and Rehabilitation of Offenders (NIACRO).

Advice was sought from our independent legal advisors and DSO in relation to employment law issues and issues in relation to redeployment. Advice was also sought from OFMDFM in respect of the need to conduct an eHR EQIA and also the EQIA process followed by the eHR Programme. An independent consultant was appointed by the Strategic Investment Board (SIB) to assist in carrying out the Equality Impact Assessment.

DFP is satisfied that it has fully discharged its legal obligations in relation to the Northern Ireland Act (1998) and its statutory Equality Scheme.

Equality Commission

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what allowance is provided to each member of the Equality Commission; and what additional expenses each is eligible for. [32094]

Angela E. Smith: The Chief Commissioner post of the Equality Commission is paid an annual salary of £70,000 based on a full-time appointment. The Deputy Chief Commissioner serves for one day per week and receives an annual allowance of £10,000. The other Commissioners each serve for two days per month and receive an annual allowance of £5,000 each.

Commissioners are also eligible for additional travel and subsistence expenses when carrying out Equality Commission business.

Foreign Direct Investment

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to increase foreign direct investment in Northern Ireland. [35034]

Angela E. Smith: I would refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given on 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 632W.

Free School Meals

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many schoolchildren in Northern Ireland are *(a)* eligible for free school meals and *(b)* in receipt of free school meals, broken down by (i) constituency and (ii) council area. [34550]

Angela E. Smith: A breakdown of the information requested at *(a)* is not available. However, the number of pupils whose entitlement to free school meals has been established following an application to their education and library board are as follows:

Parliamentary constituency	*Pupils entitled to free school meals*
Belfast East	2,198
Belfast North	5,774
Belfast South	2,191
Belfast West	8,049
East Antrim	1,796
East Londonderry	2,693
Fermanagh and South Tyrone	3,406
Foyle	7,986
Lagan Valley	1,866
Mid Ulster	3,613
Newry and Armagh	5,016
North Antrim	2,835
North Down	1,123
South Antrim	1,959
South Down	3,423
Strangford	1,469
Upper Bann	3,622
West Tyrone	4,125
Northern Ireland Total	63,144

District council area	*Pupils entitled to free school meals*
Antrim	918
Ards	1,197
Armagh	1,704
Ballymena	1,469
Ballymoney	683
Banbridge	871
Belfast	15,144
Carrickfergus	743
Castlereagh	1,314
Coleraine	1,510
Cookstown	1,195
Craigavon	3,030
Derry	7,986
Down	2,139
Dungannon	2,423
Fermanagh	1,925
Larne	642
Limavady	1,183
Lisburn	3,304
Magherafelt	1,476
Moyle	683
Newry and Mourne	4,544
Newtownabbey	1,931
North Down	1,005
Omagh	1,979
Strabane	2,146
Northern Ireland Total	63,144

Notes:
1. Figures relate to year 1 to year 7 pupils in primary schools and all pupils in post primary schools.
2. Figures are based upon the district council and parliamentary constituency in which schools are situated.

Information relating to the number of schoolchildren in receipt of free school meals is not available in the format requested. However, at October 2004 the number of such pupils in each education and library board area was:

	Number
BELB	12,960
NEELB	8,213
SEELB	6,771
SELB	11,732
WELB	13,894
Total	53,570

Note:
Figures exclude pupils in special schools.

The Department continues, through the education and library boards, to take steps to encourage eligible pupils to take up their entitlement.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average cost was of a school meal in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years, broken down by education and library board. [34551]

Angela E. Smith: The average cost of a primary and secondary school meal, in each education and library board area, for the last five years was as follows:

Primary

Board	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	£ *2004–05*
Belfast	1.33	1.43	1.48	1.58	1.73
North-Eastern	1.53	1.63	1.73	1.85	1.93
South-Eastern	1.38	1.43	1.48	1.58	1.73
Southern[1]	1.40	1.55	1.65	1.70	1.80
Western	1.40	1.48	1.50	1.70	1.75

[1] Figures include 20p for an optional sweet.

Secondary

Board	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	£ *2004–05*
Belfast	1.43	1.53	1.63	1.80	1.98
North-Eastern	1.63	1.73	1.83	1.95	2.03
South-Eastern	1.53	1.58	1.63	1.73	1.90
Southern	1.50	1.50	1.60	1.75	1.88
Western	1.55	1.65	1.70	1.90	1.95

Jobskills Initiative

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people *(a)* have been disciplined and *(b)* are passing through a disciplinary process as a result of the recent criticisms of the jobskills initiative in Northern Ireland. [32134]

Angela E. Smith: No one has been *(a)* disciplined or *(b)* is passing through a disciplinary process as a result of the recent criticisms of the jobskills initiative in Northern Ireland. The Department has acknowledged the criticisms in the report and has already introduced significant changes to the jobskills programme.

Local Government Restructuring

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the transitional costs of local government restructuring in Northern Ireland. [33493]

Angela E. Smith: It is not possible at this stage to give a reliable estimate of the transitional costs of restructuring local government in Northern Ireland.

Poppy Wearing

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the Equality Commission's advice to employers and employees in Northern Ireland is regarding the wearing of poppies in the workplace during the period immediately before Remembrance Day. [32251]

Angela E. Smith: I understand that the chief executive of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Ms Evelyn Collins, has written to the hon. Gentleman in the following terms:

"The Equality Commission recognises the sensitivity surrounding the use of emblems and symbols within Northern Ireland and offers guidance on these issues based on the relevant legislation.

The Commission is of the view that the wearing of poppies by individuals in the workplace, in a respectful manner and within the appropriate period, should not be something which would cause offence.

Our advice to employers on the general issue of emblems in the workplace is that emblems which tend to distinguish one community from the other in Northern Ireland but are not directly connected with community strife are unlikely to be regarded as creating an intimidating or hostile working environment as described in the Code of Practice. In this category would fall marks of religious observance, ashes, crosses, crucifixes, pioneer pins, fainnes, as well as poppies and shamrocks when worn with decorum and at the appropriate period.

It would be unacceptable if an individual was made to feel uncomfortable for not wearing any particular emblem or if the emblem was being flaunted before or forced on someone not wearing it.

It is a part of the Commission's remit to give advice and guidance on the Fair Employment legislation. It is for the Fair Employment Tribunal and the courts to establish and interpret the law, and, of course, if any individual feels that the use of emblems has constituted an unlawful act they are free to apply to the Tribunal for a decision on that point."

Property Valuations

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) pursuant to the answer of 24 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2199W, on property valuations, for what reasons the copies of the Equality Impact Assessment TSN analysis and Rural Proofing analysis have not been placed in the Library; [35093]

(2) pursuant to the answer of 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 393W, on the Valuation and Lands Agency, when the internal working documents and guidance will be placed in the Library. [35095]

Angela E. Smith: Copies of the documents referred to are now available in the Library.

Public Administration (Review)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many local government jobs he estimates will be lost following implementation of the Review of Public Administration. [34444]

Angela E. Smith: It is not possible at this stage to give a reliable estimate of the number of jobs that might be lost in local government as a result of the implementation of the Review of Public Administration, but the Government will endeavour to keep any redundancies to a minimum.

Smoking Ban

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of proper ventilation in achieving the aims of the ban on smoking in enclosed public places in Northern Ireland. [34727]

Mr. Woodward: There is a clear consensus among health professionals and the international scientific community that there is no safe level of exposure to second hand smoke. Public health experts stress that while ventilation systems may improve comfort by removing the smell and visibility of smoke, they do not remove toxic carcinogens from the air. This was an important factor in my decision to introduce comprehensive controls to protect both the general public and employees.

Video-conferencing

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which Northern Ireland departments have installed video-conferencing facilities; how many units have been installed in total; and at what cost. [30699]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested is as follows:

Department	*Number of installed videoconferencing facilities*	*Cost of installation (£)*
Office of First Minister and Deputy First Minister	0	0
Department of Agriculture and Rural Development	1	10,785
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure	0	0
Department of Education	0	0
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment	2	24,000
Department of the Environment	0	0
Department of Finance and Personnel	0	0
Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety	1	41,391
Department for Employment and Learning	1	14,528
Department for Regional Development	0	0
Department for Social Development	0	0

In addition, a number of departments in the NI administration also possess video-conferencing units that do not require installation, that is, they are not purpose-built in one fixed location. At present, there are thirteen such 'portable' units in use across Northern Ireland departments.

Sustainable Development

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for what reasons no appointment has been made to the post of deputy secretary to take forward environmental policy and sustainable development within the Department of the Environment; and if he will make a statement. [35343]

Angela E. Smith: The Department reviewed its top management structure following the retirement of the former deputy secretary. In recognition of the strategic importance of the work of the Environmental Policy Group, its two directors now report directly to the permanent secretary.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Arab League Reconciliation Conference

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the United Kingdom's response is to the joint statement of principles by the Arab-League Reconciliation Conference; and if he will make a statement. [33927]

Dr. Howells: The National Accord Conference Preparatory Meeting, hosted by the Arab League in Cairo on 19–21 November, was a useful initiative which provided a good opportunity for Arab and regional governments to review their relationship with Iraq and to plan future engagement. The National Accord meeting itself, which is due to take place in Iraq at the end of February/beginning of March, will be an opportunity for countries to follow-up this review with substantive commitments of assistance.

The joint statement of principles which followed the Preparatory Meeting contained a number of positive points. Among these were the calls for support of Iraq's political/electoral processes, the importance of increasing security, recognition that terrorism is not a legitimate form of resistance and a call for greater economic, technical, diplomatic and security support for Iraq from Arab countries.

The election of a new Iraqi government should herald a new era of international engagement with Iraq, with increased assistance for social and economic development as well as political and security development. Arab and regional governments should play a leading role in this—the National Accord Conference in February will be an early opportunity to carry forward this new international partnership.

British Citizens (Overseas Detention)

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many British citizens were held in *(a)* jails and *(b)* other detention facilities in countries (i) where the use of torture has been alleged, (ii) where human rights abuses have been alleged and reported, (iii) about which travel advice had been issued by his Department advising against all travel and (iv) about which travel advice had been issued by his Department advising against all but essential travel in each year since 2001; in how many cases in each category (A) consular support was requested and (B) no consular support was requested; and if he will make a statement. [34227]

Dr. Howells: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office maintains records of the numbers of British nationals detained overseas each year. However, our records do not distinguish between those detained in jails and in other detention facilities, nor do they indicate whether the detainee requested consular support or not. For information on British nationals detained overseas, I refer the hon. Member to the answers given to the hon. Member for Kettering (Mr. Hollobone) on 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 168–70W.

We do not keep comprehensive records of allegations of torture or human rights abuses in country in the world. We do maintain records of all versions of travel advice on third countries. As this is not cross-referenced to information on numbers of detainees, this information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

British Virgin Islands

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department is taking to help develop alternative industries to tourism and offshore finance in the British Virgin Islands. [33759]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Responsibility for the development of industry in the British Virgin Islands (BVI) falls within the remit of the locally elected British Virgin Islands Government. However, the UK Government are committed to helping BVI develop new areas of industry. This year, the Government have supported BVI's agricultural industry by providing assistance for the expansion of an existing poultry processing plant, provided financial support for a telecommunications liberalisation programme, supported an innovative project in the field of alternative medicine and committed funds for the development of a maritime training school.

Chad

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the recent arrest and release of Hissène Habré, former President of Chad, in Senegal. [33926]

Ian Pearson: The Senegalese authorities, following an extradition request from Belgium, detained and subsequently provisionally released Hissène Habré pending further discussion with African partners at the Africa Union summit in January 2006.

China

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on human rights in China. [25317]

Ian Pearson: The Government have concerns about a wide range of human rights issues in China. These are set out in the current Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Human Rights report at:

http://www.fco.gov.uk/Files/kfile/HumanRights2005.pdf.

We raise our concerns with the Chinese Government regularly, including through the UK China Human Rights dialogue, ministerial engagement and EU mechanisms. The Government acknowledge that the Chinese Government have recently done much to reduce poverty and promote economic development.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will include reference to the Chinese One Child Policy in his Department's Human Rights Annual Report for 2006; and if he will make a statement. [33883]

Ian Pearson: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Annual Report on Human Rights provides an overview of the main challenges to human rights around the world and explains the Government's activities and policies. Although we are not yet in a position to decide on exactly what subjects we will cover in next year's report, we will consider including material assessing the reform and operation of China's population policies.

The Government have never questioned China's right or need to implement family planning policies but has made it clear that we believe they should be based on the principles of the International Conference on Population and Development; that is on consent not coercion. We have raised concerns about this policy, including reports of enforced sterilisation and abortion. We have also raised the case of the lawyer Chen Guancheng who is being held under house arrest after he highlighted abuses in the implementation of the one child policy in Shandong. The Chinese Government have admitted there have been occasional problems with maladministration of the policy, but insist that this is down to individuals rather than overall malign intent.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Chinese authorities in relation to the safety of Gao Zhisheng and his family in continuing as the advocate for Pastor Cai. [33892]

Ian Pearson: We regularly raise human rights with the Chinese Government. As EU Presidency, the UK has launched a Freedom of Expression campaign, which has included making representations on behalf of Chinese lawyers who act in sensitive cases in China. We are aware of the case of Pastor Cai, which was raised in the context of the EU-China Human Rights Dialogue in October. Our embassy at Beijing is making further inquiries about the circumstances relating to Gao Zhisheng.

Damages

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for South Holland and The Deepings (Mr. Hayes) of 17 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1480W, on damages, if he will make a statement on the three cases to which reference is made. [32047]

Ian Pearson: In my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary's previous answer to which this questions refers, the first and third cases listed concerned forms of repetitive strain injury. The second case concerned burns sustained at an embassy function.

Dayton Accords

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials have had on the renewal of the Dayton accords; and if he will make a statement. [33925]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: There is no requirement to renew the Dayton/Paris accords and there have been no discussions on this issue including UK officials or Ministers. Representatives of the main Bosnian political parties have been involved in talks, facilitated by former deputy high representative Donald Hays, about possible changes to Bosnia and Herzegovina's constitution, which was established by the Dayton accords.

As Bosnia and Herzegovina draws closer to the EU, it may need to make changes to enable it to function more effectively as a state. However, the Dayton accords make clear that any changes to Bosnia and Herzegovina's constitution require the consent of all three constituent peoples.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the Congolese authorities regarding the allegations of serious corruption affecting the funding of the army; and what plans he has to address this issue with the UN mission in that country. [33861]

Ian Pearson: The UK continues to press the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) to implement the European Union's Security Sector Reform Mission recommendations, which aim to create a sustainable and transparent financing and administrative system for the whole army, ensuring that salaries reach soldiers on the ground. My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development reinforced this message to the President and other Government leaders during his visit to the DRC from 30 October to 1 November.

Addressing corruption within the armed forces is an integral part of the security sector reform programme which we are helping to implement. We continue to work together with the UN peacekeeping force (MONUC) and other partners to achieve that end.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many *(a)* consultants and *(b)* special advisers were employed by his Department in each year since 1997; what the cost of each was in each year; and if he will make a statement. [27410]

Mr. Straw: The numbers of special advisers employed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) since 1997 are set out in the following table. We are not able to release personal information on individual remuneration, but all have been employed within the authorised salary scales for special advisers.

Financial year	*Number*
1997–98	1
1998–99	0
1999–2000	1
2000–01	1
2001–02	2
2002–03	2
2003–04	2
2004–05	2

The number of consultants working for the FCO is not held centrally. I refer the hon. member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Cheltenham (Martin Horwood) on 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1897W for information on costs.

End-use Monitoring

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions his Department has had *(a)* with US counterparts regarding end-use monitoring of the State Department Blue Lantern programme and the Department of Defence Golden Sentry programme and *(b)* EU counterparts regarding an EU-wide verification system of end-use monitoring. [34177]

Dr. Howells: Representatives of the United States Government have made presentations on both the Blue Lantern and Golden Sentry programmes to the relevant EU working parties, who found the presentations informative. EU member states each have their own policy and procedures on end-user checks and have not reached any collective conclusions on the applicability, or otherwise, of these or similar programmes to existing national arrangements.

Equal Opportunities

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1584–85W, on equal opportunities, if he will make a statement on the development of role models. [34392]

Ian Pearson: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) recognise the importance of role models, especially for staff from under-represented groups. Current activities aimed at highlighting and developing role models in the FCO include:

- Organising informal lunches with guest speakers from under-represented groups;
- Publicising exceptional achievements by staff in the FCO News magazine;
- Providing targeted training for under-represented groups, including mentoring and coaching;
- Encouraging declaration of disability, particularly at more senior levels;
- Publicising the work of the staff advisory groups and encouraging members to become more visible.

However, the FCO encourage staff to drive their own careers, and recognises that some members of under-represented groups may not wish to be high profile role models.

Ethiopia/Eritrea

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of *(a)* human rights and *(b)* governance in Ethiopia; and if he will make a statement. [34059]

Ian Pearson: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office assessment of and actions to promote human rights in Ethiopia are set out in our Annual Report on Human Rights, which was presented to Parliament in July 2005.

Since then, we have been gravely concerned and saddened by the post-election events in Ethiopia. We condemned in particular the use of live ammunition by security forces to quell demonstrations, which resulted in many deaths and injuries, and the arrest of Opposition leaders. We have urged that these events be investigated fully and impartially and that those arrested be charged and tried fairly or released. We have urged both the Government and Opposition in Ethiopia to reconcile their differences and create an effective Parliament as the principal forum for political debate in Ethiopia. We continue to monitor the situation closely.

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Ethiopian Government concerning the killing of 46 demonstrators by security forces in the first week of November; and if he will make a statement. [34060]

Ian Pearson: My noble Friend, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, summoned the Ethiopian Charge d'Affaires on 1 November to register our concerns about the situation in Ethiopia. On 6 November, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development also raised the issue when he spoke to Prime Minister Meles. On 6 November, in our capacity as EU presidency, we also issued a statement on the situation in Ethiopia. Our ambassador in Ethiopia has also raised our concerns with Prime Minister Meles, the Ethiopian Foreign Minister and other Government Ministers. We continue to raise our concerns at every suitable opportunity.

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Ethiopian Government following the detention without charge of *(a)* Hailu Shawel, *(b)* Professor Mesfin Woldemariam, *(c)* Dr. Yacob Hailemarian, *(d)* Ms Birtukan Mideksa, *(e)* Dr. Berhanu Negga and *(f)* others; what representations he has made about the possibility that they will be charged with treason following demonstrations in Addis Ababa; and if he will make a statement. [34061]

Ian Pearson: My noble Friend, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, summoned the Ethiopian Charge d'Affaires on 1 November to register our concerns about the situation in Ethiopia, including the issue of detainees. On 6 November, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development also raised the issue when he spoke to Prime Minister Meles. On 6 November, in our capacity as EU presidency, we also issued a statement on the situation in Ethiopia, which included reference to our concerns regarding detainees. Our ambassador in Ethiopia has also raised our concerns with Prime Minister Meles, the Ethiopian Foreign Minister and other Government Ministers. We continue to call for the immediate release of all political detainees, for those individuals not charged under due process to be released immediately, and for access to those detained for their families, legal counsel and representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross or other appropriate representatives of the international community.

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Ethiopian and Eritrean Governments concerning tensions along their mutual border; and if he will make a statement. [34058]

Ian Pearson: We remain very concerned about the current situation. Ministers and senior officials have regularly raised this with the Governments of Eritrea and Ethiopia. Most recently, my noble Friend, the Foreign

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and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, raised the issue with the Eritrean ambassador on 18 October. He will also raise the issue with the Ethiopian ambassador on 6 December. In our capacity as EU presidency, Lord Triesman intends to visit the region later this month and will make further representations during that visit. In the Security Council, we supported United Nations Security Council Resolution 1640 (2005) adopted on 23 November, which expressed concern about developments at the border and outlined the way forward.

Falkland Islands

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will take steps to encourage more flights to Mount Pleasant airport in the Falkland Islands. [33863]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: External air links with the Falkland Islands currently consist of a weekly flight ran by LAN Chile between Santiago and Mount Pleasant airport, and the airbridge ran three times every fortnight by the Ministry of Defence (MOD) between Mount Pleasant and RAF Brize Norton via Ascension Island.

Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and MOD officials keep air links between the Falkland Islands and the UK under review. The FCO hopes to explore alternative options for flights with the Government of the Falkland Islands soon.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken to promote tourism to the Falkland Islands. [33865]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Falkland Islands Tourist Board is actively promoting the Falklands as a cruise and land based visitor destination. This is done by representation at international travel fairs and by direct promotion with international tourism companies. This is reflected in the numbers of approximately 40,000 cruise visitors and 1,000 land based visitors who are expected for the coming season.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the drilling for oil and gas around the Falkland Islands. [33866]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Exploration for offshore hydrocarbons is currently being undertaken by companies holding licences issued by the Falkland Islands Government, in areas to the north and the south east of the Falkland Islands. Exploration is at an early stage and has not yet led to any commercial discoveries, but seismic surveys are underway with a view to exploratory drilling in due course. The Government are fully committed to the offshore prospecting policy pursued by the Falkland Islands Government, which is entirely consistent with the United Kingdom's sovereign rights over the Falkland Islands.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had regarding the promotion of the export of meat from the Falklands since the recent outbreak of foot and mouth in Brazil, with particular reference to beef; and if he will make a statement. [33900]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The promotion of the export of meat from the Falkland Islands is a matter for the Falkland Islands Government. The Falkland Islands do not currently export beef—production is for the local market only. The Sand Bay abattoir is only certified by the EU for the export of sheep meat.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which Royal Navy ships have been operating near the Falkland Islands in each of the last five years; and what activities have been undertaken by them. [33901]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: From 2000 to 2005 the following HM ships have patrolled near the Falkland Islands as the Atlantic Patrol Task South:

HMS Somerset	December 1999 to February 2000
HMS Southampton	February to May 2000
HMS Argyll	July to October 2000
HMS Iron Duke	October 2000 to February 2001
HMS Glasgow	March to July 2001
HMS Edinburgh	July to October 2001
HMS Montrose	November 2001 to March 2002
HMS Newcastle	March to August 2002
HMS Westminster	September 2002 to April 2003
HMS Lancaster	May to November 2003
HMS Glasgow	November 2003 to April 2004
HMS Cardiff	April to September 2004
HMS Iron Duke	September to December 2004
HMS Gloucester	December 2004 to March 2005
HMS Portland	March to September 2005
HMS Southampton	September 2005 to January 2006

HMS Leeds Castle and HMS Dumbarton Castle—Falkland Islands Patrol Vessel—one of the two has been permanently deployed to the islands.

HMS Endurance visits the Falkland Islands as part of her South Atlantic and Antarctic austral summer deployments each year.

Royal Fleet Auxiliary:

Black Rover, Grey Rover and Gold Rover have all spent time in the Falklands over the last five years.

We do not comment on submarine movements.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent actions have been taken to dissuade the Argentine Government from attempting to gain sovereignty of the Falkland Islands. [33902]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Government consistently tell the Argentine Government that we have no doubts about the sovereignty of the Islands and there will be no negotiations unless and until the Falkland islanders agree.

The presence of British Forces South Atlantic Islands in the islands, our consistent rejection of Argentine protests over sovereignty and the activities of the Falkland Islands Government reaffirm our stance on sovereignty. Successive

democratic Argentine Governments have said publicly that they intend to pursue their claim to the Falkland Islands peacefully.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the UK Government have had any discussions with the Argentine Government concerning the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands since 1997. [33903]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The UK has not had any discussions concerning sovereignty of the Falklands with Argentina since 1997. However, we consistently make clear that we have no doubts about the sovereignty of the Islands and there will be no negotiations unless and until the Falkland Islanders agree.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what visits to the Falkland Islands by members of the royal family are planned. [33904]

Ian Pearson: The forward programme of visits by members of the royal family to the Falkland Islands has not been finalised. For security reasons, royal visits overseas are not generally announced until a matter of weeks before a visit takes place.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to visit the Falkland Islands. [33906]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right. hon. Friend, the Foreign Secretary, has no current plans to visit the Falkland Islands.

However, Ministers take every opportunity to meet with councillors from the Falkland Islands when they visit the UK, during which a whole range of issues are discussed. My noble Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, recently met with councillors from the Falklands in October, when chairing the Overseas Territories Consultative Council.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many people have been injured by land mines in the Falkland Islands in each year since 1993. [33908]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: There have been no injuries caused by land mines in the Falkland Islands since 1993.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken to encourage the Falklands to increase its exports to the UK. [33909]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Falkland Islands Government are responsible for encouraging the increase in exports to the UK. The combining of the Falkland Islands Company shipping service with the Falkland Islands re-supply service will both increase frequency and introduce some medium term rate stability for farmers shipping wool to the UK.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many UK residents have taken up residence in the Falkland Islands in the last 10 years. [33910]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Falkland Islands Government do not keep statistics on UK residents who have taken up residence in the Falkland Islands in the last 10 years. However, census figures identify people physically present in the Falkland Islands on the day of the census by country of birth. The figures for those born in the United Kingdom from the last four censuses are as follows:

	Number
1986	465
1991	664
1996	640
2001	704

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on comments made by the Cuban Alternate Permanent Representative at the United Nations at the General Assembly's 4th Commission on Special Policies and Decolonisation in October regarding Cuba's support for the right of Argentina in the dispute over sovereignty of the Falkland Islands. [33898]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The UK's position on this issue is well known, and was last set out in detail by the UK's Permanent Representative to the United Nations, Sir Emyr Jones Parry, in a written right of reply to the statement by His Excellency President Nestor Carlos Kirchner of the Republic of Argentina, in the high-level plenary session of the General Assembly on 14 September 2005.

The United Kingdom has no doubts about its sovereignty over the Falkland Islands. There can be no negotiations on the sovereignty of the Falkland Islands unless and until such time as the islanders so wish.

HIV/AIDS

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the South African Health Minister on offering appropriate treatment to those suffering from HIV/AIDS. [34141]

Ian Pearson: HIV and AIDS is a top priority for the UK bilateral development programme in South Africa. The Department for International Development funded a £30 million multisectoral programme in 2003. The programme works with partners in Government at national, e.g. Departments of Health, Social Development and Defence and provincial, e.g. in Eastern Cape, Limpopo and KwaZulu-Natal levels. However, while the Government are happy to assist South Africa if requested, the implementation of healthcare policy, including that on HIV/AIDS, is within the South African Government's remit.

India

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to *(a)* the Indian Government and *(b)* the Chief Minister of Orissa state about the burning down of houses belonging to members of the Christian community in Gandahati village, Gajapati district, Orissa. [34366]

Dr. Howells: Our high commission in New Delhi has looked into media reports alleging this attack against Christians in Orissa but has been unable to verify these. We condemn all instances where individuals are persecuted because of their faith or belief, wherever they happen and whatever the religion of the individual or group concerned. Our high commission in New Delhi continues to monitor the issue of religious freedom, with staff making regular calls on the appropriate Indian authorities to flag up our concern about incidents of religious intolerance. We will continue to insist that the right to freedom of religion is upheld, and that those responsible for attacks against people on grounds of their religion are brought to justice.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to *(a)* the Indian Government and *(b)* the Chief Minister of Orissa state about the continuing activities of militant Hindu groups in Orissa state and several other states in India. [34367]

Dr. Howells: We are aware of the alleged involvement of Hindu extremist organisations in attacks against Christians in India. We condemn all instances where individuals are persecuted because of their faith or belief, wherever they happen and whatever the religion of the individual or group concerned. Our high commission in New Delhi continues to monitor the issue of religious freedom, with staff making regular calls on the appropriate Indian authorities, to flag up our concern about incidents of religious intolerance. We will continue to insist that the right to freedom of religion is upheld, and that those responsible for attacks against people on grounds of their religion are brought to justice.

Iran

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the United Kingdom's relations with Iran. [34327]

Dr. Howells: We have serious concerns about Iran's position on a number of issues. At the International Atomic Energy Agency Board meeting on 24 November we made clear our growing concerns about Iran's nuclear and ballistic missile programmes. We have also expressed our concerns about Iran's attitude towards terrorism; its lack of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms; and its unhelpful approach to the Middle East Peace Process and to Iraq. Progress in our relations with Iran will depend on action by Iran to address these concerns.

Iraq

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs under what legal jurisdiction British subjects are working in Iraq if employed by *(a)* the UK Government and *(b)* the US Administration; and if he will make a statement. [34996]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* British diplomatic and consular staff working in Iraq are required under the Vienna conventions on diplomatic and consular relations to respect the laws of the host state, but in most cases they are immune from its jurisdiction, although such immunity can be waived by the sending state.

All non-Iraqi contractors working in Iraq for the US and UK Governments are required to respect the laws of Iraq, except that by virtue of Coalition Provision Authority (CPA) Order No 17 (Revised) they are not subject to Iraqi laws or regulations in matter relating to the terms and conditions of their contracts. Such contractors are immune from the jurisdiction of the Iraqi courts with respect to acts performed pursuant to the terms and conditions of their contract, but this immunity may be waived by the state which has employed the contractor.

CPA Order 17 also confers immunity from Iraqi jurisdiction on non-Iraqi nationals employed by the US and UK Governments as consultants to the Government of Iraq and on military personnel forming part of the Multi-National Force in Iraq. Such persons are, however, required to respect the laws of Iraq and their immunity may be waived by the sending state.

If a contractor of British nationality, or a British diplomat or consultant, were to commit a criminal offence in Iraq, it is possible that in some circumstances he could be prosecuted in this country. This will depend on whether extra-territorial jurisdiction exists for the offence under English law. Members of the British armed forces remain subject to military law and the criminal law of England and Wales at all times.

Opposition Spokespersons (Formal Visits)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the formal visits *(a)* undertaken by and *(b)* participated in by official Opposition spokespersons which were funded by his Department in the last two years. [35211]

Ian Pearson: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) funded the visit of the official Opposition Shadow Minister for Defence, the hon. Member for Blaby (Mr. Robathan), to Iraq in 2005.

In 2004 two official Opposition Whips, the hon. Member for Bexhill and Battle and the hon. Member for Bury St. Edmunds, participated in an FCO funded cross-party visit to the United Nations in New York.

Records show visits by official Opposition spokespersons who received briefings, hospitality or accommodation from our posts as:

Shadow Foreign Secretary, the hon. Member for Woodspring (Dr. Fox)—Turkey, South Africa, Namibia, Israel, Jordan, United States of America, India.

Shadow Chief Secretary to the Treasury, the hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Osborne)—China, Estonia.

Shadow Secretary of State for Defence, the right hon. and learned Member for Devizes (Mr. Ancram)—Egypt, Israel,Jordan.

Shadow Minister for Home Affairs, the hon. Member for Chesham and Amersham (Mrs. Gillan)—NATO parliamentary assembly.

Shadow Minister for Homeland Security, the hon. Member for Newark(Patrick Mercer)—Pakistan

Shadow Minister for the Treasury, the hon. Member for West Suffolk (Mr. Spring)—Bahrain

Shadow Minister for the Olympics and Sport, the hon. Member for Faversham and Mid Kent (Hugh Robertson)—Singapore.

South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the outcome of the recent South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation summit. [33923]

Dr. Howells: The UK warmly welcomes the progress made at the 13th South Asian Association for Regional Co-operation (SAARC) Summit in Dhaka towards achieving closer South Asian regional integration. We were particularly pleased to note the milestone decision taken by SAARC Heads of State to invite Afghanistan to join this organisation, and the moves made towards granting observer status to others. An effective and strong SAARC, working with South Asia's friends, can only benefit the people of the region.

We also welcome the movement towards concluding the South Asian Free Trade Area Agreement (SAFTA), following the recent deliberations of the Committee of Experts on SAFTA. We understand that SAFTA is now scheduled to come into force on 1 January 2006 and is expected to be fully operational by 2016. This will create a free trade zone bringing the benefits of closer regional economic integration to an area covering over 1.4 billion people.

Special Advisers

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the special advisers in post in his Department, broken down by pay band; and what the total budgeted cost to his Department of special advisers is for 2005–06. [29410]

Mr. Straw: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Hemel Hempstead (Mike Penning) today (UIN 27410).

Information relating to costs for 2005–06 will be published after the end of the current financial year.

Syria

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations *(a)* he and *(b)* his officials have made to the Government of Syria regarding the safety, proper treatment and fair trial of Dr. Kamal al-Labwani; and if he will make a statement. [33935]

Dr. Howells: Neither I nor my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary have raised the case of Dr. al-Labwani with the Syrian Government. However, our ambassador in Damascus has raised Dr. Labwani's case with the Syrian authorities, and, in our capacity as Presidency of the EU, led calls for his early release. We will continue to monitor developments closely.

Taiwan

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the Government's policy is on Taiwan's application to join the World Health Organisation; and if he will make a statement. [25924]

Ian Pearson: There are difficulties over Taiwanese involvement in a UN forum where statehood is a prerequisite for full membership. We hope that the World Health Organisation (WHO) secretariat, and others organising meetings and working groups under WHO auspices, will show flexibility in finding mechanisms to allow Taiwanese medical and public health officials to participate in these activities.

The WHO secretariat and China recently signed a memorandum of understanding on technical exchanges with Taiwan. We understand that the WHO and Taiwan already share information on an informal basis.

Turkey

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the recent unrest in south-east Turkey. [33922]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Terrorist incidents in south-east Turkey have increased during 2004–05 and Turkish military operations against the Partiya Karkeren Kurdistan (PKK) continue. The Turkish Prime Minister visited the region on 12 August, and spoke of the need to address its political, economic and cultural problems.

There have been allegations of security force involvement in a number of terrorist incidents in the south east, including a grenade attack on 9 November on a bookshop in Semdinli. The Turkish Government have promised a full investigation, and Prime Minister Erdogan visited Semdinli on 21 November to demonstrate his commitment to this.

UK Arms Exports

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the issuing of end use certificates for UK arms exports. [34175]

Dr. Howells: In the export licensing process, end user certificates are provided by the body which is purchasing strategic goods for which a licence is being sought. They state who the end user is, whether the goods are for military purposes and what end use the goods are intended for.

UN Small Arms Review Conference

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made towards securing non-European support for the adoption at the United Nations small arms review conference in July 2006 of universal criteria governing the international transfer of small arms. [33934]

Dr. Howells: The UK has made good progress in building widespread support for agreement at the 2006 UN Small Arms and Light Weapons Programme of Action Review Conference of minimum common criteria to underpin controls on transfers of Small Arms and Light Weapons controls, including import, export

and transhipment. The UK has already secured substantial non-European support especially in Africa, Latin America and the Caribbean and is working to match this in other regions including Asia.

HEALTH

A&E Departments (Paediatric Care)

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what risk assessment she has undertaken of major accident and emergency departments functioning without the back-up of a paediatrics department on same site. [31889]

Mr. Byrne: Assessment and resuscitation procedures for children are available in all major accident and emergency units. Where children requiring hospital admission attend an accident and emergency unit that does not have a paediatrics department on site, the unit will initiate care and arrange transfer to an appropriate department. This procedure addresses risks associated with failing to achieve best outcome, where staff might otherwise undertake specialised paediatric interventions with which they are unfamiliar.

There is a consultation currently in progress, "The acutely or critically sick or injured child in the district general hospital", which is accessible on the Department's website at http://www.dh.gov.uk/Consultations/fs/en. The consultation document makes explicit recommendations about the competencies needed in a paediatric resuscitation team and those needed for stabilisation of the critically ill or injured child.

Alcohol-related Diseases

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many admission episodes for alcohol-related diseases there were in each primary care trust in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [31379]

Caroline Flint: Information on admission episodes for alcohol-related diseases in each primary care trust in each of the last five years has been placed in the Library.

Ambulance Trusts

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 832W, on ambulance trusts, what the evidential basis was for deciding that 11 ambulance trusts are the most effective; and what plans she has to commission further research on the effectiveness of reorganising ambulance trusts. [26070]

Mr. Byrne: The consultation document due to be issued shortly will outline the criteria that we have used to arrive at the proposal of 11 ambulance trusts for the future. These criteria include ensuring the new organisations are operationally fit for purpose, fit with other national health service boundaries and with other Government boundaries. The results from the consultation will be a key factor in taking the final decisions.

"Taking Healthcare to the Patient: Transforming NHS Ambulance Services" sets out the vision and recommendations for the ambulance service in the future, for the local NHS to take forward. If the reconfiguration proposals are accepted following consultation, all new trusts will be judged on the extent to which they effectively implement the review's recommendations to successfully build on existing good practice and high performance to provide efficient, effective, locally responsive ambulance trusts that best meet patient need. The proposed new ambulance organisations would also still be required to achieve national performance requirements, for example on response times.

Asylum Seekers

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what role *(a)* the NHS and *(b)* primary care trusts play in providing medical and healthcare services in detention centres for asylum seekers; and how the standard of health services provided in detention centres is monitored. [31737]

Caroline Flint: On site primary healthcare services in Immigration Service removal centres are the responsibility of the Home Office, and are provided under contract by the Prison Service in directly managed centres and by private providers in contracted-out centres. Detainees held at the centres will access local national health service secondary care and other services as appropriate, including accident and emergency, maternity and in-patient mental healthcare. The on-site services are subject to monitoring by on-site Home Office Contract Monitors and are included in Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Prisons' inspections of individual centres. In addition, initial discussions have taken place with the Healthcare Commission with a view to the possible registration of the private contractors who provide these services, which would bring them within the Commission's oversight and inspection programme.

BCG Inoculation

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what is the cost of a BCG inoculation per person. [32489]

Caroline Flint: Bacillus Calmette-Guerin (BCG) vaccination is provided free of charge to any individual defined as at increased risk of tuberculosis in the chief medical officer's letter of 6 July 2005.

Bed Utilisation

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average percentage level of bed utilisation was in acute hospitals in the Cheshire and Merseyside strategic health authority area, including Southport and Ormskirk Hospital Trust in the last year for which figures are available. [26374]

Mr. Byrne: The information is not available in the format requested. The table shows data on average bed occupancy rates for all providers in the Cheshire and Merseyside strategic health authority (SHA) area with beds open overnight.

Average occupancy rate, Cheshire and Merseyside strategic health authority: 2004–05

Name	Total (percentage occupancy)
Cheshire and Merseyside Health Authority	85.9
5 Boroughs Partnership National Health Service Trust	91.7
Aintree Hospitals NHS Trust	92.2
Central Liverpool Primary Care Trust	88.8
Cheshire and Wirral Partnership NHS Trust	92.9
Clatterbridge Centre for Oncology NHS Trust	67.9
Countess of Chester Hospital NHS Trust	87.2
East Cheshire NHS Trust	84.5
Ellesmere Port and Neston PCT	88.0
Liverpool Women's Hospital NHS Trust	61.9
Mersey Care NHS Trust	90.0
North Cheshire Hospitals NHS Trust	82.7
Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen University Hospitals NHS Trust	89.2
Royal Liverpool Children's NHS Trust	71.0
South Sefton PCT	83.5
Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust	87.3
St. Helens and Knowsley Hospital NHS Trust	88.3
The Cardiothoracic Centre—Liverpool NHS Trust	66.2
The Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Trust	81.2
Walton Centre for Neurology and Neurosurgery NHS Trust	87.7
Wirral Hospital NHS Trust	81.8

Status:
Published 30 September 2005
Source:
Department of Health form KH03

Cancer Drugs

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will ensure that NHS trusts give priority to the funding of licensed cancer drugs for the next financial year. [33036]

Jane Kennedy: We are already putting record amounts of new investment into the national health service, between 2003 and 2008 NHS expenditure in England will increase on average by 7.5 per cent. each year. It is for primary care trusts to decide how best to spend these resources taking into account local circumstances.

PCTs have many competing priorities but cancer is a national and local priority. Every PCT will have a sizeable number of people in their area who will be diagnosed with the disease, live with the disease and who die from the disease each year. PCTs will need to ensure they allocate sufficient resource to meet their local contribution to tackling cancer care or other areas.

Castle Hill Hospital

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* capital value of and *(b)* total expected repayment to the private finance initiative contractor is for phase 5 of the Castle Hill Hospital. [32975]

Mr. Byrne: The capital value of the phase 5 project is around £8.8 million. The Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals National Health Service Trust will make monthly unitary payments to the phase 5 private finance initiative consortium totalling approximately £48.1 million (this figure includes an estimate for annual retail price index uplift) over the duration of the 30-year contract. This amount includes the provision of radiology medical equipment service by Phillips Medical Systems for the first 10 years, including lifecycle replacement and maintenance. The private finance initiative consortium is also providing the hard facilities management service (maintenance) for the building including full lifecycle replacement over the 30-year contract.

Source:
The Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust

Cheshire and Mersey Strategic Health Authority

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the work being done by McKinseys on the reconfiguration of services across Cheshire and Mersey Strategic Health Authority is expected to cost; and when it is expected to be *(a)* completed and *(b)* reported to hon. Members. [32819]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally. Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority (SHA) expects to consider the outcome of this work in the new year. The process of informing local stakeholders, including hon. Members, falls within the remit of the SHA.

Child Protection

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* designated doctors and *(b)* designated nurses for the protection of children from abuse and neglect are employed by primary care trusts in England. [26897]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Creatine

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how long the Food Standards Agency was given to respond to the European Commission's recent proposal to amend the Annexes of Directive 2001/15/EC in relation to creatine; what steps she has taken to satisfy herself that the Commission's consultation processes were *(a)* in accordance with best practice and *(b)* involved all key industry stakeholders; when she expects the relevant Council Standing Committee to consider the proposal in question; what her objectives are for this proposal; and if she will make a statement. [34619]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* The European Commission informed the United Kingdom and all other EC member states in late October that an amendment to the Directive would be discussed and possibly voted upon at the beginning of December. As a result of the Food Standards Agency (FSA) consulting stakeholders about the proposal, an unintended issue over the status of creatine was brought to its attention. The FSA consequently contacted the Commission and a vote on this aspect has been postponed. The FSA has pointed out to the Commission that its own consultation procedures did not appear to have reached the sector concerned in this case and that these should therefore be reviewed.

Interested parties in this country will be informed and consulted on any revised proposal concerning creatine.

Criminal Records Bureau Checks

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the impact on health professionals decisions on whether to work as locums

rather than permanent trust staff of the time taken to process enhanced Criminal Records Bureau checks; and if she will make a statement. [25925]

Mr. Byrne: We are not aware of any impact of Criminal Record Bureau checks on decisions of health professionals to work as locums or permanent staff.

Cystic Fibrosis

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to reduce prescription charges for young cystic fibrosis sufferers who want to take up employment. [32981]

Jane Kennedy: We have no plans to extend the existing list of medical conditions that give exemption from prescription charges. The list has been reviewed on a number of occasions but no clear-cut case for extending it has emerged. There is no consensus on what additional conditions might be included in any revised list of medical exemptions, or how distinctions could be drawn between one condition and another.

The extensive exemption and change remission arrangements mean that 87 per cent. of prescriptions are dispensed free-of-charge. As a result, many people with medical conditions not on the exempt list already get free prescriptions on other grounds. Anyone in work may claim help through the NHS low income scheme.

Departmental Staff

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff were employed in communications roles in her Department on 1 October *(a)* 2003, *(b)* 2004 and *(c)* 2005; and if she will make a statement. [32632]

Jane Kennedy: The Department routinely carries out an audit at the end of each financial year on the numbers of communications staff employed by the Communications Directorate, the result of which (in relation to "Press Officers") is placed in the Library. For each of the periods requested the numbers are as follows:

	Press officers	*Other communication staff*
2002–03	24	110
2003–04	26	102
2004–05	30	98

The Special Advisers Code of conduct sets out the sort of work a special adviser may undertake on behalf of their Minister. This includes communications activity. This activity has not been identified within the above figures.

The Department does not hold any figures for the numbers of staff on the actual dates quoted, as its audit is scheduled around the end of the financial year.

These figures are for the Department's Communications Directorate only.

Departmental Consultation

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will list the consultation exercises undertaken by her Department in the last two years, indicating *(a)* how many consultation responses were received, *(b)* how many stakeholders were engaged in the consultation, *(c)* what the total cost of each consultation exercise was and *(d)* what the cost per participant of the consultation was; [26382]

(2) how many stakeholders have been engaged in the Government's Your Health, Your Care, Your Say consultation exercise; and if she will make a statement. [26385]

Mr. Byrne: A total of 254 people attended the four regional events in Gateshead, Leicester, London and Plymouth and 998 people attended the citizen's summit in Birmingham on 29 October.

When the consultation closed on 4 November, 147 feedback forms had been received from local deliberative consultation events. In addition, over 18,000 on-line questionnaires have been completed and approximately 15,500 hard copies of the questionnaire have been returned. Over 60 letters have also been received from interested stakeholders in response to the consultation.

Representatives from over 60 statutory and non-statutory bodies were involved in five policy taskforces. A series of five academic seminars were also held, involving over 40 individuals from a variety of organisations. In addition, Ministers and officials met representatives of a wide range of stakeholder organisations at specially arranged and routine meetings to inform them about the exercise and to hear their views.

Around 750 organisations were contacted and invited to register with a website which enabled interested stakeholders to keep up to date with the consultation, access key documents for holding consultation events and enable an exchange of views and ideas with other organisers of local events. Contact was maintained through a regular newsletter.

Representatives from around 150 organisations attended a workshop on 19 July to discuss the best ways of involving stakeholders in the consultation and the resources required to make it a success. Around a further 120 organisations attended a briefing event about the consultation process and the website on 8 September.

A number of stakeholder organisations have put information about the consultation on their websites and some have put links through to the "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" questionnaire.

Departmental Website

Stephen Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many complaints regarding the operation of her Department's website were received in 2004–05; and how many of these were responded to within *(a)* one working day, *(b)* five working days and *(c)* longer than five working days. [31493]

Jane Kennedy: The Department's central web team manages all inquiries relating to the operation of the Department's website. All such inquiries are logged and responded to within five working days. Complaints are not logged or dealt with separately from general inquiries.

Prior to July 2004, website-related inquiries were not collated by topic. Therefore, we are only able to provide total numbers of inquiries dealt with per month from April to June 2004. From July 2004, website-related inquiries have been broken down into categories as shown in the table.

Inquiries received by topic April 2004 to March 2005

Topic	*April*	*May*	*June*	*July*	*August*	*September*
Broken/wrong links/old urls	—	—	—	38	16	27
Publication dates/ search date range	—	—	—	3	1	0
Search/ finding information	—	—	—	61	36	27
Improvements suggested	—	—	—	9	7	3
Request to exchange links	—	—	—	4	2	8
Miscellaneous (including positive feedback)				13	10	22
Printing/downloading	—	—	—	2	2	2
Site/services down	—	—	—	2	4	0
Incorrect/out of date information	—	—	—	10	10	13
Not about the Department's site/not for web team	—	—	—	21	10	14
Total	321	150	189	170	118	130

Topic	*October*	*November*	*December*	*January*	*February*	*March*
Broken/wrong links/old urls	18	20	11	11	18	15
Publication dates/ search date range	1	0	1	0	0	0
Search/ finding information	40	37	27	17	19	31
Improvements suggested	3	7	8	5	5	6
Request to exchange links	5	2	1	3	2	2
Miscellaneous (including positive feedback)	16	9	6	16	4	7
Printing/ downloading	1	1	1	5	25	10
Site/services down	0	1	0	2	12	18
Incorrect/out of date information	4	5	3	3	3	5
Not about the Department's site /not for web team	21	5	15	20	22	31
Total	153	116	90	82	110	125

Doctors

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the current rate is of under-employment among trained doctors. [27954]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the current rate of under-employment among trained doctors is not held centrally.

Flu Vaccines

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps have been taken in co-operation with industry to increase the capacity available to produce vaccine to counter a pandemic of a human variant of avian influenza. [34994]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* We are meeting with the manufacturers of ordinary flu vaccine to explore how we can work with industry to develop pandemic flu vaccines as quickly as possible after the virus is isolated. We are actively exploring a range of preparatory steps with manufacturers in order to improve the prospects of early delivery of pandemic influenza vaccines.

We are working with the National Institute for Biological Standards and Control (NIBSC) and others to see how to rationalise the testing process, which ensures that a safe vaccine is produced. We are working with NIBSC to develop a library of reference strains, which may help accelerate the vaccine development process.

FSA (Salt Campaign)

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total cost is of the Food Standard Agency's television campaign on salt; and if she will make a statement. [33197]

Caroline Flint: The Food Standards Agency committed £3.6 million to a seven and a half week advertising campaign, which ran between 10 October to 30 November.

General Medical Services Contract

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to amend the time at which the out-of-hours period *(a)* begins and *(b)* ends in the General Medical Services contract. [32331]

Mr. Byrne: One of the major themes coming out of the 'Your Health, Your Care, Your Say' public consultation is that people would prefer general practices to offer extended opening hours. The Department will be working with general practitioners, nurses, practice managers and stakeholder groups like the British Medical Association on how best to achieve this and proposals will be set out in the forthcoming White Paper on improving community health and care.

Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent discussions she has had with relevant NHS organisations on the future configuration of hospital services in the Hammersmith hospitals NHS Trust. [31886]

Jane Kennedy: The Secretary of State for Health has had no discussions recently with any relevant national health service organisation on the future configuration of hospital services in the Hammersmith hospitals NHS trust.

Health and Social Care

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the operation of sections *(a)* 113 and *(b)* 114 of the Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003. [28198]

Jane Kennedy: The Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 made provision for changes to the national health service and the social services complaints procedures.

The Department is reviewing the operation of both complaints procedures. Any changes will be aimed at improving the patient experience and the service provided by making the systems simpler, faster and more closely integrated. It is important also for both systems to focus on improvement in service delivery by learning from mistakes.

We recognise that strong links are needed across health and social care and we have already announced the merger of the Commission for Social Care Inspection and the Healthcare Commission. This is a key initiative in the drive towards a system which aims to deliver patient and user centred services.

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much has been allocated by each strategic health authority to fund the secondment of health care assistants who wish to train as nurses in each year since the scheme began; [22139]

(2) how many health care assistants have been seconded to train as nurses by each NHS Trust in each year since the scheme began; [22140]

(3) what information is collected by her Department on the number of health care assistants who have requested secondments for nursing training and had that request refused; [22141]

(4) what recent discussions she has had on the current scheme for the secondment of health care assistants to nurse training; and if she will make a statement. [22142]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 27 October 2005]:* The secondment scheme for health care assistants (HCAs) began in 1998–99. Up to 2003–04, the money for this scheme was routed through the former regional health authorities and regional offices who took local decisions on how much and which education consortia received funding. Therefore, we are only able to provide figures for the number of HCAs seconded in 2003–04, 2004–05 and expenditure for 2003–04, 2004–05 and 2005–06. This is shown in the table.

HCAs who went on to nurse training courses

	Number of HCAs		*Expenditure on HCAs' (£000)*		
	2003–04	*2004–05*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*[1]
Avon, Glouc s and Wilts	336	522	4,067	6,524	7,423
Beds and Herts	224	311	2,716	3,881	4,172
Birmingham and Black Country	655	869	7,932	10,863	12,083
Cheshire and Merseyside	614	774	7,435	9,672	12,017
County Durham and Tees Valley	182	226	2,202	2,825	3,396
Cumbria and Lancashire	387	544	4,683	6,795	7,239
Devon and Cornwall	174	238	2,103	2,969	4,212
Dorset and Somerset	190	233	2,906	2,910	3,304
Essex	202	289	2,449	3,605	5,528
Greater Manchester	630	853	7,637	10,661	11,188
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	303	443	3,669	5,537	5,923
Kent and Medway	586	285	7,098	3,558	4,778
Leicestershire, Northants and Rutland	298	337	3,607	4,213	4,422
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	281	389	3,402	4,857	6,344
North and East Yorkshire and North East Lines	224	331	2,715	4,132	4,804
North Central London	438	561	6,676	8,828	8,445
North East London	429	559	6,539	8,798	9,254
North West London	457	603	6,975	9,488	10,419
Northumberland Tyne and Wear	255	330	3,086	4,120	4,620
Shropshire and Staffordshire	266	292	4,052	3,654	4,501
South East London	381	506	5,812	7,969	8,332
South West London	204	260	3,111	4,099	4,320
South Yorkshire	352	412	4,266	5,150	6,160
Surrey and Sussex	—	442	—	5,518	6,542
Thames Valley	309	402	3,739	5,028	4,883
Trent	390	587	4,726	7,334	8,068
West Midlands South	231	293	2,794	3,659	4,515
West Yorkshire	454	552	5,500	6,895	7,989
Total	9,460	12,442	121,897.9	163,545	184,882

[1] Planned.

Officials keep the scheme under regular review and I am satisfied that it has provided significant help in supporting HCAs who wish to become nurses. Indeed, the number of HCAs participating has exceeded our expectations.

In 1998–99, £50 million was allocated to widening access initiatives and the majority was spent on HCA secondments. In 2003–04, the student nurse population was around 63,000 and of these over 6,900 were HCAs. In 2004–05, £164 million was allocated to strategic health authority workforce directorates to fund tuition fees and salary support for HCA's pre-registration training for an increased HCA population of over 9,400 (18 percent. of the population). In 2005–06, the planned spend is around £185 million and the number of HCAs entering pre-registration nurse training is expected to rise to over 13,500 (18 percent. of the student population).

We do not hold centrally the number of applications accepted or rejected by national health service trusts nor the number of NHS trusts who do not offer secondments. The number of HCAs seconded to train as nurses is a matter for local decision and it is for individual employers to decide their policy on offering such secondments.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health addressed the Healthcare Assistants' Conference in July 2005 where she praised the outstanding care that healthcare assistants deliver on a daily basis. She made a commitment to continue to invest and reform the training and development opportunities for all in the NHS.

Health Services (North Yorkshire)

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on structural changes to health services in North Yorkshire. [30651]

Mr. Byrne: Strategic health authorities (SHAs) have recently submitted their proposals for the reconfiguration of primary care trusts (PCTs), which set out how they intend to strengthen their commissioning function. These proposals have been assessed by an independent external panel drawn from and representing a wide range of stakeholder interests, to determine whether the SHA proposals meet the criteria stipulated in "Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS", (July 2005). Where the criteria are judged to have been met the proposals will go forward to a three-month public consultation. No decisions on the reorganisation of PCTs will be taken until this process has been completed.

HIV

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of individuals staying in the UK illegally in each year since 1997–98 who were eligible for continuing care for HIV because they had stayed in the UK for longer than 12 months until the NHS (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations were amended. [32075]

Jane Kennedy: Successive Governments have not required the national health service to provide statistics on the number or nationality of overseas visitors treated under the provisions of the NHS (Charges to Overseas Visitors) Regulations 1989, as amended, or on the costs of treatment.

Home Office estimates of the amount of people in the United Kingdom (UK) illegally do not separately identify those who have stayed in the UK for 12 months or more and there is no evidence on which an estimate on the proportion of such people who are HIV positive could be based.

It is therefore not possible to provide the information requested.

Hospital Admissions

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) pursuant to her answer of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 761–62W, concerning admissions, if she will break down the information by *(a)* region, *(b)* strategic health authority and *(c)* NHS trust; [20726]

(2) pursuant to the answer of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 762W, on emergency re-admissions, if she will provide equivalent figures for *(a)* quarter 4 of 2004–05, *(b)* quarter 1 of 2005–06 and *(c)* each quarter since January 2001, broken down by NHS trust. [29552]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, similar information on annual trends in readmission rates, by age group, broken down by Government regional office and by strategic health authority is available at www.nchod.nhs.uk.

Hospitals (Catering/Parking)

Damian Green: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidelines she has given to hospitals about the provision of parking spaces for *(a)* staff and *(b)* visitors; and if she will make a statement. [32545]

Jane Kennedy: In 1996, NHS Estates, an Executive agency of the Department, published "Car Parking, Health Facilities Note 21", which provided advice and guidance on issues surrounding the optimum provision of car parking facilities for health care premises. This has been placed in the Library.

The Department is currently finalising a new guidance document, "Transport Management and Car Parking: best practice guidance for NHS Trusts in England", which looks at what measures trusts can adopt when developing travel plans. In addition, it can be used to facilitate discussions with local planning authorities.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the Steamplicity catering pilot at the Charing Cross hospital. [33133]

Jane Kennedy: No assessment of the Steamplicity catering pilot at Charing Cross hospital has been made by the Department of Health. The pilot scheme is being

undertaken via the hospital's external contract provider of facilities services and a cost-benefit assessment is due to be published by them in the near future.

Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals Trust

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many agency staff were employed by the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals Trust in each of the last three years, broken down by type of job; and what the cost was in each year. [32950]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not available in the format requested. The following table shows the number of bank and locum staff employed within the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals National Health Service Trust in the last three years.

NHS Hospital, Public Health Medicine and Community Health Services: Medical and Dental and Non-Medical staff within Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust by grade and main staff group as at 30 September each specified year

Number (headcount)

	2002		2003		2004	
	Total staff	*Bank/ Locum*	*Total staff*	*Bank/ Locum*	*Total staff*	*Bank/ Locum*
Medical and Dental Staff	603	21	664	35	711	23
Of which:						
Consultant	208	1	234	3	246	4
Registrar Group	106	17	114	31	154	14
Senior House Officer	165	3	193	1	201	5
Other Staff	124	0	123	0	110	0
Total Non-Medical Staff	5,864	131	6,277	144	6,548	151
Professionally qualified clinical staff	2,963	54	3,150	55	3,258	39
Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff	2,292	54	2,399	55	2,466	39
Qualified scientific, therapeutic and technical staff	671	0	751	0	792	0
Qualified allied health professionals	273	0	297	0	331	0
Qualified healthcare scientists	n/a	0	278	0	294	0
Other qualified scientific, therapeutic and technical staff	398	0	176	0	167	0
Support to clinical staff	2,172	77	2,116	89	2,260	112
Support to doctors and nurses	1,769	77	1,653	89	1,755	112
Support to ST& T	403	0	463	0	505	0
NHS infrastructure support	729	0	1,011	0	1,030	0
Central functions	239	0	495	0	527	0
Hotel, property and estates staff	329	0	342	0	369	0
Managers and senior managers	161	0	174	0	134	0

n/a = Not applicable

Source:

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre Medical and Dental Workforce Census

Hull Royal Infirmary

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* average and *(b)* longest wait for urgent breast cancer referrals at the Hull Royal Infirmary was in the latest period for which figures are available. [32952]

Mr. Byrne: Information is not available in the format requested. In the period April to June 2005 100 per cent. of urgent breast cancer referrals to Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals National Health Service Trust were seen within two weeks of the referral by the general practitioner.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many complaints were made against the Hull Royal Infirmary in each year since 1997; and how many related to *(a)* clinical negligence, *(b)* waiting times, *(c)* tidiness/repair of hospital facilities, *(d)* staff and *(e)* other matters. [32954]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not available in the format requested. Complaints statistics for 2002–03 and 2003–04 are available at trust level and can be accessed through the Department's website at: www.performance.doh.gov.uk/hospitalactivity/data_requests/nhs_complaints.htm.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients have *(a)* contracted and *(b)* died from hospital acquired infections at the Hull Royal Infirmary in each year since figures have been available. [32956]

Mr. Byrne: The information is not available in the format requested. The table shows the number of methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) bacteraemia reports from April 2001 to March 2005[1] for the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals National Health Service Trust.

	Number of MRSA bacteraemia reports	*MRSA rate per 1,000 bed days*
April 2001 to March 2002	106	0.26
April 2002 to March 2003	75	0.18
April 2003 to March 2004	102	0.23
April 2004 to March 2005	90	[1]0.21

[1] Provisional as final activity data to be confirmed.

Source:

Mandatory MRSA blood stream infections surveillance system

Data for years prior to 2001 on the trust's MRSA bacteraemia rates (by number of reports and rate per 1,000 bed days) are available on the Department's website at:

www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics.

It is not possible to give reliable figures on the number of deaths involving hospital-acquired infections at the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospital NHS Trust from routinely collected mortality data. This is because, as elsewhere, information on where the infection was acquired may not be available to the doctor certifying the death.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many private patients have been treated at Hull Royal Infirmary in each year since 1997. [32961]

Mr. Byrne: The information for the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals National Health Service Trust and its preceding organisations is shown in the table.

Count of finished consultant episodes for selected providers of treatment (private patients treated in NHS hospitals) NHS hospitals in England, 1997–98 to 2003–04

Selected providers	*Finished consultant episodes*
1997–98	
Royal Hull Hospitals NHS Trust	89
East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	469
Total	558
1998–99	
Royal Hull Hospitals NHS Trust	65
East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	487
Total	552
1999–2000	
Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	482
2000–01	
Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	392
2001–02	
Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	431
2002–03	
Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	415
2003–04	
Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	321

Notes:

Finished consultant episode (FCE): An FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one health care provider. Please note that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.

Ungrossed data: Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data, that is, the data is ungrossed.

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics, Health and Social Care Information Centre.q

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what services the Hull Royal Infirmary offers for lung cancer patients. [32966]

Mr. Byrne: The Hull Royal Infirmary offers treatment to emergency lung cases and a full lung cancer service is provided by the Castle Hill Hospital, also within the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals National Health Service trust.

Source:

The Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people were admitted to the Hull Royal Infirmary with coronary heart disease in each year since 1997. [32968]

Mr. Byrne: The information for the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals National Health Service Trust and its preceding organisations is shown in the table.

Count of finished admission episodes for selected providers of treatment where primary diagnosis is coronary heart disease in NHS hospitals in England, 1997–98 to 2003–04

Selected providers	*Year*	*Finished admission episodes*
Royal Hull Hospitals NHS Trust	1997–98	1,364
East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	1997–98	2,003
Total	1997–98	3,367
Royal Hull Hospitals NHS Trust	1998–99	2,022
East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	1998–99	2,195
Total	1998–99	4,217
Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	1999–2000	3,927
Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	2000–01	3,541
Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	2001–02	3,064
Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	2002–03	4,300
Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	2003–04	4,089

Notes:

1. Finished admission episodes:

A finished admission episode is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.

2. Diagnosis (primary diagnosis):

The primary diagnosis is the first up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.

3. Ungrossed data:

Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data, that is, the data are ungrossed.

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics, Health and Social care Information Centre

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the target patient transport times are at the Hull Royal Infirmary in relation to children's intensive care; and whether the target was met in the last period for which figures are available. [32970]

Mr. Byrne: The Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals National Health Service Trust is part of the regional paediatric intensive care unit (PICU) based at Leeds. The Hull Royal Infirmary has two intensive care unit (ICU) beds for children and therefore does not transfer children to the regional unit at Leeds. As such, there is no target patient transfer time for this group of patients.

Source:

The Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether there is a children's nurse consultant on site at the Hull Royal Infirmary 24 hours a day, seven days a week. [32971]

Mr. Byrne: The Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals National Health Service trust does not employ a children's nurse consultant.

Source:

The Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many full-time equivalent nurses there were in critical care at the Hull Royal Infirmary in each year since 1997. [32973]

Mr. Byrne: The information is not available in the format requested. The table shows the total number of nurses employed by Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals National Health Service Trust in the years 1997 to 2004.

NHS hospital and community health services: Qualified nurses in specified organisations as at 30 September each specified year

Full-time equivalent

		1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Total specified organisations[1]		1,855	1,874	1,841	1,820	1,880	1,960	2,047	2,108
Royal Hull Hospitals NHS Trust	RF2	1,355	1,347	1,328	—	—	—	—	—
East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	RF3	500	527	513	—	—	—	—	—
Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	RWA	—	—	—	1,820	1,880	1,960	2,047	2,108

'—'not applicable

[1] Royal Hull Hospitals NHS Trust and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust merged in 2000 to become Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust

Note:

Full time equivalent figures are rounded to the nearest whole number

Source:

Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether there is a trauma team on site at the Hull Royal Infirmary 24 hours a day. [32974]

Mr. Byrne: A trauma team is provided on site at the Hull Royal Infirmary 24 hours a day.

Source:

The Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the admission level in the Accident and Emergency Department at Hull Royal Infirmary was in each year since 1997. [32976]

Mr. Byrne: The information for the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals National Health Service Trust and its preceding organisations is shown in the table.

NHS hospitals in England, 1997–98 to 2003–04

Selected providers	*Year*	*Finished admission episodes*
Royal Hull Hospitals NHS Trust	1997–98	17,142
East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	1997–98	632
Total	1997–98	17,774
Royal Hull Hospitals NHS Trust	1998–99	19,100
East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	1998–99	917
Total	1998–99	20,017
Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	1999–2000	20,103
Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	2000–01	17,144
Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	2001–02	20,523
Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	2002–03	26,978
Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	2003–04	28,649

Notes:

1. Count of finished admission episodes for selected providers of treatment and for selected methods of admission:

Emergency (via accident and emergency (A and E) services including the casualty department of the provider.

Emergency (other means, including patients who arrive via A and E department of another healthcare provider.

2. Finished admission episodes:

A finished admission episode is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.

3. Ungrossed data:

Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data, that is, the data are ungrossed.

Source:

Hospital Episode Statistics, Health and Social Care Information Centre

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* current projects, *(b)* equipment and *(c)* facilities at the Hull Royal Infirmary have been paid for by, or receive funding from, charitable organisations. [32984]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cancelled operations there were at the Hull Royal Infirmary in each year since 1997. [33005]

Mr. Byrne: The information is not available in the format requested. However, information relating to the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals National Health Service Trust is shown in the table.

Last minute cancelled operations for non-clinical reasons at Hull and East Yorkshire Hospital Trust

	Number of last minute cancelled operations
March 2002	301
March 2003	249
March 2004	222
March 2005	333
September 2005	146

Notes:

1. Data are not collected for individual hospitals. Data were collected by health authority only prior to 2001–02. Trust level data were collected from 2001–02 onwards. September 2005 represents the latest data.

2. A last minute cancellation is one that occurs on the day the patient was due to arrive, after they have arrived in hospital or on the day of their operation. For example, patients are to be admitted to hospital on a Monday for an operation scheduled for the following day (Tuesday). If the hospital cancels their operation for non-clinical reasons on the Monday then this would count as a last minute cancellation. This includes patients who have not actually arrived in hospital and have been telephoned at home prior to their arrival.

3. An operation which is rescheduled to a time within 24 hours of the original scheduled operation should be recorded as a postponement and not as a cancellation. The quarterly monitoring cancelled operations (QMCO) collection does not record the number of postponements.

4. Some common non-clinical reasons for cancellations by the hospital include: ward beds unavailable; surgeon unavailable; emergency case needing theatre; theatre list over-ran; equipment failure; administrative error; anaesthetist unavailable; theatre staff unavailable; and critical care bed unavailable.

Source:

Department of Health dataset QMCO

Immunotoxicologists

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans the Department has to advance medical toxicology in the UK, with specific regard to the employment of immunotoxicologists. [32287]

Caroline Flint: The Department is in touch with the Royal College of General Practitioners with a view to improving the training in toxicology provided for general practitioners. Contacts between the Department and leading United Kingdom clinical toxicologists have led to questions in this area being included in the Membership examination of the Royal College of Physicians. Officials from the Department have served on committees of the British Toxicology Society and the Royal College of Pathologists group that administers the diploma in toxicology. The Department has funded research in toxicology and with the aid of Chief Medical Officer's expert advisory committees has published reports and reviews in the field.

The Department has not focused specifically on immunotoxicology, although Professor Stephen Holgate, Medical Research Council's Professor of Immuno-pharmacology at Southampton Medical School, is a member of the Committee on the Medical effects of Air Pollutants and has been influential in drawing questions in the immuno-toxicology area to the Department's attention.

In-vitro Fertilisation

Mr. Scott: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent on in-vitro fertilisation treatment in each primary care trust in England in the last year for which figures are available. [32373]

Caroline Flint: Information about primary care trusts' expenditure on in-vitro fertilisation is not collected centrally. The primary responsibility for the provision of these services rests with the national health service at local level.

Isle of Wight Ambulance Service

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many violent incidents there have been involving staff of the Isle of Wight Ambulance Service in the course of their duties in each of the last five years. [34620]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* The information requested is shown in the table.

National health service hospital and community health services: recorded violent incidents for Hampshire Ambulance Services NHS Trust for each specified year

	Number of incidents
2000–01	168
2001–02	81
2002–03	75

Notes:

Covers 1 April to 31 March for the specified years.

This data was discontinued in 2003.

Source:

Survey of violence, accidents, harassments in the NHS

IT Projects

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many IT projects which cost over £1 million and were introduced since 1997 are in use in her Department. [26616]

Mr. Byrne: The Department has delivered 11 such information technology projects since 1997 and of these, 11 are still in use.

Local Authority Wards

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will estimate the percentage of local authority wards in the area principally served by each NHS acute hospital trust in England which are not in the most deprived 10 per cent. of local authority wards. [17941]

Caroline Flint: The information is not available in the format requested.

Maladministration

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many payments for maladministration have been made by *(a)* her Department, *(b)* its agencies, *(c)* its non-

departmental public bodies and *(d)* other bodies for which her Department has responsibility in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [32244]

Jane Kennedy: It is the policy of the Department, its agencies, non-departmental public bodies and, where appropriate, its sponsored organisations to make financial redress in accordance with the guidance set out in "Chapter 18.7 and Annexes 18.1 and 18.2 of Government Accounting".

The information requested is shown in the following table:

Numbers of maladministration cases for which financial redress was made

Department of Health	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Department	—	—	—	—	—
Agencies	—	1	—	—	—
Non departmental public bodies	—	—	1	—	—
Bodies sponsored by Department	—	—	—	—	—
National health service bodies: total	3	22	31	63	58

Notes:
1. 2004–05 NHS figures do not include data from NHS foundation trusts.
2. NHS bodies (health authorities, strategic health authorities, primary care trusts and NHS trusts) follow the guidance in para. *(e)* of Annex 2 of Chapter 5 of the relevant Manual for Accounts, which adapts elements of the Government Accounting Guidance to be applicable to the NHS.

Sources:
Department of Health Annual Reports on Losses and Special Payments
Audited summarisation forms of the health authorities 2000–01 to 2001–02
Audited summarisation forms of the strategic health authorities 2002–03 to 2004–05
Audited summarisation schedules of the primary care trusts 2000–01 to 2004–05
Audited summarisation schedules of the NHS trusts 2000–01 to 2004–05

Medical Care Practitioners

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to initiate training courses for medical care practitioners; on what date she expects medical care practitioners to start work in the NHS; and what estimate she has made of the number of medical care practitioners who will be working in the NHS in 2010. [27551]

Mr. Byrne: It is for local employers to decide how many medical care practitioners they may wish to employ and when to start the requisite training. There has been no central estimation of the 2010 medical care practitioner work force.

Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency's performance in assessing applications for new marketing authorisations. [33048]

Jane Kennedy: All applications for new marketing authorisations made to the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) under the European licensing procedures are being assessed well within the statutory timelines. The MHRA continues to assess new active substance applications with a mean assessment time of less than 40 days. However, it is acknowledged that performance with regard to the assessment of national abridged applications is currently below MHRA norms. This is due to a combination of reasons. As a result of new European requirements regarding the format of applications, the MHRA experienced a surge in applications in 2003 resulting in a backlog of applications to be processed. This, coupled with some difficulties in recruiting appropriate professional assessment staff as a result of market forces and the recent introduction of Sentinel, the MHRA's new information management system, has had an adverse effect on MHRA's overall efficiency in this area. Steps are currently in progress to actively address these issues, including a recent successful recruitment campaign, overtime exercises and the implementation of a range of steps to improve efficiency.

Mobile Communications

Mr. Mark Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the contribution made by mobile communications to the NHS and other health professionals in Greater London in terms of *(a)* achieving savings and *(b)* the provision of improved services to NHS users; and if she will make a statement. [27368]

Jane Kennedy: The Department is currently undertaking a strategic review of assistive technology. The potential for mobile and other technologies, including text messaging services, to help keep individuals out of acute or institutional care where appropriate and to help individuals or professionals manage long term conditions will be assessed as part of that review.

The Department has contracted to provide digital radio communication systems for ambulance trusts in England. This should save money compared to trusts holding individual contracts for the same services. It will also bring further benefits in terms of higher quality communications, standardisation and interoperability between ambulance services and with other emergency services.

North Yorkshire Area Health Authority

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people were employed by North Yorkshire area health authority in 1997; and how many are employed in *(a)* York and Selby primary care trust, *(b)* Hambleton and Richmondshire primary care trust and *(c)* Harrogate and Craven primary care trust. [31721]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Hospital, public health medicine and community health services (HCHS): medical and dental staff[1], non-medical staff, general medical practitioners (excluding retainers)[2] and practice staff[3], within the specified health authority[4] and organisations[5]

Numbers (headcount)

	1997	2004
North Yorkshire health authority	14,111	—
HCHS medical and dental staff[1]	593	n/a
General medical practitioners (excluding retainers)[2]	493	n/a
Practice staff[3]	2,108	n/a
HCHS non-medical staff	10,917	n/a
Professionally qualified clinical staff	5,185	n/a
Support to clinical staff	3,358	n/a
NHS infrastructure support	2,316	n/a
Other and unknown	58	n/a
Craven, Harrogate and rural district primary care trust	n/a	1,574
HCHS medical and dental staff[1]	n/a	20
General medical practitioners (excluding retainers)[2]	n/a	173
Practice staff[3]	n/a	550
HCHS non-medical staff	n/a	831
Professionally qualified clinical staff	n/a	434
Support to clinical staff	n/a	285
NHS infrastructure support	n/a	112
Other and unknown	n/a	0
Hambleton and Richmondshire primary care trust	n/a	1,212
HCHS medical and dental staff[1]	n/a	49
General medical practitioners (excluding retainers)[2]	n/a	84
Practice staff[3]	n/a	315
HCHS non-medical staff	n/a	764
Professionally qualified clinical staff	n/a	424
Support to clinical staff	n/a	169
NHS infrastructure support	n/a	171
Other and unknown	n/a	0
Selby and York primary care trust	n/a	2,790
HCHS medical and dental staff[1]	n/a	42
General medical practitioners (excluding retainers)[2]	n/a	216
Practice staff[3]	n/a	676
HCHS non-medical staff	n/a	1,856
Professionally qualified clinical staff	n/a	978
Support to clinical staff	n/a	639
NHS infrastructure support	n/a	229
Other and unknown	n/a	10

n/a = data not applicable.

[1] Excludes medical hospital practitioners and medical clinical assistants, most of whom are also GPs working part time in hospitals.

[2] General medical practitioners (excluding retainers) includes contracted GPs, CMS others, PMS others and GP registrars. Prior to September 2004 this group included GMS unrestricted principals, PMS contracted GPs, PMS salaried GPs, restricted principals, assistants, GP registrars, salaried doctors (Para 52 SFA), PMS other, flexible career scheme GPs and GP returners.

[3] Practice staff includes practice nurses, direct patient care, admin and clerical and other.

[4] There is no health authority area data available for 2004. Health authorities were superseded by strategic health authorities in 2002.

[5] There is no PCT data available in 1997 as PCTs were first introduced in 2000.

Note:

Data as at 30 September each year, except GP and practice staff data as at 1 October 1997.

Sources:

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre Medical and Dental Workforce Census

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census 2004

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre General and Personal Medical Services Statistics

Obesity

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assistance her Department has given to general practitioners to reduce obesity among their patients; and if she will make a statement. [32749]

Caroline Flint: The quality and outcomes framework specifically rewards general practitioners (GPs) for delivering evidence based care to patients with chronic diseases which may involve weight management interventions to tackle obesity.

In order to support GPs in reducing obesity we are developing a variety of tools such as the obesity care pathway, a Weight Loss Guide and a short patient activity questionnaire. Also, together with the Countryside Agency, we have already piloted the use of pedometers as a motivational tool in general practice to increase patients' levels of physical activity.

The National Institute for Health Clinical Excellence (NICE) provided guidelines for anti-obesity drugs and surgery in 2001 and has been commissioned to prepare definitive guidance on the prevention, identification, management and treatment of obesity, due for publication in 2007. NICE guidance will include an assessment of four commonly used methods to increase physical activity: brief interventions in primary care, pedometers, exercise referral schemes and community based exercise programmes for walking and cycling.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of children likely to suffer from obesity over the next 10 years. [33137]

Caroline Flint: The prevalence of obesity in children aged two to 10 years increased from 9.6 per cent. in 1995 to 13.7 per cent. in 2003. The British Medical Association estimates that one in five boys and one in three girls will be obese by 2020, as stated in the recent schools' White Paper. In 2004, the Government adopted a public service agreement (PSA) target

> "to halt, by 2010, the year-on-year increase in obesity among children under 11 in the context of a broader strategy to tackle obesity in the population as a whole."

This PSA target is held jointly by the Department, the Department for Education and Skills and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research she has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the efficacy of identifying and managing obesity in children in a primary care setting. [33175]

Caroline Flint: The Department asked the Health Development Agency (HDA) to review the evidence of prevention and treatment of overweight and obesity. In 2003, HDA concluded that there is supporting evidence for the need to improve the role of health professionals especially general practitioners in the primary care setting in the management of obesity and overweight.

In addition, the Department has commissioned the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence to prepare a definitive guidance on the prevention, identification, management and treatment of obesity, which will be published after full consultation in 2007. Meanwhile, to support local monitoring of obesity among children, the Department plans to issue guidance to primary care trusts on measurement of height and weight in primary school age children. This guidance will provide advice to primary care trusts on how to measure height and weight of children between five to 11 years.

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Oesophageal Cancer

Chris Grayling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the MCM5 test being trialled at the Freeman hospital in Newcastle; and when it will be brought into regular use in the NHS. [32272]

Mr. Byrne: The Department meets the service costs of research commissioned by its research partners that takes place in the national health service. The funding allocated for this purpose supports a substantial body of health research, including Cancer Research UK's trial of the MCM5 test for bladder and prostate cancer.

The trial at the Freeman hospital in Newcastle is expected to involve 3,000 patients and is not due to finish until 2006. At this stage it is not possible to speculate on when the test might be introduced on a regular basis into the NHS as the results from the trial will require in depth analysis.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will answer questions *(a)* 26323, *(b)* 26321 and *(c)* 26322 tabled by the hon. Member for Stratford-on-Avon on 3 November. [33013]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave him on 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2116W, and on 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 254W, and to the answer given by my hon. Friend the Under Secretary of State with responsibility for Care Services, on 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 497W.

Pesticides

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will conduct a population biomonitoring programme which includes pesticides. [32297]

Caroline Flint: The Department does not currently have any specific plans to conduct a population biomonitoring programme, although it is having discussions with the Health Protection Agency on the feasibility of biomonitoring projects for chemical contaminants that includes pesticides. The Health Protection Agency is currently carrying out a scoping study, which will ascertain what biomonitoring programmes are currently underway in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when *(a)* the Health Protection Agency and *(b)* her Department will establish a public health toxicology service to deal with chemical issues; and whether it will include pesticides. [32299]

Caroline Flint: The United Kingdom's National Poisons Information Service, commissioned by the Health Protection Agency, provides advice on potential cases of poisoning to medical practitioners. The service does not provide advice to the public, although it is recognised that systems in other European countries do provide this service. Advice to the public on what to do in suspected cases of poisoning is available from NHS Direct.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the recent oral evidence from the Department to the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, what the evidential basis was for the statement that pesticide use has not increased. [33893]

Caroline Flint: The statement that pesticide usage has not increased, made by a Departmental official while giving oral evidence to the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, was based on evidence provided in the National Statistics, "Pesticide Usage Survey Report 202 on Arable Crops in Great Britain 2004", which is available on the Central Science Laboratory's (CSL) website at www.csl.gov.uk/science/organ/pvm/puskm/arable2004.pdf and on the National Statistics, "Pesticide Usage Survey Report 195 on Outdoor Vegetable Crops in Great Britain 2003", also available on CSL's website at www.csl.gov.uk/science/organ/pvm/puskm/outdoorveg2003.pdf.

These show that although areas treated may have increased, the amounts used have generally declined.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will ask the Pesticides Safety Directorate to commission research on the bystander impact of pesticide use. [33894]

Caroline Flint: The Department will be contributing to the Government response to the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution's report, "Crop Spraying and the Health of Residents and Bystanders", which is being co-ordinated by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. This is likely to include the commission of new research but details are yet to be decided. Departmental officials have been discussing with the pesticides safety directorate issues of common interest with respect to the report.

Physical Activity

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has held with professional rugby clubs about developing community rugby programmes to tackle obesity and increase participation in physical activity; and if she will make a statement. [32208]

Caroline Flint: We are keen to encourage both rugby codes to work in partnership with local authorities, primary care trusts and other local partners to promote physical activity and healthy lifestyles in the community.

I attended an event to disseminate the results of the "Professional Rugby in the Community Consultation" and showcase some of the excellent community work being undertaken by premier rugby clubs, which was hosted by Premier Rugby Ltd. on 9 November 2005.

Premier Rugby Ltd. were invited to give a presentation setting out professional rugby's commitment to community development at the first of the regional sport and health seminars organised on behalf of the Department on 25 November 2005 in Leeds, at which I also spoke.

Prior to these events my officials met with representatives of Premier Rugby Ltd. to discuss how professional rugby clubs and the national health service might work together at a local level to increase physical activity and tackle obesity.

Pressure Ulcers

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether she plans to monitor adherence to the clinical guidance published by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence on pressure ulcer management, published in September; and what plans she has to monitor the uptake of vacuum assisted closure technologies as recommended by the guidance; [31900]

(2) what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of vacuum assisted closure machines in treating open wounds; [31901]

(3) what steps she is taking to prevent pressure ulcers in NHS hospitals. [31899]

Mr. Byrne: Clinical guidelines published by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) are recommendations on the appropriate treatment and care of people with specific diseases and conditions within the national health service. They are based on the best available evidence. Guidelines help health professionals in their work, but they do not replace their knowledge and skills.

We have no plans to monitor the uptake of vacuum-assisted closure technologies as the NICE guidance stated that the findings on the effectiveness of such technology must be viewed with extreme caution due to limited trial-based evidence.

The Department has made no assessment on the effectiveness of vacuum assisted closure machines in treating open wounds.

Reducing the incidence of pressure sores in hospitals is tackled locally through the development and implementation of individualised plans for prevention and treatment agreed and delivered by a multidisciplinary team working with patients and their carers.

Primary Care Trusts

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether decisions by primary care trusts to divest themselves of service provision will be based on the results of the "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" consultation. [25422]

Mr. Byrne: Any move away from direct provision of services will be a decision for the local national health service within the framework set out in the forthcoming White Paper, "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say", and after local consultation. We will support primary care trusts (PCTs) who want to do that, but we will not instruct PCTs to do it, nor will we impose any timetable. What matters is getting the best services for each community—and that is what the White Paper will focus on.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the salary is of the chief executive of each Cheshire primary care trust; and what estimate she has made of the likely cost of their redundancy packages. [32054]

Mr. Byrne: This information is not held centrally. However, Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Health Authority advises that salaries of primary care trust chief executives are already in the public domain via annual reports. No final decisions regarding the reconfiguration of primary care trusts, under 'Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS', have been made.

Private Patients

Chris Huhne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the share of NHS provision for private patients has been as a percentage of the total private medical market in each of the last 10 years. [31349]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not collect the information requested.

Pulmonary Arterial Hypertension

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has *(a)* to change staffing levels in national pulmonary arterial hypertension centres in England and *(b)* to increase the number of such centres. [34065]

Mr. Byrne: There are no plans to increase the number of specialist centres for the treatment of pulmonary hypertension (PH) in England. It is for health professionals in the existing seven centres to decide on the appropriate staffing levels needed to achieve the national service standards for PH, as set by the national specialist commissioning advisory group.

School Nurses

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether school nurses are permitted to sign prescriptions for contraceptives for minors without parental knowledge; and if she will make a statement. [34220]

Beverley Hughes: I have been asked to reply.

Health professionals, including school nurses, can provide contraception to young people under 16, provided they are satisfied that the young person is competent to fully understand the implications of any treatment and to make a choice of the treatment involved. When doing so, school nurses work under medical supervision through Patient Group Directions—a written instruction for the supply or administration of medicines to groups of patients, without an individualised doctor's prescription.

Health professionals work within an established legal framework, which involves assessing the young person's competence to understand the choices they are making. A young person's request for confidentiality is respected unless there are child protection issues. However, health professionals should always encourage the young person to talk to their parents.

Sexual Health

Susan Kramer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she takes to monitor the use of funding allocated to primary care trusts to improve sexual health services following the publication of the Choosing Health White Paper in November 2004. [31469]

Caroline Flint: Primary care trusts will receive funding for implementing the targets in the Choosing Health White Paper in their mainstream allocations and we will be monitoring the outcomes from this investment. In particular, the progress towards targets to reduce the level of new infections of gonorrhoea, to ensure patients have access to genito-urinary medicine clinics within 48

hours by 2008 and numbers of screens undertaken in the Chlamydia screening programme. These improved performance measures, should significantly strengthen the incentive for local investment and service modernisation.

In addition, a letter has been sent by the Department to strategic health authority chief executives highlighting that when considering any savings from implementing "Commissioning a patient led NHS", savings should not be identified from those posts working on implementation of Choosing Health. This includes posts in frontline services.

Smoking/Alcohol

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many women have smoked during pregnancy in each of the last 10 years. [34428]

Caroline Flint: The data are not available in the exact format as requested. The data which are presented is the most recent available.

Information on smoking in pregnancy is obtained from the infant feeding survey, which is carried out every five years; the most recent survey was in 2000. The available information is shown in the table.

Proportion of women who smoked throughout pregnancy, England, 1990, 1995, and 2000

Smoking prevalence	*1990*[1]	*1995*[2]	*Percentage 2000*[2]
Smoked during pregnancy	28	23	19
Base number	5,413	4,956	[3]4,921

[1] Data for 1990 relate to Great Britain.
[2] The results from the 1995 and 2000 surveys are not directly comparable, since some of the smoking questions on the questionnaire were revised in 2000 to improve the reliability of the results.
[3] The base for 2000 excludes 200 mothers who did not supply sufficient information for their smoking status to be classified.
Sources:
Office of Population Censuses and Surveys, Infant Feeding Survey 1990
Office for National Statistics, Infant Feeding Survey 1995
BMRB Infant Feeding Survey 2000, which is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/05/97/63/04059763.pdf

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many incidences of *(a)* smoking and *(b)* alcohol-related conditions were treated in (i) 1998 and (ii) the most recent year for which information is available; what the cost of treatment was in each year; and what estimate the Government have made of the costs to the economy. [34180]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* The information is not available in the form requested.

The latest estimates, published in 2004 by the Health Development Agency in the document, "The Smoking Epidemic" are that smoking kills around 86,500 people a year in England, one-fifth of all deaths.

The latest data on the cost to the national health service of treating illness and disease caused by smoking is estimated to cost between £1.4 billion to £1.7 billion every year in terms of general practitioner visits, prescriptions, treatment and operations.

Estimates of total cost to the economy are not available.

The incidence of alcohol-related conditions treated are shown in the table.

Count of finished consultant episodes for selected alcohol related diseases NHS hospitals: England, data year 1998–99 and 2003–04

Primary diagnosis	*1998–99*	*2003–04*
Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol	35,947	38,101
Alcoholic liver disease	13,689	21,001
Toxic effect of alcohol	2,130	1,591
Total	51,765	60,693

Notes:
Finished consultant episode (FCE)
An FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that the figures do not represent the number of patients, as a person may have more than one episode of care within the year.
Diagnosis (primary diagnosis)
The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the hospital episode statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.
Grossing
Figures are grossed for both coverage and missing/invalid clinical data, except for 2003–04, which is not yet adjusted for shortfalls.
Source:
Hospital episode statistics, health and social care information centre

It was estimated that the cost to the NHS in 2000–01 to be at a middle range of £1.5 billion.

The Prime Ministers strategy unit's interim analysis for the alcohol harm reduction strategy for England estimated that the overall cost of alcohol misuse was £20 billion a year.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Antisocial Behaviour (Hedges)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many orders to remove hedges have been made by local councils in *(a)* England and *(b)* Gloucestershire, under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003; and if he will make a statement. [35046]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* Under section 69(3) of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, local councils cannot order action involving the removal of a high hedge. Information on notices requiring remedial works to hedges, issued under the 2003 Act, is not collected centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with local councils about the workings of the high hedges provisions in the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003; and if he will make a statement. [35047]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has held no formal discussions with local councils about the workings of the high hedges provisions in the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003, which came into force in

June 2005. The Government are committed to a formal review of this legislation after it has been in operation for five years.

Chris Huhne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the average costs to the complainant of making a complaint to a local authority relating to high hedges; and if he will make a statement. [35276]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister published the 'Regulatory Impact Assessment: High Hedges—Implementing Part 8 of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003' on 23 March 2005. It contains estimates of the costs to complainants of making a complaint to a local authority about a high hedge. Copies of the Regulatory Impact Assessment are available in the House Library.

The Regulatory Impact Assessment was prepared before the legislation came into operation in June 2005. Information on the fees being charged by local authorities for dealing with high hedges complaints is not collected centrally.

Asset Register

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 30th November 2005, *Official Report*, column 581W, on the asset register, what documents his officials work from when assessing the assets of his Department. [35487]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The document officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister work from when assessing the ODPM's assets is the central ODPM's Asset Register which is held on its electronic accounting system SAP. This records all assets that cost over £5,000 and are held for use on a continuing basis. Third party invoices and professional valuations are the supporting documents used by officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to establish asset values on the Asset Register. The accounting system automatically calculates both increases and decreases in asset values due to indexation, and the monthly depreciation charge, according to parliamentary and HM Treasury guidelines.

Bus Services (Stoke Orchard)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he made of bus services attending Stoke Orchard, Gloucestershire when objecting to this aspect of Tewkesbury borough council's local plan; and if he will make a statement. [35086]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* As part of the assessment process of the Tewkesbury local plan, information from both Tewkesbury borough council and the bus service operators in the area was obtained in respect of the allocation at Stoke Orchard. This information was taken into account in my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister the First Secretary of State's decision to direct Tewkesbury borough council to delete the policy relating to the site allocation at Stoke Orchard from the Tewkesbury borough local plan.

It was my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, the First Secretary of State's view that this policy was inconsistent with PPG3, PPS7, PPG13 and RPG10 and would lead to a greater dispersal of development, exacerbating unsustainable patterns of commuting.

Designated Growth Areas

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the local delivery partners in *(a)* the Milton Keynes growth area and *(b)* each other designated growth area. [31850]

Yvette Cooper: The Local Delivery Vehicles established in Milton Keynes South Midlands to cover individual areas are: Milton Keynes Partnerships Committee; Aylesbury Vale Advantage; Renaissance Bedford; West Northamptonshire Development Corporation; and North Northants Together.

The Local Delivery Vehicles established in London Stansted Cambridge Peterborough are: Cambridgeshire Horizons; and Opportunity Peterborough.

The Regeneration Partnerships established in Thames Gateway to cover individual areas are: London Thames Gateway Development Corporation; Basildon Renaissance; Renaissance Southend; Thurrock UDC; Medway Renaissance Partnership; Swale Forward; and Kent Thameside Delivery Board.

The Local Delivery Vehicle for Ashford is Ashford's Future.

Fire Services

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* back-up facilities and *(b)* secondary sites are available for each fire regional control centre; and if he will make a statement. [34586]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The nine regional control centres will be part of an integrated network. In exceptionally busy periods, or in the worst case in the event of the failure of one centre, others in the network will be able immediately to take over answering calls and sending vehicles to incidents. Consequently, there is no need for secondary sites. To minimise the risk of the failure of one regional control centre, each has been designed so that there are no single points of failure in the system; for example, all the new centres will have two generators.

Homelessness

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the number of homeless people in *(a)* Southend, *(b)* Essex, *(c)* Greater London and *(d)* England in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [34315]

Yvette Cooper: Information about English local authorities' actions under homelessness legislation is collected quarterly and is in respect of households rather than people. The number of households accepted as eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need for the past five financial years, and the number of households in temporary accommodation arranged by local authorities under homelessness legislation as at 31 March of each year, is listed in the following table for Southend-on-Sea, Essex, Greater

London and England. For corresponding information about Welsh authorities, I refer the hon. Member to my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Wales.

After being accepted as homeless, a household will be placed in some form of accommodation. They may be placed in temporary accommodation, until a settled solution becomes available, or they may be given a settled solution straight away depending on the accommodation available to the local authority. As an alternative to temporary accommodation an authority may arrange for a household to remain in their current accommodation (homeless at home), until a settled solution becomes available.

Information is also collected on the number of people who sleep rough, that is, those who are literally roofless on a single night. The following table also shows the number of persons sleeping rough on a single night of each year.

Households accepted[1] as homeless during the year, households in temporary accommodation at the end of the year, and numbers of rough sleepers

Households	*Accepted during 2000–01*	*In TA[2] at end March 2001*	*Rough sleepers[3] (persons) 2000*	*Accepted during 2001–02*	*In TA[2] at end March 2002*	*Rough sleepers[3] (persons) 2001*
Southend-on-Sea	121	161	16	157	121	1
Essex[4]	2,922	1,937	0	2,891	2,424	0
Greater London	29,710	42,620	546	29,320	46,390	357
England	114,670	75,200	1,180	116,660	80,210	703

	Accepted during 2002–03	*In TA2 at end March 2003*	*Rough sleepers3 (persons) 2002*	*Accepted during 2003–04*	*In TA2 at end March 2004*	*Rough sleepers3 (persons) 2003*
Southend-on-Sea	230	175	1	n/a	n/a	0
Essex[4]	2,892	2,939	0	2,962	3,021	0
Greater London	29,790	52,690	321	30,080	58,820	267
England	128,540	89,040	596	135,430	97,680	504

	Accepted during 2004–05	*In TA2 at end March 2005–12–08*	*Rough sleepers3 (persons) 2004*
Southend-on-Sea	236	207	0
Essex[4]	2,406	2,987	2
Greater London	26,730	61,990	265
England	120,860	101,070	508

[1] All households eligible under homelessness legislation, found to be unintentionally homeless and in a priority need category, and consequently owed a main homelessness duty, n/a denotes the authority failed to provide a return for one or more quarters of the year
[2] Households in accommodation either pending a decision on their homelessness application or awaiting allocation of a settled home following acceptance. Excludes those households designated as "homeless at home" that have remained in their existing accommodation and have the same rights to suitable alternative accommodation as those in accommodation arranged by the authority.
Figures for Essex, London and England include ODPM estimates for any incomplete or missing P1E returns
[3] Number of persons sleeping rough, based on local authority mid-year counts or estimates.
[4] Essex comprises 12 district councils, and excludes the unitary authorities of Southend on Sea and Thurrock
Source:
ODPM P1E Homelessness returns (quarterly) and HSSA returns (annual)

Housing

James Duddridge: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the Government will publish its final response to the Barker Review of housing supply; and if he will make a statement. [34160]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* The Government's initial response to Kate Barker's report was provided by my right hon. Friends the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Deputy Prime Minister alongside the Budget on 17 March 2004. We published the full response on 5 December 2005.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many and what percentage of households in each London borough were on the housing register on 1 April. [34663]

Yvette Cooper: The number of households on the housing waiting list, and the percentage of total households that are on the housing waiting list, in each London borough, as at 1 April 2005, are shown in the following table:

Local authority	*Number of households on the housing register*	*As a percentage of all households*
Barking and Dagenham	2,321	3.5
Barnet	13,627	10.2
Bexley	4,528	5.0
Brent	17,351	15.2
Bromley	2,998	2.3
Camden	16,532	17.0
City of London	1,204	30.1
Croydon	8,856	6.3
Ealing	14,324	10.9
Enfield	7,872	6.8
Greenwich	7,666	8.2
Hackney	7,744	8.4
Hammersmith and Fulham	8,384	9.9
Haringey	19,930	19.9
Harrow	4,944	5.8

Local authority	Number of households on the housing register	As a percentage of all households
Havering	3,477	3.7
Hillingdon	7,471	7.4
Hounslow	10,382	11.5
Islington	6,326	7.5
Kensington and Chelsea	9,436	10.7
Kingston upon Thames	4,903	7.7
Lambeth	10,648	8.2
Lewisham	18,279	16.2
Merton	5,188	6.3
Newham	25,317	26.1
Redbridge	7,941	8.1
Richmond upon Thames	4,898	6.1
Southwark	7,548	6.5
Sutton	3,724	4.8
Tower Hamlets	21,183	24.1
Waltham Forest	8,837	9.2
Wandsworth	8,668	6.7
Westminster	6,565	6.1
London	309,072	9.6

Source:
ODPM's Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (HSSA).

Local authorities in England report the number of households on their housing waiting list as at 1 April in their annual Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix returns. Local authorities sometimes maintain a common waiting list with the housing association/s in their district. However, information is not held centrally where a housing association maintains a separate waiting list to the local authority.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether *(a)* local authorities and *(b)* social services have responsibility for housing vulnerable people; and if he will make a statement. [34667]

Yvette Cooper: Local authorities have a number of responsibilities to provide accommodation and support for vulnerable people. These include:

A duty under part 7 of the Housing Act 1996 for local housing authorities in England to ensure that suitable accommodation is available for people who are homeless through no fault of their own, if they are eligible for assistance and fall within a priority need group. (Priority need groups are as defined in section 189 of the 1996 Act and, additionally, in the Homelessness (Priority Need for Accommodation) (England) Order 2002.)

A duty under part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 for local housing authorities to ensure, in allocating settled social housing, that 'reasonable preference' for an allocation goes to certain categories of people (including those who are homeless and those who need to move on medical or welfare grounds) who might be considered vulnerable.

A duty under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000 23(B) (8) *(b)* to promote the welfare of care leavers, aged 16–18, and to support them by providing them with or maintaining them in suitable accommodation. Local authorities have continuing responsibilities to support care leavers aged 18–21 which may also require them to offer support to enable this group to access suitable accommodation.

A duty under section 20 (3) of the Children Act 1989 to accommodate any child in need aged 16 and 17 whose welfare is likely to be seriously prejudiced without the provision of accommodation. A child accommodated under this section, will become looked-after by the local authority.

Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 also includes the power for the children's services function of local authorities to provide accommodation for families and children. The power to provide accommodation under this section will almost always concern children needing to be accommodated with their families.

However, there may be cases where a lone child who needs help with accommodation, but who does not need to become a looked-after child, might appropriately be assisted under section 17. In these cases, the decision about whether or not a child should be accommodated by the local authority and the related decision as to whether he/she should become looked-after will be determined by the local authority's assessment of the child's needs in accordance with the statutory guidance set out in "The framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families" published by the Government in April 2000.

A power, and so far as directed by the Secretary of State for Health a duty, under sections 21 and 29 of the National Assistance Act 1948, for local authority social services to provide residential accommodation and certain other welfare services for people who are 'ordinarily resident' in the authority's area and who are in need of residential care. This includes a person with no settled residence or ordinarily resident elsewhere who is in urgent need of residential care.

In single tier arrangements, these duties will fall to parts of the same local authority. In two-tier arrangements, the housing duties will fall to the lower tier authority and the social services duties will fall to the upper tier authority.

While not a duty, upper tier authorities also provide housing-related support services for vulnerable adults through the Supporting People programme. These services are intended to support and assist people to maintain or move towards living independently.

James Duddridge: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to reduce the waiting lists for council housing in *(a)* Southend-on-Sea, *(b)* Essex and *(c)* England. [33774]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 1 December 2005]:* In England in 2004–05, over 28,000 homes were provided for rent or low cost home ownership through the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme. Of these, 544 were completed in Essex, of which 40 were completed in Southend-on-Sea Unitary Authority.

Sustainable Communities: Homes for All sets out the Government's plans to deliver more affordable housing over the next five years from 2005–06. Measures include the delivery of 75,000 social rented homes by 2008.

For 2006–07 and 2007–08 Regional Housing Boards have made recommendations to Ministers for the allocation of Regional Housing Pots funds. The Eastern Regional Housing Board has recommended that from their allocation of £432 million for the two years a total of £356 million should be allocated to the provision of affordable housing. However, the exact distribution of funding between programmes for 2006–08 will not be known until the completion of the Housing Corporation's Affordable Housing Programme bidding process in early 2006.

We are also making available £1.6 million this year to assist in the development of 15 sub-regionally based CBL schemes. The funding will support the development of the Herts and Essex Housing Options Consortium which will include Brentwood BC, Chelmsford BC, Epping Forest DC and Uttlesford DC.

Mr. Rooney: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to encourage local authorities to adopt innovative solutions to address household overcrowding in their area. [35291]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* The Government have doubled their investment in social housing from 1997 levels and the Housing Corporation has taken steps to encourage investment in larger homes through its National Affordable Housing programme. Against that background, it is for local authorities to develop housing strategies that give due weight to the needs of overcrowded households alongside the other housing needs in their area.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much his Department has allocated for social housing in each constituency in Essex in each of the past 10 years. [34312]

Yvette Cooper: Information is not readily available for all of the funding allocations until 1999. A total of £626 million has been allocated for social housing in Essex from 1999 to 2005–06. This includes allocations for new build, improvements to existing stock and disabled facilities grants.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the number of uninhabited homes in *(a)* England, *(b)* the North East, *(c)* the Tees Valley and *(d)* Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland. [32453]

Yvette Cooper: The estimated number of vacant dwellings in *(a)* England, *(b)* the Government Office for the North East region, *(c)* the Tees Valley and *(d)* Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland are tabled as follows:

	Number
Total England	710,935
The Government Office for the North East	45,732
Tees Valley (comprising Darlington, Hartlepool, Middlesbrough, Redcar & Cleveland and Stockton-on-Tees unitary authorities)	10,962
Middlesbrough and Redcar & Cleveland unitary authorities which encompass the Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency	5,058

The data are as at November 2004, the latest date for which estimates are available and were reported on CTB1 & CTB1S forms submitted by billing authorities to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister each year. The figure includes both long and short-term empty properties.

The Government are introducing new powers from April 2006 for local authorities to reduce the number of long-term empty homes in their area.

Local Government Funding

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the net debt or reserves/surplus was for each local authority in England, including police and fire authorities, in *(a)* 1997–98 and *(b)* the latest year for which figures are available. [29724]

Mr. Woolas: Tables have been made available in the Library of the House showing levels of revenue reserves at 1 April 1997 and 1 April 2004 for each local authority in England.

Comparisons across years may not be valid due to changing local authority responsibilities.

Mobile Telephone Masts

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many new mobile telephone masts have been erected under permitted development rights in each year since 1997 in *(a)* Gravesham and *(b)* Kent. [33636]

Yvette Cooper: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1066W to my hon. Friend, the Member for Coventry, South (Mr. Cunningham).

Planning

Mr. Fallon: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to publish proposals to amend the law on planning and Travellers. [34111]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expects to publish the new Planning Circular for Gypsies and Travellers, to replace DOE Circular 1/94 "Gypsy Sites and Planning", early in the new year.

Private Landlords

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the implications for his policy on housing of private landlords requiring a guarantor prior to agreeing a new tenancy; and whether he attributes this practice directly to the policy of paying housing benefit to tenants rather than directly to landlords. [33780]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not made any detailed assessment of the implications for housing policy of the practice of some private landlords to seek a financial guarantor prior to agreeing a new tenancy. My understanding is that they would do so for tenants whose financial circumstances are unclear, for example—students as well as housing benefit claimants.

The direct payment of housing benefit to tenants may have some impact. However, as we made clear earlier this year in 'Sustainable Communities: Homes for All', we are keen to improve access to the private rented sector for households who might otherwise face homelessness, through local authority schemes that provide rent deposits or the guarantees that private landlords seek, or which offer approved lettings with accredited landlords.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will conduct a survey of the number of local authorities reporting that private landlords require a guarantor before agreeing to a tenancy. [33781]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* Information from landlords or tenants on landlords seeking financial guarantors of tenants is not currently collected in the routine statistical surveys of housing. Local authorities are unlikely to offer a consistent view of this matter as it concerns the contractual relationship between landlord and tenant.

However we will consider the case for collecting such information, along with other proposals for new research, as part of the development of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's analytical programme 2006–07. As reflected in the licensing provisions of the Housing Act 2004, we are keen that private landlords should seek references to provide some guarantees that their prospective tenants will not behave in an anti-social way.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* legislative and *(b)* other measures are in place to prevent private landlords discriminating against letting to tenants in receipt of housing benefit; and if he will make a statement. [34579]

Yvette Cooper: Anti-discrimination legislation does not extend to the practice of refusing to let to benefit claimants and it would be impracticable to do so. However landlords often refuse to let to tenants on housing benefit because of the historical delays by local authorities in administering it. In 2002 the Government implemented a comprehensive strategy to improve delivery and now the average time taken to process new claims has been cut by over two weeks, with the greatest improvements seen in the poorest performing local authorities.

We are keen to encourage greater use of the private rented sector for those in housing need and we have been exploring with local authorities good practice in this field. Access to the private rented sector can be improved for households who might otherwise face homelessness through local authority schemes that provide rent deposits or the rent guarantees that private landlords seek, or which offer approved lettings with accredited landlords as part of an expansion of arrangements for choice-based lettings.

Public Transport (Northamptonshire)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the evidential basis is for the assessment of the effectiveness of the anticipated modal shift to public transport in North Northamptonshire as outlined in the Milton Keynes and South Midlands sub-regional spatial strategy. [34093]

Yvette Cooper: One of the objectives of the Milton Keynes and South Midlands sub-regional spatial strategy is to create a shift to more sustainable modes of travel such as public transport. The strategy itself does not assess the detail of the modal shift.

Right to Buy

Mr. Rooney: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many council homes in Bradford were sold under the Right to Buy scheme in each year since 1980. [35288]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* The numbers of council properties sold under the right-to-buy scheme by Bradford local authority in each financial year since 1979–80 as reported by Bradford are tabled as follows. There are no council sales after 2002–03 due to a large scale voluntary transfer.

Bradford: right to buy sales.

Financial year	*RTB sales*
1979–80	0
1980–81	1
1981–82	453
1982–83	624
1983–84	399
1984–85	250
1985–86	387
1986–87	310
1987–88	0
1988–89	351
1989–90	1,545
1990–91	1,151
1991–92	419
1992–93	288
1993–94	206
1994–95	218
1995–96	147
1996–97	126
1997–98	169
1998–99	151
1999–2000	231
2000–01	225
2001–02	311
2002–03	362

Source:
Quarterly returns (P1B) to ODPM from local authorities.

Mr. Rooney: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what amount of capital receipts has been generated from right to buy sales in Bradford in each year since 1980. [35290]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* The total capital receipts from right-to-buy sales of local authority dwellings in Bradford in the years from 1996–97 onwards are tabulated as follows. Information for years prior to 1996–97 is not centrally available. These figures are net of discounts and are as reported by the local authority. There was a large scale voluntary transfer in 2002–03.

Bradford

	Current prices (£ million)
1996–97	2.2
1997–98	2.9
1998–99	2.6
1999–2000	4.0
2000–01	4.1
2001–02	5.7
2002–03	6.8

Source:
Quarterly P1(A/B) return received from local authorities

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 8 December 2005

WALES

Departmental/Ministerial Travel

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what expenditure was incurred by the Wales Office for *(a)* air and *(b)* rail travel in each year since 2003–04. [32361]

Mr. Hain: The total travel cost incurred by the Wales Office for the following years were:

Means of travel	£
(a) air travel	
2003–04	321
2004–05	18,344
(b) rail travel	
2003–04	111,808
2004–05	94,533

Figures for financial year 2005–06 will be available in April 2006.

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales on how many occasions since 7 July 2005 he has used the London Underground in connection with his official duties. [35332]

Mr. Hain: On three occasions.

Government of Wales Act (Convictions)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females have been (i) charged with and (ii) convicted of offences under section (A) 72, (B) 75 and (C) 145C of the Government of Wales Act 1998 in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [33804]

Mr. Hain: None.

Race Equality Impact Assessments

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many race equality impact assessments his Department completed between *(a)* April 2004 and March 2005 and *(b)* April 2005 and November 2005; and how many assessments in each period resulted in a change of policy. [32827]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office completed two race equality impact assessments between April 2004 and March 2005 as part of the regulatory impact assessments for the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Bill and the Transport (Wales) Bill. Between April 2005 and November 2005, one was completed as part of the Regulatory Impact Assessment for the Commissioner for Older People (Wales) Bill. No changes were made as a result of conducting these assessments.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Avian Influenza

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what guidance her Department has given to poultry workers and those working with live birds on the actions they should take in the event of their suffering from influenza-like symptoms. [30745]

Caroline Flint: I have been asked to reply.

The extant general advice to poultry workers is that if they think that they have contracted an infection from an animal they should contact their doctor quickly and inform them that they work in agriculture. In the absence of avian influenza in the United Kingdom, poultry workers and others, having contact with live birds, need to follow only normal good practice in dealing with flu-like symptoms.

Both the Health and Safety Executive and the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs have published guidance on their websites.

Biodiversity Ministerial Group

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs who the members are of the Inter-departmental Ministerial Group on biodiversity; how often it meets; and whether the minutes of its meetings are published. [35049]

Jim Knight: The members of the Inter-departmental Ministerial Group on biodiversity are the Minister of State for Trade, Investment and Foreign Affairs at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the Under-Secretary of State at the Department for International Development, the Under-Secretary of State with responsibility for Rural Affairs, Landscape and Biodiversity at Defra, and the Chairman of the Joint Nature Conservation Committee.

The group has met twice to date, and a third meeting is planned for February 2006. Thereafter the group intends to meet at intervals of between six and nine months.

The minutes of the meetings are not published.

Bushmeat Trade

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) what proposals the Inter-departmental Ministerial Group on biodiversity has made to date to combat the international trade in bushmeat; [35003]

(2) if the Inter-departmental Ministerial Group on biodiversity will open up discussions on the international trade in bushmeat to external stakeholders and other interested parties; [35005]

(3) what progress has been made by the Inter-departmental Ministerial Group on biodiversity in developing the Government's policy on the international trade in bushmeat from Africa. [35038]

Jim Knight: In response to a request from the Inter-departmental Ministerial Group on biodiversity, the Department has recently let a research contract to the Overseas Development Institute.

The research will comprise a desk study which will draw on previous and current research and other relevant literature, particularly focusing on literature published in the past five years. The results will inform policy discussions at the Inter-departmental Ministers Group on biodiversity, by addressing the key questions;

1. Is the bushmeat trade a primary threat to endangered species?

2. From the published literature are the major concerns about bushmeat generic or mainly about endangered charismatic species such as great apes?

3. What action is already in hand by the Government, and to what extent does this fulfil the need to develop and implement specific actions?

4. Is current action by the Government effective and are there further interventions which would be more effective?

5. How do the Governments duties with regard to endangered species/international biodiversity relate to bushmeat? The research will include an assessment of the Governments obligations to the multilateral environmental agreements to which the UK is signed up to, as well as domestic controls that are in place.

6. What is the relative importance of the bushmeat issue in relation to global biodiversity loss; and efforts to conserve and sustainably use biodiversity?

7. What is the degree of aggregate dependence for poor people on bushmeat nationally in key bushmeat producing countries in west and central Africa?

8. What impact would the declining supply of bushmeat have on poor people in these countries?

9. Consideration of the evidence for an association between the levels of bushmeat trade in the sub-region and extra-sectoral influences, such as the EU common fisheries policy, and the policy issues arising.

10. Whether the Governments focus in this regard should remain on western and central Africa or should this be broader to address bushmeat issues in the rest of Africa, and /or other parts of the world?

The recommendations to the group will help to inform Government policy in this area. The specification for this project can be viewed at www.defra.gov.uk/science/funding/historical.htm.

At this stage it would be premature to invite external stakeholders, and other interested parties, to discuss the matter before this work has concluded. The research is due to conclude in the summer of next year.

Departmental Estate

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which buildings and sites used by her Department and related agencies *(a)* have ceased to be used in the last year and *(b)* will be closed under current plans for relocation. [31764]

Jim Knight: The Sir Michael Lyons initiative is part of Defra's overall estate strategy that will contribute to the freeing up of space in London and the south east and the subsequent "release" of our occupations. Planned relocation is currently unlikely to lead directly to closures.

The following table lists those occupations nationwide that Defra and its agencies has ceased to use in the last year due mainly to estate rationalisation.

Property	*Date ceased to be used*
Market Towers, Nine Elms Lane, Vauxhall	28 May 2004
10 Queen Street, Ripon	23 June 2004
Springfield House, Chapel Brow, Leyland	29 June 2004
Oxford Spires Business Park, Kidlington	8 July 2004
132 Warkworth Woods, Gosforth	24 December 2004
19-29 Woburn Place, London	31 January 2005
Westmoreland Lane Farm, Crooklands, Milnethorpe	22 March 2005
2nd Floor Princes House, Queen Street, Barnstaple	25 March 2005
10 Whitehall Place, London	30 March 2005

Farming Guidelines

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what guidelines for working in co-operation with local farming interests her Department follows; and if she will make a statement. [34567]

Jim Knight: There are no specific guidelines for working with local farming interests, however under the Sustainable Farming and Food Strategy we have set up regional steering groups to oversee delivery of regional farming and food action plans. These groups consist of regional and local farming and food sector representatives, alongside other stakeholders from the health and environment sectors. The groups were brought together by Government offices and regional development agencies to decide initially upon the priorities within these plans, and then subsequently to oversee delivery.

Forestry Commission

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department has taken to ensure the Forestry Commission works closely with local farmers. [34566]

Jim Knight: The Forestry Commission has always worked closely with farmers and other landowners as it carries out its functions and duties under the Forestry Act 1991 and other legislation. These include the provision of advice and incentives for woodland management and creation as well as regulation of tree felling. DEFRA's Rural Strategy published in 2004 is leading to delivery reforms, including the creation of Natural England with which the Forestry Commission will be aligned. This will help to deliver services to farmers and the rural community in a more streamlined customer-focused way.

The English Woodland Grant Scheme (EWGS), introduced earlier this year is simplifying arrangements for farmers who seek financial support for creating new woodlands by bringing together in a single scheme contribution to cost grants and income forgone payments.

The introduction of woodland options under the Environmental Stewardship scheme has provided new opportunities for farmers. In order to help farmers understand the woodland support options available to them, the Commission and DEFRA have produced guidance for farmers, entitled Funding for Farm Woodlands in England. The Commission has also been working closely with the Rural Development Service through joint Environmental Stewardship staff training events.

The Commission is also a major land manager, which gives it a unique insight and understanding of countryside management and the needs of its neighbours, many of who are farmers.

Housing Development

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the quantity of carbon dioxide emissions which would be saved in a year if the National Code for Sustainable Buildings was extended to all new housing developments in England. [33303]

Yvette Cooper: I have been asked to reply.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is consulting on a proposed new Code. The consultation document includes the customary regulatory impact assessment.

Land Use

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment her Department has made of the impact on the environment of turning high grade agricultural land into low grade park and scrub land. [34565]

Jim Knight: Land use inevitably evolves in response to a range of factors and has the potential for both positive and negative environmental impacts. The nature and speed of ongoing change may vary following the introduction this year of the decoupled CAP single payment scheme. Besides existing surveys and monitoring, we are spending over £1 million over the next three years on a new Agricultural Change and Environmental Observatory programme, to monitor and where possible anticipate such changes. The Observatory programme is being developed by DEFRA and key stakeholders including English Nature, the Countryside Agency and the Environment Agency.

TREASURY

Tax Credit System

10. **Mr. Vara:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the recent performance of the tax credit system. [35541]

Dawn Primarolo: Child tax credit is benefiting 6 million families, with 1½ million poor children already lifted out of poverty.

Building on work to improve the administration of tax credits, which I reported at the hearing of the Treasury Sub-Committee on 26 October, the Chancellor announced in his pre-Budget report a package of further improvements that reflect our experience of the first years of operating the tax credits system. These measures will provide greater certainty for claimants, while maintaining flexibility to respond to falls in income and changes in families' circumstances.

UK Economy

13. **Stephen Hammond:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the principal factors affecting the estimated level of growth in the UK economy. [35544]

Mr. Des Browne: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Daventry (Mr. Boswell) in the Chamber earlier today, *Official Report*, column 986.

19. **Damian Green:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the principal factors affecting the estimated level of growth in the UK economy. [35550]

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the principal factors affecting the estimated level of growth in the UK economy. [35441]

John Healey: Pre-Budget report 2005 (Cm 6701), published on 5 December 2005, provided a comprehensive account of recent economic developments and fully set out the Government's assessment of growth prospects for the UK economy.

Biofuels

14. **Paddy Tipping:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the rate of duty on *(a)* biodiesel and *(b)* bioethanol. [35545]

John Healey: Both biodiesel and bioethanol attract a favourable duty differential of 20 pence per litre less than that for the main road fuels. We have guaranteed that this differential will continue until at least 2007–08.

Government support for biofuels has led to the amounts of biofuels being released for consumption in the UK increasing 10-fold since the same period last year.

Child Poverty

15. **Chris Bryant:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent estimate he has made of the number of children living in poverty in the UK. [35546]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government's policy is that every child should have the opportunity to fulfil its potential. That is why we have set a target to eradicate child poverty by 2020, and intermediate targets to reduce it by a quarter and a half.

We are broadly on track to meet our first target, and the latest figures show that we have already lifted more than half a million children out of relative low-income poverty since 1998–99, from 3.1 to 2.6 million by 2003–04.

Pensions Commission

17. **Jo Swinson:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the public expenditure implications are of the proposals in the Pensions Commission's second report; and if he will make a statement. [35548]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The most reasonable starting point for estimating the costs of the Pensions Commission's proposals is that implied by existing Government commitments and known demographic trends. Using this starting point, the Commission's own published estimates show that their core state pension package begins to add cost in 2010, reaching a total of £14 billion by 2020 in real terms.

EU Budget (Rebate)

20. **Michael Gove:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the future of the UK rebate within the EU budget. [35551]

21. **Mr. Hands:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the future of the UK rebate within the EU budget. [35552]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I refer the hon. Gentlemen to the written ministerial statement given by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary to the House on 5 December, *Official Report*, column 65WS.

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total cumulative value of the UK's rebate from the EU budget has been since 1984. [35553]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: From 1985–86, when the abatement came into effect, to the end of 2004–05, the value totalled £44.2 billion.

Work Force Skills

22. **Chris Mole:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the relationship between the level of skills in the work force and economic growth. [35554]

John Healey: Skills are vital to the stability and growth of the economy. Increases in an economy's trend rate of growth depend on how many people are in employment and how productive they are. Skills are one of the drivers of productivity.

That is why the Government have more than doubled overall investment in education and training since 1997.

It is also why the Chancellor commissioned the Leitch Review of Skills, this independent review of the UK's skills needs, which published its interim report on Monday, set out the extent of current evidence on the relationship between work force skills and employment.

Job Creation

23. **Mr. Donohoe:** To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many new jobs have been created since 1997. [35555]

John Healey: Since 1997, there are 2.2 million more jobs in the UK. Over the last eight years, job numbers have grown by 330,000 a year; an average growth rate of 1 per cent. and, the number of jobs in the UK is now at a record high.

Air Passenger Duty

John Hemming: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the value of air passenger duty has been in each year since 1997 *(a)* in real terms, allowing for inflation and compared to the increase in gross domestic product, and *(b)* expressed as average amount per UK passenger. [35239]

John Healey: Reliable estimates of the value of each of the four APD rates for each scenario requested from 1997 are not available due to the restructuring of APD in 2001. However, estimates since 2001 are shown in the following table.

Real terms APD (£)

	EEA—Reduced rate	*EEA—Standard rate*	*Non-EEA—Reduced rate*	*Non-EEA—Standard rate*	*Average per passenger*
2001	5.00	10.00	20.00	40.00	10.12
2002	4.92	9.84	19.68	39.36	9.70
2003	4.78	9.55	19.11	38.22	8.38
2004	4.64	9.28	18.56	37.11	8.24

APD (£) if raised with money GDP

	EEA—Reduced Rate	*EEA—Standard rate*	*Non-EEA—Reduced rate*	*Non-EEA—Standard rate*	*Average per passenger*
2001	5.00	10.00	20.00	40.00	10.12
2002	4.82	9.64	19.28	38.56	9.50
2003	4.56	9.12	18.24	36.47	8.00
2004	4.28	8.56	17.13	34.26	7.61

Information on the rates of air passenger duty is available at the UK Trade Info website at: www.uktradeinfo.com/index.cfm?task=statindex

John Hemming: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of *(a)* the increase in air passenger duty which would be required to maintain air fares at a constant level in real terms up to 2010 and *(b)* what increase in price this would contribute to average air fares. [35241]

John Healey: No estimate has been made of what APD would be necessary to maintain air fares constant in real terms until 2010. Likewise no estimate has been made into what proportion this would contribute to average air fares.

Information on the rates of air passenger duty is available at the UK Trade Info website at: www.uktradeinfo.com/index.cfm?task=statindex

Companies Act Regulations

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether he has drafted new regulations to replace the Companies Act 1985 (Operating and Financial Review and Directors' Report etc.) Regulations 2005; [35007]

(2) if he will list the regulations which implement the operating and financial review for UK listed companies; [35010]

(3) what new regulations he plans to issue on company reporting consequent on his planned abolition of the operating and financial review. [35011]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Department of Trade and Industry is drafting regulations to amend the relevant sections of the Companies Act 1985, as originally amended by the Companies Act 1985 (Operating and Financial Review and Directors' Report etc.) Regulations 2005 (SI 2005/1011). These will remove the statutory requirement for an OFR, leaving in place a requirement for all companies to prepare an enhanced business review in their directors' reports. The new regulations will reinforce the Government's commitment to improving strategic, forward-looking narrative reporting.

Comprehensive Spending Review

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the Barnett formula will apply to the outcome of the 2007 comprehensive spending review; and if he will make a statement. [33777]

John Healey: The funding arrangements for the devolved Administrations are set out in the Statement of Funding Policy published in July 2004. The Government have no plans to replace the Barnett formula.

Construction Projects (Bank Accounts)

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his policy is on introducing a requirement for all public sector contractors to establish project bank accounts for all construction projects coming on-stream; and if he will make a statement. [35479]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Government support fair payment practice within the construction industry. Clients within Government Departments must consider the most suitable approach to use on a case-by-case basis from the range of options open to them—including making use of project bank accounts.

It is important that clients are able to judge each case on its merits, as it is not at present considered appropriate to adopt a one-size-fits-all approach to the use of project bank accounts, or for that matter any other single payment mechanism, for all construction procurement activity.

Debt

Ed Balls: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many households in *(a)* West Yorkshire, *(b)* Wakefield district and *(c)* Normanton constituency have a level of debt above (i) £10,000, (ii) £20,000, (iii) £50,000 and (iv) £100,000; [35407]

(2) how many women in *(a)* West Yorkshire, *(b)* Wakefield district and *(c)* Normanton constituency have debts of over £10,000; and how many of these are under 30-years-old. [35408]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the national statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 8 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Questions on the number of households and the number of women in West Yorkshire, Wakefield district and Normanton constituency that were more than £10,000 in debt (35407, 35408).

The information requested is not available.

The only information available is national data on debt per person or per household. At the end of 2004 debt per person nationally was £25,135; and debt per household was £48,185.

Golden Rule

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he is taking to commission independent assessments of the golden rule. [35442]

Mr. Des Browne: Progress against the golden rule is measured by the average annual surplus on the current budget as a percentage of GDP over the economic cycle.

Based on cautious audited assumptions underpinning the public finance forecast the PBR 2005 shows that the Government is meeting the golden rule in the current economic cycle.

HMRC (Investigations)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what measures he is taking to speed up the response of HM Revenue and Customs to investigations by the parliamentary ombudsman. [35517]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs generally respond to inquiries from the parliamentary ombudsman promptly within the time limit set by her office, usually three weeks. Where there are difficulties in meeting the time limit, it is normal practice that arrangements are made with the ombudsman's office to agree an extension.

Income Growth

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average percentage increase was in net income in the UK over the past three years; and what the rate of inflation was over the same period. [34678]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 7 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking *(a)* what the average percentage increase was in net income in the UK over the past three years and *(b)* what the rate of inflation was over the same period, (34678)

(a) It has been assumed that the question relates to gross disposable income of the household sector. The latest information available for gross disposable income is for the second quarter of 20057 (2005Q2). The growth in this series over the three years to 2005Q2 was 12.4%; equivalent to an average of 4.0% per annum.

The series quoted is gross disposable income for the combined household and non-profit institutions, serving-households (NPISH) sectors. The accounts for the household and NPISH sectors are currently combined; separate estimates are not available.

(b) In the UK, there are two main measures of inflation, the Consumer Prices Index (GPI) and the Retail Prices Index (RPI). The Government's inflation target is based on the CPI. The Bank

of England's Monetary Policy Committee sets interest rates to meet this target. The RPI is the more familiar measure of inflation. Tax allowances, state benefits, pensions and many other payments are often revised in line with this index.

The figures are published each month on the National Statistics website, www.statistics.gov.uk, in a First Release, on a Tuesday about a month, after the index date. The publication dates are announced six months in advance.

The most recently available three-year period is for October 2002—October 2005. During this period, the CPI increased by 5.0 percent while the RPI increased by 6.9 percent.

The figures for the last three years are shown in full in Annex A. Figures are presented for both the CPI and the RPI. Monthly figures and the most recently available annual averages for the last three years are presented.

Annex A. CPI and RPI indices and inflation rates: the latest three years

	CPI		*RPI*	
	Index over 1996 = 100	*Percentage change over 12 months*	*Index January 1987 = 100*	*Percentage change over 12 months*
2002				
October	108.9	1.4	177.9	2.1
November	108.9	1.6	178.2	2.6
December	109.3	1.7	178.5	2.9
2003				
January	108.6	1.4	178.4	2.9
February	109.0	1.6	179.3	3.2
March	109.4	1.6	179.9	3.1
April	109.7	1.5	181.2	3.1
May	109.7	1.2	181.5	3.0
June	109.6	1.1	181.3	2.9
July	109.5	1.3	181.3	3.1
August	109.9	1.4	181.6	2.9
September	110.2	1.4	182.5	2.8
October	110.4	1.4	182.6	2.6
November	110.3	1.3	182.7	2.5
December	110.7	1.3	183.5	2.8
2004				
January	110.1	1.4	183.1	2.6
February	110.4	1.3	183.8	2.5
March	110.6	1.1	184.6	2.6
April	111.0	1.2	185.7	2.5
May	111.4	1.5	186.5	2.8
June	111.3	1.6	186.8	3.0
July	111.0	1.4	186.8	3.0
August	111.3	1.3	187.4	3.2
September	111.4	1.1	188.1	3.1
October	111.7	1.2	188.6	3.3
November	111.9	1.5	189.6	3.4
December	112.5	1.6	189.9	3.5
2005				
January	111.9	1.6	188.9	3.2
February	112.2	1.6	189.6	3.2
March	112.7	1.9	190.5	3.2
April	113.1	1.9	191.6	3.2
May	113.5	1.9	192.0	2.9
June	113.5	2.0	192.2	2.9
July	113.6	2.3	192.2	2.9
August	114.0	2.4	192.6	2.8
September	114.2	2.5	193.1	2.7
October	114.3	2.3	193.3	2.5
2002	108.3	1.3	176.2	1.7
2003	109.8	1.4	181.3	2.9
2004	111.2	1.3	186.7	3.0

Source:
National Statistics Consumer price indices First Release, 15 November 2005

Interim Death Certificates

Mrs. Betty Williams: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what guidance his Department has given to financial institutions on the acceptability of interim death certificates in permitting access by next-of-kin to funds held in the name of the deceased. [34956]

Dawn Primarolo: No guidance has been given to financial institutions by the Treasury on the acceptability of interim death certificates in permitting access by next-of-kin to funds held in the name of the deceased.

Low-income Families

John Battle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will encourage the use of credit unions among families on low incomes; and if he will make a statement. [35129]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Government welcome the role credit unions play in promoting financial inclusion and recognises their contribution to choice and diversity in the financial services sector.

Measures announced at this PBR will facilitate an expansion in the use of credit unions among individuals and families on low incomes. In particular, the maximum rate that credit unions can charge on loans will be increased from 1 per cent. a month to 2 per cent. a month.

The new rate will allow credit unions to develop a more risk-based approach to lending, enabling them to offer affordable credit to more people on low incomes who currently rely on high rate lenders.

The Government have also announced changes that will enable credit unions to offer cash ISAs to their members. This follows changes announced at Budget 2005 to allow credit unions to offer child trust fund accounts. These measures complement a £36 million growth fund for credit unions and other community-based lenders, announced at PBR 2004, and to be administered by the Department for Work and Pensions from mid-2006.

Ministerial Travel

Bob Russell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on how many occasions since 7 July he has used the London underground in connection with his official duties. [35017]

John Healey: The Chancellor regularly uses public transport in connection with his official duties. It would be inappropriate to disclose details on security grounds.

Older Workers

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women aged 50 to 65 years are available for work; and how many are employed (i) full-time and (ii) part-time. [34965]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 8 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about people aged 50–65 and their economic activity.

The attached table provides available information showing the number of people aged 50–64 who are in employment and working full or part time, also those who are unemployed. The table covers the twelve month period ending in August 2005.

These estimates from the Labour Force Survey are, as with any sample survey, subject to sampling variability.

People aged 50–64 who are in employment working full or part time and those who are unemployed, United Kingdom, 12 month period ending August 2005

Thousand

	Total population aged 50–64	*Total active population*	*In employment*			*Unemployed*[1]
			Total[2]	*Of which: Full-time*	*Of which: Part-time*	*Total*
All persons	10,604	7,035	6,838	4,938	1,896	198
Male	5,217	3,906	3,775	3,336	437	131
Female	5,387	3,129	3,063	1,602	1,459	67

[1] For seeking work and available to start, those people unemployed have been given.
[2] Includes people who did not state whether working full or part time.
Source:
ONS—Labour Force Survey

Operating and Financial Review

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what assessment his Department has made of the effect on company stakeholders of the non-implementation of the Operating and Financial Review; and if he will make a statement; [34839]

(2) what assessment his Department has made of the cost to businesses in preparing for the implementation of the Operating and Financial Review; and if he will make a statement; [34840]

(3) what the reasons were for his decision to abandon the Operating and Financial Review; [34772]

(4) what estimate he has made of the cost to British companies of preparing to meet the requirements of the Operating and Financial Review; and if he will make a statement; [34773]

(5) what assessment he has made of the implications of his announcement of the removal of the obligation to publish operating and financial reviews for the Government's policy on company law reform; and if he will make a statement. [35009]

John Healey: The Government assessed the costs of implementing a statutory Operating and Financial Review against those of implementing an enhanced Business Review in a Regulatory Impact Assessment, which was published alongside the DTI's formal response to consultation. It was estimated that a statutory Operating and Financial Review would cost business £33 million per annum more than the Business Review. Most of these additional costs related to the different audit requirements applying to the OFR compared to the Business Review.

Consistent with its approach to company law reform of simplifying company law, reducing the regulatory burden on business and promoting effective shareholder engagement, the Government have concluded that a requirement for an enhanced Business Review, in line with the requirements of the European Accounts Modernisation Directive, is preferable to a requirement for a statutory Operating and Financial Review for quoted companies. The enhanced Business Review will meet key narrative reporting requirements, while imposing considerably less cost than the Operating and Financial Review. The new reporting regime demonstrates the Government's ongoing commitment to strategic forward looking narrative reporting.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what consultation he undertook with stakeholders before revoking the regulations covering the implementation of the Operating and Financial Review for FTSE listed companies; and if he will make a statement: [34841]

(2) what discussions he had with *(a)* the Confederation of British Industry, *(b)* the Department for Trade and Industry, *(c)* the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, *(d)* the Association of British Insurers and *(e)* the Sustainable Development Commission prior to his decision to abandon the Operating and Financial Review; and if he will make a statement; [34774]

(3) if he will list the organisations consulted on his decision to remove the obligation on businesses to publish operating and financial reviews; [35008]

(4) whether he consulted the *(a)* Operating and Financial Review Working Group and *(b)* Financial Reporting Council before his decision to remove the obligation on companies to publish an operating and financial review. [35012]

John Healey *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* In line with the Government's commitment to simplifying company law and reducing the regulatory burden on business, the Government have decided to replace the requirement for quoted companies to produce a statutory Operating and Financial Review with a requirement to produce an enhanced Business Review. This aligns the reporting requirements of quoted companies with the requirements of the European Accounts Modernisation Directive and demonstrates the government's ongoing commitment to strategic forward-looking narrative reporting.

In considering the issues around removing the statutory OFR, the Government reviewed responses to the extensive consultation on the introduction of the OFR published by the DTI in December 2004.

Private Members' Bills

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, if he will list those Private Members' Bills introduced under *(a)* Standing Order No. 14(6), *(b)* Standing Order No. 23 and *(c)* Standing Order No. 57 which were (i) supported and (ii) opposed by his Department in each session since 1997–98. [36059]

John Healey: The information requested is not available.

R64–8 Forms

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many R64–8 forms have been *(a)* received and *(b)* processed successfully each month since May 2004; what target has been set for the speed of processing of form R64–8 in the central processing facility; what assessment he has made of the risk of a backlog of unprocessed R64–8 forms at 31 January 2006; how many centrally employed Inland Revenue staff are involved in processing R64–8 forms; what representations he has received regarding the decision to process R64–8 forms centrally rather than at local HM Revenue and Customs offices; what the average processing time was from receipt to completion for R64–8 forms received (i) prior to and (ii) since the centralising of processing; and if he will take steps to ensure that taxpayers are not penalised where an R64–8 form has been submitted but remains unprocessed at the last date for filing tax returns. [35183]

Dawn Primarolo: Prior to April 2005 this work was dealt with across the IR office network. To improve customer service, by ensuring consistency in treatment, the centralisation of this work began in April 2005. Statistics are only available from when the work was centralised in April 2005.

	64–8s received	*64–8s processed*
April 2005	136,845	51,800
May 2005	86,155	54,178
June 2005	88,301	70,407
July 2005	85,588	187,388
August 2005	104,289	125,195
September 2005	91,818	80,680
October 2005	96,665	96,864
November 2005	112,182	111,830

This work is subject to a turnaround target for correspondence of 15 working days. The current average turnaround time for processing the clerical forms 64–8 on all the relevant systems within NICO is 10 days and eight days for recording the 64–8 on the self assessment system.

Plans are in place to ensure that every effort is made to have no self assessment related forms on hand at 31 January 2006. We have introduced an online authorisation service which allows agents to set up client authorisations without the need to submit paper 64–8s.

At 2 December there were 129 full time equivalent staff working on processing 64–8 forms.

We anticipate processing more than 1 million 64–8 forms this financial year, 251 representations have been received about the process. Of those 57 per cent. have mentioned delays in the process. Only a very small proportion has specifically mentioned concerns about the centralisation of the process.

As mentioned above, the current average turnaround time for processing the clerical forms 64–8 on all the relevant systems within NICO is 10 days and eight days for recording on the self assessment system.

The online agent authorisation service is currently available. Existing guidance on HMRC's website or the leaflet COP1 gives taxpayers information on how to appeal against any penalties imposed by HMRC.

Research and Development (Tax Relief)

Kitty Ussher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the impact of research and development tax reliefs and tax credits on companies' propensity to spend money on research and development. [35495]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for Twickenham (Dr. Cable) on 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 95W on R and D tax credits. The results from the survey of R and D companies referred to in that reply were published on the HM Revenue and Customs website on 2 December 2005 at www.hmrc.gov.uk/research/ The survey shows that the R and D tax credit has already had a positive impact since its introduction; half of those with a successful claim said that R and D tax credits had had some impact on either their R and D spend or R and D projects.

The survey results form the first part of the long-term evaluation of R and D tax credits. The Government remain committed to ongoing evaluation of the R and D tax credit and will continue to appraise its overall impact as further evaluation results build up over time.

Kitty Ussher: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* small and medium-sized and *(b)* other companies have chosen (i) to offset research and development tax relief against current or future tax and (ii) to receive research and development tax credit as a cash sum in each year for which figures are available; what the total (A) turnover and (B) number of employees is of those companies in each case; and what the total value is of the tax (1) relief and (2) credit in each case. [35496]

John Healey: Data for small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) is published on the HM Revenue and Customs website at www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/corporate_tax/randdtcmenu. The data shows the number and value of claims for research and development (R and D) tax reliefs. The value of support claimed is classified as either reductions in corporation tax revenue from setting off R and D tax reliefs against profits, payable credits or a combination of both. The total turnover of companies claiming R and D tax reliefs under the SME scheme is shown in the following table.

R and D tax relief: total turnover of all claimants under the SME scheme

	£ million
2000–01	2,620
2001–02	6,630
2002–03	10,710
2003–04	14,100
2004–05	7,890
2005–06	220

Note:
Figures, particularly for later years, are subject to change as more claims are received.

Data for other companies (commonly called large companies) are shown in the following table. The claims and value of support for large companies relate only to reductions in corporation tax revenue from companies use of R and D tax reliefs to reduce their tax liabilities.

R and D tax relief: number of claims, value of support claimed and total turnover under the large company scheme

	Number of claims	*Support claimed (£ million)*	*Total turnover (£ million)*
2002–03	765	180	125,090
2003–04	1,080	320	135,650
2004–05	260	30	4,950

Notes:
1. Figures, particularly for later years, are subject to change as more claims are received.
2. The number of claims and total turnover are calculated according to the financial year in which the company's accounting period ends. The value of support claimed is calculated on a receipts-basis according to when tax receipts are foregone by HM Revenue and Customs.

Information is not available on the total number of employees of companies claiming R and D tax reliefs.

Small Businesses

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what measures his Department is preparing to take to reduce the burden of administration on small businesses. [35518]

John Healey: The Government set out in the pre-Budget report their approach to better regulation including the progress made in implementing the Better Regulation Task Force's and the Hampton Report's recommendations first announced in Budget 2005. The Treasury is fully committed to the implementation of these recommendations as they effect the department, in particular applying a risk-based approach to the regulation of financial services and measuring the administrative burdens of the Treasury's regulations on business as part of a government-wide project. The Government will set targets to reduce these administrative burdens on businesses, charities and the voluntary sector next year.

Tax Credits

Helen Goodman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many applications have been received for tax credit additional payments *(a)* in each year since the start of the scheme and *(b)* in each month for 2005–06; [35165]

(2) how many tax credit additional payments have been made *(a)* in each year since the start of the scheme and *(b)* in each month for 2005–06; and what the total value of these additional payments has been in each case; [35166]

(3) how many tax credit additional payments have been refused *(a)* in each year since the start of the scheme, *(b)* in each month for 2005–06 and *(c)* according to each of the grounds for rejection as set out in Code of Practice 26 (2005); [35167]

(4) how many tax credit additional payments have been made in *(a)* in-year overpayments and *(b)* end of year overpayments, broken down by the year in which the initial award was made. [35168]

Dawn Primarolo: Information on the numbers of requests for additional tax credits payments, and the number refused, is not available.

For the number and value of additional payments made I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave my right hon. Friend the Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) on 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 331W.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his Department's latest estimate is of the number of likely *(a)* overpayments and *(b)* underpayments in tax credits for 2004–05. [35722]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer my right hon. Friend to my reply to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws)

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what proportion of small and medium-sized enterprises in Tamworth constituency were eligible for research and development tax credits in each of the last five years; and what the take-up was in each year. [35816]

John Healey: The information requested in relation to enterprises in Tamworth is not available.

For information generally on take-up of research and development tax credits I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Luton, South (Margaret Moran) of 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 991W, on tax credits.

TRANSPORT

Aircraft Emissions/Noise

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action his Department is taking to reduce emissions from aviation as a contribution to the shared Public Service Agreement climate change target to move towards a 20 per cent. reduction in carbon dioxide emissions below 1990 levels by 2010. [35244]

Ms Buck: International aviation is outside the scope of our domestic targets, but we are taking action to tackle the climate change impact of aviation as set out in the Aviation White paper. This includes pressing for the inclusion of aviation in the EU emissions trading scheme. The Government are also pressing for the adoption by industry of working practices that minimise their impact on climate change, research into new technologies and voluntary action by industry to

control greenhouse gas emissions. We recognise that these measures may not provide a total solution. In view of this, the Government will continue to explore and discuss options for the use of other economic instruments.

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps the Government are taking to tackle aircraft emissions. [34155]

Ms Buck: The Government's plans to tackle aircraft emissions are set out in "The Future of Air Transport White Paper". On climate change, it sets out the Government's belief that the best way of ensuring aviation contributes towards the goal of climate stabilisation would be through a well-designed emissions trading regime, for which we are pressing at international and European level. At the local level, the Government are seeking powers through the Civil Aviation Bill to require the imposition of an emissions related element in airport charges where an air quality problem exists. We are also continuing to press for tighter standards for aircraft emissions and improved operational practice to reduce local emissions.

Alan Keen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to ensure that children's education is not affected by exposure to aircraft noise; what *(a)* standards and *(b)* guidelines for airlines apply in this area; and if he will make a statement. [33941]

Ms Buck: In its White Paper "The Future of Air Transport" the Government stated that larger UK airports—those with more than 50,000 movements a year—are expected to offer acoustic insulation to noise-sensitive buildings such as schools, which are exposed to medium to high levels of noise, that is 63 dBA Leq or more. The dBA value relates to the Leq 16 hour daytime period from 07.00 to 23.00.

The White Paper recognised the difficulties associated with insulating some noise-sensitive buildings. We say that where acoustic insulation cannot provide an appropriate or cost-effect solution, airport operators should endeavour to provide alternative mitigation measures such as environmental grants, provisions of quiet rooms for reading or music, or funding for school trips away from the noisy environment, especially where the loss of amenity outdoors may be severe. In such cases we expect the priority of need and the level of any contribution to be assessed on a case-by-case basis by the airport operator and relevant stakeholders.

BAA have announced its intention at Heathrow to work with relevant local authorities to set up a community-led body to take these decisions.

Alan Keen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the (i) impact of exposure to aircraft noise on the educational development of children and (ii) numbers of schoolchildren who may be affected by aviation-related noise. [33957]

Ms Buck: The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs co-funded the European Community RANCH (Road Traffic and Aircraft Noise exposure and Children's Cognition and Health) Study.

This comprised three field studies of children around major airports in the UK, Spain and the Netherlands. In the UK children from 29 different schools around Heathrow took part.

The Government took the emerging results of this research into account when developing its environmental policies set out in "The Future of Air Transport" White Paper.

Full details of the RANCH study—as well as the earlier West London Schools Study—are on DEFRA'S website at www.defra.gov.uk

The study concluded that aircraft noise exposure was related to impaired performance in reading comprehension and recognition memory. In particular that the reading age in children exposed to high levels of aircraft noise was delayed by up to two months in the United Kingdom and by up to one month in the Netherlands for a 5dB change in noise exposure. It was not possible to calculate reading age for the Spanish test.

Aircraft noise was not associated with impairment of recall memory, working memory, prospective memory or sustained attention.

Alan Keen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions his Department has had with the Department for Education and Skills on the impact of aviation-related noise under Heathrow flight paths on children's learning. [35346]

Ms Buck: The Department for Transport and the Department for Education and Skills are aware of the European Community RANCH (Road Traffic and Aircraft Noise exposure and Children's Cognition and Health) Study, which was co-funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. There have been no discussions between Departments specifically on the issues raised by the RANCH study, as they affect Heathrow. In the first instance these are matters for the local education authority.

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the change in quantities of emissions produced by UK air travel in *(a)* 2030 and *(b)* 2050 compared with 2005; and what assumptions underlie those forecasts. [35236]

Ms Buck: Our forecasts for aviation and climate change, and the assumptions underlying them, are set out in Aviation and Global Warming, published by the Department for Transport in January 2004. The figures shown relate to estimates of emissions for all flights departing UK airports for 2030 and 2050, with an interpolated figure for 2005.

	Carbon emitted (Mt)
(2005)	(9.8)
2030	17.7
2050	17.4

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport by what amount emissions trading is expected to reduce the Government's forecast of increased climate change emissions from aviation at 2030, expressed as a percentage and in absolute terms. [35237]

Ms Buck: At present, it is too early to provide a reliable estimate of the impact emissions trading will have on forecasts of emissions from aviation. This will depend on a number of factors including the overall number of allowances and the detailed design for the inclusion of aviation into the ED ETS. These factors have yet to be specified and will be subject to discussion with other member states' Governments.

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what modelling the Government has undertaken of the impact of the trend in aviation's proportion of total UK emissions of greenhouse gases on the costs and reduction requirements of other UK emissions sectors with, particular reference to *(a)* business, *(b)* public services and *(c)* residential use. [35245]

Ms Buck: International aviation is outside the scope of our domestic targets. Domestic aviation was responsible for 0.38 per cent. of UK emissions in 2003. We have not undertaken any modelling of the impact that trends in these emissions would have on the costs and reduction requirements in other sectors.

Departmental Energy Consumption

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much energy has been consumed by his Department in each of the last five years; and how much was spent on energy in each year. [22463]

Ms Buck: The Department for Transport was formed in May 2002 and as a result the information provided only relates from the years 2002–03 onwards.

The Department's energy consumption and spend are shown in the following table:

	kWh	*Cost (£)*
2002–03	63,611,113	2,190,786
2003–04	65,700,149	2,494,598
2004–05	79,740,062	2,753,353

The data above covers approximately 1,100 sites that range from large central HQ offices, regional training facilities, driving test centres, Maritime Rescue Sub Centres and vehicle testing stations.

Departmental Vacancies

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many staff vacancies there are in the railways sector of his Department. [35397]

Derek Twigg: The complement of the Rail Group is 259. There are currently 250 staff in post.

DVLA

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Authority has recently sold on information about licence holders to a third party. [35392]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 7 December 2005]:* The provisions governing the release of vehicle keeper data have been in place for over 40 years. Regulation (1)(e) of the Road Vehicles (Registration and Licensing) Regulations 2002 allows DVLA to release information from the vehicle register to anyone who can demonstrate 'reasonable cause' to have it. 'Reasonable cause' is not defined in legislation and requests are considered on their merits.

DVLA's inquiry unit deals with approximately 30,000 requests for information each week. When details can lawfully be released, a fee of £2.50 is charged to prevent administrative costs being borne by the taxpayer.

When these provisions were introduced, the large numbers of vehicles currently on the roads, or the range of bodies requesting access was not anticipated. For these reasons, I have announced a review of regulations governing release of information early in the new year.

Fatal Road Accidents

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many fatal road accidents occurred in the Leeds West constituency in each year between 1992 and 2005. [35255]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of fatal accidents in Leeds West constituency from 1994–2004 based on 2004 boundaries are given in the following table. Constituency data is not compiled prior to 1994.

	Fatal accidents
1994	5
1995	3
1996	2
1997	6
1998	3
1999	2
2000	5
2001	5
2002	1
2003	3
2004	4

Festivals

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 562W, on festivals, how much was spent by the Department on the Celebration of Culture event on Friday 11 November 2005. [35795]

Ms Buck: The Department spent £300 on the Celebration of Culture event on Friday 11 November 2005.

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 562W, on festivals, how much money was made available by his Department for staff to travel to *(a)* the Swansea Chinese Association's New Year Celebration, *(b)* the 2004 Diwali Event at the NEC in Birmingham and *(c)* the November 2005 Asian Mela Event at the NEC. [35819]

Ms Buck: The Highways Agency reimbursed a total of £200 in travel costs to enable three staff to represent the agency over two days at the 2004 Diwali event at the NEC in Birmingham, and reimbursed a total of £210 in travel costs to enable six staff to represent the agency over three days at the Asian Mela Event at the NEC.

Two members of DVLA's Diversity Team attended the Swansea Chinese Association's New Year Celebration in their own time and at no cost to the Department or DVLA.

Free Travel Provisions

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will include *(a)* dial-a-ride and *(b)* community transport services in the provisions for free travel from April 2006. [35146]

Ms Buck: As is the case with the current statutory minimum entitlement, dial-a-ride and community transport services will not be included. Local authorities will have the discretion, as they do at present, to offer concessions on these services based on their judgment of local circumstances and their overall financial priorities.

Maladministration

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many payments for maladministration have been made by *(a)* his Department, *(b)* its agencies, *(c)* its non-departmental public bodies and *(d)* other bodies for which his Department has responsibility in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [32238]

Ms Buck: The Department for Transport was formed in May 2002 therefore prior to that no information on any maladministration is available.

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Department	n/a	n/a	10	17	15
Agencies	n/a	n/a	26	51	77
NDPBs	n/a	n/a	0	0	0
Bodies sponsored by Department	0	0	0	0	0

Public Transport (Disabled Access)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on access for disabled people to public transport. [35482]

Ms Buck: The Government are committed to an accessible public transport system in which disabled people have the same opportunities to travel as other members of society.

A great deal has already been achieved. For example, we have introduced regulations significantly improving access for disabled people to all new trains, buses and coaches; over 4,700 accessible rail vehicles will be in service by the end of 2005 and almost half of the bus fleet is already accessible across the country, with much higher proportions in many urban areas.

Measures in the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 will further increase disabled people's rights when travelling by public transport. These include extending to transport services the "right of access" disabled people currently have to services such as shops and banks. The new Act also allows us to set an "end date", of no later than 1 January 2020, by which time all trains will have to be accessible. We are on course to implement these measures in December 2006 in line with our published timetable.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects all buses in *(a)* England and *(b)* Lancashire to be accessible by disabled people and those in wheelchairs. [35483]

Ms Buck: The Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000 (as amended) require buses with a capacity of more than 22 passengers, used on or after 31 December 2000 to be accessible to disabled people including wheelchair users. The regulations set end dates of 1 January 2015 for small single deck buses, 1 January 2016 for large single deck buses and 1 January 2017 for double deck buses to comply with the regulations. After those dates all buses in service will be accessible. Bus operators are free to choose how and where they introduce compliant buses, often leading to higher concentrations of accessible buses in major cities.

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to improve access to public transport for disabled people in Swindon. [33227]

Ms Buck: We have introduced "accessibility planning" into the local transport planning process to encourage local authorities and other agencies to assess more systematically whether people can access transport services in their areas. This process covers all forms of transport from buses, coaches and taxis to cycling and walking networks. Making provision for disabled people is a condition against which the resulting Local Transport Plans (LTPs) are assessed.

Swindon borough council is using its LTP funding for an on-going programme of improvements at bus stops that will assist disabled passengers. The programme involves provision of raised kerbs at bus stops to minimise the step height between the pavement and the bus. This allows easier access for wheelchair users and for other people who have difficulty with high steps such as many older people.

Routes to bus stops are also being improved with new link paths and dropped-kerb road crossings and bus Stop Clearways are introduced to ensure that parked cars do not obstruct the stops allowing buses to pull up alongside the raised kerbs.

Local bus operators are providing new accessible low floor buses in Swindon and the Local Transport Plan funding to improve bus stops will allow the benefits of this investment in new vehicles to be maximised.

Rail services in Swindon are already accessible to disabled people. The station has lifts to all platforms and recent access improvements have been made to the forecourt and bus stop areas.

At a national level there has been significant progress in making public transport accessible to disabled people through regulations made under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995). We made the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations in 2000 and many of the trains calling at the station comply with those. Although the older rolling stock serving Swindon doesn't comply it can nevertheless accommodate passengers travelling in a wheelchair.

More generally disabled people in Swindon as elsewhere in the country will also benefit from the provisions in the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA 2005). We have already laid regulations which

will, from December 2006, lift the transport exemption in Part 3 of the for land-based public transport, vehicle hire, breakdown services and vehicles used on leisure and tourism transport services. We will also be consulting shortly on draft regulations to set an "end date" of no later than 1 January 2020 for when all trains will have to meet the rail vehicle accessibility regulations and to apply those regulations to older trains when they are refurbished.

Race Equality Impact Assessments

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many Race Equality Impact Assessments his Department completed between *(a)* April 2004 and March 2005 and *(b)* April 2005 and November 2005; and how many assessments in each period resulted in a change of policy. [32839]

Ms Buck: The Department for Transport is committed to valuing diversity and promoting equality. The Department's Race Equality Scheme 2005–08 covers the activities of the Department and its executive agencies as an employer as well as a policy maker and service provider.

Race Equality Impact Assessments are being completed across all areas of our business. From April 2004 to March 2005 the Department for Transport has completed eight Race Equality Impact Assessments, two of which have resulted in policy changes.

No centrally co-ordinated figures are yet available for the period April 2005 to November 2005 as we collect statistics on an annual basis. These figures will be collected as part of our next race equality data monitoring exercise and published in our 2005–06 Race Equality Report.

Railways

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions he has had with rail operating companies about fares. [35484]

Derek Twigg: None.

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will take steps *(a)* to re-establish and *(b)* to improve rail services between Leeds City Centre and the towns and villages in the outlying areas of Leeds metropolitan district council; and if he will make a statement; [33999]

(2) if he will take steps to re-open rail services to East Ardsley. [34000]

Derek Twigg: There are no plans to re-establish rail services between Leeds city centre and the outlying areas of Leeds metropolitan district council or East Ardsley. The Department nevertheless continues to work with West Yorkshire passenger transport executive which has responsibility for rail services in this area, to secure improvements, based on proposals that show value for money and affordability.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what estimate he has made of the impact of the returned rolling stock to the c2c Fenchurch Street line on the availability of seats for commuters entering the line at Benfleet Station; and if he will make a statement; [34818]

(2) if he will make a statement on the return of rolling stock to the c2c Fenchurch Street line; and when stock will be available to commuters. [34819]

Derek Twigg: Of the five units transferred away in May 2004, three returned to service on c2c in September. This allowed capacity increases on three morning and three evening peak services, all of which call at Benfleet. The other two units are due to return to c2c by the end of this month.

Sick Leave

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many of his Department's employees who are within one year of the official retirement age are on extended sick leave. [32590]

Ms Buck: The number of employees who are within one year of the official retirement age (age 60) is 424, and the number of those who are on extended sick leave (over 6 months) is 11.

The Department is committed to managing sick absence effectively and to putting in place the recommendations of the 'Managing Sickness Absence in the Public Sector' report. The DfT Board takes an active interest in the issue of attendance management, and a number of steps have already been taken.

The 'Managing Sickness Absence in the Public Sector' report covers a requirement for Departments to demonstrate progress against four generic recommendations:

line managers are trained in both systems and procedures and the skills to deal with absence management;

departmental HR support should enable moves towards integrating absence and performance management;

all public sector organisations should review individual cases and case management arrangements for long-term sick absences (e.g. over six months);

departments should consider whether recruitment procedures are robust in terms of pre-employment checks as to an individual's absence record.

The consumption data has been 'weather corrected' by the Building Research Establishment as part of their work in analysing the annual Government energy data.

The Department is on course to meet the target in the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate to source at least 10 per cent. electricity from renewable sources by 2008, and a range of actions are currently under way in our HQ buildings, including the commissioning of a Carbon Trust energy audit, to minimise our energy usage. Our executive agencies are undertaking similar actions to meet the energy targets contained in the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate.

SRA (Former Staff)

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many former Strategic Rail Authority staff have been employed by his Department. [35396]

Derek Twigg: 161 former SRA staff have been employed by the Department for Transport.

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many staff the Strategic Rail Authority employed prior to its abolition. [35398]

Derek Twigg: As at 31 March 2005, before functions and staff began to transfer to successor organisations, the Strategic Rail Authority employed 404 staff.

Statutory Instruments

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many statutory instruments introduced by his Department had to be *(a)* withdrawn, *(b)* amended by a further statutory instrument and *(c)* reprinted because of defective drafting in each session since 1997; and what steps he (1) is taking and (2) plans to take to prevent this. [34257]

Ms Buck: The Department for Transport was formed in May 2002 since then no statutory instrument produced by it has been withdrawn or reprinted on account of defective drafting.

The Department's records reveal that in that period 16 statutory instruments have been amended by a further instrument in order to correct defective drafting in an earlier instrument. This number breaks down by parliamentary Session as follows:

	Number
2001–02	1
2002–03	3
2003–04	5
2004–05	7

During this period the Department produced over 520 general statutory instruments.

The Department endeavours to keep the number of defective instruments to a minimum through the provision of training for officials involved in this work and a system involving checking by two lawyers in addition to the principal drafter. The present arrangements are being reviewed.

Tyne and Wear (Financial Bids)

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what payments have been made to Newcastle city council and its partners for the Quayside Transit System, broken down by year. [34378]

Ms Buck: The Department has paid Newcastle city council a total of £7.211 million for the Quayside Public Transport Scheme, broken down by financial year as follows:

	£ million
2001–02	1.050
2002–03	0.526
2003–04	0.708
2004–05	2.110
2005–06	0.317

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when rail passenger partnership funding for the reopening of the Newcastle-Blyth-Ashington freight line to passenger traffic will be made available. [34379]

Derek Twigg: The Rail Passenger Partnership fund was suspended by the Strategic Rail Authority in January 2003. No new projects have been funded since that date.

US Aircraft

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on how many occasions since 2001 US-registered aircraft tail number *(a)* N44982, formerly N8068V and N379P and *(b)* N313P has landed in the United Kingdom; and at which airports. [33246]

Ms Buck: The Department for Transport has no record of these aircraft landing at UK airports, which indicates that if these aircraft landed in the UK they were either not involved in civil commercial transport or that they were stopping for technical purposes, for example, to refuel. As such they would not require the Secretary of State for Transport's permission.

Vehicle Accidents (Airport Transport)

Mr. Caton: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many vehicle accidents where drivers of airport transport had exceeded the driving time limit set down in the UK domestic drivers' hours rules have been recorded in the last three years. [35429]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not available.

Vehicle Certification Agency

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reasons the salary of the chief executive of the Vehicle Certification Agency differs from that of his predecessor. [35827]

Ms Buck: The current chief executive of the Vehicle Certification Agency (VGA) was recruited through fair and open competition and was appointed in post from 19 April 2004 on a three-year fixed-term contract.

The advertised salary at the time reflected the competitive market conditions relevant for the skills and experience the agency was looking for when the post was advertised. The competition field was strong and the most suitable candidate was appointed as chief executive based on competency skills and experience identified by the selection panel.

Violence Against Passengers

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Guildford of 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1151W, on violence against passengers, how many victims of violence were recorded by British Transport Police in each police force area in England and Wales in each year since 1998–99. [31835]

Derek Twigg: The number of victims of violence recorded by the British Transport Police (BTP) in each year in each police force area in England and Wales since 1999–2000 is given in the following table. The data for 1998–99 data is unavailable by police force area.

Police force area	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Avon and Somerset	35	41	35	43	54	43
Bedfordshire	14	17	25	21	27	33
Cambridgeshire	25	35	13	23	28	31
Cheshire	42	32	38	53	54	69
City of London Police	71	81	67	101	131	145
Cleveland	6	11	7	13	30	27
Cumbria	3	8	9	9	14	12
Derbyshire	16	22	10	21	11	17
Devon and Cornwall	27	27	38	45	48	49
Dorset	15	12	7	18	18	8
Durham	9	9	9	6	11	15
Dyfed Powys	4	2	1	2	7	15
Essex	51	76	90	102	120	174
Gloucester	3	4	8	5	7	1
Great Manchester	101	117	128	125	182	160
Gwent	19	10	19	15	15	15
Hampshire	53	65	47	76	127	94
Hertfordshire	57	62	100	120	146	156
Humberside	12	30	26	31	32	26
Kent	132	134	171	256	313	250
Lancashire	30	37	41	60	57	79
Leicestershire	19	12	23	24	19	18
Lincolnshire	8	2	9	5	10	21
Merseyside	252	218	242	230	281	254
Metropolitan Police	2,779	2,509	2,256	2,605	2,833	3,122
Ministry of Defence	0	0	0	1	0	0
Norfolk	12	3	14	12	34	44
North Wales	10	8	13	12	36	23
North Yorkshire	9	20	20	24	34	31
Northamptonshire	2	2	2	4	3	9
Northumbria	21	22	22	36	88	101
Nottinghamshire	13	22	23	20	26	28
South Wales	58	76	69	84	92	104
South Yorkshire	25	20	21	48	46	40
Staffordshire	9	14	9	10	8	12
Suffolk	3	8	8	19	13	13
Surrey	83	98	118	141	153	157
Sussex	133	185	158	188	219	204
Thames Valley	59	74	82	129	130	202
Warwickshire	4	3	11	10	10	12
West Mercia	16	20	26	33	35	41
West Midlands Police	96	129	127	142	138	220
West Yorkshire	83	116	141	238	255	261
Wiltshire	9	8	11	9	10	18

The Home Office introduced a National Crime Recording Standard (NCRS) that all police forces across England and Wales were required to adopt. BTP adopted this standard on 1 April 2002. The impact of the new recording standard saw an increase in recorded crime nationally.

BTP have also been proactive in encouraging victims of assaults to report these offences.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Government Art Collection

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the estimated cost of damage to the Government Art Collection was in the past 12 months for which figures are available; which items were damaged; how the damage occurred in each case; and whether restoration was possible. [34375]

Mr. Lammy: The estimated cost of restoration work resulting from damage to GAC works of art in the last 12 months is £20,249, of which £1,142 was paid by the GAC The works of art affected are as follows:

Beatrice marble bust by F Saul

The bust was chipped during transport. Restoration was completed at a cost of £550.

Embassy (evening) light-box by Catherine Yass

Received a scratch and scuffs to the surface while on display. Restoration is possible; the estimate is £310.

Lady Arabella Stuart (1575–1615) Cousin of King James I and VI oil painting by Marcus Gheeraerts the Younger

The canvas was punctured while on display. Restoration was completed at a cost of £282.

Sir Henry Chamberlain Bt (1773–1829) Diplomat oil painting by an unknown 19th century British artist

The canvas was punctured while in temporary storage. Restoration was completed at a cost of £1,642.

High Treason, Court of Criminal Appeal: the Trial of Sir Roger Casement 1916 oil painting by John Lavery

The canvas was punctured while on display. Restoration was completed at a cost (including transport) of £14,465.

Sir Robert Walpole, Earl of Orford (1676–1745) Prime Minister oil painting by Jean Baptiste van Loo (Studio)

The canvas was punctured while on display. Restoration is possible; the estimate is £3,000.

Devotional screenprint by Sonia Boyce

Received a scratch and scuff to the surface while on display. Restoration is under discussion with the artist.

London Olympics

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the acquisition of land for Olympic use. [33609]

Mr. Caborn: The London Development Agency (IDA) is responsible for acquiring the land in East London that will be needed for the Olympics and has recently made two compulsory purchase orders to this end. Other regional development agencies (RDAs) at Olympic sites elsewhere in the UK will also be able to acquire land (compulsorily or by agreement) if that proves necessary. Under the London Olympics Bill, currently before Parliament, the new Olympic Delivery Authority will have powers to acquire land by agreement—including, with the consent of the Secretary of State, on the same terms as for compulsory purchases.

The Government made an amendment to the London Olympics Bill at Report Stage, on 6 December, which will ensure the necessary land can be assembled without delay and used for Olympic development. Where a RDA purchases land for the purpose of preparing for the Olympics, the amendment has the effect of removing the need for a special parliamentary process to approve the compulsory purchase of 'special land' where equivalent land is not being provided in exchange; clarifying that 'special land', once acquired, can be built on; allowing the compulsory purchase of Crown land and any interest in Crown land; and extinguishing all existing rights over the land acquired (while providing for compensation to those who have rights removed).

Anyone owning an interest in land that is being acquired by compulsory purchase will be entitled to fair compensation, based on the principle that they should be paid neither more or less than their loss. If the amount payable cannot be agreed between the parties it will be settled by the Lands Tribunal.

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps her Department is taking to ensure that firms engaged in construction of facilities for the Olympics provide adequate levels of training to ensure a sustainable skilled work force. [34964]

Mr. Caborn: The 'Procurement Principles' published by the interim Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) in September—which underpin the development of the ODA's procurement strategy—identify the importance of a programme of skills and training to maximise local benefits and secure the wider economic dividend.

A key assessment criterion in the selection of contractors will be their commitment to working with the ODA to deliver a range of benefits including training and supply chain initiatives.

In addition, the London Development Agency, working with others such as the Learning and Skills Council, is developing a Local Employment and Training Framework which aims to maximise the potential capacity of the local labour market.

School Sports

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what *(a)* advice and *(b)* other support her Department provides to (i) schools and (ii) the Department for Education and Skills to encourage a wider range of sporting activities to be provided in schools. [35516]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport and the Department for Education and Skills share an ambitious Public Service Agreement target to increase the percentage of 5 to 16-year-olds who spend a minimum of two hours a week on high quality PE and school sport, within and beyond the curriculum, to 75 per cent. by 2006 and 85 per cent. by 2008. Long-term—by 2010—we want to offer children the chance to do at least four hours of sport every week.

The target is being delivered through the national PE, School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL) strategy being implemented jointly by both Departments. Over £1.5 billion is being invested over the five years to 2008 to deliver the strategy through nine inter-linked programmes of work.

We have produced a range of guidance documents including:

'High Quality PE and Sport for Young People—A Guide to recognising and achieving high quality PE and sport in schools and clubs';

'Do You Have High Quality PE and Sport in Your School—A guide to self-evaluating and improving the quality of PE and school sport';

'Swimming Charter';

'Primary Playground Development'; and

'Dance Links';

which provide information and advice to school sport partnerships, schools, sport clubs, local education authorities, national governing bodies, county sport partnerships and others.

The 2004–05 School Sport Survey, the largest in Europe, confirms that the national strategy is on track to meet the public service agreement target. The survey found that overall 69 per cent. of pupils in the 11,400 schools taking part were spending at least two hours in a typical week on high quality PE and school sport. In 2003–04 the figure was 62 per cent.

Copies of the guidance documents and the survey reports have been placed in the Libraries of both Houses of Parliament.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

English Regions

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Leader of the House if he will bring forward proposals for regional question time sessions in the House for each of the English regions. [35515]

Mr. Hoon: I organise the question rota on the basis of ministerial responsibilities. Issues relating to particular regions can be raised with the relevant departmental Ministers. Issues relating to the work of the Government offices for the regions can be raised during oral questions to the Deputy Prime Minister.

Non-departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Amess: To ask the Leader of the House (1) which of the advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by his Department *(a)* have a statutory base, *(b)* publish their advice to Government, *(c)* publish an annual report and *(d)* lay an annual report before Parliament; and if he will indicate in each instance whether this is under a statutory requirement; [34672]

(2) which of the advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by his Department *(a)* hold public meetings, *(b)* conduct public consultation exercises, *(c)* conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests, *(d)* publish a register of members' interests, *(e)* publish agendas for meetings and *(f)* publish the minutes of meetings; and whether in each case this is under a statutory requirement. [34673]

Nigel Griffiths: The Office of the Leader of the House of Commons does not sponsor any advisory non-departmental public bodies.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Amess: To ask the Leader of the House what the target time is for answering written parliamentary questions. [35973]

Mr. Hoon: Ministers have an obligation to Parliament to ensure that Members receive a substantive response to their named day question on the named day and to endeavour to answer an ordinary written question within a working week of it being tabled.

Ministers and their Departments should make every effort to ensure that the live bundle of questions still awaiting a substantive reply should be kept to a minimum at all times.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

UK Passport Fees

Lynne Jones: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission pursuant to his written statement of 17 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 76WS, on UK passport fees, if he will break down the elements which contribute to the increase; and how much is accounted for by increased production costs. [32856]

Andy Burnham: I have been asked to reply.

The passport fee increase reflects the cost of implementing key anti-fraud measures to combat the rapidly growing threat of passport and identity fraud and forgery. This increase will support enhanced background checks on applicants, the gradual introduction of biometric passports and face-to-face interviews for first-time applicants.

The component elements of the standard passport fee are published on the UK Passport Service official website www.passport.gov.uk Reproduced in the table as follows. With the exception of a modest increase in administration costs of £0.22 per application all other aspects of the increase directly relate to costs associated with the service provided to the customer.

	£
Application processing	14.02
Consular protection	9.65
Book production	5.00
Secure delivery	3.00
Anti-fraud initiatives	14.51
Administrative	4.82

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Devolved Legislatures

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General what his policy is with regard to *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in the Law Officers' Department giving evidence to the (i) Scottish Parliament, (ii) National Assembly for Wales and (iii) Northern Ireland Assembly committees; and to what categories of document he gives (A) full access, (B) restricted access and (C) no access to the (1) Scottish Parliament, (2) NAW, (3) Northern Ireland Assembly and (4) House of Commons select committees. [34537]

The Solicitor-General: Requests for the attendance of Ministers or officials to give evidence to the devolved legislatures, and for the provision of information to the assemblies, will be considered on a case by case basis. This consideration will reflect: the principles set out in the Cabinet Office guidance "Departmental Evidence and Response to Select Committees" (July 2005); the policy outlined in the Department for Constitutional Affairs' Devolution Guidance Note #12 "Attendance of UK Ministers and Officials at Committees of the devolved legislatures"; and the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act. The principles underlying the provision of information to House of Commons Select Committees are set out in "Departmental Evidence and Response to Select Committees", particularly sections 4B and 4C.

European Court of Human Rights

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General how many United Kingdom cases are awaiting hearing before the European Court of Human Rights. [34534]

The Solicitor-General: Oral hearings before the Court are now the exception rather than the rule. There are 88 cases against the United Kingdom pending before the European Court of Human Rights that have been declared admissible by the Court. A further 352 cases have been communicated to the Government on which an admissibility decision is awaited.

I have now ascertained that, regrettably, the information provided in an earlier answer to a question by my hon. Friend the former member for Tooting (Mr. Cox) on the same issue on 26 October 2004, *Official Report*, column 1104W, was not accurate in that it appears to have included a group of cases known as Widowers cases as admissible which had only been communicated. There are 71 Widowers cases which have been declared admissible and 319 which have been communicated but on which there has not yet been a decision on admissibility.

NORTHERN IRELAND

CCTV

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which groups have been consulted regarding possible CCTV cameras in West Belfast; and on what dates meetings have taken place. [31935]

Mr. Hain: The Chief Constable has advised me that West Belfast District Command Unit has consulted all sections of the local community including clergy, elected representatives, statutory and voluntary groups and the Northern Ireland Office. This consultation process took place over the past three years, and is on-going.

Fair Recruitment

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what account the Equality Commission takes of recent recruitment when examining the religious breakdown of the public sector work force in Northern Ireland. [34424]

Angela E. Smith: I understand that the chief executive of the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland, Ms Evelyn Collins, has written to the hon. Gentleman in the following terms:

"The Equality Commission considers that recent recruitment is an important component when examining the overall trends in the composition of the public sector work force in Northern Ireland. Public authorities are required to monitor the composition of their work force, applicants, appointees, leavers and promotees. This information is provided to the Commission on an annual basis. The Commission monitors overall compositional trends and makes this information public in its annual monitoring report, "Profiling the Northern Ireland Workforce". In relation to individual employers the Commission monitors employment trends through the annual monitoring returns and in greater detail through the article 55 Review process where employers analyse their own employment trends at least once every three years."

Fisheries Patrols

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patrols were undertaken by the Fisheries Conservancy Board patrol boat around the Foyle and Bush rivers on Northern Ireland's North Coast area in the last year for which figures are available; what the *(a)* nature and *(b)* extent of co-operation with the Loughs Agency patrol vessel about these patrols was; and on how many days during the 2005 angling and netting season the patrol boat was not in use. [35356]

Mr. Hanson: In 2005, 21 boat patrols were carried out on Northern Irelands North Coast. These patrols occurred during the peak of the Foyle netting season and as such involved regular contact with the Foyle patrol boat. The North Coast patrol boat is not involved in angling enforcement. During the netting season in the FCB jurisdiction, the boat was not in use for approximately 108 days.

Home Heating Oil

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the cost of home heating oil in Northern Ireland. [34555]

Angela E. Smith: The cost of home heating oil in Northern Ireland is determined by a competitive market and, on average, has been lower than the equivalent cost in the remainder of the United Kingdom.

The competitive market reflects developments in the international oil market. Global oil prices have been high and volatile over the past eighteen months as a result of very strong growth in global demand and accompanying pressure on supplies. Most recently, disruptions to US Gulf of Mexico production and refining capacity, as a result of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, led to prices rising to record levels in early September 2005. These developments were reflected in a corresponding record increase in the price of home heating oil in Northern Ireland.

A recovery of global oil production and refining facilities, together with a slight reduction in demand has resulted in a subsequent moderation of prices. This, in turn, has led to a corresponding reduction in the average price of home heating oil in Northern Ireland.

Isle of Man (Fishing Jurisdiction)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what *(a)* discussions, *(b)* meetings and *(c)* correspondence he has had with the Isle of Man Government in relation to the extent of its fishing jurisdiction; and if he will make a statement. [35317]

Angela E. Smith: There have been no discussions or meetings between the Isle of Man Government and Department of Agriculture and Rural Development Ministers in relation to extent of the Isle of Man's fishing jurisdiction. DEFRA Ministers have had correspondence from the Isle of Man Government regarding their proposal to extend the fishing jurisdiction around the island from three to 12 miles. DEFRA consulted stakeholders on this proposal in the summer and a decision on the outcome of the consultation will be communicated to the Isle of Man Government in due course.

Maritime Safety

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what publicly funded training is available for lifeguards in Northern Ireland. [18227]

Angela E. Smith: The Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS) UK awards the National Pool Lifeguard Qualification at accredited centres across the United Kingdom including many in Northern Ireland. Provision is mainly based in local leisure centres and pool lifeguards can also train for the National Aquatic Rescue Standard.

The RLSS UK also awards the National Beach Lifeguard Qualification and the Assistant Beach Lifesaver Award which are offered through local lifeguard clubs.

Motoring Offences

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland have been prosecuted for driving while not insured in each of the last 10 years, broken down by constituency. [34549]

Mr. Hanson: Prosecution data are not readily available broken down by Northern Ireland constituency. The statistics included within the response are based on the 12 police divisions for the years 1994 to 1999 and police district command units for 2000 to 2003. Police district command units became operational in April 2001. However, for the purposes of comparability, calendar year 2000 data are also disaggregated by DCU, rather than police division. It is not possible to disaggregate data by DCU for years prior to 2000.

With the exception of overall totals, figures in table 1 should not be compared with those in table 2, as table 1 figures relate to the police division to which an offence was reported, while those included within table 2 relate to the police district command unit in which an offenders address falls.

Data beyond 2003 will become available in early 2006.

Table 1: Prosecutions for 'No insurance' by police division[1] 1994–99

Police division	*1994*	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*
A (Musgrave Street)	429	435	402	400	195	259
B (Grosvenor Road)	515	491	507	460	341	350
D (Antrim Road)	1,084	970	747	716	546	633
E (Strandtown)	439	439	420	436	237	234
G (Newtownards)	526	395	375	363	238	233
H (Armagh)	379	445	307	348	365	370
J (Portadown)	392	446	352	328	203	305
K (Dungannon)	405	467	374	335	221	226
L (Enniskillen)	473	507	469	483	566	542
N (Strand Road)	703	604	512	467	519	416
O (Coleraine)	388	353	333	254	222	254
P (Ballymena)	399	354	300	251	195	232
Missing	0	0	0	0	13	7
Total	6,132	5,906	5,098	4,841	3,861	4,061

[1] Figures relate to the police division to which an offence was reported. Missing data relate to those offenders for which police division information is not available.

Notes:

1. Offences include 'no insurance' and 'causing no insurance'.
2. Police stations included within brackets are the divisional headquarters.
3. Figures are based on the principal rule, thus only the most serious offence for which an offender is charged is recorded.

Table 2: Prosecutions for 'No insurance' by district command unit[1] 2000–03

District command unit	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Antrim	60	78	98	96
Ards	107	121	139	119
Armagh	76	109	132	152
Banbridge	37	53	66	70
Belfast East	95	118	189	154
Belfast North	198	292	314	301
Belfast South	84	125	121	105
Belfast West	114	168	297	187
Ballymena	72	92	149	88
Ballymoney	28	49	56	58
Carrickfergus	52	70	77	79
Coleraine	66	88	129	93
Cookstown	48	76	87	63
Craigavon	126	145	235	271
Castlereagh	61	68	97	73
Dungannon and South Tyrone	97	161	138	114
Down	87	132	146	124
Fermanagh	106	148	221	165
Foyle	277	361	316	353
Larne	53	64	91	59
Limavady	57	61	79	90
Lisburn	128	163	212	241
Magherafelt	53	66	88	55
Moyle	39	26	52	41
Newtownabbey	77	113	135	131
North Down	81	102	182	120
Newry and Mourne	171	207	194	235
Omagh	137	180	181	147
Strabane	93	121	161	108
Missing	65	82	126	97
Total	2,745	3,639	4,508	3,989

[1] Figures relate to the police district command unit in which an offender's address falls. Missing data relate to those offenders for which DCU information is not available.

Notes:

1. Offences include 'no insurance' and 'causing no insurance'.
2. Figures are based on the principal rule, thus only the most serious offence for which an offender is charged is recorded.

Murder and Manslaughter

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many persons were *(a)* charged with and *(b)* convicted of (i) murder and (ii) manslaughter in Northern Ireland in each year since 1995. [33086]

Mr. Hanson: Figures for the number of offences of murder and manslaughter cleared by a charge/summons are provided in Table 1 and cover the financial years 1995–96 to 2004–05.

The prosecution and conviction statistics included within Table 2 cover the calendar years 1995 to 2003. Data beyond 2003 will become available in early 2006.

It should be noted that statistics in Table 1 are based on offences cleared and subsequently charged, while data in Table 2 relate to the number of persons prosecuted and convicted. As such, comparisons between the two tables are not appropriate.

Table 1: Offences of murder and manslaughter cleared by charge/summons by the Police in Northern Ireland: 1995–96 to 2004–05

	Cleared by charge/summons[1]	
Financial year	*Murder*	*Manslaughter*
1995–96	14	0
1996–97	23	2
1997–98	29	0
1998–99	29	2
1999–2000	25	3
2000–01	25	1
2001–02	28	4
2002–03	27	0
2003–04	21	3
2004–05	26	2

[1] Please note that the figures relate to the number of crimes that have been cleared by way of charge/summons. This does not equate to the number of persons who have been made amenable.

Source:
Central Statistics Unit, PSNI

Table 2: Northern Ireland prosecutions and convictions for murder and manslaughter—1995 to 2003

	Murder		*Manslaughter*	
	Prosecutions	*Convictions*	*Prosecutions*	*Convictions*
1995	55	19	6	5
1996	27	13	8	8
1997	19	3	6	6
1998	40	17	9	8
1999	40	13	15	15
2000	21	13	10	9
2001	9	6	8	7
2002	18	14	4	4
2003	25	18	10	7

Note:
Figures exclude attempts.

Source:
Statistics and Research Branch, Northern Ireland Office

Police

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list by name each group consulted by the Police Service of Northern Ireland before the installation of CCTV cameras in *(a)* East Belfast, *(b)* North Belfast and *(c)* South Belfast; and how many times each group was consulted in each case. [31934]

Mr. Hain: The Chief Constable has advised me that no precise records are held that can show exactly how many times consultation occurred. In addition, the confidentiality of many community consultations and contacts must be respected.

East Belfast

The CCTV cameras in East Belfast were installed in three phases.

(i) A single camera was installed at Albert Bridge/Lagan Walkway in 1998 after consultation with Laganside Corporation, Belfast city council and BT who were the partners in that CCTV scheme. Its role was primarily to prevent antisocial behaviour in the new Laganside development area.

(ii) The second phase was in 2001 and consisted of two cameras at Madrid Street and Newtownards Road respectively. There was no consultation with community groups prior to the initiation of planning work.

Sinn Fein and Loyalist community representatives were informed about the positioning of the Madrid Street and Newtownards Road cameras in 2001 prior to the installation of the equipment.

(iii) The third phase consisted of five cameras that were erected in 2002 after the prolonged violence that summer. No consultation was carried out prior to the installation as there was a clear operational need to provide a technological alternative to the use of large numbers of police and military personnel in the Cluan Place/Short Strand area. Representatives from Sinn Fein, DUP, UUP and a loyalist community group were informed of the intention to erect cameras prior to their installation.

South Belfast

The CCTV system in operation in South Belfast was developed more than 10 years ago. As with most developments in the city centre, police would have spoken with city council, planning authorities, the Chamber of Commerce and other relevant groups in the area.

North Belfast

Between 1 June 2001 and 31 May 2002 174 riots occurred in North Belfast in which 723 police officers were injured. The initial roll out of CCTV in North Belfast was undertaken by PSNI as an urgent response to the on-going interface violence in the DCU, with no time for community consultation.

The initial cameras were situated at the main flashpoints including Limestone Road, Ardoyne Shopfronts, North Queen Street/Duncairn Gardens, Whitewell Road and Ardoyne Road.

The second phase roll out allowed for wider community-based consultation, including community representatives, political representatives and other interested parties. The exact timing of such contacts is not held.

Primary Schools (Intake)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Department of Education funded primary schools in Northern Ireland had a September intake of fewer than *(a)* 12 and *(b)* nine pupils in P1 classes. [35321]

Angela E. Smith: The requested information is as follows:

Number of funded primary schools with fewer than 12 pupils in Year 1—290.

Number of funded primary schools with fewer than nine pupils in Year 1—193.

Sports Academy

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether the decision to establish a sports academy at the university of Ulster has been subject to an equality impact assessment; and if he will make a statement. [34607]

Angela E. Smith: In line with legislative requirements, the university carries out equality impact assessments where there is evidence to indicate that there may be differential impacts on one or more of the categories set out in the section 75 legislation; in this case, I understand that the university determined that it was not required.

Surplus School Places

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what strategic planning his Department has undertaken to address surplus school places in Northern Ireland. [35320]

Angela E. Smith: Surplus places are removed from the schools estate through closures and amalgamations, and through the capital programme which provides schools to meet long-term demand when buildings are replaced. The education and library boards and the Council for Catholic Maintained Schools are aware of the need to take action to tackle surplus places and I have offered some financial support towards the costs of bringing forward rationalisation proposals.

Following a review of the procurement and delivery arrangements for the schools' estate earlier this year, the Department of Education has been examining how to improve the planning of school provision in future, including the need for rationalisation, and intends to provide guidance to school authorities on longer term planning of the estate.

Sustainable Development

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what resources have been invested by the Department of the Environment in taking forward the sustainable development strategy; and if he will make a statement. [35344]

Angela E. Smith: It is recognised that in recent years a substantial amount of the Department of the Environment's environmental policy resource was directed towards reducing the backlog in the transposition of EU directives. This had a detrimental effect on the production of the Northern Ireland sustainable development strategy. With work on the directives largely up to date the Department allocated resources to take forward the sustainable development strategy in April 2004. From September 2005 this team was increased to six staff equating in monetary terms to c. £210,000 annually.

Tourism

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he has taken to emphasise *(a)* the Ulster Scots connection and *(b)* the Scots Irish influence in the promotion of Northern Ireland as a tourist destination, with particular reference to visitors from the United States. [31278]

Angela E. Smith: Activity to harness the tourism opportunity presented by the Ulster Scots culture requires close working between a number of agencies.

In 2003–04 Tourism Ireland Ltd. (TIL) undertook a number of activities specifically aimed at the Ulster Scots audience in the United States. Advertisements were placed in US-based publications and TIL also distributed Ulster Scots Agency publications to key players throughout the United States. In addition, research undertaken by TIL in 2003 on the Ulster Scots market was used to inform the Northern Ireland Tourist Board's marketing activities in the current year.

TIL has the job to attract visitors to Northern Ireland, the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) has the responsibility to ensure that they have a worthwhile, authentic and memorable experience when they get here.

In order to deliver on the potential of the Ulster Scots connection, NITB has identified the need for a brochure which will tell the Northern Ireland story and encourage additional visits. The NITB has worked with the Ulster Scots Agency in the preparation of a new publication targeted specifically at United States visitors. The publication will be available in January 2006.

In 2007 Northern Ireland will be featured in the Smithsonian Institution's annual Folklife festival which takes place in Washington DC and attracts over one million visitors. The Smithsonian Institution intends to present a balanced, multi-faceted programme reflecting Northern Ireland's contemporary life. Ulster Scots traditions are included in the research for the festival programme.

Union Flag

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what buildings in Northern Ireland are designated as Government buildings for the purposes of flying the Union flag on designated days; on what date Churchill House was removed as a Government building for that purpose; and what other recent changes have been made to the list of Government buildings so designated. [34769]

Mr. Hanson: The specified Government buildings are listed in Part I of the Schedule of the Flags Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000. These are Adelaide House, Castle Buildings, Churchill House, Clarence House, Dundonald House, Netherleigh House and Rathgael House. There have been no amendments to Part I of the Schedule since the regulations came into force and therefore Churchill House has not been removed.

SCOTLAND

Departmental Assets

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will list the 10 most valuable *(a)* movable and *(b)* immovable assets owned by his Department. [27379]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office has listed all its valuable movable and immovable assets, as underpinned in the 2004–05 resource accounts:

£000

	Net book value
Movable	
Equipment	62
IT hardware	47
Software	35
Immovable	
Dover House, London	1,090
Fixtures and fittings	121

Departmental Estate

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what *(a)* land and *(b)* property his Department (i) owns and (ii) rents in each constituency; and if he will make a statement. [33257]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office does not own or rent any land or own any properties. However, the Office rents two buildings, which are detailed as follows:

Name and address	*Constituency*
Dover House, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2AU	Cities of London and Westminster
1 Melville Crescent, Edinburgh, EH3 7HW	Edinburgh North and Leith

The Office also has a small presence in the following properties:

Name and address	*Constituency*
Meridian Court, Cadogan Street, Glasgow, G2 6AT	Glasgow Central
50 Frederick Street, Edinburgh, EH2 1NG	Edinburgh North and Leith

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many staff in his Department were *(a)* civil servants, *(b)* contractors and *(c)* other staff in each year since 1997. [27455]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office was established on 1 July 1999.

The number of civil servants working in the Office can be found in Civil Service Statistics, published by the Cabinet Office. This publication is available in the Library or online at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_of_the_civil_service/statistics/contents_for_civil_service_statistics_2004_report/index.asp

The Scotland Office has not employed any contractors.

The total numbers of temporary staff in the Scotland Office and Office of the Advocate-General was:

	Number of individual temporary staff
1999–2000	13
2000–01	16
2001–02	19
2002–03	15
2003–04	20
2004–05	6

Identity Cards

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what estimate he has made of the *(a)* total and *(b)* net cost of (i) integrating the proposed identity card scheme into his Department's IT systems and (ii) the ongoing operation of the scheme within his Department. [31113]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office has a very limited number of executive functions and at this stage we do not anticipate any need to integrate our IT system with the identity card scheme.

Sick Leave

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how many of his Department's employees who are within one year of the official retirement age are on extended sick leave. [32596]

David Cairns: All the staff in the Scotland Office are on loan from the Scottish Executive or the Department for Constitutional Affairs. No staff within one year of the official retirement age are on extended sick leave.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Employment Rights

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the reason was for the recent withdrawal of booklets on employment rights by the Department; and if he will re-introduce the publication of those booklets. [35528]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 7 December 2005]:* It is our aim to provide up to date information that meets our end users' needs. Our end users have generally told us that they do not need detailed explanations of the law, but rather practical advice and guidance on what they should actually do in respect of employment issues. The Department decided that the best way to deliver this service was through frontline providers such as ACAS who are closer to our end users. ACAS produces a series of booklets summarising individual rights and runs a helpline to provide practical advice. I understand that feedback on these has generally been very positive.

The Department continues to provide full explanations of employment law for those customers who need it on the internet. Providing this information via the internet enables officials to update text easily and avoid delays to users. Special measures are in place for hard copies of these publications to be provided for those with disabilities or without access to the internet.

EU Tariffs

Michael Gove: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the EU's average applied tariff rate on *(a)* agricultural and *(b)* non agricultural imports from the rest of the world was on the last date for which figures are available; and what the average rates would be if the EU's current offer in the World Trade Organisation is accepted. [34764]

Ian Pearson: The information is as follows.

(a) The EU's average applied tariff on agricultural imports in 2005, as reported in the WTO statistical database, is 5.9 per cent. The EU offer represents an average tariff reduction of 39 per cent. for the EU agricultural tariff schedule, but the resulting average applied tariff will depend on which tariff lines are selected as sensitive products.

(b) The EU's average applied tariff on non-agricultural imports in 2005, as reported in the WTO statistical database, is 4.0 per cent. If the EU offer is accepted the resulting average tariff would be 2.3 per cent.

Export Credits Guarantee Department

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what account was taken by the Export Credits Guarantee Department in advancing a guarantee to Mabey and Johnson Ltd. on 30 August for the supply of flyovers and bridges in the Philippines of a complaint registered against the project with the Philippines ombudsman on 9 August. [33931]

Ian Pearson: ECGD was made aware of the complaint which is being investigated by the Philippines ombudsman. It consists of a number of unproven allegations relating to an earlier project. As such, ECGD concluded that there were no grounds to withhold its guarantee.

Fur Import Ban

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he plans to ban the import of cat and dog fur from China; and what penalties he has power to impose on those found to have breached such a ban. [34606]

Ian Pearson: The Government share the ethical abhorrence felt on hearing reports of cruelty to domestic cats and dogs. However, to date, the Government have no evidence of imports of domestic cat and dog fur into the UK. In a statement to Parliament on 28 January 2005 the Government made it clear that they are committed to establishing the facts about this issue and taking practical and proportionate action in response. We continue to believe, given EU competence on commercial policy, that any action is best pursued at EU level. We continue to discuss this with the European Commission.

Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the timetable is for his Department's proposals to amend the Housing Grants, Construction and Regeneration Act 1996. [35480]

Alun Michael: Officials at the Department of Trade and Industry and Welsh Assembly Government are currently preparing an analysis of the responses to the consultation and will be publishing it shortly. We have already committed to consult further on amendments to the legislation. Current plans are to issue this consultation in spring next year. The timetable for amendment to the legislation will be dependant on the outcome of this consultation and parliamentary business.

Operating and Financial Review

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if he will make a statement on the Government's implementation of the Modernisation Directive requirements for an expanded directors' report for large and medium-sized companies following the Government's decision to abolish the operating and financial review; [35013]

(2) if he will make a statement on his Department's implementation of the Companies Act 1985 (Operating and Financial Review and Directors' Report etc.) Regulations 2005 (S.I. 2005/1011). [35014]

Alun Michael: The Government intend to bring forward regulations, before the recess, under section 257 of the Companies Act 1985 to repeal the provisions of that Act which impose obligations on companies in relation to the preparation of operating and financial reviews. The regulations will leave in place those provisions of the Companies Act 1985 relating to the requirements to prepare a business review which are necessary to implement the Accounts Modernisation Directive (2003/51/EC). We will also bring forward amendments to the Company Law Reform Bill in due course.

Research and Development

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total value is of research and development grants awarded to companies in Northamptonshire in each year since 1997. [36144]

Alun Michael: From 1997 to 2004, businesses in Northamptonshire were awarded a total of £1,567,699 through Grant for Research and Development and the legacy Smart scheme as shown in the following table:

	Value of offers (£)
1997	131,453
1998	214,051
1999	260,576
2000	316,425
2001	203,800
2002	285,000
2003	63,228
2004	94,166

Kitty Ussher: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many research and development grants have been awarded to companies in the *(a)* micro, *(b)* research, *(c)* development and *(d)* exceptional category of his Department's research and development programme in each year for which figures are available, broken down by region; what the total value was of private sector contributions to funded projects in each year and category; and what the nearest available equivalent information is for predecessor schemes in each of the previous five years. [35501]

Alun Michael: The number of grant for research and development awards since the product's introduction in June 2003 is shown in the following tables together with the total value of private sector contributions.

Number of grant for research and development offers

2004–05

Region	Micro	Research	Development	Exceptional
East	10	23	26	1
East Midlands	1	12	9	—
London	3	29	13	2
North East	5	6	16	—
North West	5	17	27	2
South East	11	13	17	2
South West	6	6	7	—
West Midlands	4	10	15	—
Yorks and Humber	14	21	14	—
Minimum private sector contribution (£ million)	1.11	5.93	32.89	4.98

2003–04

Region	Micro	Research	Development	Exceptional
East	14	32	11	7
East Midlands	13	7	10	—
London	14	24	13	—
North East	3	1	6	—
North West	29	17	17	1
South East	14	24	29	1
South West	14	4	10	2
West Midlands	7	4	13	—
Yorks and Humber	16	14	17	1
Minimum private sector contribution (£ million)	2.17	5.31	28.91	8.30

Information for the legacy Smart scheme is shown in the following tables:

Number of Smart offers

2004–05

Region	Micro	Feasibility	Development	Exceptional
East	—	—	—	—
East Midlands	—	—	—	—
London	—	1	—	—
North East	—	2	—	—
North West	—	1	1	—
South East	—	—	—	—
South West	—	—	—	—
West Midlands	—	—	—	—
Yorks and Humber	—	—	—	—
Minimum private sector contribution (£ million)	—	0.06	0.21	—

2003–04

Region	Micro	Feasibility	Development	Exceptional
East	7	81	20	2
East Midlands	4	22	8	—
London	2	42	13	1
North East	3	19	5	—
North West	4	57	19	1
South East	20	84	29	2
South West	7	8	1	—
West Midlands	2	8	2	—
Yorks and Humber	5	38	14	—
Minimum private sector contribution (£ million)	0.48	5.21	25.66	5.01

2002–03

Region	Micro	Feasibility	Development	Exceptional
East	13	104	49	1
East Midlands	7	31	29	2
London	18	43	12	1
North East	8	24	4	—
North West	27	74	32	1
South East	20	127	48	3
South West	21	29	15	—
West Midlands	1	28	14	—
Yorks and Humber	28	37	32	1
Minimum private sector contribution (£ million)	1.38	6.51	52.97	6.72

2001–02

Region	Micro	Feasibility	Development	Exceptions
East	5	48	28	—
East Midlands	18	22	7	—
London	7	26	5	—
North East	1	14	1	1
North West	14	69	28	—
South East	12	69	19	3
South West	27	20	18	1
West Midlands	13	33	15	1
Yorks and Humber	14	44	31	—
Minimum private sector contribution (£ million)	1.03	5.05	34.50	5.71

2000—01

Region	Micro	Feasibility	Development	Exceptional
East	—	38	20	1
East Midlands	—	25	10	—
London	—	7	7	—
North East	—	7	3	—
North West	—	36	26	—
South East	—	45	30	2
South West	—	16	10	—
West Midlands	—	33	15	—
Yorks and Humber	—	26	24	—
Centrally administered[1]	108	—	—	9
Minimum private sector contribution (£ million)	1.02	3.42	29.47	10.36

1999–2000

Region	Feasibility	Development	Exceptional
East	44	21	—
East Midlands	18	16	—
London	11	4	—
North East	19	12	—
North West	16	8	—
South East	21	19	—
South West	22	14	—
West Midlands	31	6	—
Yorks and Humber	32	22	—
Centrally administered[1]	—	—	3
Minimum private sector contribution (£ million)	3.09	21.17	2.41

1998–99

Region	Feasibility	Development	Exceptional
East	28	22	—
East Midlands	26	14	—
London	12	10	—
North East	16	8	—
North West	17	16	—
South East	35	22	—
South West	26	16	—
West Midlands	32	17	—
Yorks and Humber	39	24	—
Centrally administered[1]	—	—	3
Minimum private sector contribution (£ million)	3.28	27.97	2.64

[1] Prior to August 2000, exceptional projects were administered centrally by SBS.

Small Businesses

Kitty Ussher: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what progress he has made in his discussions with Government Departments towards implementing a mandatory small business research initiative programme. [35493]

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Alun Michael: My right hon. Friend, the Chancellor of the Exchequer, mandated departments to participate in the Small Business Research Initiative in the Budget on 16 March this year and the DTI's Small Business Service will shortly be publishing the overall performance figures, for 2003–04 and 2004–05.

The Government are taking steps to improve disclosure of SBRI performance by Departments and a new system of record keeping will be in place from April 2006.

Kitty Ussher: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what criteria he will use to ascertain whether the mandatory Small Business Research Initiative is a success. [35500]

Alun Michael: The Small Business Research Initiative target is that at least 2.5 per cent. of the value of the extramural research and development contracts of Government Departments' and agencies' will be placed with small firms. The Initiative will be considered a success when we are able to demonstrate that this has been achieved.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many businesses have started in Coventry, South with the help of the Small Business Service since its inception; and how much funding was disbursed by the Small Business Service to these businesses. [35216]

Alun Michael: I understand that Business Link Coventry and Warwickshire, has helped 455 individuals in Coventry, South with their business start up plans. Of these 60 are known for certain to have started a business.

The support offered to new businesses does not include the provision of start up grants. Since 2000 I understand that Business Link Coventry and Warwickshire has spent some £600,000 of its funding on helping start-ups in the Coventry and Warwickshire area.

Telephone Preference Service

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1360W, on the telephone preference service, how many *(a)* informal warning letters the Information Commissioner has issued to companies in each of the last five years in respect of breaching the telephone preference scheme and *(b)* companies have received (i) more than one informal warning letter, (ii) between two and 10 informal warning letters and (iii) in excess of 10 informal warning letters. [33961]

Alun Michael: I am advised that as explained in the Commissioner's previous correspondence about statistics, the database that the Commissioner's office uses to record complaints about breaches of the Privacy and Electronic Communications (EC Directive) Regulations 2003 (PECR), which includes the TPS scheme, does not enable his office to determine how many of the complaints they receive about telephone calls are TPS registered. In addition, due to the nature of the casework management system previously used, his office is unable to provide specific numbers for telephone marketing complaints prior to 2004.

The number of letters the Commissioner's office wrote to organisations that were alleged to be at fault was 597 in 2004 and 1,125 so far this year. The increase in complaints corresponds with the sharp increase in TPS registrations. On the issue of multiple warning letters to individual companies, his office is unable to provide precise statistics from their database, although there are a number of companies that they have written to on several occasions for potential breaches of PECR. Where it is considered that a company has persistently breached PECR, cases are sent to their new Regulatory Action Division who consider enforcement.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

AIDS/HIV

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what action his Department is taking to tackle AIDS and HIV in China. [36198]

Mr. Thomas: DFID is providing £25 million to tackle HIV and AIDS in China. This support is focused on helping the poorest and most vulnerable groups, especially injecting drugs users and sex workers, to benefit from prevention and care services. It also aims to increase the coverage and quality of prevention and care and to increase the capacity of the government to develop and implement effective responses to HIV and AIDS. There is a particular focus on Yunnan and Sichuan provinces in southwest China. Support is also provided to the central government and to Hunan, Hubei, Gansu, Guangxi, Jilin and Zhejiang provinces.

DFID is discussing a new programme of up to £30 million to support the Chinese Government's plans to increase work on HIV and AIDS. This programme would be co-ordinated with the United Nations and the Global Fund on AIDS, TB and Malaria. The programme is expected to be approved in April 2006 and to last for five years.

Asian Earthquake

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the *(a)* organisations in receipt of monies made available by his Department in response to the recent earthquake in Kashmir and Pakistan and *(b)* the amounts given; and if he will break down those amounts by (i) grant and (ii) loan. [35116]

Mr. Thomas *[holding answer 5 December 2005]*: DFID has allocated £58 million for the continuing relief effort. The details of grants provided to date in support of organisations' humanitarian response are as follows.

Partner	*Activity*	*Amount (£)*
Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs)		
Oxfam	3,500 winterised family tents. 19,700 collapsible 10-litre jerry cans 7,530 wool blankets 40,000 sleeping mats 20,000 tarpaulins	[1]998,448
Oxfam	Water and Sanitation	560,000
Islamic Relief	10,000 tarpaulins 20,000 blankets 1,000 winterised family tents	[1]258,000
Christian Aid/Church World Services	1,000 winterised tents in-kind; Programme for shelter, food and first aid. 2,000 tarps from Lahore (£10,000)	[2]310,000
Save the Children UK	Provision of shelter, blankets, clothing, primary health care, psycho social support to children	300,000
Save the Children UK	Shelter	600,000
Save the Children India	Shelter	500,000
Action Aid	Food packages, health centres, psycho social support, and shelter; 1,250 tarps from Lahore (£6,100)	306,100
Rural Support Programme Network (RSPN)	Tents, food, sanitation, water; 2,750 tarps from Lahore (£13,500)	313,500
Mercy Corps	Health units, emergency obstetrics and outreach	212,000
International Health Partners	Provision of various emergency medicines	50,000
Nprwegian Refugee Council	Stoves and fuel	300,000
Norwegian Refugee Council	Shelter	700,000
CAFOD	Water and Sanitation and shelter, and cash for work; 2,000 tarps from Lahore (10,000)	310,000
International Medical Corp (IMC)	Mobile health clinics, primary health care training, distribution of hygiene kits	289,000
GOAL	2,000 tarps from Lahore	10,000
ACTED	Shelter, toolkits and latrines	300,000
Action Against Hunger	Water and Sanitation	337,123
Internews	Communication, support to journalist training, radio distribution	300,000
Tearfund	Shelter	498,964
Merlin	To set up two field trauma units in the Panj Kot valley. Support to four Primary Health Centres and health outreach via mobile units.	800,000
Australian Aid International	Health	199,424
UN Agencies		
World Health Organisation (WHO)	Shipment of health and trauma kits to Pakistan (covering 40,000 people for 3 months) and programme surveillance and response teams. 1 staff secondment 3 months.	670,000
Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	HIC module plus vehicle; other in-kind support (vehicles, staff secondments).	[1]350,000
OCHA	Co-ordination and additional support to the HIC	750,000
United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS)	Support for helicopters, one refueler	2,258,250
United Nations Joint Logistics Centre (UNJLC)	Staff secondments	50,000
World Food Programme (WFP)	Logistics support	800,000
WFP	EMOP food support	650,000
United Nations Department for Safety and Security (UNDSS)	Four vehicles to support UNDSS and relief worker safety and security	[1]150,000
International Organisation for Migration (IOM)	Shelter packages including tents, stoves and cooking equipment, including 2 staff secondments	830,000

Partner	Activity	Amount (£)
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	Water and Sanitation, staff secondment	1,080,000
Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)	Camp Management, staff secondments	1,250,000
Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement		
International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC)	Helicopters, winter clothing, tents and food in Pakistan administered Kashmir; one refueler.	2,078,250
Federation	Relief supplies for NWFP Pakistan	1,500,000

[1] In kind.
[2] Including £115,000 in kind.

All of our humanitarian assistance support through the above organisations is through grants. It does not involve loans. DFID is also providing a range of direct actions, including helicopter provision and other support for the United Nations and the funding of 78 flights for agencies of the Disasters Emergency Committee. Full details of DFID's response actions can be seen in the regular DFID Situation Reports, available at www.dfid.gov.uk.

In addition to our humanitarian response, we are contributing £70 million over three years for the reconstruction effort. This money will be provided to support Government of Pakistan programmes. The details of how this payment will be made and audited are being finalised.

British Overseas Territories

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what funding has been allocated from his Department for the improvement of transport links *(a)* to and from and *(b)* within each British Overseas Territory in each of the last seven years. [33767]

Mr. Thomas: Our contributions to costs of maintaining or improving transport links have been included within our overall assistance. Since 1998, these have included:

joint funding (with the European Union) of a new airport for Montserrat (around £11 million); ferry and operating subsidies for Montserrat (about £2 million annually);

technical assistance for the extension of the airport runway in Anguilla (£0.57 million); civil aviation advice for the Turks and Caicos Islands (£420,000);

an annual subsidy to maintain operation of the 'RMS St. Helena' (approximately £2 million annually);

refurbishment of the Hill of Difficulty Road, the jetty and the slipway at Bounty Bay in Pitcairn (£2.1 million);

technical support for roads improvements in Anguilla (£130,000);

support, through budgetary assistance, for regular roads maintenance work in Montserrat and St .Helena;

a project, in partnership with the EU, to carry out repairs to Tristan da Cunha's only harbour, due to commence in 2006.

I announced plans last March to build an airport in St. Helena, subject to satisfactory contract bids and a rigorous environmental impact assessment.

EU Agricultural Policies

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the impact of EU agricultural policies on people in developing countries. [35037]

Mr. Thomas: The Government acknowledge the damaging impact that dumping and trade-distorting subsidies have on developing countries, particularly on their agriculture sectors. We fully support the commitment made at the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Doha Ministerial meeting in 2001, which agreed that agriculture negotiations would aim to achieve: substantial improvements in market access; reductions of, with a view to phasing out, all forms of export subsidies; and substantial reductions in trade-distorting domestic support.

The package of reforms to the EU's Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) agreed in June 2003 and May 2004 mark a significant shift in the EU's agricultural policy. The de-coupling of subsidies from production should connect European farmers much more closely to the market and have real impacts on reducing excessive production, which results in dumping and harms developing countries. The Government will continue to be at the forefront of those pushing for further reform of the EU's agricultural policy and I welcome the fact that the Commission has re-affirmed its commitment to ensuring that the EU plays a full and constructive role in the WTO agriculture negotiations. I also welcome the commitment in the WTO to agree to set an end date for all export supports. The UK believes these should end by 2010.

The Doha Development Agenda and specifically the WTO Ministerial Conference in Hong Kong represent an important opportunity to make a significant contribution to reducing global poverty. The UK Government are working to achieve an outcome that delivers real gains for developing countries, including the poorest. These gains should include improved participation by developing countries in the world trading system, through substantially increased market access for developing countries and the dismantling of trade-distorting agricultural subsidies by industrialised countries.

Free Trade

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking to promote free trade with developing countries; and if he will make a statement. [35131]

Mr. Thomas: The UK Government are committed to the development of an open and rules-based international trading system that fulfils its potential to contribute to the reduction of poverty in poorer countries. Our key policy commitments on trade and development, as well as our objectives for the current round of multilateral trade talks, are set out in the Government's White Papers, "Making Globalisation a Force for Good"(July 2004) and "Eliminating World Poverty: Making Globalisation Work for the Poor" (December 2000). The UK Government are working hard to support the poorest and most vulnerable producers, be it through multilateral negotiations in the World Trade Organisation (WTO) or regional trade agreements such as the Economic Partnership Agreements.

The UK Government do not support forced liberalisation or unfettered free trade but trade that is fair as well as free. The UK Government support the view that developing countries need to decide on the timing, pace and sequencing of any market opening in line with their own national development and poverty reduction plans. In the context of the WTO negotiations we are firmly committed to ensuring that developing countries are given appropriate flexibility to adjust to trade reforms.

In the long term, the removal of trade barriers, if managed properly, can help developing countries gain better access to developed country markets and more competitively priced inputs. By increasing Aid for Trade, (AFT) the UK hopes to help poorer countries seize the opportunities presented by more open markets. DFID will treble its support to £100 million a year by 2010 to help boost poor countries' capacity to trade.

At the WTO ministerial in Hong Kong we are working with international partners to deliver on the ambition of Doha and build on G8 commitments. The UK Government are working to achieve an outcome that delivers real gains for developing countries, including the poorest.

Intellectual Property Rights

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much his Department has spent on enabling the least developed countries to meet the economic, administrative and legal challenges of making use of the flexibilities within the agreement on the trade related aspects of intellectual property rights of the World Trade Organisation. [35205]

Hilary Benn: DFID has been funding several programmes specifically around, or incorporating activities, on Trade Related Intellectual Property Rights (TRIPS) flexibilities in the context of its global strategy to improve access to essential medicines.

We have been providing support to the World Health Organisation's Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation and Public Health (CIPIH), which is reporting in January 2006, with the secondment of an official to lead the secretariat of the Commission (three-year project: £240,000).

We have been funding legal research and assistance on how to implement the flexibilities, with for instance the recent release of the UNCTAD-International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development's "Resource Book on TRIPS and Development" (part of a three-year £1.2 million project), published this year.

DFID also supports country-focused work on the issue. In Ghana, we support an Access to Medicines Initiative (ATMI) through the Ghana National Drugs Programme that includes work on TRIPS flexibilities. The DFID Health Resource Centre commissioned a series of studies that looked at access to medicines in under-served markets, including country case studies in Kenya and Malawi. A study on China and India investigates the effects of changing intellectual property legislation on the pharmaceutical industry in these countries, and in a recent update, the consequences of the alignment with TRIPS obligations in 2005.

Palestinian Authority

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what measures are in place to ensure accountability for funds transferred from *(a)* the UK and *(b)* the European Union for development assistance in the Palestinian Authority; and if he will make a statement. [35433]

Mr. Thomas: Both the UK Government and the European Commission take concerns over the use of aid very seriously. DFID has co-ordinated closely with the European Commission, the International Monetary Fund, the World Bank and other donors in ensuring that the Palestinian Authority (PA) makes proper use of donor funds.

Since 2004, part of both UK and European Community (EC) funding for the Palestinians has been provided to the PA budget through the World Bank-managed Reform Trust Fund. Release of funds is linked to the achievement of benchmarks for reform. Progress is carefully monitored. This process has helped the PA to improve its financial control and management. It also reflects our commitment that aid should be properly accounted for, used for the intended purposes and represent value for money. Other forms of UK and EC assistance for Palestinians have been provided through organisations whose accounts are reliably audited.

DEFENCE

Aircraft Landing Rights

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions since 2001 US-registered aircraft tail number *(a)* N44982, formerly N8068V and N379P and *(b)* N313P has landed in the United Kingdom; and at which military airfields. [33247]

Mr. Ingram: The information requested has not been recorded centrally over the last five years and could be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

Aldermaston

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will amend the 25 year contract for the running of AWE Aldermaston, in relation to the number of shares held by each member of the consortium. [34868]

John Reid: The AWE contract does not stipulate the shareholding of individual consortium members.

Al-Yamamah Programme

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will publish the 1992 National Audit Office report into charges of corruption by BAE Systems in connection with the al-Yamamah programme; and if he will make a statement. [34830]

John Reid *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* I assume the question refers to the 1992 National Audit Office report on the Ministry of Defence's involvement in the al-Yamamah programme. The report refers to confidential arrangements between the Governments of the United Kingdom and Saudi Arabia.

The then Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee decided that the NAO report should not be published and that it should be handled on a highly restricted basis. In a review by the parliamentary ombudsman January 2003–04, the ombudsman concluded that

> "I am satisfied that the NAO report is covered by parliamentary privilege and that the decision as to whether or not to disclose the report is properly a matter for Parliament."

In considering the report, the then PAC chairman stated

> "I did an investigation and I find no evidence that the MOD made improper payments. I have found no evidence of fraud or corruption. The deal . . . complied with Treasury approval and the rules of Government accounting."

Anglo-Polish Navy Exercises

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will attend one of the joint Anglo-Polish navy exercises in 2006. [33889]

Mr. Ingram: At present, I have no plans to attend one of the joint Anglo-Polish navy exercises in 2006.

Armed Services (Recruitment)

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what terms of reference were used to scope options for *(a)* collection and *(b)* management of data concerning the potential recruitment pool for the armed services; and what steps were taken to investigate the availability of independent experts to conduct this research. [26275]

Mr. Touhig: The armed forces conducts a range of research as part of its recruit marketing operation. All market research and collection and management of response-driven data is carried out via the Central Office of Information using their agency roster. This ensures that independent experts carry out this function on behalf of the Services.

DARA (St. Athan)

Kitty Ussher: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will meet representatives of the Amicus trade union to discuss the potential for future defence contracts being awarded to the Defence Aviation Repair Agency, St. Athan. [31388]

Mr. Ingram: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence has already met with Derek Simpson, the General Secretary, from the Amicus Trade Union to discuss the future of the Defence Aviation Repair Agency site at St. Athan.

Defence Headquarters

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to collocate HQ Land Command and HQ Adjutant-General; and how he intends to announce his plans. [35720]

Mr. Ingram: Work to consider the benefits of rationalisation and collocation of the two main Army HQs—HQ Land Command (currently based in Wilton) and HQ Adjutant-General (currently based in Upavon)—is ongoing. The Army is currently determining the possible size and structure of the new HQ organisation and, in parallel, assessing a number of local site options. We expect to know the outcome of this analysis in early 2006 and then to inform the House accordingly. Staff and the trade unions are being kept closely in touch with developments and formal consultation will commence in 2006.

Departmental Finance

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will place in the Library a copy of *(a)* his Department's output categories for financial years (i) 2004–05 and (ii) 2005–06 and *(b)* the STPO5 Overseas Security and Policy Paper. [32703]

John Reid: Schedule 5 of the Departmental Resource Accounts sets out costs by Departmental aims and objectives. These are in effect high-level output categories. Data for financial year 2004–05 were published on 28 October 2005 and copies of the relevant accounts have been placed in the Library of the House. On current plans, the format of Schedule 5 of the Resource Accounts is unlikely to change for financial year 2005–06.

I am unable to place a copy of the Overseas Security and Policy Paper in the Library of the House as it is a confidential document and its release would prejudice the formulation of Government policy and have a detrimental impact on international relations.

EU Arms Embargoes

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many countries are members of the NATO Partnership for Peace programme and also the subject of an EU arms embargo. [30868]

Dr. Howells: I have been asked to reply.

There is only one country (Uzbekistan) that is a member of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation Partnership for Peace Programme and also the subject of an EU arms embargo. The embargo was agreed on 14 November 2005.

Ground-based Air Defence

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on plans for future ground-based air defence. [34363]

Mr. Ingram: We remain committed to delivering an effective Ground Based Air Defence (GBAD) capability to meet envisaged threats. From 2008 GBAD capability will be delivered by the Army, deploying Rapier Field Standard C and the High Velocity Missile, with a Joint Headquarters located at RAF High Wycombe.

Helicopters

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* Lynx AH 7 and *(b)* Lynx AH 9 helicopters are fit for operations; what his plans are for the cannibalisation of army and navy helicopters during the next 12 months; and how many (i) Lynx AH 7 and (ii) Lynx AH 9 helicopters have been cannibalised in the last two years. [33405]

Mr. Ingram: In October 2005, 31 Lynx AH Mk 7 and eight Lynx AH Mk 9 helicopters were defined as Fit for Purpose (FFP). As stated in my answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 120W, the numbers of helicopters that have been cannibalised is not held centrally. Records are maintained only of the total number of times that cannibalisation has taken place. The following table shows this information for Lynx AH Mk 7 and Mk 9, for the periods November 2003 to October 2004 and for November 2004 to October 2005.

	Aircraft type	
Total cannibalisations	*Lynx AH Mk 7*	*Lynx AH Mk 9*
November 2003-October 2004	463	37
November 2004-October 2005	573	108
Last two years	1,036	145

All instances of cannibalisation of Royal Navy, Army and RAF helicopters are authorised and undertaken in accordance with clearly defined regulations. This process will continue to be employed where appropriate.

Landing Ship Dock (Auxiliary) Project

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many design changes have been made to the Landing Ship Dock (Auxiliary) Project by *(a)* BAE Systems and *(b)* Swan Hunter; and what has been the cost to his Department of these changes. [34030]

Mr. Ingram: As the Design Authority for the Landing Ship Dock (Auxiliary) Programme, Swan Hunter have considered numerous proposals for design changes as part of the ship building process. The costs are part of the price of the Swan Hunter contract. Some of the design changes have led to claims from BAES for delay and dislocation to their shipbuilding programme, not all of these claims have been resolved and therefore a revised contract price for BAES is not yet available.

Non-depleted Uranium Ammunition

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on progress with introducing the new non-depleted uranium ammunition for Challenger 2 tanks. [32683]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence is investigating the feasibility of new non-depleted uranium ammunition for Challenger, and initial de-risking work is being undertaken by BAE Systems.

Remembrance Day Poppies

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department *(a)* was consulted by and *(b)* offered advice to the Royal British Legion on the risks of pinning Remembrance Day poppies onto the clothing of purchasers. [26871]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 14 November 2005]:* So far as I am aware, the Ministry of Defence was neither consulted nor offered advice on this matter.

Shropshire Light Infantry

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many service personnel from the Shropshire Light Infantry are serving in Iraq. [33419]

Mr. Ingram: There are currently 14 members of the Shropshire Light Infantry serving in Iraq.

UK Military Airfields (Arrests)

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether UK military police have lawful authority to arrest individuals suspected of criminal offences who are on board aircraft which transit through UK military airfields; and if he will make a statement. [33938]

Mr. Ingram: The United Kingdom military police have lawful authority to arrest an individual suspected of a criminal offence if that person is subject to UK military law. This power is set out in the Service Discipline Acts.

Veteran Medal

Jim Sheridan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many veterans in Paisley and Renfrewshire, North constituency have applied for veteran medals in the last five years. [28959]

Mr. Touhig: Records of applications are not broken down by geographical area, however a total of 21 badges have been issued since April 2005.

CABINET OFFICE

Business Regulation (Kettering)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will visit Kettering to discuss reducing the level of regulation on business. [34969]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Cabinet Office Ministers currently have no plans to visit Kettering. However, businesses can submit suggestions to Government for areas where regulations are placing an unnecessary burden on them through the www.betterregulation.gov.uk web portal. Departments will be obliged to respond to proposals within 90 working days.

Civil Service Pensions

Mr. Mudie: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what estimate he has made of the annual amount which would be raised if civil servants were required to pay a 6 per cent. contribution to their pension scheme. [35592]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Government have not made any estimate of the annual amount that would be raised if civil servants were required to pay a 6 per cent. contribution to their pension scheme. Civil servants currently pay contributions of either 1.5 per cent. or 3.5 per cent. of pensionable earnings depending on which section of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme they belong to. The total of these member contributions for the year 2004–05 as disclosed in the Civil Superannuation Resource Accounts was £256 million.

Nos. 10 and 11 Downing Street

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what plans there are to refurbish Numbers *(a)* 10 and *(b)* 11 Downing Street; and if he will make a statement. [36053]

Mr. Jim Murphy: I have nothing further to add to the answer given on 6 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 302W by the then Chancellor of the Duchy, my right hon. Friend the Member for Barrow and Furness (Mr. Hutton).

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Brownfield/Greenfield Land

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many acres of brownfield land there are in each London borough; and how many such sites are of half an acre or less; [33305]

(2) how many acres of *(a)* brownfield and *(b)* greenfield land there are in England, broken down by local authority. [33306]

Yvette Cooper: The National Land Use Database of Previously-Developed Land provides estimates of the amounts of previously developed vacant and derelict land in 2004. A table with this information has been made available in the Library of the House. The estimates include an allowance for the contribution from small sites but these are not generally recorded separately and no count is available. The table also shows the amounts of land not in built-up areas (greenfield). The built-up areas are those with a population of 1,000 or more and are for 2001. They include green spaces if they are within the built-up area.

Catalyst Corby-North Northants Together

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister in what month he expects a decision to be made on the appointment of a new chairman and chief executive for the merged Catalyst Corby-North Northants Together. [34101]

Yvette Cooper: Following Baroness Andrews' provisional approval last month, the two bodies have just launched, on 2 December, a public consultation on the proposed merger. The merger aims to build on the considerable success of Catalyst Corby and the promising early work of North Northants Together and draw on the expertise of both organisations in driving and managing the delivery of sustainable growth in North Northamptonshire.

Responses to the consultation are invited by 27 January. Subject to the results, it is planned that the new organisation will start operations on 1 April 2006. Formal appointments to the board and of the executive staff will be made after the close of consultation, subject to final ministerial approval of the merger in the light of comments received.

Council Tax Revaluation

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 2062–63W, on council tax revaluation, how many of the 1,794,709 dwellings fall into each value significant code. [33742]

Mr. Woolas: Work on the collection of value significant codes is incomplete.

Departmental Research

Bob Spink: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what research projects commissioned by his Department are being undertaken; and what the publication arrangements are in each case. [33004]

Jim Fitzpatrick: A list of all research projects commissioned by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is available from the Research Management Database (RMD) at: http://www.rmd.odpm.gov.uk

Under the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Publication Scheme, we are committed to publishing research project reports within six months of project completion or, at the latest, when quality checks, including relevant peer review, are completed or when a policy decision based on its findings is publicised. Information on the project completion date is contained in the Research Management Database.

There are agreed publication timetables for a number of statistical research projects. This information is regularly updated and available at: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_about/documents/page/odpm_about_609298.hcsp

Designated Growth Areas

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1688–89W, on designated growth areas, (1) what evidential factors will be used to determine mainstream funding in each designated growth area in England; [31851]

(2) how much additional grant funding will be made available by his Department for designated growth areas within England; [31849]

(3) what estimate his Department has made of the amount of private funding that will be used within *(a)* the Milton Keynes growth area and *(b)* each other designated growth area towards infrastructure costs; and if he will make a statement. [31848]

Yvette Cooper: Mainstream Government funding is, by its nature, determined by the relevant Government Departments based on their own procedures for allocating funding towards meeting their objectives under their Public Service Agreement. For most Government programmes, this is covered by the

periodic spending reviews. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been working with Departments towards ensuring that growth is given due consideration in the allocation of funding. In a number of cases this would follow in the ordinary course, simply because funding levels are based on (among other factors) population. In other cases, specific mechanisms are available to safeguard rapidly growing areas.

To give an example from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's own departmental expenditure, population is an important factor in the allocation of revenue support grant (RSG) to local authorities. As a result of recent changes to the formula for allocating RSG, namely the abolition of "ceilings" and (as from 2006–07) the use of forward-looking population data, local government funding will be more responsive to the relatively rapid population growth associated with growth areas.

By way of example from another Department, capital funding from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) for new schools places responds formulaically to local authorities' estimates of pupil numbers. Local authorities in the growth areas should therefore be taking account of growth plans in their submission to DfES. Nonetheless, a "safety valve" mechanism has been put in place to allow exceptional needs resulting from unanticipated factors (which could include growth in pupil numbers) to be taken into account. A number of growth locations have accessed funding under this mechanism.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has made grant funding available exclusively in support of projects in the growth areas. The total amount of such funding, up to and including 2007–08, is around £1.25 billion. This does not include the £200 million to be made available to the growth areas by Department for Transport under the community infrastructure fund. Expenditure beyond 2007–08 will be subject to the forthcoming Comprehensive Spending Review. This expenditure will lever in funding from other sources. For example, it was estimated that the initial round of ODPM funding (amounting to just over £600m) would lever in funding of over £3 billion from other public and private sector partners (not including Department for Transport funding).

Private sector investment will respond to opportunities presented by the growth areas, e.g. investment by the privately owned utilities in water, wastewater and electricity supply infrastructure. In addition, housing developers will be expected to contribute to the infrastructure costs associated with housing development through Section 106 contributions. A good example of this is in Milton Keynes, where the local delivery vehicle Milton Keynes Partnerships Committee has been negotiating a standard charge of over £18,000 per house from developers in the east and west expansion flanks. This will generate approximately £300 million of funding to complement circa £900 million of funding from public sources in support of infrastructure to facilitate construction of 15,000 houses to 2016.

Disabled Facilities Grant

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of the disabled facilities grant funding stream from the Government Office for London was made available to the London borough of Croydon in 2004–05. [34970]

Yvette Cooper: The London borough of Croydon received a specified capital grant from Government of £591,000 in 2004–05 towards the authority's expenditure on Disabled Facilities Grants. This represents almost 4 per cent. of the total allocation for London of £15,282,000.

Energy Efficiency

David Howarth: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the interdepartmental committee on improving the energy performance of existing buildings set up by the Minister for Housing and Planning on 14 September is expected to complete its work; and what its terms of reference are. [35716]

Yvette Cooper: The aim of the review is to identify the scope for measures that can be taken in existing buildings to:

improve the sustainability, and in particular the energy and water efficiency of the building; and

make the building more resilient to the predicted effects of climate change; while

not adversely affecting either the building fabric or the health and safety of the occupants.

It is due to be completed by summer 2006.

EU Funded Projects (North-east)

Mr. Atkinson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the EU funded projects in the north-east of England which were identified by the European Court of Auditors as having *(a)* accounting errors and *(b)* inadequate documentation; and if he will make a statement. [35814]

Yvette Cooper: The European Court of Auditors carry out audits in all member states on all EC income and expenditure to ensure sound financial management and compliance with EC regulations. The audit in the north-east of England was conducted in July and October 2004. The findings of these audits are summarised in the European Court of Auditor's annual report to the European Parliament. The individual reports and the detail contained in them belong to the European Court of Auditors. They do not publish individual reports. The appropriate route to request the report is to apply in writing to the court.

Fire Service

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many attacks on fire crews have taken place in each county in England in each of the last eight years. [35463]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has been maintaining records of attacks on firefighters since April 2004. Prior to that date their was no requirement for the fire and rescue service to report attacks on firefighters.

Since April 2004 there has been in place a procedure for attacks on firefighters to be notified to the ODPM using the Fires and Incidents of Special Interest (FOSI) reporting procedures as detailed in Dear Chief Fire

Officer (DCOL) letter 3/2004 issued 1 April 2004. This procedure was updated by the issue of Fire and Rescue Service Circular 5/2005 issued on 15 February 2005. The following table shows a break down of notifications received by the ODPM of attacks on firefighters since the 1 April 2004:

FRS	*Number*
Avon	9
Bedfordshire	2
Buckinghamshire	6
Cambridgeshire	20
Cheshire	45
Cleveland	121
Cornwall	0
Cumbria	3
Derbyshire	8
Devon	4
Dorset	4
Durham	23
Essex	10
Gloucestershire	5
Greater Manchester	337
Hampshire	11
Hereford	0
Hertfordshire	1
Humberside	18
Isle of Wight	1
Kent	16
Lancashire	28
Lincolnshire	8
Leicestershire	9
London	5
Merseyside	267
Norfolk	3
Northamtonshire	1
Nottinghamshire	59
Northumberland	10
North Yorkshire	1
Oxfordshire	0
Royal Berkshire	7
Shropshire	0
South Yorkshire	54
Somerset	1
Staffordshire	15
Suffolk	4
Surrey	1
East Sussex	0
West Sussex	0
Tyne and Wear	24
Warwickshire	11
West Midlands	221
West Yorkshire	76
Wiltshire	0
Total	1,449

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the members of the project team for the delivery of *(a)* Fire Link and *(b)* Fire Capture; and from where each secondee on the team has been seconded. [35114]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Firelink and FiReControl project teams comprise civil servants, seconded fire and rescue service staff and consultants.

As of 30 November 2005 there were, for Firelink, 51 team members, including 12 officers seconded from the following fire and rescue services: London, West Yorkshire, Mid and West Wales, South Wales, Suffolk, East Sussex, Devon, Nottinghamshire, Staffordshire, Northumberland Lothian and Boarders and Strathclyde.

For FiReControl, there were 74 team members (70 full-time equivalents). The 13 secondees from the fire and rescue service are from Wiltshire, London, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, West Midlands, Greater Manchester, Tyne and Wear, Lancashire, Northumberland, Cumbria and South Wales. The project team number includes two full-time special advisers from the Chief Fire Officers' Association (CFOA).

Fire-prevention Sprinklers

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he plans to revise planning regulations and guidance to ensure that new-build commercial and residential properties are required to have fire-prevention sprinkler facilities as standard. [34967]

Yvette Cooper: Health and safety issues including construction standards for new buildings are included in Building Regulations rather than planning guidance. Guidance on measures that will meet the fire safety requirements of these Regulations is given in Approved Document B (or 'AD B'). AD B includes guidance on limiting the spread of fire in a building and on when sprinklers should be provided. AD B is intended to provide guidance only for some of the more common building situations; there may be other ways of complying with the Regulations, such as using sprinklers as a compensatory feature.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister recognises that the greater use of sprinklers could be beneficial, especially for those buildings where occupants are particularly vulnerable to fire. Therefore, ODPM recently consulted on a revised draft AD B which proposes the increased use of sprinklers. The public consultation is now closed and the responses are being considered. ODPM hopes to be in a position to publish a revised AD B around the end of 2006.

Flooding

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance his Department provides to *(a)* elected representatives and *(b)* the general public on planning applications relating to areas indicated on the website of the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs as prone to flooding; and if he will make a statement. [32619]

Yvette Cooper: Planning policy guidance on development and flood risk is contained in PPG25, published in 2001. It aims to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages in the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and to direct development away from areas at highest risk. PPG25 advises that the Environment Agency should be consulted on planning applications in flood risk areas, including areas shown on the Agency's Flood Maps, and that planning applications in such areas should be accompanied by a Flood Risk Assessment. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is now consulting on a new PPS25 which strengthens and clarifies these and other aspects of policy on this issue.

Green Belt

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the applications for building on greenbelt land in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [34328]

Yvette Cooper: Information on planning applications for building on Green Belt land is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Growth Areas Directorate

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many officials are assigned *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time to the Department's Growth Areas Directorate, broken down by grade; [34075]

(2) how many officials in the Department's Growth Areas Directorate are working *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time on recovering the growth agenda in Northamptonshire, broken down by grade. [34088]

Yvette Cooper: Growth Areas Division, which has responsibility for the three newer growth areas of Milton Keynes/South Midlands (including Northamptonshire), Ashford, London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough and the New Growth Points Initiative, currently has 15 staff. Its work is organised on a mix of area and thematic responsibilities and to reflect policy and business priorities.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent discussions have taken place between the Department's Growth Areas Directorate and officials in the *(a)* Department of Health, *(b)* Department for Education and Skills and *(c)* Home Office on adjusting future revenue spending in the growth areas to take account of house building. [34103]

Yvette Cooper: The Growth Areas Division in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has periodic discussion with other Government Departments on how mainstream programmes keep in step with growing populations. For example the ODPM has worked with the Department of Health to ensure that funding allocations to primary care trusts take account of growth. The Department of Health's announcement on primary care trust revenue funding on 9 February 2005 included a growth area adjustment.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent discussions the Department's Growth Areas Directorate has had with Anglian Water about the provision of water supplies and sewerage to North Northamptonshire. [34107]

Yvette Cooper: Growth Areas Division in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have held meetings with the water industry including Anglian Water on how the industry might respond to higher growth levels. This supplements the industry's discussion with local partners and delivery organisations.

High Hedges

Jeremy Wright: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many applications have been made to local authorities to reduce the height of hedges since the introduction of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. [34126]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Jeremy Wright: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment his Department has made of the impact of local authority fees on the willingness of applicants to use the process provided by the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 to deal with excessively high hedges. [34127]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has made no formal assessment of the impact of local authority fees on the willingness of applicants to use the process provided by the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 to deal with excessively high hedges. This part of the 2003 Act came into operation in June 2005 and so it is too soon to draw conclusions about the impact of local authority fees. We are also aware that authorities are keeping their fees for this service under review.

Jeremy Wright: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance he has issued to local councils on action they should take in response to an application under high hedges regulations to cut a hedge by more than a third to ensure reasonable enjoyment of a property. [34913]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has issued no guidelines on not cutting hedges by more than a third. Paragraph 6.24 of our publication 'High Hedges Complaints: Prevention and Cure' advises that Councils cannot order remedial works that would kill a hedge. In our view this would amount to the same as removing the hedge altogether and, under section 69(3) of the 2003 Act, Councils are expressly prevented from ordering action involving removal of a hedge.

How far one can reduce a hedge before it is killed will vary according to the particular circumstances and, to illustrate the point, we give the example of a healthy Leyland cypress hedge which will usually respond well to a reduction by up to one-third whereas an older specimen may not. There will be circumstances where Leyland cypress, or other species, may be reduced by more than one-third without destroying them.

Where local councils have concluded that remedial action is required to ensure reasonable enjoyment of a property, it is for them to decide what height the hedge should be reduced to while ensuring its survival. That judgment depends on the species of the shrubs or trees in the hedge, their age and health, and past management. We recommend councils, therefore, to consider each case on its merits and to obtain arboricultural advice.

Copies of 'High Hedges Complaints: Prevention and Cure' are available in the Library of the House. Further information is published on the Frequently Asked Questions pages of our website at www.odpm.gov.uk/treesandhedges, under the heading 'Remedial works'. This acknowledges that there may be some cases where councils could be prevented from requiring action that would provide a full remedy to the problems identified because it would kill the hedge. Nevertheless, they would still be able to order works that offer some relief to the complainant. In addition, if a complainant

considers that the action specified in a remedial notice does not go far enough, they can appeal against the council's decision to the Planning Inspectorate.

Homelessness

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many individuals were homeless in each district authority in Northamptonshire in each year since 1997. [34432]

Yvette Cooper: Information about local authorities' actions under homelessness legislation is collected in respect of households, rather than persons.

The number of households accepted as eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need in each year since 1997–98, and the number of households in temporary accommodation arranged by local authorities under homelessness legislation on 31 March each year as reported by each local authority in Northamptonshire is as tabled.

The duty owed to a person accepted as eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in priority need is to secure suitable accommodation. If a settled home is not immediately available, the authority may secure temporary accommodation until a settled home becomes available. As an alternative to the provision of temporary accommodation some authorities arrange for households to remain in their current accommodation (homeless at home), until a settled solution becomes available.

Information is also collected, since 1998, on the number of people who sleep rough—that is, those who are literally roofless on a single night—and these are also presented in the tables.

Households accepted[1] as homeless during the year, households in temporary accommodation[2] at the end of the year, and numbers of rough sleepers[3] each year, for districts in Northamptonshire

	Households Accepted[1] during 1997–98	*Households in TA[2] at end March 1998*	*Households Accepted[1] during 1998–99*	*Households in TA[2] at end March 1999*	*Rough Sleepers[3] (persons) 1998*	*Households Accepted[1] during 1999–2000*
Corby	28	7	30	12	0	52
Daventry	78	28	74	25	0	127
East Northampton	29	20	34	23	0	47
Kettering	53	11	100	9	0	112
Northampton	423	32	378	61	13	369
South Northamptonshire	170	34	128	19	0	94
Wellingborough	25	6	30	11	0	11

	Households in TA[2] at end March 2000	*Rough Sleepers[3] (persons) 1999*	*Households Accepted[1] during 2000–01*	*Households in TA[2] at end March 2001*	*Rough Sleepers[3] (persons) 2000*
Corby	13	0	42	17	0
Daventry	29	0	94	56	0
East Northampton	25	0	50	36	0
Kettering	9	0	133	12	0
Northampton	65	12	430	62	6
South Northamptonshire	15	0	69	16	0
Wellingborough	14	0	10	24	0

	Households Accepted[1] during 2001–02	*Households in TA[2] at end March 2002*	*Rough Sleepers[3] (persons) 2001*	*Households Accepted[1] during 2002–03*	*Households in TA[2] at end March 2003*	*Rough Sleepers[3] (persons) 2002*
Corby	60	12	0	58	22	0
Daventry	76	40	0	104	54	0
East Northampton	42	28	0	43	22	0
Kettering	112	16	0	103	10	0
Northampton	286	81	6	414	110	6
South Northamptonshire	69	21	0	62	28	0
Wellingborough	34	32	0	81	5	0

	Households Accepted[1] during 2003–04	*Households in TA[2] at end March 2004*	*Rough Sleepers[3] (persons) 2003*	*Households Accepted[1] during 2004–05*	*Households in TA[2] at end March 2005*	*Rough Sleepers[3] (persons) 2004*
Corby	60	21	0	50	29	0
Daventry	121	56	0	72	50	0
East Northampton	81	36	0	83	50	0
Kettering	141	18	0	103	16	0
Northampton	420	138	7	455	179	8
South Northamptonshire	46	27	0	56	30	0
Wellingborough	90	16	0	n/a	44	0

n/a denotes the authority failed to provide a return for 1 or more quarters of the year.

[1] All households eligible under homelessness legislation, found to be unintentionally homeless and in a priority need category, and consequently owed a main homelessness duty.
[2] Households in accommodation either pending a decision on their homelessness application or awaiting allocation of a settled home following acceptance. Excludes those households designated as "homeless at home" that have remained in their existing accommodation and have the same rights to suitable alternative accommodation as those in accommodation arranged by the authority.
[3] Number of persons sleeping rough, based on local authority mid-year counts or estimates. Counts began in 1998.
Source:
ODPM—P1E Homelessness returns (quarterly) and HSSA returns (annual)

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how many households applying under Part VII of the Housing Act 1996 in each authority in Norfolk and Suffolk have been found to be *(a)* homeless and in priority need, *(b)* homeless but not in priority need, *(c)* intentionally homeless and *(d)* not homeless in each year since 1997; [32538]

(2) how many homeless households have been placed in temporary accommodation in each authority in Norfolk and Suffolk in each year since 1979. [32539]

Yvette Cooper: A table presenting summary information reported by each local authority in Norfolk and Suffolk on their decisions under homelessness legislation during each financial year since 1997/98 has been made available in the Library of the House. Also included are the numbers in temporary accommodation arranged by local authorities, as at 31 March of each year.

Equivalent information collected prior to January 1997 is not available in electronic format and could be provided only at disproportionate costs.

Householder Development Consents Review

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will ensure that the Householder Development Consents review will clarify the position on permitted development rights for domestic micro-generation equipment. [33473]

Yvette Cooper: The Householder Development Consents review has been considering whether it is necessary to require a planning application for various kinds of minor development to dwellings. As stated to the House on 11 November, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister envisages consulting next year on possible amendments to the General Permitted Development Order, including provisions that would make it easier for householders to install micro-generation equipment.

Housing

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people are on the housing list waiting to be re-housed in Tamworth. [32030]

Yvette Cooper: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given on 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 205W, in which the number of applicants on the Tamworth housing waiting list was requested.

Local authorities in England report the numbers of households on their housing waiting list as at 1 April in their annual Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix returns. Households looking for transfer within the local authority's stock are not included.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many vacant dwellings there were in *(a)* Tamworth and *(b)* Staffordshire in each of the last five years (i) in total and (ii) as a proportion of all dwellings. [32032]

Yvette Cooper: The following table gives the latest available figures for the total number of vacant dwellings and the proportion of vacant dwellings for Tamworth and Staffordshire for each of the last five years. From April 2006 local authorities in Staffordshire will have new powers to bring long-term empty dwellings back into use.

	Tamworth		*Staffordshire total*	
	Total empty homes	*Empty as percentage of all properties*	*Total empty homes*	*Empty as percentage of all properties*
April 2000	570	1.94	[1]—	[1]—
April 2001	620	2.09	[1]—	[1]—
November 2002	480	1.60	8,701	2.5
November 2003	512	1.70	7,872	2.3
November 2004	499	1.65	8,913	2.6

[1] Not available, since figures were not provided by all local authorities.
Source:
2000 and 2001 figures come from a combination of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (HSSA) return, and the Housing Corporation's Regulatory Statistical Return (RSR). For the years 2002 to 2004 the figures are based on ODPM's Council Tax Base 1 (CTB1) return.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister in what circumstances, and after how long an interval local authorities are allowed to re-ballot tenants who have previously voted against a large-scale voluntary transfer of council housing. [32341]

Yvette Cooper: The timing and circumstances surrounding any decision to re-ballot tenants are matters for the local authority.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment his Department has made of the merits of extending the National Code for Sustainable Buildings to all new housing developments; what estimate he has made of the likely cost to the housing industry of such an extension; and if he will make a statement. [33304]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently consulting on a proposed new code. The consultation document includes a regulatory impact assessment as is customary.

Colin Challen: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many new houses were built in the last accounting period; and how many of these were built to Ecohomes standards, broken down by Ecohomes category. [34482]

Yvette Cooper: There were 155,000 new dwellings built in England during 2004–05, as reported by local authorities (P2 return to the Office of the Deputy Prime

Minister) and the National House-Building Council. Information on how many of these were built to Ecohomes standards in not available centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people in Gravesham are waiting to be found suitable accommodation by the local authority while living in accommodation judged unacceptable by social services. [34666]

Yvette Cooper: Gravesham borough council have provided details of three individuals that are waiting to be found suitable accommodation by the local authority, and are currently in accommodation deemed unsuitable by social services. These cases are being addressed during December 2005.

Further information of this nature can be readily accessed by contacting the housing needs team at Gravesham borough council.

John Battle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer to the right hon. Member for Birkenhead (Mr. Field) of 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 760W, on housing, what assessment he has made of the impact of the Right to Buy on the number of households on Leeds housing waiting lists; and if he will make a statement. [35249]

Yvette Cooper: No such assessment has been made. It is for each housing authority to manage its stock in the light of local circumstances.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the latest figures are for the number of vacant *(a)* private and *(b)* public properties in each local authority in Hampshire; and if he will make a statement. [33991]

Yvette Cooper: The most recent data for the total number of vacant dwellings by tenure and by district in Hampshire are tabled as follows:

	Tenure				
District	*Local authority (LA) 1 April 2005*	*Registered social landlord 1 April 2005*	*'Other' public sector 1 April 2005*	*Private sector (non RSL) residual*	*Total November 2004*
Basingstoke and Deane	0	43	3	1,451	1,497
East Hampshire	0	17	0	871	888
Eastleigh	0	111	0	993	1,104
Fareham	53	10	2	876	941
Gosport	58	22	0	1,020	1,100
Hart	0	19	0	969	988
Havant	0	57	36	775	868
New Forest	58	9	67	1,415	1,549
Rushmore	0	167	262	474	903
Test Valley	0	53	21	762	836
Winchester	104	10	0	1,014	1,128
Total	273	518	391	10,620	11,802

Source:
The figures above are based on three sources: Total from ODPM's Council Tax Base 1 return; LA and 'Other' public sector tenures from ODPM's Housing Strategy Statistical return; RSL tenure from Housing Corporation's Regulatory Statistical Return; and the private sector (non-RSL) is obtained by subtracting all these three separate tenure figures from the total.

New powers will be available to local authorities in Hampshire to bring empty dwellings back into use from April 2006.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many houses have been completed in each local authority in Hampshire in each year since 2001; how many of these were classified as affordable housing; what the projections are in each case for the next three years; and if he will make a statement. [33993]

Yvette Cooper: The number of affordable dwellings completed and acquired, as well as the total number of all new build dwellings completed in each local authority in Hampshire and Portsmouth and Southampton, in each financial year since 2001–02 are tabled as follows.

Table 1

	2001–02		*2002–03*		*2003–04*		*2004–05*	
Local authority	*Affordable housing completions*	*Total dwellings completed*	*Affordable housing completions*	*Total dwellings completed*	*Affordable housing completions*	*Total dwellings completed*	*Affordable housing completions*	*Total dwellings completed*
Portsmouth	215	227	116	406	36	512	85	457
Southampton	110	439	161	712	77	573	242	792
Basingstoke and Deane	53	711	20	550	55	740	122	729
East Hampshire	38	240	19	157	93	399	96	443
Eastleigh	15	122	27	157	144	489	201	829
Fareham	43	293	38	195	24	270	57	193
Gosport	22	260	3	455	64	443	118	185
Hart	6	354	73	485	71	516	168	531
Havant	42	167	89	121	42	197	7	142
New Forest	155	559	27	487	111	487	53	504
Rushmoor	51	172	30	103	98	137	119	491
Test Valley	30	453	99	544	11	473	61	220
Winchester	91	286	8	397	56	487	359	533

Sources:
Affordable housing completions—Housing Corporation (Approved development programme).
Total dwellings completed—Returns (P2) from local authorities to ODPM.

Local authorities have provided, through the Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix, information on the additional number of affordable dwellings that are planned for 2005–06 and proposed for 2006–07. These figures are tabled as follows.

Table 2

Local authority	*Planned 2005–06*	*Proposed 2006–07*
Portsmouth	379	315
Southampton	435	251
Basingstoke and Deane	348	207
East Hampshire	102	150
Eastleigh	110	125
Fareham	60	60
Gosport	52	81
Hart	149	127
Havant	147	108
New Forest	100	100
Rushmore	177	130
Test Valley	119	103
Winchester	144	93

Source:
Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the target is of each local authority in Hampshire for the percentage of housing to be provided which is to be affordable housing; and if he will make a statement. [34173]

Yvette Cooper: Local authorities set out targets for affordable housing provision in their development plans. It is for individual local authorities to explain and make statements on their policy. The content of adopted and emerging plans in Hampshire is tabled as follows:

Local authority	*Percentage sought*
Portsmouth	Minimum 30
Southampton	Up to 25
Basingstoke and Deane	30–40
East Hampshire	[1]—
Eastleigh	30–40
Fareham	20–35
Gosport	40
Hart	40
Havant	30
New Forest	35
Rushmoor	15–30
Test Valley	30
Winchester	35

[1] Negotiated on a site by site basis.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many affordable homes are planned to be built as part of the growth area programme in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Ribble Valley constituency in each year to 2031. [35472]

Yvette Cooper: The current review of the Regional Spatial Strategy for the North West will address future housing provision in the region. It is up to local authorities to assess the need for affordable housing within their areas in their local development frameworks. The Housing Corporation is also considering bids from registered social landlords for resources to provide social housing up to 2008.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the number of new households likely to be established in each government office region over the next 20 years. [33500]

Yvette Cooper: Interim 2002 based projections of additional households up to 2021 are published on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at:

http://www/odpm/gov.uk/embedded_object.asp?id=1156104

Mr. Soames: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many vacant homes there are in *(a)* West Sussex, *(b)* the area covered by the South East plan and *(c)* the South East Region. [34034]

Yvette Cooper: The estimated number of vacant dwellings in West Sussex is 8,525. The area covered by the South East plan is the same as that covered by the South East region. The estimated number of vacant dwellings in that area is 97,804, including short term and long term empty homes.

The data are as at November 2004 and are as reported on CTB1 and CTB1S returns submitted by billing authorities to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister each year. The figure includes both long and short-term empty properties.

The Government are introducing new powers from April 2006 for local authorities to reduce the number of long-term empty homes in their area.

Simon Hughes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what reports he has received of registered social landlords in London selling off social rented housing to finance Decent Homes Standard works to remaining stock. [33371]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 30 November 2005]:* Records of registered social landlords' (RSLs) applications for consent to dispose of housing stock, which include the reason for disposal, are maintained by the Housing Corporation. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not require formal reports on this information. Information provided by RSLs in their Regulatory and Statistical Returns (RSR) on the number of homes they have disposed of is publicly available on the RSR's website at: www.rsrsurvey.gov.uk .

London Borough of Croydon (Funding)

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of the *(a)* European Structural Fund Objective 2, *(b)* Community Chest and *(c)* Estate Action funding stream from the Government Office for London was made available to the London borough of Croydon in 2004–05. [32433]

Yvette Cooper: No funding was available to the London borough of Croydon in 2004–05 through the European Structural Fund's Objective 2 Programme as it did not meet the European Union's eligibility criteria when the present round of Objective 2 Programmes were agreed.

In 2004–05 the Community Empowerment Network (CEN) in Croydon received funding of £243,139 under the Single Community Programme. Of that the CEN allocated £112,600 for Small Grants (formerly

Community Chest), and spent £137,001. Total Single Community Programme funding available in London in 2004–05 was £9,343,811.

2004–05 was the last year of Estate Action funding in London, which received £2,626,000 for two schemes in the London borough of Lambeth. The London borough of Croydon received no Estate Action funding.

London Mayor

Mrs. Lait: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the people and organisations which were sent the consultation document on the Government's proposals for additional powers and responsibilities for the London Mayor and Greater London Assembly. [34966]

Mr. Woolas: The Government have sent its consultation document on proposals for additional powers and responsibilities for the Mayor of London and London Assembly to over 400 organisations and individuals. A list of recipients can be viewed on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at: www.odpm.gov.uk/gla/review

Materials Recycling (West Sussex)

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment his Department has made of the environmental implications of the proposed materials recycling facility at Ford in West Sussex. [35855]

Yvette Cooper: Assessment of the environmental implications of such developments is a matter for the local planning authority, in this case West Sussex county council, to determine in the first instance. I understand that the applicant submitted an environmental impact assessment with the planning application.

Should a planning application for a proposed materials recycling facility at Ford be referred to my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister the First Secretary of State for consideration, the environmental implications of the proposal would be considered together with other material considerations.

Mining

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessments are required to be conducted prior to an agreement being reached for the diversion of a river to enable the extension of open cast mining; and what ongoing monitoring of river quality is then required. [34485]

Yvette Cooper: An environmental impact assessment (EIA) would almost certainly be necessary before any such proposal could be considered. EIA is mandatory for all open-cast mining at sites in excess of 25 hectares. In all other cases the proposals would be considered for EIA against the potential impacts, as would any works involving river canalisation in excess of 1 hectare. The Environment Agency would be consulted as part of the EIA process, and if it was decided in the light of the resulting environmental statement that the development should proceed, it could require conditions on the monitoring of river quality to be attached to the mineral permission. Planning policy for England is set out in PPS23, "Planning and Pollution control Annex 1".

Mobile Homes

Chris Huhne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what rights those with mobile homes on plots owned by their local council have to buy the plot; and what plans he has to *(a)* review and *(b)* to change the legislation which applies in such cases. [31359]

Yvette Cooper: A park home owner does not have the right to buy the plot they rent from a local authority. Under Part V of the Housing Act 1985, the Right to Buy is available only to secure tenants who rent dwelling houses from a social landlord, who may buy the house or flat that they rent.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not have any evidence to suggest that there is sufficient demand for right to buy from this sector and have no current plans to review and change the legislation.

Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (Leeds)

John Battle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what programmes the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund has funded in Leeds West constituency since it began. [35122]

Mr. Woolas: Neighbourhood Renewal Fund is allocated at local authority level. Details of the individual activities funded by the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund are not collected at constituency level and, unfortunately, the information requested is not directly available. However, over the financial years 2000–01 to 2004–05, Leeds city council has confirmed expenditure of £27.3 million of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund for the delivery of agreed Local Strategic Partnership priorities focussed on accelerating improvements in the most deprived areas of the local authority district, some of which will be in the Leeds West constituency. Further detail on Neighbourhood Renewal Fund expenditure within the district may be obtained direct from the Leeds city council's Regeneration Service, which is located within its Neighbourhoods and Housing Department.

Planning

Philip Davies: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many planning applications were referred to the planning inspector in *(a)* England and *(b)* Yorkshire in each of the last eight years; and in how many of those cases the planning inspector overturned the local planning authority's decision. [33877]

Yvette Cooper: The information is as follows.

Planning appeals decided/allowed—England 2004–05 to 1996–97

	Outcome
2004–05	
Decided	17,403
Allowed (number)	5,689
Allowed (percentage)	33
2003–04	
Decided	18,178
Allowed (number)	6,018
Allowed (percentage)	33
2002–03	
Decided	15,002
Allowed (number)	5,469
Allowed (percentage)	36

Planning appeals decided/allowed—England 2004–05 to 1996–97

	Outcome
2001–02	
Decided	13,539
Allowed (number)	4,893
Allowed (percentage)	36
2000–01	
Decided	12,916
Allowed (number)	4,515
Allowed (percentage)	35
1999–2000	
Decided	12,619
Allowed (number)	4,573
Allowed (percentage)	36
1998–99	
Decided	12,877
Allowed (number)	4,523
Allowed (percentage)	35
1997–98	
Decided	13,051
Allowed (number)	4,685
Allowed (percentage)	35

Planning appeals decided/allowed—local planning authorities in Yorkshire 2004–05 to 2000–01[1]

	Outcome
2004–05	
Decided	849
Allowed (number)	313
Allowed (percentage)	37
2003–04	
Decided	860
Allowed (number)	268
Allowed (percentage)	31
2002–03	
Decided	672
Allowed (number)	244
Allowed (percentage)	36
2001–02	
Decided	687
Allowed (number)	265
Allowed (percentage)	39
2000–01	
Decided	543
Allowed (number)	197
Allowed (percentage)	36

[1] These data are available for the last five years only.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the aggregated receipts to local planning authorities were from planning fees in England for each year from 1996–97 to 2004–05; and what the estimated figures are for 2005–06. [33167]

Yvette Cooper: Planning fee receipts collected by English local authorities were estimated and are tabled as follows.

	£ million
1996–97	110
1997–98	132
1998–99	132
1999–2000	134
2000–01	142
2001–02	144
2002–03	174
2003–04	188
2004–05	204

There is no official estimate for the current year 2005–06.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what changes the Government *(a)* has made since 1997 and *(b)* is planning to make to planning regulations relating to the use for residential purposes of land designated for employment, industrial or commercial purposes. [33168]

Yvette Cooper: Planning Policy Guidance note 3: Housing (PPG3), published in March 2000, asks local planning authorities to review their non-housing allocations of land (including employment land) when reviewing their development plan and consider whether some of this land might be better used for housing or mixed use developments. This built on the general policy approach in the previous PPG3 published in 1992.

The PPG3 update 'Supporting the Delivery of New Housing', published in January this year, added a new paragraph to PPG3. This advocates the re-use of industrial and commercial land where it would be better used for housing and mixed use development unless a compelling case can be made for the retention of the current allocation.

A new draft Planning Policy Statement 3 was published on 5 December.

Predictive Diallers

John Hemming: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many calls were made from call centres in his Department in 2004–05 using predictive diallers; how many such calls resulted in contact being made with the recipient without a Government agent available to talk to them; and what assessment he has made of the likely impact of Ofcom's policy on silent calls on the use of predictive diallers in departmental call centres. [28177]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The central Office of the Deputy Prime Minister HQ does not have a call centre, and its switchboard does not use predictive diallers when making calls to members of the public.

Regional Assemblies

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the total cost was of the North East Regional Assembly referendum; and if he will make a statement. [32206]

Yvette Cooper: The Electoral Commission Report on the North East Regional Assembly Referendum records the cost of running the referendum at £2.3 million. In addition support for the Yes and No campaigns totalled £0.5 million. A copy of the report is available at www.electoralcommission.org.uk

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Resident Management Companies

Mr. Maude: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many resident management companies or associations there were in the United Kingdom in each year since 1987. [35152]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not hold information about how many resident management companies or associations there are in the UK, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

However according to our information, the number of tenant management organisations (TMOs) in England in each year since 1987 are as follows:

	Number
1987	16
1988	18
1989	21
1990	24
1991	35
1992	47
1993	55
1994	72
1995	84
1996	103
1997	114
1998	126
1999	134
2000	140
2001	147
2002	152
2003	158
2004	160

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister believe there are in the region of a further 100 TMOs for which we do not have information on the year of their establishment. TMOs can exist in both the local authority and registered social landlord sectors.

Right-to-Buy Scheme

Jim Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what regional variations there are in right to buy sales discounts; and what changes there have been in such discounts in each region since 1997. [32415]

Yvette Cooper: There are 10 regional discount limits for Right to Buy:

£38,000 in the South East (except in the local authority areas of: Chiltern, Epsom and Ewell, Hart, Oxford, Reading, Reigate and Barnstead, Tonbridge and Mailing Vale of the White Horse, West Berkshire, where it is £16,000)

£34,000 in the Eastern Region (except in Watford where it is £16,000)

£30,000 in the South West

£26,000 in the North West, and the West Midlands

£24,000 in the East Midlands, and Yorkshire and the Humber

£22,000 in the North East

£16,000 in London (except in Barking and Dagenham and in Havering, where it is £38,000).

In 1997, the maximum Right to Buy discount in England was £50,000. The lower regional limits set out above were introduced with effect from 11 February 1999. The limits were reduced to £16,000 with effect from 27 March 2003 in 41 areas under the greatest housing pressure as evidenced by high levels of homelessness and high local house prices. Of the areas, 31 are in London, nine are in the South East, and one is in the Eastern region, as indicated.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of Lancashire's council housing stock was sold under the right-to-buy scheme in each year since 1980. [35471]

Yvette Cooper: The following table shows the proportions of council housing stock of local authorities in Lancashire that were sold under the right-to-buy scheme in each year since 1980.

	Council housing stock[1]	*Right-to-buy*	*Proportion of council housing stock sold under right to buy (percentage)*
1980–81	67,892	121	0.2
1981–82	67,014	1,942	2.9
1982–83	65,109	2,329	3.6
1983–84	62,590	979	1.6
1984–85	62,043	637	1.0
1985–86	68,892	843	1.2
1986–87	67,370	1,108	1.6
1987–88	66,108	1,084	1.6
1988–89	64,924	2,794	4.3
1989–90	62,905	2,288	3.6
1990–91	60,281	1,566	2.6
1991–92	58,686	752	1.3
1992–93	57,753	551	1.0
1993–94	57,290	512	0.9
1994–95	52,827	537	1.0
1995–96	52,287	386	0.7
1996–97	48,879	326	0.7
1997–98	48,351	435	0.9
1998–99	47,845	473	1.0
1999–2000	46,992	612	1.3
2000–01	39,728	582	1.5
2001–02	37,214	621	1.7
2002–03	36,129	899	2.5
2003–04	35,035	1,444	4.1
2004–05	33,425	1,098	3.3

[1] Excludes Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool that are now unitary authorities.

Source:

Numbers of right-to-buy sales are collected on the quarterly return (P1A/B) to ODPM from local authorities.

John Battle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what total capital receipts have been generated from right-to-buy sales in Leeds in each year since 1980. [35120]

Yvette Cooper: The total capital receipts from right-to-buy sales of local authority dwellings in Leeds in each year from 1996–97 onwards are tabled as follows. Information for years prior to 1996–97 is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. These figures are net of discounts and are as reported by the local authority.

Capital receipts

	Leeds (£ million)
1996–97	11.3
1997–98	12.8
1998–99[1]	15.4
1999–2000	15.5
2000–01	18.1
2001–02	23.1
2002–03	34.6
2003–04	44.6
2004–05	66.9

[1] Sales during first three quarters only.
Source:
Quarterly P1(A/B) return received from local authorities.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what receipts were generated from right-to-buy sales in Gravesham in each year since the introduction of the scheme. [33634]

Yvette Cooper: The total capital receipts from right-to-buy sales of local authority dwellings in Gravesham in the years from 1996–97 onwards are in the following table. These figures are net of discounts and are as reported by local authorities.

£ million

	Gravesham
1996–97	1.3
1997–98	1.7
1998–99	2.5
1999–2000	3.8
2000–01	3.4
2001–02	3.9
2002–03	6.2
2003–04	8.9
2004–05	4.4

Source:
Quarterly P1(A/B) return received from local authorities

The information for years prior to 1996–97 is not centrally available.

Sick Leave

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many of his Office's employees who are within one year of the official retirement age are on extended sick leave. [32602]

Jim Fitzpatrick: There are currently no staff in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister who are within one year of the official retirement age and who are also on extended sick leave.

Telecommunications Masts

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 209–10W, on mobile telephone masts, if he will make a statement on the application of the precautionary principle as recommended by the Stewart Group and adopted by the Government. [34057]

Yvette Cooper: Since the publication of the Stewart Report the Government have introduced standards to ensure that all base stations meet the international guidelines on public exposure set by the International Commission on Non-Ionising Radiation Protection (ICNIRP). These guidelines are five times tougher in respect of public exposure than the guidelines previously used. More generally the Government's acceptance of the precautionary approach recommended the Stewart Group is demonstrated in the way it has adopted its recommendations.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the Arup Report on mobile telephone masts; and if he will make a statement. [34349]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister commissioned the University of Reading and Arup to undertake an independent study to assess the impact that the code of best practice on Mobile Phone Network Development has had since its introduction, how local authorities have implemented the code and how the public perceives its operation. Plans are to publish this report in the new year and a statement will be made at that time.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many planning applications have been granted for mobile phone masts in Tamworth since 1997. [35671]

Yvette Cooper: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to my hon. Friend the Member for Coventry, South (Mr. Cunningham) on 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1066W.

Thames Gateway

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what provision there will be for *(a)* older people, *(b)* disabled people and *(c)* families with children in the new housing planned for the Thames Gateway. [33307]

Yvette Cooper: New housing developments in the Thames Gateway, as elsewhere, are required to follow national planning policy for housing as set out in planning policy guidance note 3: "Housing" (PPG3). PPG3 expects new developments to meet the housing requirements of the whole community, including those in need of affordable and special needs housing. It seeks to provide wider housing opportunity and choice, and a better mix in the size, type and location of housing than is currently available so that new housing meets the diverse range of needs across the social spectrum—including those of older people, disabled people and families with children. The Government also require new housing to be well-designed in order to create attractive, high-quality living environments in which people will choose to live.

The Government are now consulting on a new national policy framework for planning for housing through draft planning policy statement 3 which was published on 5 December 2005.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list public sector organisations involved in the regeneration of the Thames Gateway. [33308]

Yvette Cooper: The key partners are identified in "Creating Sustainable Communities: Delivering the Thames Gateway" (page 52), which sets out the Government's vision for and commitment to the Gateway. The Thames Gateway spans 40 miles north and south of the Thames and includes 16 local authorities. Therefore there are a large number of local organisations involved in regeneration projects in different parts of the

Gateway. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister therefore announced on the 23 November that we will be publishing a strategic framework to help shape and guide investments, decisions and actions by Government and our delivery partners across the Thames Gateway.

Town and County Planning Act

Greg Clark: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many certificates were granted under section 191 of the Town and County Planning Act 1990 in each of the last 10 years. [32658]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Transport Innovation Fund

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much of the Transport Innovation Fund is to be allocated to the growth areas in each year for which information is available. [34091]

Yvette Cooper: The Transport Innovation Fund will support:

innovative local transport packages that combine demand management measures, such as road pricing, with public transport improvement; and

regional, inter-regional and local schemes that are beneficial to national productivity.

The Fund is expected to increase from £290 million 2008–09 to over £2 billion by 2014–15. None of these funds have yet been allocated. However, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport recently announced on 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 3WS, that seven areas would receive development funding to work up demand management proposals. These included Cambridge, which is part of the London-Stansted-Cambridge-Peterborough Growth Area.

Valuation Office Agency

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate the Valuation Office Agency has made of the number of domestic properties in England with *(a)* patios, *(b)* greenhouses and *(c)* scenic views. [33483]

Mr. Woolas: None.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Animal Experiments

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of animals used for experimentation were genetically modified, in the last year for which figures are available broken down by species . [30479]

Andy Burnham: In 2003, the last year for which information is available, there were around 764,000 procedures on genetically modified animals, which represented 27 per cent. of all regulated procedures reported in that year. The number of actual animals used is very close to the number of procedures, because nearly all animals are used once only.

The number of procedures carried out on animals carrying a genetic modification, broken down by species and type of procedure, is given in tables three and 3.3 of the annual publication Statistics of scientific procedures on living animals, Great Britain, 2003 (Cm 6291), a copy of which is in the Library. Over 97 per cent. of genetically modified animals used in 2003 were mice; most of the remainder were fish.

Asylum/Immigration

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many officials of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate are directly employed in making initial decisions on asylum claims, broken down by civil service grade. [20491]

Mr. McNulty: The number of caseworkers making initial decisions on asylum claims in the Immigration and Nationality Directorate are as follows:

Higher executive officers—59

Executive officers—183

Administrative officers—4.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Libyan nationals claimed asylum in the UK in each year since 2000. [33593]

Mr. McNulty: The table shows the number of asylum applications (excluding dependants) from Libyan nationals from 2000 to Q3 2005, by year. Information on asylum applications is published in quarterly web pages and in the annual statistical bulletin Asylum Statistics United Kingdom. Copies of these publications and others relating to general immigration to the UK are available from the Library of the House and from the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html

Asylum applications[1] received in the United Kingdom, excluding dependants, by year, 2000 to Q3 2005—nationals of Libya

	Total	Port	In country
2000	155	35	115
2001	140	25	115
2002	200	25	175
2003	145	10	135
2004[2]	160	30	125
Q1 to Q3 2005[2]	95	5	90

[1] Figures rounded to nearest 5.
[2] Provisional figures.

Mr. Malins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department by what process the National Asylum Support Service awards contracts for housing asylum seekers; what safeguards are in place to ensure that best value is obtained; what terms and conditions are imposed on agencies which contract with providers of accommodation to ensure that they obtain the cheapest and best accommodation available; what process is available for unsuccessful tenderers to challenge decisions; what monitoring is undertaken by his Department to ensure transparency and absence of collusion between agencies and housing providers; and if he will make a statement. [34125]

Mr. McNulty: The procurement process to award contracts for housing asylum seekers is based on best practice guidelines and managed under the EU

Procurement directive (Negotiated Procedure). Contracts are developed to meet the strategic aims of delivering business continuity, flexibility, value for money and maintaining community cohesion. Unsuccessful tenderers have a right of challenge under the EU directive and all challenges will be dealt with according to the EU guidance and in line with Home Office policy. As part of the procurement process all parties are expected to sign a confidentiality and non-collusion agreement and there is an auditable record of all communication between the purchasing agency and the bidding organisations.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent discussions he has had with EU Ministers about illegal immigration from North Africa into the EU; and if he will make a statement. [35301]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* The Home Secretary has held various discussions with other EU Ministers about illegal immigration from North Africa, both bilaterally and at EU level, including at recent JHA Councils and at the G5 in Evian. It has been a UK presidency priority to make progress on this issue.

Illegal migration across the Mediterranean is an humanitarian problem affecting source, transit and host countries alike. Discussions have focused on the need to take urgent action to prevent loss of life at sea, tackle human trafficking and assist transit countries in North Africa to build capacity to manage migration flows more effectively. In parallel, there is a need for the EU and African countries to work in partnership to develop a comprehensive, long-term approach to strengthen and enhance dialogue and practical co-operation and to address the root causes of migration.

This approach was recognised by EU Heads of State at the informal summit in London on 27 October 2005 and is strongly reflected in the Commission Communication on Priority actions for improving migration management published on 30 November 2005. The communication focuses on concrete actions that can be carried out quickly with sub-Saharan Africa and the Mediterranean countries, as the first step in this long-term approach.

Civil Emergency Planning

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what dates since September 2001 local authorities and emergency services in *(a)* Essex, *(b)* Greater London and *(c)* England have carried out emergency drills for terrorist attacks; where such drills took place; and which agencies were involved. [34340]

Mr. Jim Murphy: I have been asked to reply.

The Government do not gather information about the number and nature of exercises carried out by local responders and which agencies were involved.

Part 1 of the Civil Contingencies Act 2004—which came fully into force on 14 November 2005—establishes a statutory framework for civil protection activity at the local level. The Act sets out clear roles and responsibilities for local responders and establishes a basis for effective performance management. Under this legislation category 1 responders (eg local authorities, emergency services, health bodies) are required to maintain emergency plans and business continuity plans to ensure that they can respond effectively to the full range of emergencies, including terrorism. The legislation also requires category 1 responders to put in place a programme of exercises to ensure that these plans are effective.

Responders' performance against the requirements set out in the Act will be monitored by their existing performance management bodies (eg Audit Commission, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary).

Criminal Records Bureau

Tim Loughton: *To ask the Secretary of State for the* Home Department how many people working with children have completed Criminal Records Bureau checks. [33116]

Andy Burnham: The Home Office does not collate data concerning the number of people who are working with children. Therefore I am unable to provide information on the number of people working with children who have completed Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) checks. However, during the last 12 months, the CRB processed 1,904,789 disclosure applications where a check against the Protection of Children Act 1999 (PoCA) list has been specifically requested.

Departmental Estate

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the status of the old Home Office building at 50 Queen Anne's Gate. [31797]

Ms Harman: I have been asked to reply.

The building is currently being prepared for refurbishment by the landlord following completion of the move of the Home Office to their new premises at 2 Marsham Street, on 18 April 2005. An agreement has been signed between DCA and the landlord, on 5 October 2005, under which the landlord will refurbish the building before DCA take occupation. Work will start on the building on 5 December 2005 and is due for completion in November 2007.

Deportation

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what responsibility he has for deportees after the expiry of the three year period in the Memorandum of Understanding with Jordan. [31156]

Mr. McNulty: There is no time limit on the operation of the majority of the understandings contained in the Memorandum. The exception to this relates to the deportee's entitlement to contact, and be visited by, a representative of the independent body in the event he is arrested, detained or imprisoned. A deportee who is arrested, detained or imprisoned within three years of his return is entitled to contact and be visited regularly by a representative of that body. Where applicable, those visits will continue beyond that three year limit. If a returned person is arrested detained or imprisoned after this three year period, there is no entitlement to contact, or be visited by, the independent body.

European Anti-crime Measures

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the European Commission's proposals to establish a European Public Prosecutor's Office to prosecute serious crime with a cross-border dimension. [35643]

Andy Burnham: Any proposal for the development of a European Public Prosecutor remains subject to ratification of the Constitutional Treaty and the unanimous agreement of the member states. There is no legal base for the creation of a European Public Prosecutor under current treaties. We remain unconvinced that the creation of a European Public Prosecutor is necessary or desirable.

Identity Cards

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether identity card database material will be shared with other EU countries; and if he will make a statement. [34370]

Andy Burnham: There will be no open access to the information held on the National Identity Register. Information may be provided with the consent of the individual under clause 14. Information may also be provided without consent under clause 19 to organisations such as the police and the security services, provided that the conditions set out in clauses 19 and 23 are met.

Clause 20 allows information to be provided to overseas authorities in the context of criminal proceedings and investigations, as provided for in section 17 of the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001. In these cases both the safeguards provided under clause 23 and section 18 of the 2001 Act also apply.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his latest estimate is of the *(a)* one-off and *(b)* recurring costs associated with the introduction of stand-alone identity cards. [34728]

Andy Burnham: The current best estimate for the total average running costs for issuing passports and ID cards to UK nationals, for which fees will be charged, is £584 million per annum, 70 per cent. of which is attributable to the cost of the biometric passport. Within our current best estimates of the ID cards scheme as a whole, it will be affordable to set a charge of £30 at current prices for a stand-alone ID card, valid for 10 years.

The Home Office is not breaking this cost down further, nor publishing details of set-up costs because this information is commercially sensitive and discussion of estimated costs for individual elements of the scheme, such as the stand-alone identity card, may prejudice the procurement process by limiting the Department's ability to secure value for money from the market.

The Government recognise the need to have independent assurance so the public can place trust in the figures produced. Thus, KPMG a world leading audit and accounting firm, were commissioned to produce an independent review of the costing methodology and key assumptions in the business case. They concluded that the methodology used to cost the identity cards proposals is robust and appropriate for this stage of development.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer to the Question on identity cards, 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 594W, when he expects his Department's work with representatives from law enforcement agencies and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs will be completed. [35272]

Andy Burnham: It is planned that work to identity benefits to fight organised crime and money laundering with law enforcement agencies and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs will be ongoing up to and beyond the launch of the identity cards scheme so that, along with planned activities, its potential to assist any emerging threats can be assessed.

Naturalisation

Dr. Evan Harris: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how long it took to process applications for naturalisation in *(a)* the most recent period for which figures are available, *(b)* 1997 and *(c)* 2001; and if he will make a statement. [34653]

Mr. McNulty: The most recent period for which figures are available is January/April to October 2005, at which time the overall average waiting time for naturalisation applications was 4.16 months. This figure is provisional and subject to change. For periods prior to 1 April 2004, we cannot provide the waiting time figure purely for naturalisation applications. Waiting time data covers all nationality applications received by Nationality Group, including naturalisation, registration (adult and minor) and renunciations. Overall average waiting time in 1997 was 14.26 months and in 2001 was 10.51 months. These figures are for the calendar years.

Passports

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 868W, on passports, if he will break down the number of passports recorded as lost between the London and Peterborough passport offices. [24511]

Andy Burnham: The number of recorded reports for lost or stolen passports that were received at either the London or Peterborough office, since 1 April 2004, now stands at 152,470. This is broken down as follows:

Passports: lost or stolen

	Number lost	*Number stolen*
Peterborough	78,402	31,373
London	34,602	8,093

Port Security

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans the Government have to introduce 24 hour security at UK ports. [23124]

Mr. McNulty: Immigration coverage of international flight arrivals is based upon a range of factors, including the nature and frequency of traffic and the numbers of passengers requiring leave to enter at each port.

There are currently 41 manned ports, of which 16 are staffed 24 hours a day. Other ports are covered on a risk assessed basis. Officers are deployed to unmanned ports to meet specific arrivals where necessary. The provision of advance passenger information by carriers under the e-Borders programme will increase the Border Agencies' ability to conduct risk assessments and deploy resources in a targeted manner.

There are no plans to have personnel manning the ports 24 hours a day. We are however extending the Immigration Service mobile response capacity, based on intelligence, to respond to any new or emerging threats.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Barry Courthouse

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the last valuation was of the Barry court house; and whether this was undertaken for *(a)* commercial and *(b)* residential purposes. [30980]

Ms Harman: The Valuation Office Agency (VOA) last visited Barry magistrates court for the purposes of valuing it in September, 2004. The valuation basis used by the VOA was depreciated replacement cost (DRC) as this is a specialised building with separate circulation routes and custodial facilities (three cells). The value of the site at 31 March 2005 was £2,674,000. Barry magistrates courts was valued in common with other magistrates courts as it transferred under the Courts Act 2003 to the Department of Constitutional Affairs on 31 March 2005.

Civil Service Relocation (Scotland)

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many departmental civil service jobs have been relocated to Scotland in each year since 2001. [32378]

Ms Harman: No posts have been relocated to Scotland since 2001.

Departmental Expenditure

Martin Horwood: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the Department and its agencies have spent on *(a)* the design and production of new logos and *(b)* employing external (i) public relations and (ii) graphic design agencies in each year since 2000, broken down by project. [33213]

Ms Harman: My Department and a list of its agencies which have spent the following amounts on design and production of logos and employing external public relations agencies since 2000 is set out below.

(a) Expenditure on design and production of new logos

£

Agencies	*Logos*	*Amount*
FY 2000–01		
Council on Tribunals	New organisational logo	575
Law Commission	New organisational logo	7,500
FY 2002–03		
Commission for Judicial Appointments	Logo for new public body: CJA	1,350
FY 2003–04		
DCA	Logo for new Department	25,000
HM Courts Service	Logo for new agency: HMCS	20,000
Northern Ireland Court Service	Logo for new public body: NI Legal Services Commission	12,705
FY 2004–05		
DCA	Logo for Freedom of Information Act	12,842
FY 2005–06[1]		
DCA	Logos for new public bodies: Commission for Judicial Appointments, Office for Judicial Complaints, Judicial Appointments and Conduct Ombudsman	35,000
Judicial Studies Board	Logo for the European Judicial Training Network General Assembly	1,600
HM Inspectorate of Court Administration	Logo for new agency: HMICA	5,850

[1] To date.

(b) Expenditure on employing external public relations agencies—

£

Commission for Judicial Appointments	*Amount*
2002–03	12,000
2003–04	37,360
2004–05	48,900
2005–06	33,350

[1] To date.

Information on employing graphic design agencies since 2000 is not centrally held. To collate the information would be disproportionate to cost.

Departmental Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many staff in her Department have been relocated into London and the South East in each of the last five years for which records are available. [31755]

Ms Harman: There has been no relocation of jobs into London and the South East. The Department for Constitutional Affairs does not hold records on individual staff who may have relocated through the normal course of internal staff movement.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans she has to relocate staff in her Department and related agencies into London and the South East. [31756]

Ms Harman: The Department for Constitutional Affairs has no plans to relocate staff into London and the South East.

Departmental Tendering Policy

Martin Horwood: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what her Department's policy is on including *(a)* ethical and *(b)* environmental factors in tenders for services. [33327]

Ms Harman: My Department lets contracts in accordance with the general principles of EU Community law, which are non-discrimination, equal treatment, transparency, proportionality, and mutual recognition. In addition, my Department's standard contract documents make clear its policies on matters such as equality and diversity, and, that suppliers should demonstrate the same values.

Environmental factors in contracts let by my Department are considered on a case by case basis relative to the subject matter of the contract, and the requirements of EU Community law.

Human Rights Act

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidance her Department has given the English Regional Chambers on the implementation of the Human Rights Act 1998. [33120]

Yvette Cooper: I have been asked to reply.

I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to her on 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1700W.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 640–41W, on the Human Rights Act, what the *(a)* name and *(b)* publication date is of the guidance to local authorities; and if she will place a copy in the Library. [35405]

Ms Harman: The "Guidance on Contracting for Services in the light of the Human Rights Act 1998" was first published in May 2005, and was republished in November 2005. It is available on the websites of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and of the Department for Constitutional Affairs, and I have placed a copy in the Library.

Identity Cards

Lynne Jones: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what estimate she has made of the *(a)* total and *(b)* net cost of (i) integrating the proposed identity card scheme into her Department's IT systems and (ii) the ongoing operation of the scheme within her Department. [31105]

Ms Harman: The Department for Constitutional Affairs has, in consultation with the Identity Cards Programme, commenced work on calculating costs in the areas where ID cards will be used in the department—both in terms of integrating with the IT systems and the ongoing operational impact. This information is commercially sensitive and to release it may prejudice the procurement process and the Department's ability to obtain value for money from potential suppliers.

The Department is represented on the Ministerial Committee on Identity Cards which oversees the work on benefits planning and realisation.

We believe that operational benefits will be realised through the use of ID cards particularly in areas where the identity of individuals will assist in the delivery of front line services. As improvements in our business processes are identified we will consider changes to our IT systems to derive the maximum benefit.

Judges

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps her Department is taking to increase the number of disabled people serving as judges. [26630]

Ms Harman: My Department has been working with organisations and individuals with an expertise or interest in, or experience of, disability, including the Disability Rights Commission and a number of serving judges, to develop an action plan to promote judicial appointment to potential candidates who are disabled, and to ensure that issues of reasonable adjustment are properly dealt with, both for disabled candidates and for serving judges who have or develop a disability. The action plan was published on my Department's website (www.dca.gov.uk) on 2 November and I have today placed a copy in the Libraries of both Houses.

The same organisations and individuals will be involved in implementing the action plan, through a joint working group with departmental officials.

Land Registry Adjudicator

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs when the Adjudicator to the Land Registry was appointed; how many cases have been referred to him; how many cases have been resolved; and what the average length of time taken to resolve each case has been since the appointment of the Adjudicator. [33605]

Ms Harman: The Adjudicator, Mr. Cousins, was appointed to post in September 2003. The Office of the Adjudicator to HM Land Registry came into force in October 2003.

From October 2003 until October 2005 the total number of cases referred to the office of the Adjudicator to HM Land Registry was 2,853.

From October 2003 until October 2005 a total of 2,059 cases have been disposed of.

The information requested for the average length of time to resolve each case cannot be provided without incurring disproportionate cost.

Legal Services (Ribble Valley)

Mr. Evans: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans she has for a specialist domestic violence court in Ribble Valley. [34521]

Bridget Prentice: The Department for Constitutional Affairs wrote to all magistrates courts committees on 15 December 2004 asking for expressions of interest in setting up a specialist DV court (SDVC).

The Lancashire area was among those who responded and included in the selection process for establishing 25 specialist domestic violence court systems across England and Wales.

Lancashire has a roll out programme in place for SDVC's across the Criminal Justice Area, Ribble Valley is included.

The timing for the setting up of individual courts is currently being decided between the Government Office for the North West Region and the Local Criminal Justice Boards and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships within the area.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what proportion of the magistrates sitting at Ribble Valley magistrates courts are female. [34522]

Ms Harman: The Ribble Valley is covered by the Blackburn, Darwen and Ribble Valley Local Justice Area.

72 out of 157 magistrates (45.9 per cent.) in the Blackburn, Darwen and Ribble Valley are female.

Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether victims in cases covered by the Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill are included in the proposals made in the consultation document "Hearing the Relatives of Murder and Manslaughter Victims"; and if she will make a statement. [34419]

Ms Harman: The proposals for victims' advocates set out in the consultation paper "Hearing the Relatives of Murder and Manslaughter Victims" apply to cases tried only in England and Wales.

Rape Trials

Vera Baird: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many rape trials in which all proceedings are complete have been conducted in *(a)* Darlington Crown court, *(b)* Carlisle Crown court, *(c)* Newcastle Crown court and *(d)* York Crown court under the revised definition of that offence in the Sexual Offences Act 2003; and what verdicts have been returned in each case. [35292]

Ms Harman: Departmental records show the following figures for completed rape trials and their verdict under the revised definition of that offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 at Carlisle Crown court, Newcastle Crown court and York Crown court. We cannot supply figures for Darlington, as the Crown court does not sit there.

	Carlisle	*Newcastle*	*York*
Trials	7	9	11
Acquittal	3	4	7
Conviction	4	5	3
Jury unable to agree	—	—	1

Royal Marriage

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether HRH the Prince of Wales asked *(a)* before and *(b)* since his marriage in April that legislation be introduced to make his marriage morganatic; and if she will make a statement. [35852]

Ms Harman: No.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Adult Education

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how adults without a qualification at level 2 are prioritised in the *(a)* learndirect and *(b)* nextstep services. [36046]

Phil Hope: The Learning and Skills Council delivers an integrated information and advice service on learning and work through the national learndirect telephone and online service, and 47 local nextstep partnerships. The information services which learndireet and nextstep provide are freely available to all adults, and there is no prioritisation. The more resource intensive advice services which learndirect and nextstep deliver are targeted primarily on those who do not have a full level 2 qualification, since they are more likely to lack the skills foundation for employability and lifelong learning. Within those who lack a full level 2, nextstep face-to-face advice services are further prioritised towards people aged 50 and over, or who have learning difficulties or disabilities.

Autism

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the Government have approved the Son-Rise programme for public funding for the treatment of autism. [34571]

Maria Eagle: It is for schools and local authorities to decide on provision for children with autistic spectrum disorders (ASDs) in individual cases. The Option (Son-Rise) programme is one of the interventions listed in my Department's and the Department of Health's Good Practice Guidance on ASDs as an intervention which is available to use for individual children. The guidance makes clear that listing does not constitute an endorsement of the intervention by the Department's Autism Working Group. A number of local authorities have funded Son-Rise programmes for individual children through statements of special educational needs.

Childminders

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding has been given to support childminder networks in *(a)* Leeds and *(b)* Leeds West constituency in 2005–06. [35142]

Beverley Hughes: Developing robust childminder networks attached to children's centres and extended schools is one of the objectives set out in the 10 year strategy for childcare. The Government have given local authorities the scope to use funding flexibly to develop and sustain childcare services, rather than allocate funds for specific purposes. Leeds city council will receive 405,982 over 2004–06 for the sustainability element of their Sure Start general grant. They will decide how much is required to support childminder networks, and where to direct this funding. The council can also use a proportion of their children's centre revenue funding (£1,615,171 over 2004–06) on network development to meet the requirement to integrate childminders with children's centre services.

Leeds city council currently supports a city-wide network of 125 childminders using Sure Start funding. Work to link these childminders closely with children's centres and extended schools is ongoing, including the five centres developing in the Leeds West constituency.

Employer Training

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 2056W, on employer training, what definition she uses of a fair contribution for employers to pay towards the cost of wider employee training. [35823]

Phil Hope: We do not expect employers to pay for employees to attain the skills they need to give them a sound basis for sustainable employment in the economy. That is why we have introduced an entitlement to free training for adults who lack basic skills or a first full level 2 qualification. Beyond this, where there are tangible returns to business, the Government believe it is right that employers make an appropriate contribution to the cost of training provided through the further education system. We expect this contribution to grow to 50 per cent.—of course fees costs—by 2010. This is what we stated in the LSCs 'priorities for success' in October 2005.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of *(a)* employers and *(b)* employees who were eligible signed up for employer training pilots in the last year for which figures are available. [36047]

Phil Hope: A report by the Institute for Employment Studies (IES) published in March 2005, "Platform for Progression: Employer Training Pilots Year 2 Evaluation Report" found that at the end of the second year of the pilots almost 12,000 workplaces were involved in the 12 phase 1 and 2 pilots. Some 10 per cent. of eligible employers were involved—12 per cent. in the phase 1 pilots and 8.5 per cent. in phase 2. Take-up had been stronger in the second year of the pilots than the first and take-up levels varied significantly by pilot area. 80,000 learners had signed up, around 4 per cent. of the eligible population.

These figures will be updated in the IES Evaluation Report of Year 3 of ETP which we expect to publish early in 2006.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the National Employer training programme will continue with the Employer Training Pilot model of weighting funding towards the successful completion of qualifications by participating employees. [35614]

Phil Hope: Yes. The new national employer training programme—which will be known as Train to Gain"—will pay 50 per cent. of the tuition costs on successful completion of the qualification by the learner. This is the same approach as currently operates in the Employer Training Pilots.

Every Child Matters Youth Board

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the Every Child Matters Youth Board. [33855]

Beverley Hughes: The Government committed to forming a Children and Youth Board in "Every Child Matters: the Next Steps". The Board was set up so that children and young people could gather the views of their peers on the issues that affect them. These views are then used to provide direct advice on the development of national policy and the design of services to the Minister for Children Young People and Families and to officials in the department.

The 2005/06 Board consists of 25 children and young people aged between 8–19, with five under 12-years-old. The children and young people are from the nine Government office regions and also include two representatives from each of the two devolved Administrations. The Minister for Children, Young People and Families meets the Board regularly.

Free Nursery Places

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many three and four-year-olds in Leeds West constituency are in free nursery places. [35141]

Beverley Hughes: All four-year-olds have been entitled to a free early education place since 1998 and from April 2004 this entitlement was extended to all three-year-olds. The free entitlement consists of a minimum of five two and a half hour sessions per week for 33 weeks of the year for six terms before statutory school age, which is the term following their fifth birthday.

Some local authorities may additionally offer subsidised childcare places but this information is not collected centrally.

Figures for January 2005 show that all four-year-old children receive some form of free entitlement. The figure for three years olds is 96 per cent. This covers all maintained, private, voluntary and independent providers and represents 535,100 three-year-olds and 568,300 four-year-olds.

In January 2005 in Leeds local authority there were 7,100 free nursery places taken up by three-year-old children. The equivalent figure for four year olds was 7,600. Information for private and voluntary providers is not currently available for Leeds West constituency in 2005.

The latest figures on early education places for three and four-year-olds in England were published in Statistical First Release 43/2005 "Provision for children under five years of age in England-January 2005 (final)" in September, which is available on my Department's website:

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000604/index.shtml

Noise Pollution

Alan Keen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions she has had with the Secretary of State for Transport on the exposure of children to aircraft noise *(a)* during the school day, *(b)* in the evening and *(c)* at weekends. [33958]

Jacqui Smith: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Skills has not had discussions with the Secretary of State for Transport on this subject. I have however met with Cllr Ruth Cadbury from the London borough of Hounslow and expressed my concern that the challenges faced by schools under or near the flight path approach of Heathrow and its new runway are fully addressed.

Ofsted Reports

Ms Gisela Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will take steps to enable state schools to have a right of appeal to the parliamentary ombudsman in relation to Ofsted reports. [35641]

Jacqui Smith: Where a school is dissatisfied with the outcome of Ofsted's internal consideration of a complaint about an inspection, it has the right to have the case re-examined by the Independent Complaints Adjudicator, appointed by the Secretary of State.

The role of the parliamentary ombudsman is to protect private persons in their relations with the Executive. As a consequence, complaints from bodies constituted for purposes of the public service fall outside the remit of the ombudsman. However, there may be specific circumstances in which those involved in a school inspection may appeal to the ombudsman, in particular, where it can be demonstrated that maladministration has caused them a personal injustice.

Online Message Boards

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her Department's policy is on the use of online message boards for public consultations. [36022]

Phil Hope: My Department does not have a specific policy on the use of online message boards for public consultations.

The Department uses an online consultation system to enable respondents to contribute to public consultations.

Positive Action for Young People (Croydon)

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of the Positive Action for Young People funding stream from the Government office for London was made available to the London borough of Croydon in 2004–05. [33875]

Maria Eagle: In 2004–05, £213,662 was made available from the Positive Activities for Young People programme (PAYP) to the London borough of Croydon. Total expenditure in the London region in 2004–05 was £13,471,088.

Prison Service (Learning and Skills)

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much was paid to HM Prison Service by her Department for the post of Head of Learning and Skills for the last three years; what the projected expenditure is for these posts over the next five years; and what the projected costs over the next five years are for the Learning and Skills Co-ordinator posts in prisons in the south-west. [35615]

Phil Hope: The following table sets out the budget allocated to the Prison Service by the Department for Education and Skills for Heads of Learning and Skills posts for the last three years.

£ million

	Budget
2003–04	1.96
2004–05	7.00
2005–06	7.56

Expenditure for 2006–07 is expected to be the same as 2005–06. Budgets for future years have not yet been set.

Expenditure for the Learning and Skills Co-ordinator posts in the south-west is £455,000 for 2005–06. Budgets for future years have not yet been set.

School Deficits (Essex)

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools in Essex are expected to run a deficit in the current financial year; and what the reasons given for a deficit are in each case. [35811]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not yet available. The Department is due to collect the section 52 out-turn data relating to the 2005–06 financial year from October 2006.

Sexual Abuse

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action her Department is taking to prevent sexual abuse involving children. [34792]

Maria Eagle: The Government's guidance documents 'What to do if you you're worried a child is being abused' (2003), 'Safeguarding Children in Education', and 'Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004' set out the roles and responsibilities of practitioners who work with children, and of a wide range of organisations, to promote children's welfare and safeguard them from harm. We

are currently revising 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', the core inter-agency guidance on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The revised version will include updated guidance on female genital mutilation, forced marriage, child prostitution and internet safety. My Department is leading work to update the National Plan to Prevent the Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children and is contributing to the Home Office review of prostitution. We provide support for the Stop It Now! campaign run by the Lucy Faithfull Foundation and also to ChildLine. We are implementing the recommendations of the Bichard Inquiry relating to improved vetting arrangements for workers with children and the provision of training for school governors and head teachers to ensure that staff selection interviews reflect the importance of safeguarding.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance is given to schools to encourage children to report acts of sexual abuse. [34793]

Maria Eagle: My Department's guidance for all local authority education departments, schools (including independent schools) and further education colleges in England, 'Safeguarding Children in Education', explains the duty, roles and responsibilities placed upon them by sections 157 and 175 of the Education Act 2002 to carry out their functions with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. The guidance makes clear that schools should demonstrate to children that they are in a safe environment where they will be listened to, and that schools should have a child protection policy in place, which emphasises the importance of listening to children and taking their concerns seriously.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent discussions she has had with children's charities about child sex abuse. [34794]

Maria Eagle: In November I addressed the annual conference of the Coalition for the Removal of Pimping (CROP). My right hon. Friend, the Minister for Children, Young People and Families, has recently written to the NSPCC in response to their recent 'Talk 'til it Stops' campaign, which asked the Government to introduce and resource public awareness campaigns to prevent child abuse.

Sick Leave

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many of her Department's employees who are within one year of the official retirement age are on extended sick leave. [32601]

Maria Eagle: My Department remains committed to managing sickness absence effectively and to putting in place the recommendations of the recently published report "Managing Sickness Absence in the Public Sector".

There is currently one person within one year of the official retirement age on extended sick leave.

Sixth-form College (Shrewsbury)

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will visit the sixth-form college in Shrewsbury. [33890]

Ruth Kelly: My Ministers and I are keen to visit educational establishments of all types and get many invitations, which we try to accept as far as our diaries permit.

Special Advisers

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the names of the special advisers who have served in her Department since 2001; what the dates of service were of each; and what policy areas each covered. [33851]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by the Minister for the Cabinet Office on 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1257W.

Special advisers support their Ministers across the range of the Department's policy areas. Their responsibilities are set out in the Model Contract for Special Advisers which is available in the House Libraries.

Special Educational Needs

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children received a statement of special education needs in *(a)* each local authority in Essex, *(b)* each London borough and *(c)* England in the last year for which figures are available. [34216]

Maria Eagle: The information requested is shown in the table.

Children for whom a statement was issued for the first time during calendar year 2004

	Number
England	25,990
Essex	630
Southend-on-Sea	92
Thurrock	164
London	4,521
Inner London	1,711
Camden	179
City of London	1
Hackney	149
Hammersmith and Fulham	104
Haringey	137
Islington	102
Kensington and Chelsea	36
Lambeth	143
Lewisham	182
Newham	45
Southwark	178
Tower Hamlets	190
Wandsworth	165
Westminster	97
Outer London	2,810
Barking and Dagenham	114
Barnet	116
Bexley	208
Brent	156

Children for whom a statement was issued for the first time during calendar year 2004

	Number
Bromley	152
Croydon	240
Ealing	156
Enfield	188
Greenwich	149
Harrow	108
Havering	94
Hillingdon	100
Hounslow	230
Kingston upon Thames	98
Merton	165
Redbridge	168
Richmond upon Thames	75
Sutton	107
Waltham Forest	186

[1] Fewer than five pupils.
Source:
SEN2 Survey.

Sure Start

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children living in *(a)* Leeds and *(b)* Leeds West constituency are participating in Sure Start schemes. [35137]

Beverley Hughes: There are eight Sure Start local programmes in Leeds reaching a total of 6,026 children under the age of four. Sure Start Seacroft covers 1,345 children; Sure Start Bramley covers 993 children; Sure Start Middleton covers 502 children; Sure Start Chapeltown covers 783 children; Sure Start Beeston Hill covers 905 children; Sure Start Burley covers 466 children; Sure Start Harehills covers 499 children and Sure Start Little London involves 533 children under four. All eight Sure Start local programmes are part of or are becoming children's centres. There are also 24 neighbourhood nurseries in Leeds providing 730 full day care places. 13 of these nurseries are involved in becoming children's centres.

In 2004–06, Leeds planned to develop 25 children's centres reaching a total of 10,706 children under the age of five. 14 of these centres have been designated as children's centres by the Sure Start unit and eleven have received approval to proceed.

Five of these children's centres are based within the Leeds West constituency serving a total of 2,450 children under five; two have been designated as children's centres. There are also two Sure Start local programmes within the constituency covering 1,458 children under four; both are part of children's centres. There are four neighbourhood nurseries based within Leeds West, offering a total of 147 full day care places.

University Staff (Salaries)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions the Department has had with the relevant trade unions on the salaries of university staff. [35214]

Bill Rammell: The Department has had no such discussions. Universities are autonomous and responsible for determining their own academic and administrative affairs, including deciding what to pay their own staff. Pay and conditions of service are subject to negotiations between employers, their staff and their representative trade union bodies. The Government plays no part in this.

Youth Services

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much public funding was made available for youth services in *(a)* England, *(b)* Staffordshire and *(c)* Tamworth constituency in each of the last 10 years. [35669]

Maria Eagle: From 2003–04, and the introduction of Formula Spending Shares, there has been a Youth and Community sub-block containing unhypothecated resources for the Youth Service, among other items. Subsequently, authorities' planned expenditure on Youth and Community activities has been separately recorded on their section 52 budget statements each year.

The following table shows the planned expenditure on Youth and Community activities for both Staffordshire and England, using information provided by authorities to the Department.

The figures for England and Staffordshire are in the following table:

£

Financial year	*England*	*Staffordshire*
2003–04	516,853,232	7,231,835
2004–05	528,637,156	7,358,625
2005–06	545,410,613	7,588,790

All LEAs including Staffordshire have received additional funding via the Transforming Youth Work Development Fund (replaced in 2005–06 by Transforming Youth Work Performance Improvement Fund) and SENDA funds. The allocations to Staffordshire were:

£

Financial year	*SENDA capital*	*SENDA revenue*	*TYWDF/ TYWPIF*
2002–03	91,911	25,067	307,280
2003–04	108,407	25,017	123,908
2004–05	75,051	16,678	122,279
2005–06	[1]—	[1]—	147,870

[1] Not applicable

DfES does not collect funding information on Tamworth as information is gathered by local authority area.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Recipients

David Mundell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many individuals in Scotland are in receipt of at least one social security benefit. [35041]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available in the format requested. It is not possible to separate those receiving only housing benefit and council tax benefit from the overall figures.

The available information was in the written answer I gave the hon. Member on 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 607W.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps his Department is taking to improve take-up of benefits provided by his Department in the top 125 most deprived lower layer super output areas as identified in the 2005 Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation; and what discussions he has had on this issue with the Welsh Assembly Government. [33293]

Mr. Plaskitt: Although the Department is not taking any steps specifically aimed at take-up of benefits in these areas, it maintains close working relationships at operational level with local authorities and the voluntary sector across the country, to ensure that all those entitled to services and benefits from the Department receive them.

Nationally, we have recently begun the third annual publicity and marketing awareness campaign aimed at getting everyone who is entitled to council tax benefit to claim it.

We are continuing, nationally, to make contact with those households that are likely to be eligible to pension credit. Activity has included direct mail, telephone calls and, where appropriate, home visits. The Pension Service's Local Service is working closely with local partners including Help the Aged and Age Concern to help ensure pensioners take up their entitlements.

As with all matters relating to the Department's responsibilities, we maintain ongoing dialogue with the Welsh Assembly Government at an operational level.

Child Maintenance

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of assessed Child Support Agency cases had maintenance collected via deduction of earnings orders in each quarter since 1994; and if he will make a statement. [28383]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the Chief Executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty, dated 8 December 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what proportion of assessed Child Support Agency cases had maintenance collected via deduction of earnings orders in each quarter since 1994; and if he will make a statement.

The available information is presented in the attached table.

I hope you find this helpful.

The number of cases that had a deduction from earnings order (DEO) in place as a method of maintenance collection from November 1995 to September 2005:

Quarter ending	*Cases with DEO as method of maintenance collection*	*Total number of cases with a maintenance liability*	*Percentage of cases with DEO as method of maintenance collection*
1995			
November	24,000	252,000	10
1996			
February	28,000	267,000	11
May	29,000	279,000	10
August	29,000	291,000	10
November	34,000	307,000	11
1997			
February	38,000	323,000	12
May	42,000	334,000	12
August	45,000	352,000	13
November	50,000	372,000	13
1998			
February	53,000	389,000	14
May	57,000	410,000	14
August	62,000	430,000	14
November	65,000	443,000	15
1999			
February	68,000	461,000	15
May	71,000	483,000	15
August	72,000	499,000	14
November	75,000	515,000	15
2000			
February	78,000	527,000	15
May	81,000	539,000	15
August	83,000	544,000	15
November	89,000	546,000	16
2001			
February	92,000	545,000	17
May	95,000	547,000	17
August	97,000	551,000	18
November	97,000	557,000	17
2002			
February	100,000	561,000	18
May	100,000	567,000	18
August	101,000	561,000	18
November	102,000	564,000	18
2003			
February	92,000	503,000	18
May	—	—	—
August	—	—	—
November	—	—	—
2004			
February	—	—	—
May	94,000	563,000	17
August	99,000	579,000	17
November	103,000	589,000	18
2005			
February	108,000	603,000	18
May	112,000	620,000	18
August	119,000	638,000	19
September	122,000	651,000	19

Notes:

1. Numbers are rounded to the nearest thousand and percentages to the nearest whole number.
2. Robust information covering the period May 2003 to February 2004 is not currently available.
3. Information prior to November 1995 is not provided as management information is not available.

4. The above includes those old scheme cases with a full maintenance assessment, and those new scheme cases with either a full maintenance calculation, or a default maintenance decision. Old scheme cases with a punitive interim maintenance assessment (an imposed assessment due to the non co-operation of the non resident parent), a small number of which would have deductions from earnings orders in place, are excluded from this analysis in line with the Agency's target definitions, as are new scheme cases being processed clerically.

5. These figures include all cases with a maintenance liability with the exception of around 5,000 cases for which the method of payment is unknown.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many children in Northamptonshire have been supported by parental payments made through the Child Support Agency in each year since 1997. [34880]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information can not be broken down to the geographical level requested.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many change requests have been made to the Child Support Agency's new computer system in each year since 2003–04; and if he will make a statement. [21450]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty, dated 8 December 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many change requests have been made to the Child Support Agency's new computer system in each year since 2003–04.

The process for notifying EDS of any elements of the system that do not fully enable us to meet our functional requirements involves making a "request for change". This does not necessarily mean that a change to the underlying requirement has taken place. The change is commonly a defect discovered during testing or live operation.

In 2003/4 we introduced 32 agreed changes to the original requirement, 11 in 2004/5 and 4 to date in 2005/6.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent progress there has been with tackling *(a)* computer problems and *(b)* telephone problems at the Child Support Agency; and if he will make a statement. [21585]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is matter for the chief executive Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty, dated 8 December 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent progress there has been with tackling *(a)* computer problems and *(b)* telephone problems at the Child Support Agency.

As a result of the remedial work carried out over the past 18 months, the computer system stability, availability and performance are much improved, in most cases now achieving and maintaining agreed technical service-level standards.

There have been significant technical improvements made to the performance of the telephony system, including recent upgrading of call-management software, resulting in a measured improvement in the stability and availability of the telephony service. There are further planned telephone service improvements, which will mainly centre around enabling faster responses, and more consistent availability of staff who can deal with a client's call.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the key performance metrics are for measuring the success of the EDS contract with the Child Support Agency. [30021]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty, dated 8 December 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the key performance metrics for measuring the success of the EDS contract with the Child Support Agency are.

The Departmental wide contract with EDS sets out a number of performance related criteria that are designed to measure their ability to deliver the operational services. The Department monitors the achievement or otherwise of these measures and where applicable it can apply financial remedies to EDS for poor performance.

The main criteria on which EDS performance is measured in respect of CS2 are:

The level of system availability (where the target is 99.2%);

Response times (where the target is 95% of responses within 3 seconds); and

Accuracy and timeliness of payments to parents with care (where the target is 100%).

In addition as part of the CS2 commercial settlement with EDS they have agreed to a deliver a staged and specified programme of work. The Department has retained substantial sums of money that will be released over time as and when EDS deliver on their commitments.

I hope you find this helpful.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will break down the Child Support Agency's compliance figures by the income band of the non-resident parent. [30069]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information requested is not currently available.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many deduction of earning orders were in place at the Child Support Agency in each year from 1997–98 to 2004–05; what proportion of cases this represented in each year; and if he will make a statement. [33433]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty, dated 8 December 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many deduction of earning orders have been in place at the Child Support Agency in each year from 1997 to 2005; what proportion of cases this represents in each year; and if he will make a statement.

The available information is presented in the attached table.

I hope you find this helpful.

Number of cases that had a deduction from earnings order (DEO) in place as a method of maintenance collection from November 1995 to September 2005

Quarter ending	Cases with DEO as method of maintenance collection	Total number of cases with a maintenance liability	Percentage of cases with DEO as method of maintenance collection
November 1995	24,000	252,000	10
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August 1996	29,000	291,000	10
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May 1999	71,000	483,000	15
August 1999	72,000	499,000	14
November 1999	75,000	515,000	15
February 2000	78,000	527,000	15
May 2000	81,000	539,000	15
August 2000	83,000	544,000	15
November 2000	89,000	546,000	16
February 2001	92,000	545,000	17
May2001	95,000	547,000	17
August 2001	97,000	551,000	18
November 2001	97,000	557,000	17
February 2002	100,000	561,000	18
May 2002	100,000	567,000	18
August 2002	101,000	561,000	18
November 2002	102,000	564,000	18
February 2003	92,000	503,000	18
May 2003	—	—	—
August 2003	—	—	—
November 2003	—	—	—
February 2004	—	—	—
May 2004	94,000	563,000	17
August 2004	99,000	579,000	17
November 2004	103,000	589,000	18
February 2005	108,000	603,000	18
May 2005	112,000	620,000	18
August 2005	119,000	638,000	19
September 2005	122,000	651,000	19

Notes:

1. Number are rounded to the nearest 1,000 and percentages to the nearest whole number.
2. Robust information covering the period May 2003 to February 2004 is not currently available.
3. Information prior to November 1995 is not provided as management information is not available.
4. The figures includes those old scheme cases with a full maintenance assessment, and those new scheme cases with either a full maintenance calculation, or a default maintenance decision. Old scheme cases with a punitive interim maintenance assessment (an imposed assessment due to the non co-operation of the Non Resident Parent), a small number of which would have deductions from earnings orders in place, are excluded from this analysis in line with the Agency's target definitions, as are new scheme cases being processed clerically.
5. These figures include all cases with a maintenance liability with the exception of around 5,000 cases for which the method of payment is unknown.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in how many cases in which the Child Support Agency was seeking to make the flat rate deduction in child maintenance where the non-resident parent was on benefit in each year since 2003 the request was subsequently found to be for a different benefit from the one being claimed. [34697]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what problems remain to be fully resolved with the Child Support Agency computer system. [21440]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is matter for the chief executive Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty, dated 8 December 2005:

In reply to your Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what problems remain to be fully resolved with the Child Support Agency computer system.

Under the terms of the recently-completed commercial settlement, EDS will complete the new computer system (CS2) to an agreed specification, up to the point of providing system capability for conversion of cases onto the new rules. This will include correcting all currently-agreed system defects and running any scans necessary, without further cost. The Department will retain a proportion of payments conditional upon timely completion of this work to the required standards of quality. In addition EDS has agreed to make no further charges for the old (CSCS) computer system until June 2008.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Housing Benefit

Mr. McGovern: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what criteria he used in determining whether to continue the single room rent upper limit on housing benefit provisions for those aged under 25 years. [36042]

Mr. Plaskitt: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Stafford, (Mr. Kidney), on 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 13W.

Mr. McGovern: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment the Government have made of the effect of the age discrimination clauses in the Equality Bill of the legality of the single room rent upper limit on housing benefit provisions for those aged under 25 years. [36043]

Mr. Plaskitt: There are no clauses in the Equality Bill which introduce (or extend) protection against discrimination on grounds of age.

Identity Cards

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the *(a)* total and *(b)* net cost of (i) integrating the proposed Identity Card Scheme into his Department's IT systems and (ii) the ongoing operation of the scheme within his Department. [31120]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Department for Work and Pensions has, in consultation with the Identity Cards programme, developed its current best estimate of the cost of using the ID Cards Scheme to support the services which it oversees and these costs have been incorporated into the business case. The Department is represented on the Ministerial Committee on Identity Cards which oversees the work on benefits planning and realisation.

In deriving these estimates account has to be taken of the types of use required to support the particular services which this Department oversees. Not all services will require a high degree of integration between the Identity Cards Scheme and other IT systems. Where there may be a need for integration, some costs can be absorbed into the usual cycles of system upgrades and technology refreshes.

We cannot release the detailed estimated costs for integrating IT systems and the ongoing operation of the Identity Cards Scheme within the Department and the services which it oversees at this stage as these elements may be acquired from the market. The estimates are therefore commercially sensitive and to release them may prejudice the procurement process and the Department's ability to obtain value for money from potential suppliers.

Jobcentre Plus

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Jobcentre Plus clients live more than 20 miles away from their nearest Jobcentre Plus office; and what arrangements are made to assist with their travel requirements. [28702]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Leslie Strathie, dated 8 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning how many Jobcentre Plus clients live more than 20 miles away from their nearest Jobcentre Plus office; and what arrangements are made to assist with their travel requirements. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

We do not hold information on the distance our customers have to travel to their nearest Jobcentre Plus office. However, this government is investing in modern, welcoming offices which provide a single point of access to Jobcentre Plus services. Previously, a customer may have had to visit a Jobcentre to access job vacancies, and a social security office to arrange payment of benefit. The new service brings both together in an integrated, personal service for customers. In fact, customers in receipt of benefit other than Jobseeker's Allowance have increased access to our offices, as there will be approximately double the number of Jobcentre Plus locations compared with the number of social security offices they could have previously contacted.

In planning the new network of Jobcentre Plus offices, local managers take into account many factors including population spread, availability and cost of public transport and the distance between offices. We aim to locate our new offices where there are good transport links. Inevitably as the office network changes, there will be some customers who will find they will have to travel further. Jobcentre Plus is actively working with local partners to ensure these hard to reach communities have access to services.

In many locations, particularly rural locations, we are often able to provide outreach facilities, ensuring access to job vacancies, advice and information through third party premises. In practice this means that with our new network, very few of our customers would have to travel more than 20 miles to access Jobcentre Plus services, other than in the most remote rural areas.

Customers are now using our offices differently. More of our face-to-face customer contact is on an appointment basis and information on job vacancies is readily available by telephone and the internet. This enables staff in our offices to focus on those customers in greatest need of support.

There are long established rules for reimbursing travelling costs for Jobseeker's Allowance customers attending a Work Focused Interview, principally where the interview does not fall on their normal signing day. For normal fortnightly attendance to sign-on, customers are expected to meet the cost of their journey to the office. Where the closure of an office means customers having to travel over an hour to the nearest office, we will consider if postal signing is appropriate. Customers in receipt of Income Support and Incapacity Benefit can claim for reimbursement of their expenses in a similar way when requested to attend the office.

Link-Age Pilots

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 548W, on the Link-Age pilots, where each pilot is located; and how each pilot will be evaluated. [35474]

Mr. Timms: The pilot sites for the second phase of Link-Age are in the process of being agreed DWP is working in partnership with the Department of Health, the social exclusion unit, Better Government for Older People, Help the Aged, Age Concern, Citizens Advice Bureau, and the Local Government Association to identify the criteria against which the pilots will be selected. An evaluation plan is being designed alongside the pilot selection criteria. The location of pilot sites and the evaluation plan will be announced shortly.

Pension Credit

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Stroud *(a)* received the state pension and *(b)* (i) applied for and (ii) received pension credit in each of the last five years; and what the average pension credit payment was in each year. [35112]

Mr. Timms: The available information is in the following tables.

Number of people in Stroud parliamentary constituency receiving state pension in each of the last 5 years

	Number
May 2005	21,300
May 2004	21,000
May 2003	20,500
May 2002	20,300
March 2001	20,000

Source:
DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (100 per cent. data) and 5 per cent. sample data

Information on the number of people who have applied for pension credit is not available in respect of individual constituencies. pension credit was introduced from October 2003. Information on numbers of households and individuals in receipt of pension credit at 30 June 2005 is contained in the most recent quarterly pension credit progress report published on 20 October. The report is available in the Library.

Number of people in Stroud parliamentary constituency receiving pension credit and the average weekly amount

	Household recipients	Individual beneficiaries	Average weekly amount
May 2005	3,900	4,700	38.00
May 2004	3,600	4,300	36.06
November 2003	2,900	3,400	37.85

Notes:
1. Caseloads are rounded to the nearest 100 therefore totals may not sum. Average weekly payments are shown to the nearest penny.
2. Pension credit (PC) replaced minimum income guarantee (MIG) on 6 October 2003. Existing MIG recipients were automatically converted onto pension credit on that date (assuming they still met the eligibility criteria).
3. PC data are taken as at 30 November 2003 and 31 May in 2004, 2005.
4. State pension data are taken as at 31 March 2001 and 31 May in 2002–05.
5. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.
6. For March 2001, the caseload figures have been adjusted to be consistent with the Work and Pension Longitudinal Study (WPLS) data. These figures are therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation.

Pension Reform

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether it is his policy to increase the state pension age to 67; and if he will make a statement on the Government's plans for pension reform. [33631]

Mr. Timms: The Pensions Commission's Second Report published on 30 November 2005 includes recommendations to Government on raising the state pension age over time.

As far as the specific recommendations are concerned, the Government are ruling nothing in and nothing out. Ministers have asked the Pensions Commission to continue their involvement in the public debate over the next few months. The Government will work toward, republication of a white paper in the spring which will set out their response.

Pensioners

Mr. David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many female pensioners in Midlothian are in receipt of the full basic state pension. [35261]

Mr. Timms: The number of female pensioners in the Midlothian parliamentary constituency who are in receipt of a full basic state pension as at 31 March 2005 is 4,600.

Notes:
1. Data is taken from 5 per cent. extract of Pension Service Computer System, therefore figures are subject to a degree of sampling variation. They are also adjusted to be consistent with the overall caseload from the Work and Pension Longitudinal Study.
2. The figure for the number of recipients is rounded to the nearest hundred.
3. A full basic State Pension (£79.60 in 2004–05) is paid to those who fully satisfy the contribution conditions either in their own right or where applicable, on the basis of their late or former spouse's contributions.
4. Parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant Office for National Statistics postcode directory.

Source:
DWP Information Directorate 5 per cent. sample.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners have been entitled to either income support or pension credit in each year since 1990; how many claimed it in each year; and what percentage did not claim in each year. [35647]

Mr. Timms: Estimates of the number of pensioners entitled to Income Support, the comparable number of recipients and the associated percentage rates of take-up can be found in the DWP report series: "Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take-Up". Copies of the annual series are held in the Library.

The latest report relates to financial year 2002–03 and pre-dates the introduction of pension credit. The report presents patterns in the take-up of pensioners' income support/minimum income guarantee between 1997–98 and 2002–03.

Information on numbers of households and individuals in receipt of pension credit at 30 June 2005 is contained in the most recent quarterly pension credit progress report published on 20 October. A copy of the report is also in the Library. The report containing the first six months following the introduction of pension credit, "Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take-Up in 2003/2004" will be released on 19 December 2005 and will contain estimates of take-up.

Winter Fuel Payments

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what measures he is taking to speed up the payment of the winter fuel allowance. [35505]

Mr. Timms: The winter fuel payment is issued as quickly as possible following the September qualifying week and subsequent matching exercise to determine entitlement and level of payment. Payments go out over several weeks and commenced in early November. The majority of payments, including all automatic payments, will be made by Christmas.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer about increasing the winter fuel allowance. [35507]

Mr. Timms: The Chancellor has announced that the winter fuel payment will continue at the current rate for the remainder of this Parliament. The payment provides a significant contribution towards fuel cost.

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people will receive the winter fuel payment in the Leeds, West constituency in 2005–06. [35125]

Mr. Timms: For winter 2004–05 there were 14,035 people in the Leeds, West constituency who received a winter fuel payment. We expect the numbers for winter 2005–06 to be similar. This information for winter 2004–05 is also available in the Library.

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Local authorities and parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.

Source:
Information Directorate, 100 per cent. Sample

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Australia (Domestic Violence)

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) how many immigration cases have involved allegations of domestic violence in Australia in the past three years; [35087]

(2) how many women accompanied by their children who have fled alleged domestic violence in Australia have been *(a)* granted visas to stay in the United Kingdom and *(b)* had their children returned to Australia against their wishes in the last three years. [35088]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* Our visa issuing post in Canberra, which handles all applications for entry clearance to the United Kingdom from Australia, has no statistics of applications from individuals who might have been involved in domestic violence.

Although it is possible that some individuals seeking entry clearance for the UK may be victims of domestic violence, there is no provision under the Immigration Rules for entry to the UK on these grounds. There is therefore no requirement or incentive for an applicant seeking entry clearance at any of our visa issuing missions overseas to declare that they have been subject to domestic violence, as their applications will be considered on other grounds.

Jurisdiction on the return of nationals to their home country belongs with the Home Office.

BBC World Service

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what *(a)* benchmarks and *(b)* indicators have been set by which to judge the effectiveness of the planned BBC World Service Arabic television news channel. [34929]

Ian Pearson: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is currently in discussions with the BBC World Service about all its performance measures to be in place from April 2006. It is anticipated that measures for the BBC Arabic Television service will include indicators on reach, impact (including reputation), quality and value for money among target audiences in key areas throughout the region.

Broadcasting (Illegal Jamming)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what discussions have been held between the US State Department and the UK Government on representations each Government has made to the Libyan Government over the recent jamming of communication satellites Telstar 12 and Hotbird; and if he will make a statement; [34921]

(2) what representations he has made to the Libyan Government about the jamming of the Telstar 12 and Hotbird communication satellites since September; and if he will make a statement; [34923]

(3) what assessment he has made of Libya's compliance with the International Telecommunications regulations of the United Nations International Telecommunications Union *(a)* within Libya and *(b)* with reference to jamming of the Telstar 12 and Hotbird communications satellites; and if he will make a statement; [34925]

(4) what discussions the Government had with *(a)* broadcasting authorities and *(b)* Loral Skynet on (i) disruption of commercial and Government data circuits and (ii) restoration of Sowt Alamel's broadcasting services via the Telstar 12 and Hotbird satellites; and if he will make a statement; [34926]

(5) what impact the recent interruption of the Telstar 12 and Hotbird communication satellites had on Government communications. [34927]

Dr. Howells: We have been informed that the Telstar 12 satellite has experienced some technical interference and note it has been alleged that the interference has originated from Libya. Our understanding is that, if true, the alleged action might be a breach of the International Telecommunications Regulations of the United Nations International Telecommunications Union.

Government communications may have been disrupted and we are investigating the matter further. Following discussions with the United States authorities, the Office of Communications and Loral Skynet, the British ambassador in Tripoli raised the issue with the Libyan authorities at senior level.

The Government continue to work to eliminate barriers to freedom of expression and information and to create an environment in which free speech and free media flourish.

Burma

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the Myanmar Government over the extended detention under house arrest of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi. [34719]

Ian Pearson: Daw Aung San Suu Kyi remains under house arrest with almost no contact with anyone outside her compound. We have not yet been able to verify the reports that her period of detention has been formally extended. The Burmese authorities have given no official notification of the extended detention.

We have, however, joined with others in the international community in calling repeatedly for her immediate release and that of all political prisoners in Burma, most recently in a statement issued on behalf of the European Union on 28 November.

We will continue to highlight the case of Daw Aung San Suu Kyi with the Burmese authorities at every available opportunity. Our ambassador in Rangoon raised her continuing detention and that of other prisoners of conscience when she met the Burmese Home Minister on 26 October. In the meantime our embassy in Rangoon is monitoring the situation closely.

Cameroon

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will instruct the British ambassador to Cameroon to make urgent representations to President Biya concerning the arrest and detention of Mr. Nfor Ngala Nfor. [32154]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 7 December 2005]:* My noble Friend, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, raised the case of Mr. Nfor Ngala Nfor with the Cameroon Minister Delegate at the Ministry of External Relations at the Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting on 24 November.

The British high commissioner to Cameroon discussed the Southern Cameroons National Council with the Cameroon Deputy Minister of Justice on 29 November.

Colombia

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Government of Colombia to ensure that *(a)* criminal investigations into third parties who backed and co-ordinated paramilitaries are advanced and *(b)* that those responsible for backing paramilitarism are brought to justice under the new Justice and Peace Law. [35254]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We have regularly urged the Colombian Government to do more to tackle the issue of collusion between state officials and the paramilitary groups. President Uribe has publicly stated on a number of occasions that he will not tolerate such collusion and will act decisively against those who are proved to have such links. The Colombian Government have a clear duty to undertake thorough judicial investigations into all attacks and abuses, including those where there are credible allegations of collusion. We have made this point to the Colombians on many occasions and will continue to do so. We have also made it clear that a culture of impunity must not be allowed to flourish.

We have been encouraged by recent, stronger action by the Colombians to address these issues. This has resulted in dismissals from the security forces, and in some cases, arrests and imprisonment of both high-ranking army officers and police. Such action sends a strong message that collusion with illegal groups and involvement in drug trafficking will not be tolerated. It also helps increase public confidence in the security forces. We commend the Colombian Government for this and urge them to continue, and strengthen, their efforts to crack down on collusion and to deny impunity to wrong-doers.

The EU response to the new Justice and Peace Law can be found at http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/gena/86442.pdf

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Mr. Mullin: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what dates President Kabila of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has visited the UK in the last four years. [34516]

Ian Pearson: President Joseph Kabila of the Democratic Republic of the Congo has made an official visit to the United Kingdom once over the last four years, from 4–6 February 2004. Prior to that, he also made an official visit to the UK in March 2001.

Departmental Victim Support

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether policy changes in relation to victim and family support from his Department are being considered following the Sharm el-Sheikh bombing. [34493]

Dr. Howells: Those injured abroad, or the relatives or dependants of those killed abroad, are not currently eligible for compensation under the UK compensation schemes. However, the Government are currently discussing this, and the wider question of support in the UK for the victims of terrorist incidents overseas.

Diplomatic Residency (Cape Town)

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) for what reasons the head of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office property management team and a consultant interior designer recently visited the high commissioner's residency in Cape Town; and at whose request the visit was made; [35717]

(2) when the high commissioner's residence in Cape Town was last refurbished and redecorated; [35718]

(3) who is now resident in the high commissioner's residence in Cape Town. [35719]

Ian Pearson: The Head of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Property Management team has not visited Cape Town.

The FCO has a rolling visit programme to review the interiors and furnishings of certain residences. The visit of an interior designer to Cape Town was part of this programme. A senior member of Estates Directorate visiting South Africa on other business took the opportunity to accompany them.

The Cape Town residence last had a major refurbishment in financial year 2000–01.

The high commissioner, the right hon. Paul Boateng and his wife, reside both in his residence in Pretoria and in his residence in Cape Town.

European Court of Human Rights

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list those cases against the United Kingdom that have been lodged and are awaiting consideration by the European Court of Human Rights; which articles of the Convention are cited in each application as having been breached; which cases have been ruled admissible; and if he will make a statement on each case. [33726]

Ian Pearson: A list of all the cases lodged against the United Kingdom at the European Court of Human Rights is not available as in the majority of cases the Court decides without referring them to Governments. The cases against the United Kingdom that have been ruled admissible, and the articles in respect of which they are admissible, are as follows:

Case name	*Article*
Barrow	Article 14 and Article 1 of Protocol 1
Bell	Article 6
Black	Article 6
Blake	Article 6
Boyle	Article 5
C	Articles 6, 8 and 13
Grant	Articles 8, 14 and Article 1 of Protocol 1
Keegan and Others	Articles 8 and 13
McKay	Article 5
O'Halloran and Francis	Article 6
Pearson	Article 14 and Article 1 of Protocol 1
Saadi	Article 5
Singh and Others	Articles 8, 12, 13 and 14
Stec and Others	Article 14 and Article 1 of Protocol 1
Tsfayo	Article 6
Walker	Article 14 and Article 1 of Protocol 1
Widowers (71 cases)	Article 8 and/or Article 1 of Protocol 1 and Article 14
Young	Article 6

The other cases which have been communicated to the Government and on which an admissibility decision is awaited, and the articles in respect of which they have been communicated, are as follows:

Case name	*Article*
A and Others	Articles 3, 5, 13 and 14
Alderson and eight Others	Article 6
Basnet	Articles 2, 3, 5 and 6
Bellinger	Articles 8, 12, 13, 14 and Article 1 of Protocol 1
BH	Article 6 and Article 1 of Protocol 1
Botmeh and Alami	Article 6
Brecknell and Others	Article 2
Burden	Article 14 and Article 1 of Protocol 1
Capital Landfill Restoration	Article 1 of Protocol 1
Copland	Articles 3, 6 and 8
Dearnley	Article 6
Dickson	Articles 8 and 12
Drew	Article 3
Elahi	Article 8
Evans	Articles 8 and 14
Fernie	Article 6
Financial Times and Others	Articles 6 and 10
Hussain (A)	Articles 2 and 3
Hussain (Y)	Article 6
Liberty and Others	Articles 8 and 13
M	Article 8
MacDonald	Articles 8, 13 and 14
Martin	Article 6
McCann	Article 8
MW	Articles 8, 12 and 14 and Article 1 of Protocol 1
N	Article 3
S and Marper	Articles 8 and 14
Schofield	Article 6
Times Newspapers	Article 10
Upton	Articles 8 and 14
Wainwright	Articles 3, 8 and 13
Widowers (319 cases)	Article 8 and/or Article 1 of Protocol 1 and Article 14
Wilkinson	Articles 3, 6, 8 and 13
Wilson	Article 6

To prepare a statement on each of these cases would result in disproportionate cost.

Foreign Decorations

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 24 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 2245–46W, on foreign decorations, when he expects the Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals to announce *(a)* its decision on the Pingat Jasa Malaysia medal and *(b)* the results of its review of the Government's rules for the accepting and wearing of foreign awards. [33436]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* The Committee on the Grant of Honours, Decorations and Medals will be considering the Pingat Jasa Malaysia medal and reviewing certain rules governing the accepting and wearing of foreign awards at its meeting on 7 December. Further consultations may be required before the Committee submits its advice to Her Majesty The Queen. Hon. Members will be informed when decisions have been taken.

Indonesia

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what is the Government's policy on the US removal of the military embargo against Indonesia; what representations the Government has made to the US Administration on this matter; and if he will make a statement. [33323]

Ian Pearson: We have noted the United States (US) Government decision on their military relationship with Indonesia. We have not made any representations to the US Administration on this matter.

Iraq

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the total cost was of *(a)* private security guards and *(b)* private contractors employed in Iraq by the UK Government in 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [35001]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* In financial year 2004–05, the total cost requirements for private security guards and private contractors employed in Iraq by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office were £48.9 million and £9.67 million respectively.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether an official in his Department has issued an apology to the Iraqi authorities in relation to the events in Basra on 19 and 20 September. [36072]

Dr. Howells: No apologies have been given to the Iraqi authorities by officials with regard to any aspect of the events of 19 September. The UK and Iraqi authorities have conducted and completed inquiries into the events of 19 September in Basra. A joint statement about the matter was released on 11 October 2005, available at http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uky4332818.stm. The matter is now closed.

Kosovo

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of progress in the UN-led talks on the future status of Kosovo; and if he will make a statement. [34720]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: On 10 November, the United Nations Security Council endorsed the Secretary-General's appointment of former Finnish President, Martti Ahtisaari, as his Status Envoy for Kosovo. Mr. Ahtisaari has begun his work, visiting Belgrade and Pristina last week. We look to both sides to engage constructively in this process. The British Government will continue to support the Status Envoy. I am placing in the Library of the House a copy of the Contact Group (United States, UK, France, Germany, Italy and Russia together with representatives of the European Union) Guiding Principles. These are there to support the work of the Status Envoy.

Legislative Consultation

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list those of his Department's advisory non-departmental public bodies which the Government are required to *(a)* consult prior to legislative proposals and *(b)* publish its response to advice from. [34681]

Ian Pearson: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has three advisory non-departmental public bodies (NDPB). They are the Diplomatic Service Appeal Board, The Government Hospitality Advisory Committee for the Purchase of Wine and the Wilton Park Academic Council.

The Government are not required to consult these NDPBs prior to legislative proposals or publish their response to advice from them.

Liberia

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance the UK is providing to the Government of Liberia to reform and strengthen the *(a)* justice and *(b)* civil security structure in Liberia; and if he will make a statement. [34730]

Ian Pearson: The UK is currently providing no direct support to Liberia on the justice sector. The Department for International Development (DFID) looked into a justice programme, but could not proceed for lack of a suitable local partner. Further, there are several other donors present in Monrovia better placed to cover this sector. The UK, however, played a key role in negotiating and getting agreement on the Governance and Economic Management Assistance Programme (GEMAP), which has a justice component. The UK representative in Monrovia is also involved in the Rule of Law Taskforce, and DFID is running a governance programme with an anti-corruption component.

The UK is actively involved in sharing lessons learned from the UK Security Sector Reform (SSR) leadership role in Sierra Leone with the UN and the United States, who are leading on SSR in Liberia. There is also a UK Brigadier seconded to the UN in Liberia to advise on various aspects of SSR.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment his Department has made of the level of resources available to UN human rights officials tasked with investigating reports of trial by ordeal in Liberia; and if he will make a statement. [34731]

Ian Pearson: We are aware of recent so-called "witchcraft" trials in Grand Cape Mount county. Such worrying issues form part of our regular dialogue with the UN Mission in Liberia (UNMIL), including with their human rights staff. UNMIL are not only following closely and attending some of the hearings, but they are also carrying out civic education with local communities. The UK Political Officer in Monrovia—the sole Government representative in Liberia—has discussed the trials with UNMIL human rights staff, both in Monrovia and during a visit to the county where the activity is centred, in November 2005.

Palestine

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Israeli authorities regarding the lifting of restrictions in Palestine in line with the Roadmap in preparation for the legislative elections scheduled for 25 January 2006. [35172]

Dr. Howells: We, along with our EU partners, have emphasised to the Israeli Government the need to co-operate fully with the Palestinian authority in facilitating the preparation and conduct of the elections, especially to ensure the freedom of movement of all election officials, candidates, campaigners and voters.

Sanjar Umarov

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what assessment his Department has made of the *(a)* whereabouts, *(b)* medical condition and *(c)* reason and conditions of detention of Sanjar Umarov; and if he will make a statement; [34732]

(2) what discussions *(a)* he, *(b)* Ministers of his Department and *(c)* other members and representatives of the UK Government have had with members and representatives of the government of Uzbekistan concerning the (i) arrest and (ii) detention of Sanjar Umarov on 22 October 2005; and if he will make a statement. [34733]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Sanjar Umarov was detained on 22 October 2005. He is being held in solitary confinement in Tashkent City Prison on charges of large scale embezzlement related to his business affairs. The Prosecutor General's Office has completed its preliminary investigation into Mr. Umarov's affairs and has submitted it to the Supreme Economic Court.

Mr. Umarov's lawyer was first able to visit on 26 October 2005. He reported that Mr. Umarov was naked in his cell and incoherent. On subsequent visits Mr. Umarov has been able to talk to his lawyer in the presence of the investigation team. He has requested medical treatment for high blood pressure but has not had an independent medical assessment to date.

Our ambassador in Tashkent, David Moran, raised Mr. Umarov's case with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 24 October 2005 and again with Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs Mustafayev on 26 October 2005. We issued a Presidency statement on 25 October 2005 calling on the Uzbek authorities to allow Mr. Umarov access to his lawyer and his family and to treat him in accordance with international standards. The statement can be found at:

http://www.eu2005.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1107293561746&a=KArticle&aid=1129042521613&date=2005-10-25.

Mr. Moran discussed Umarov's case with Foreign Minister Ganiev on 2, 10 and 11 November 2005.

On 8 November 2005, the EU issued a declaration on the human rights situation in Uzbekistan, which referred to Umarov's detention and urgently requested the Uzbek authorities to allow an independent assessment of Mr. Umarov's condition. The declaration, which can be found at: http://www.eu2005.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1107293561746&a=KArticle&aid=1130675480072&date=2005-11-08, was delivered to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs by diplomatic note.

Our Embassy in Tashkent remains in close touch with Umarov's family and lawyer.

Uganda

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of whether the Lord's Resistance Army is willing to engage in peace talks with the Government of Uganda. [35210]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 7 December 2005]:* The Ugandan Interior Minister has welcomed the recent comments made by Vincent Otti, the Lord's Resistance Army's (LRA) deputy commander, to the BBC that the LRA is ready to talk. Former Ugandan Minister, Betty Bigombe, who has been trying for years to encourage peace talks, has suggested that if it is genuine in its latest offer, the LRA should call a ceasefire in northern Uganda. For any peace talks to succeed the LRA needs to demonstrate that they are seriously pursuing a sustainable peace that ensures those indicted by the International Criminal Court face justice in The Hague.

United States (Deportation)

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 18 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 909W, to the right hon. and learned Member for North-East Fife (Sir Menzies Campbell), on the United States (deportation), whether the answer applies to UK Overseas Territories. [34421]

Dr. Howells: I can confirm that that answer is true of the UK Overseas Territories.

War Crimes Trial (Guantanamo)

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the US Administration on behalf of *(a)* the UK Government and *(b)* the European Union regarding the US Department of Defence's decision to conduct the first war crimes trial at Guantanamo with the power to impose the death penalty; and if he will make a statement. [33709]

Ian Pearson: The Government's view on the Military Commissions are well known to the United States (US) Government. The Government have expressed their reservations about them from July 2003 when two British nationals were designated for possible trial. The Government subsequently concluded that the Commissions did not meet the standards required for our nationals. The UK has not made representations on this matter on behalf of EU member states.

The Military Commissions have been suspended, pending consideration of the Hamdan case by the US Supreme Court. This is not expected before early next year. The US Government have confirmed that it will not seek the death penalty for any of the nine terrorist suspects it has formally charged at Guantanamo Bay.

West Papua

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many visits have been made by embassy staff to West Papua in the past year; and if he will place copies of the reports of the visits in the Library. [35050]

Ian Pearson: Members of the British embassy, Jakarta, have visited Papua on three occasions in the past year.

It would not be appropriate to place copies of the reports of the visits in the Library of the House.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1902W, on West Papua, what reports he has received that Tactica water cannon vehicles are present in West Papua and have been used to control peaceful protests; what representations he has since made to the Indonesian authorities; and if he will make a statement. [35126]

Ian Pearson: In the period since 22 November, we have received reports indicating that Tactica water cannon vehicles were deployed to the city of Jayapura, Papua in August of this year. The reports indicate that the vehicles may have been used by police to disperse a

violent incident during which demonstrators were allegedly seeking to cause criminal damage to a public facility. We are currently seeking confirmation of these reports from the Indonesian authorities.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1902W, on West Papua, what guidelines have been issued to his Department's embassy staff in Indonesia concerning the end-use monitoring of UK-supplied military equipment; and if he will place copies of those guidelines in the Library. [35128]

Ian Pearson: No guidelines have been issued to embassy staff in Jakarta concerning the end-use monitoring of UK supplied military equipment. The core standing tasks of the British embassy Jakarta include investigating any credible reports that British supplied equipment has been used by the armed forces or law enforcement agencies to perpetrate abuses of human rights.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1902W, on West Papua, what assessment he has made of whether the use of Tactica vehicles to control peaceful protests is a breach of previous assurances that UK-supplied equipment will not be used to violate human rights. [35134]

Ian Pearson: We consider that the use by a Government within its own borders of proportionate force to maintain law and order, subject to appropriate controls, is legitimate and does not constitute internal repression or a human rights abuse.

We have received reports that Tactica water cannon vehicles may have been used by police to disperse a violent incident in Jayapura, Papua, during which demonstrators were allegedly seeking to cause criminal damage to a public facility. We are currently seeking confirmation of these reports from the Indonesian authorities.

HEALTH

Acute Hospitals

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many acute hospitals have provided type 1 accident and emergency facilities in each year since 1990. [25281]

Mr. Byrne: Data on the number of type 1 accident and emergency (A and E) departments are only available in this format from 2000–01 and are shown in the following table. Prior to 2000–01, statistics provided a count of the number of trusts providing a type 1 A and E service, rather than the number of type 1 A and E services. The pre-2000–01 trust data are available on the Department's website at:www.performance.doh.gov.uk/hospitalactivity

Type 1 A and E departments, 2000–01 to 2005–06

	Number
2000–01	201
2001–02	196
2002–03	209
2003–04	211
2004–05	208

Note:
As at end March of relevant year.
Source:
KH03 for 2000–01 to 2001–02. QMAE for subsequent years.

Alcohol

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 22 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 738W, on alcohol, if she will break down the figures provided by *(a)* primary care trust, *(b)* London borough and *(c)* individual London hospital. [16899]

Jane Kennedy: Information showing the number of admission episodes for alcohol-related diseases in children aged 11–15 by primary care trust, London local authority and London hospital provider, has been placed in the Library.

Allergy Specialists

Susan Kramer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many allergy specialists are working in the NHS in London, broken down by *(a)* primary care trust and *(b)* London borough. [31436]

Jane Kennedy: London primary care trusts do not employ staff with an allergy speciality and numbers of allergy specialists are not collected by London borough.

However, the information in the table shows the latest figures available for hospital medical staff with a specialty in allergy, within London Government Office Region, by strategic health authority, national health service trust and grade.

Hospital, medical staff with a specialty in allergy, within London Government Office Region, by strategic health authority, organisation and grade as at 30 September 2004

Number (headcount)

			Of which:			
		All staff	*Consultant*	*Registrar group*	*Senior house officer*	*Hospital practitioner/ clinical assistant*
London GOR		45	32	9	1	3
Of which:						
North Central London SHA	Q05	13	10	2	1	0
Great Ormond Street Hospital for Sick Children	RP4	4	4	0	0	0
North Middlesex University Hospital NHS Trust	RAP	1	1	0	0	0
Royal Free Hampstead NHS Trust	RAL	7	4	2	1	0
University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust	RRV	1	1	0	0	0

Hospital, medical staff with a specialty in allergy, within London Government Office Region, by strategic health authority, organisation and grade as at 30 September 2004

Number (headcount)

				Of which:		
		All staff	*Consultant*	*Registrar group*	*Senior house officer*	*Hospital practitioner/ clinical assistant*
North East London SSA	Q06	3	3	0	0	0
Barts and the London NHS Trust	RNJ	3	3	0	0	0
North West London SHA	Q04	15	9	3	0	3
Chelsea and Westminster Healthcare NHS Trust	RQM	2	2	0	0	0
Hammersmith Hospitals NHS Trust	RQN	6	1	2	0	3
Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS Trust	RT3	3	2	1	0	0
St. Mary's NHS Trust	RJ5	4	4	0	0	0
South East London SHA	Q07	9	6	3	0	0
Guys and St. Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust	RJ1	5	3	2	0	0
King's College Hospital NHS Trust	RJZ	4	3	1	0	0
South West London SHA	Q08	5	4	1	0	0
Epsom and St. Helier University Hospitals NHS Trust	RVR	5	4	1	0	0

Source:
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre medical and dental work force census.

Antidepressants

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1799W, on antidepressant drugs, if she will break down the figures by *(a)* 0 to 11, *(b)* 12 to 16, *(c)* 17 to 25, *(d)* 26 to 50, *(e)* 51 to 65, *(f)* 66 to 75 and *(g)* 75 year olds and over; and what proportion of the total population in each age chart is represented as a proportion of the total population for each age group. [33514]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is not available. Age-based prescription data are available only for people within the three age-related charge exemption categories: zero to 15 years; 16 to 18 years and in full-time education; and people aged 60 years or over.

Prescription data are not gathered for other age categories, nor where a prescription charge exemption on age grounds alone does not apply: 16 to 18 but not in full-time education and all persons aged 18 to 59 years.

Audiology

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her answer of 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2648W, on audiology services, what data is being collected as part of the pilot for diagnostic tests for pure tone audiometry; which hospitals are involved in the pilot; when the results of the pilot will be published; and if she will make a statement. [33352]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given to the hon. Member for South Cambridgeshire (Mr. Lansley) on 12 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2648W. The pilot data collection looked at data on activity and waiting times for a short list of diagnostic tests or procedures, including pure tone audiometry. The same set of information was collected for each of the diagnostic tests/procedures covered by the piloting exercise.

Children's Hospices

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the impact of primary care trust deficits on funding for children's hospices; and if she will make a statement. [30387]

Mr. Byrne: The national health service is currently receiving the largest sustained increase in funding in its history, with an investment of £135 billion over 2006–07 and 2007–08. There is no limit to the amount primary care trusts may devote to palliative care

In our manifesto, we made a commitment to increase the funding for end of life care, giving people the choice as to where they receive this care. This pledge is extended to the care of children and young people with a life-threatening condition.

Departmental PSAs

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she intends to extend the ambit of her Department's 2004 public service agreement target number eight to include those persons supported by grant-funded organisations. [30801]

Mr. Byrne: There are no current plans to extend the ambit of public service agreement target number eight. However, the Health and Social Care Information Centre is currently leading a project to establish a data collection on the number of people who are helped to live more independently in their own homes through services provided by voluntary and other organisations that do not form part of a formal care package agreed by social services.

Departmental Resources

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the real terms percentage increase in allocated resources for her Department *(a)* was for the period 1997–98 to 2004–05 and *(b)* is estimated to be between 2005–06 and 2007–08 (i) for each period and (ii) for each year. [31038]

Jane Kennedy: The average real terms increase in national health service total net expenditure for the period 1997–98 to 2004–05 is 6.2 per cent.

The estimated average real terms increase in NHS total net expenditure for the period 2005–06 to 2007–08 is 7.1 per cent.

The real terms increase year on year from 1997–98 to 2007–08 is included in the following table.

NHS total expenditure: England 1997–98 to 2007–08

		Net NHS expenditure (£ billion)	*Percentage increase*	*Percentage real terms increase*
Cash				
1997–98	Outturn	34.664	5.1	2.0
1998–99	Outturn	36.608	5.6	2.9
1999–2000	Outturn	39.881	8.9	6.8
Resource Budgeting Stage 1				
1999–2000	Outturn	40.201	—	—
2000–01	Outturn	43.932	9.3	7.9
2001–02	Outturn	49.021	11.6	8.9
2002–03	Outturn	54.042	10.2	6.8
Resource Budgeting Stage 2				
2003–04	Outturn	63.001	—	—
2004–05	Estimated outturn	69.706	10.6	8.3
2005–06	Plan	76.387	9.6	6.9
2006–07	Plan	84.324	10.4	7.5
2007–08	Plan	92.643	9.9	7.0

East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust (Chief Executive)

Michael Jabez Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on what grounds the chief executive of the East Sussex Hospitals NHS Trust recently resigned her position; and what payment has been made to her in settlement of her claims against the Trust. [21474]

Caroline Flint: Ministers were not involved in the employment matters of East Sussex Hospitals National Health Service Trust. This was a matter which was dealt with by the trust.

However, Surrey and Sussex strategic health authority, the local headquarters of the NHS has advised that the former chief executive resigned her position to pursue new career opportunities. I understand that the trust intends to publish details of her severance package in the next annual accounts.

Epilepsy

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department is taking to encourage the development of epilepsy networks within the NHS. [30744]

Mr. Byrne: We have invested £1.2 million in a NHS Modernisation Agency project to improve access to, and the quality of, neurological services. We have also given £290,000 to the National Society for Epilepsy to develop its information outreach services.

On 19 February 2003, the Department published its action plan for epilepsy—"Improving Services For People With Epilepsy". Following this, the NHS Modernisation Agency ran "Action on Neurology" in 2004–05 at eight pilot sites. This included delivering high quality epilepsy service without the need for patients to travel far by the use of electronic and paper patient-held records. The pilots also aimed to improve communications between primary, secondary and tertiary care by developing a network of healthcare professionals to deliver a co-ordinated service. A further aim was to develop general practice with special interest services for people with epilepsy and headaches and a primary care triage system to improve access and efficiency.

Fertility Treatment

Mrs. Riordan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment her Department has made of the use of eligibility criteria by primary care trusts in the provision of funding for infertility services; [28519]

(2) what assessment her Department has made of the extent to which primary care trusts are making available sufficient funding for centrally-agreed levels of fertility treatment; [28520]

(3) if she will make a statement on the progress that primary care trusts in England are expected to make in implementing the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's clinical guideline on fertility; [28521]

(4) what assessment she has made of the likely effect of the forthcoming *(a)* review of specialised services commissioning and *(b)* reorganisation of primary care trusts on progress towards implementing the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's clinical guideline on fertility. [28522]

Caroline Flint: When the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) guideline on the assessment and treatment of people with fertility problems was published in February 2004 we advised primary care trusts (PCTs) to offer a minimum of one cycle of invitro fertilisation (IVF) by April 2005 to those who meet the clinical criteria in the guideline, giving priority to couples with no children living with them. Following up the implementation of the guideline, NICE has carried out surveys measuring its impact and these are available on the NICE website at www.nice.org.uk The surveys have found that 95 per cent. of the PCTs who responded are offering at least one cycle of IVF to those defined as eligible according to local criteria. The primary responsibility for the implementation of the clinical guideline on the assessment and treatment of people with fertility problems produced by NICE rests with the national health service at local level, in discussion with patients' groups and local health bodies. Local policies will reflect local needs and priorities. We have advised that we expect the NHS to make progress to full implementation of the guideline in the longer term.

The assessment and treatment of people with fertility problems is not defined as a specialised service. In many cases, PCTs work together to commission infertility treatment services.

Health Services (Uxbridge)

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* residential and *(b)* in-patient specialist drug treatment rehabilitation places are available in (i) Uxbridge constituency and (ii) each London borough. [29758]

Jane Kennedy: We do not hold figures for Uxbridge as drug treatment data are collected on a drug action team (DAT) area basis. Data are not collected on treatment places, but collected on the basis of aggregated numbers in treatment in the financial year across all six treatment types, which are:

day care

general practitioner prescribing

specialist prescribing

residential rehabilitation

in-patient detoxification

structured counselling

In 2004–05, the numbers in treatment in Hillingdon, of which Uxbridge is part of, was 504.

The figures for all DATs in London, for numbers in treatment in 2004–05 is shown in the following table.

	Number
Barking and Dagenham	571
Barnet	562
Bexley	345
Brent	844
Bromley	657
Camden	1,834
City of London	20
Croydon	954
Ealing	1,203
Enfield	608
Greenwich	782
Hackney	1,180
Hammersmith and Fulham	1,079
Haringey	1,022
Harrow	757
Havering	482
Hillingdon	504
Hounslow	857
Islington	1,495
Kensington and Chelsea	1,150
Kingston upon Thames	424
Lambeth	1,527
Lewisham	1,063
Merton	728
Newham	859
Redbridge	651
Richmond upon Thames	547
Southwark	1,503
Sutton	564
Tower Hamlets	1,204
Waltham Forest	626
Wandsworth	945
Westminster	1,392
London region total	27,692

Health Warnings (Cigarette Packets)

Mr. Rob Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make representations to the European Commission for the addition of a "smoking causes blindness" warning to the list of approved warnings for cigarette packets. [33448]

Caroline Flint: The European Commission is not currently in a position to change the health warnings on tobacco packs. There are many candidate conditions caused by smoking that might be appropriate as new warnings. As and when the 14 current health warnings are reviewed, the United Kingdom will be keen to be involved in ensuring that the revised warnings are as effective as possible.

Hepatitis C

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to increase the proportion of people infected with hepatitis C that are treated. [33584]

Caroline Flint: The Department is running a hepatitis C awareness campaign for healthcare professionals and the public as part of implementation of the Hepatitis C Action Plan for England.

One of the aims of the awareness campaign is increase diagnosis of hepatitis C so that those infected can be referred for specialist assessment and treatment, if indicated. The awareness campaign highlights groups considered to be at risk of hepatitis C infection and who should consider being tested, or who should be offered testing by healthcare professionals.

HIV/AIDS

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will instruct the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence to conduct an appraisal of the use of anti-HIV drugs for post-exposure prophylaxis. [26015]

Caroline Flint: Public health guidance on anti-HIV drugs for post-exposure prophylaxis was published on 5 July 1998 by the Health Education Authority and is available on the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's website at www.nice.org.uk. It has also been placed in the Library.

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients in North Somerset primary care trust were diagnosed with HIV/AIDS in *(a)* 2003 and *(b)* 2004; and how many have been so diagnosed in 2005. [33687]

Caroline Flint: Data on HIV/AIDS diagnoses are not available at primary care trust (PCT) level. Data at strategic health authority (SHA) level which have reported to the end of September 2005 are available on the Health Protection Agency's website at:

www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/hiv_and_sti/hiv/epidemiology/hars_tables.htm.

The relevant SHA for North Somerset PCT is Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire SHA.

Hospitals

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many people were admitted to hospital on Christmas day in each year since 1997 in *(a)* England and *(b)* each strategic health authority, broken down by reason for admittance; [32024]

(2) how many people stayed in hospital overnight on Christmas day in *(a)* England and *(b)* each strategic health authority in each year since 1997. [32025]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average cost is to NHS hospitals per meal provided by *(a)* in-house and *(b)* external caterers. [33135]

Jane Kennedy: The average cost to NHS hospitals per main patient meal for in-house and external caterers is £2.60 and £2.56 respectively.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of patients leaving NHS hospitals after stays of a week or more who are suffering from malnutrition. [33134]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Counts of finished discharge episodes and counts of individual patients where the primary diagnosis is malnutrition and length of stay is seven days or longer in national health service hospitals in England for 2003–04

	Primary diagnosis
Discharges	*Patients*
165	159

Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics, Health and Social Care Information Centre

Influenza Vaccinations

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list those categories of people who are on the Government's priority list to receive avian influenza vaccinations in the event of a UK outbreak. [33728]

Caroline Flint: There has been some confusion between seasonal flu, avian flu and pandemic flu. Avian influenza is a disease which mainly affects birds. Seasonal flu refers to the viruses that circulate in the human population and cause widespread illness each winter. Pandemic flu will only occur after an avian virus has mutated into a strain to which large numbers of the population have not been exposed and which can spread easily between humans.

We are finalising a contract for the purchase of a two to three million doses of vaccine against the H5N1 strain currently circulating in South East Asia and other areas. This vaccine can be used for research and for possible use for healthcare workers in an emergency, and may provide some limited protection against a pandemic emerging from that source. We hope to award this contract shortly and would receive some stocks early next year.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of those eligible for the winter influenza vaccine have been vaccinated in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [29808]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is shown in the table.

Flu uptake in those aged 65 and over for the last five years

	Percentage
2000–01	65.3
2001–02	67.7
2002–03	68.5
2003–04	71.0
2004–05	71.5

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average patient waiting time was for a winter influenza vaccine in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [29811]

Caroline Flint: This data are not held centrally.

IVF Treatment

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people have received help from the national health service for IVF treatment in each of the last five years, broken down by primary care trust. [33784]

Caroline Flint: Information about the number of people receiving in vitro fertilisation in each primary care trust is not collected centrally. The primary responsibility for the provision of these services rests with the national health service at local level.

Lupus

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 442W, on lupus, whether the part of her Department's research and development budget which is allocated to and managed by individual NHS organisations is ring-fenced solely for the purpose of research and development. [25066]

Jane Kennedy: The research and development budget the Department allocates to national health service organisations is subject to an agreement between the Secretary of State and each of those organisations. The agreement is an NHS contract and is legally binding. The agreement states that the research and development allocation should be used to

> "host, support, carry out and commission research and development in such a way as to achieve maximum benefits in terms of the NHS research and development strategy".

It specifically precludes expenditure on local service development, clinical audit, patient care services, or costs that are, or should be, met by another body such as a commercial organisation, NHS commissioner or university.

The Department undertakes regular performance management to ensure compliance with the terms of the agreement, requiring annual reports from individual NHS organisations covering current research activity and financial accountability.

The Government are committed to moving to full transparency of the use of research and development funds allocated to NHS trusts and achieving full sustainability for clinical research in the NHS. To that end, the Department's consultation document, "Best Research for Best Health: a new national health research strategy" includes proposals for the introduction of a

system in which the money supporting research and development undertaken in the NHS will follow patient involvement in health studies.

Mental Health

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS *(a)* consultant psychiatric posts and *(b)* mental health acute beds were available in each of the last five years in (i) West Sussex, (ii) East Sussex and (iii) Brighton and Hove Unitary Authority. [33107]

Caroline Flint: Information is not held centrally in the format requested. However, information on the number of medical consultants within the psychiatry group of specialities for West Sussex, East Sussex and Brighton and Hove Unitary Authority is shown in the table.

The Department does not collect mental health acute beds data. However, information relating to the number of acute beds and the number of mental health beds at trust level is available on the Department's website at: www.performance.doh.gov.uk/hospitalactivity/data_requests/beds_open_overnight.htm

Hospital, public health medicine and community health services (HCHS) medical consultants: within the psychiatry group of specialties within specified organisations by year

Numbers (headcount) and full time equivalents

	East Sussex RXD		South Downs RDR		West Sussex RW8	
	no	*fte*	*no*	*fte*	*no*	*fte*
1999	[1]—	[1]—	20	18	[1]—	[1]—
2000	[1]—	[1]—	20	17	[1]—	[1]—
2001	[1]—	[1]—	25	21	[1]—	[1]—
2002	19	18	20	17	39	36
2003	19	19	23	19	40	37
2004	21	21	26	23	39	37
2005[2]	25	25	22	20	45	42

[1] Equals zero.

[2] As at June.

Notes:

1. '0' denotes less than one, more than zero.

2. All data as at 30 September each year, except for 2005 where data as at 30 June.

Source:

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre medical and dental workforce census.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent assessment she has made of the level of funding for mental health services in North West Leicestershire. [33286]

Mr. Byrne: The Department assesses annually the investment in mental health services published in the national survey of mental health services. The report details the level of investment in adult mental health services and compares it with results reported in previous years.

The analysis in the report is derived from the detailed finance mapping exercise co-ordinated by local implementation teams as part of the regular adult mental health review process undertaken each autumn.

Ministerial Travel

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* flights and *(b)* helicopter flights, taken by Ministers within her Department for (i) UK and (ii) overseas visits in each year since 1995; on how many occasions (A) charter flights were used and (B) first and club class tickets were obtained; and who accompanied the ministers on each trip. [27800]

Jane Kennedy: The Department does not hold the information in the form requested.

Since 1999, the Government have published, an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Library. These report information for the financial years 1995–96 to 2004–05. Information for 2005–06 will be published as soon as it is ready after the end of the current financial year.

All travel is undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Management Code.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent in each year from 1 May 1997 on ministerial travel, broken down by *(a)* provision and running costs of vehicular transport, *(b)* first class travel by rail, *(c)* standard class travel by rail, *(d)* first class travel by air, *(e)* club or equivalent class travel by air and *(f)* economy class travel by air. [27815]

Jane Kennedy: The Department's finance systems do not hold information in the form requested. The available information up to 2003–04 is shown in the following table. In April 2004, the Department introduced a new accounting system. Under the new accounting system information on travel costs are not separately identifiable.

Ministers' offices travel (including Ministers, officials and special advisers, where appropriate)

£

	1997–98	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Total expenditure on travel	376,376	427,970	508,932	557,042	480,855	511,899	595,043
United Kingdom travel rail	22,268	26,582	44,194	35,250	35,500	40,354	45,418
Overseas travel rail	0	0	1,685	350	1,533	1,216	1,366
UK air	4,755	2,376	2,395	15,780	22,919	17,104	20,602
Overseas air	9,263	50,523	21,163	19,215	27,220	54,636	44,187

Since 1999, the Government have published, an annual list of all visits overseas undertaken by Cabinet Ministers costing £500 or more during each financial year. The Government have also published on an annual basis the cost of all Ministers' visits overseas. Copies of the lists are available in the Library. These report information for the financial years 1995–96 to 2004–05. Information for 2005–06 will be published as

soon as it is ready after the end of the current financial year.

In respect of ministerial cars, my hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary at the Cabinet Office has asked Roy Burke, Chief Executive of the Government Car and Despatch Agency (GCDA) to write to the hon. Member with details of the costs of ministerial vehicles provided to Departments in 2004–05. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library. For information for the financial years 2000–01 to 2003–04,I refer the hon. Member to the letters from the Chief Executive of the GCDA to the hon. Member for Buckingham (John Bercow) dated 10 January 2005 and to the then hon. Member for Arundel and South Downs (Howard Flight) dated 13 September 2003. Copies of these letters are available in the Library.

All travel is undertaken in accordance with the guidelines set out in the Ministerial Code and the Civil Service Management Code.

NHS Finance

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the end-of-year financial position was of the NHS *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by (i) NHS trust, (ii) primary care organisation and (iii) other NHS organisation in each year since 1997–98. [27541]

Mr. Byrne: This information requested has been placed in the Library. In the year before this series (1996–97), 209 of the 529 national health service bodies were in deficit and the total deficit was £460 million.

NHS Logistics

Mr. Mike Hall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much of the £3.1 billion business for consumable goods not purchased from NHS Logistics in 2003 she expects the winning bidder for NHS Logistics business to provide direct to NHS trusts; and how the figure of £3.1 billion was calculated. [32882]

Jane Kennedy: The market testing of the proposed outsourcing of the national health service consumable supply chain and procurement services is ongoing and no decision has been made regarding outsourcing to an independent provider.

The figure of £3.1 billion was calculated using trust financial returns (TFR3) data of 2003.

NICE (Drug Approvals)

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cancer drugs approved by the EU Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use are awaiting approval by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence. [19897]

Jane Kennedy: This is a matter for the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE). Information about NICE'S current work programme is available on the its website at www.nice.org.uk.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average period of time taken was to assess a drug already approved by the EU's Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use as suitable for human use following its referral to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence in the last period for which figures are available. [19903]

Jane Kennedy: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) is not responsible for assessing the suitability of drugs for human use. Assessment of the safety, quality and efficacy of a medicinal product lies with the relevant medicines regulator, such as the Medical Healthcare products Regulatory Agency in the United Kingdom. NICE provides advice to the national health service on the clinical and cost effectiveness of drugs approved by the European Union's Committee for Medicinal Products for Human Use and other regulators.

Obesity

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2743W, on obesity, what indicators her Department has proposed for the new quality and outcomes framework; and whether they include obesity treatment. [32305]

Caroline Flint: NHS Employers, on behalf of United Kingdom Health Ministers, are currently discussing with the British Medical Association's general practitioners committee revisions on the existing general medical services contract. Once approved by the respective UK Health Ministers, an announcement on changes to the current contract will apply from April 2006.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will include points for treating obesity in the general practitioners contract; and if she will make a statement; [32750]

(2) what recent discussions her Department has with the British Medical Association about treating obesity; and if she will make a statement. [32751]

Caroline Flint: NHS Employers, on behalf of United Kingdom Health Ministers, is currently discussing with the British Medical Association's general practitioners committee revisions on the existing general medical services contract. An announcement on changes to the current contract that will apply form April 2006 will be made at the end of the negotiating process, and once approved by the respective UK Health Ministers, which is intended to be later in the year.

Premature Babies

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the financial impact of caring for a premature child who has contracted respiratory syncytial virus has been assessed; and if she will make a statement. [30157]

Caroline Flint: Premature children, children with chronic lung disease, and those receiving oxygen therapy are particularly vulnerable to respiratory syncytial virus. The financial impact associated varies with the severity of the illness and is difficult to estimate. In addition to the cost to the national health service of hospital admissions, the associated longer term morbidity has a financial impact on families and on children's community health services.

Primary Care Trusts (Oxfordshire)

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what authority she has granted to the Thames Valley strategic health authority to consider letting the contract for the management of primary care trusts in Oxfordshire to the private sector. [20396]

Caroline Flint: No authority has been granted to the Thames Valley strategic health authority (SHA) to let the contract for the management of primary care trusts in Oxfordshire to the private sector.

SHAs have submitted their proposals for the reconfiguration of primary care trusts (PCTs), which set out how they intend to strengthen their commissioning function. These proposals have been assessed by an independent external panel drawn from and representing a wide range of stakeholder interests, to determine whether the SHA proposals meet the criteria stipulated in 'Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS' (July 2005). Where the criteria are judged to have been met, the proposals will go forward to a 14 week local consultation. No decisions on the reorganisation of PCTs will be taken until this process has been completed.

Private Patients

Chris Huhne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many private patients were admitted to NHS hospitals in each of the last 10 years. [31346]

Mr. Byrne: The numbers of finished consultant episodes for private patients treated in national health service hospitals for each year from 1994–95 to 2003–04 are shown in the following table.

Count of finished consultant episodes for private patients treated in national health service hospitals in England 1994–95 to 2003–04

	Number
1994–95	101,526
1995–96	109,716
1996–97	112,923
1997–98	124,325
1998–99	142,783
1999–2000	144,341
2000–01	125,902
2001–02	121,712
2002–03	118,680
2003–04	113,273

Notes:
1. Last 10 years for which data are currently available.
2. Figures do not accurately represent the number of patients treated as a patient may have more than one episode of care during the year.
3. Two different counting systems were used during this time series. From 2000–01 counts were based on administrative data category field 'admincat' but for earlier years the counts were based on a derived administrative category data field.
4. Figures are grossed for coverage, except for 2003–04 which is not yet adjusted for shortfalls.

Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Public Interest Disclosure Act

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures are in place to ensure that her Department meets the requirements of the Public Interest Disclosure Act 1998. [30390]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has its own whistleblowing policy which was introduced in line with the best practice advised by the Public Interest Disclosure Act. It enables staff to raise concerns about any malpractice or illegal act.

Tuberculosis

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the costs of implementing the tuberculosis action plan, Stopping Tuberculosis in England. [31192]

Caroline Flint: The Chief Medical Officer's action plan Stopping Tuberculosis in England (October 2004) makes a number of recommendations on how tuberculosis (TB) services already funded within the national health service can make improvements to the overall delivery of services to tackle TB.

The costs of implementing the action plan are not quantifiable. Changes to NHS services to deliver these recommendations are the responsibility of NHS managers and depend on local service models for the provision of services. Costs will vary in different locations to meet local needs.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the estimated cost was of treating multi-drug resistant tuberculosis *(a)* per case and *(b)* in total in the last year for which figures are available. [31006]

Caroline Flint: Data on the costs associated with treatment of multi-drug resistant tuberculosis, either by case or in total, are not routinely collected. The National Institute of Clinical Excellence has undertaken analysis of tuberculosis treatment costs as part of the development of forthcoming guidance Tuberculosis—National clinical guideline for diagnosis, management, prevention, and control. This data is due for publication in early 2006.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of *(a)* tuberculosis and *(b)* multi-drug resistant tuberculosis there were in each year since 1997–98. [31010]

Caroline Flint: The information in the following table shows the number of cases of tuberculosis and of multi-drug resistant (MDR) tuberculosis in England and Wales from 1999 to 2003.

	TB cases	*MDR cases*
1999	5,704	17
2000	6,271	27
2001	6,597	24
2002	6,794	31
2003	6,780	48

Note:
Data is provided from 1999, the first year from which matched data are available, to 2003 which is the most recent year that matched data is available.

Source:
Health Protection Agency CfI Enhanced Tuberculosis Surveillance, as at 23 November 2005

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the training requirements are for nurses to administer the Mantoux test for TB. [33296]

Caroline Flint: Training requirements for nurses administering Mantoux tests are that they should be properly trained and competent in all aspects of Bacillus Calmette-Guerin (BCG) immunisation policy and Mantoux testing procedure including:

recent changes to national BCG policy,

identification of individuals at higher risk of tuberculosis,

when the use of Mantoux testing is appropriate,

administration of an intradermal injection,

subsequent reading of the test.

Waiting Times

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 5 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 2842W, on waiting times, where her Department is piloting data collections to support the 18-week waiting time target; when these data will be published; what data are being collected under each of the pilots; when she expects the collection of data to be extended to all parts of the country; and if she will make a statement. [23953]

Mr. Byrne: Details of the sites and diagnostic tests piloted are shown in the list. Pilot diagnostics data collections have helped refine the list of diagnostic tests to be included in the national data collection for the 18-week target. The national data collection is to be rolled out nationally from January 2006.

Since this has been a pilot exercise, we have no plans to publish the associated data.

A listening exercise on the principles and definitions to underpin the implementation of the 18-week target is under way. This will help inform the development of systems for measuring performance against the target. The exercise is being conducted via the 18-week website (www.18weeks.nhs.uk).

18 weeks pilot sites:

Aintree Hospitals National Health Service Trust

Blackpool, Fylde and Wyre Hospitals NHS Trust

Bromley Hospitals NHS Trust

Central Manchester and Manchester Children's Hospitals University NHS Trust

East Lancashire Hospitals NHS Trust

Gateshead Health NHS Trust

Guy's and St Thomas's NHS Foundation Trust

Harrogate and District NHS Foundation Trust

Luton and Dunstable Hospital NHS Trust

Mayday Healthcare NHS Trust

Morecambe Bay Hospitals NHS Trust

Royal Orthopaedic Hospital NHS Trust

Royal Surrey County Hospital NHS Trust

Royal United Hospitals Bath NHS Trust

Sherwood Forest Hospitals NHS Trust

St George's Healthcare NHS Trust

Stockport NHS Foundation Trust

Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust

University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust

Wirral Hospitals NHS Trust

Somerset Coast Primary Care Trust (PCT)

Bromley PCT

Craven, Harrogate and Rural District PCT

Newark and Sherwood PCT

Tests piloted:

Magnetic resonance imaging

Computerised topography

Non-obstetric ultrasound

Barium Enema (from July)

DEXA scan (from July)

Audiology—pure tone audiometry

Cardiology—echocardiography

Cardiology—electrophysiology

Neurophysiology—peripheral neurophysiology

Respiratory physiology—sleep studies

Urodynamics—pressures and flows (from July)

Colonoscopy (from July)

Flexi sigmoidoscopy (from July)

Cystoscopy (from July)

Gastroscopy (from July)

Cardiology—diagnostic cardiac catheters/angiography (April to July)

GI Physiology—manometry (April to July)

Nurse and GPSI-led endoscopy (April to June)

All other endoscopy (April to June)

All other diagnostic tests or procedures (April to June)

Physiological measurement—breath tests (July)

Physiological Measurement—balance tests (July)

Physiological measurement—event monitoring in ECGs (July)

Endoscopy—ERCP (endoscopic retrograde cholangiopancreatography) (July)

Endoscopy—colposcopy (July)

Endoscopy—hysteroscopy (July)

Endoscopy—laparoscopy (July)

Imaging—nuclear medicine (July)

X-ray Equipment

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent on *(a)* repairing existing and *(b)* buying new NHS X-ray equipment in 2004–05. [33603]

Jane Kennedy: A figure of £110 million, excluding value added tax, is recorded for repairs to existing x-ray equipment for national health service trusts in England in 2004–05. X-ray equipment is taken to refer to x-ray imaging equipment only: fluoroscopy, bone densitometers, general and mobile x-ray, mammography, cardiac, mobile image intensifiers.

X-ray film or posterior anterior chest system, linear accelerators, ultrasound, and magnetic resonance imaging equipment are therefore not included in these figures.

Information on buying new NHS x-ray equipment in 2004–05 is not held centrally.

Written Answers to Questions

Monday 12 December 2005

ELECTORAL COMMISSION

Registered Third Parties

Mr. Amess: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission how many *(a)* organisations and *(b)* individuals are registered with the Electoral Commission as Registered Third Parties; and how many were so registered in each month since 2004. [33787]

Peter Viggers: The Electoral Commission's statutory register of recognised Third Parties is available at www.electoralcommission.org.uk. There are currently 22 recognised Third Parties on this Register, 20 of which are organisations and two are individuals.

As of the last day in each month since January 2004 the number on the register was:

	Total
2004	
January	9
February	11
March	11
April	12
May	14
June	14
July	14
August	15
September	16
October	16
November	15
December	16
2005	
January	16
February	18
March	20
April	26
May	26
June	26
July	25
August	23
September	23
October	23
November	22

Mr. Amess: To ask the hon. Member for Gosport, representing the Speaker's Committee on the Electoral Commission how many officials in the Electoral Commission deal with the registration of Registered Third Parties; at what grade; and if he will make a statement. [33788]

Peter Viggers: The Commission informs me that no staff are employed full time on the registration of recognised Third Parties, but aspects of this form part of the duties of three officials. The staff concerned are at manager, officer and assistant level respectively.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Correspondence

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General how many *(a)* letters from hon. Members, *(b)* letters from members of the public and *(c)* parliamentary questions from (i) hon. Members and (ii) Lords were dealt with by the Law Officers' Department in each year since 1995 in respect of what percentage his Department took (A) more than one month and (B) more than three months to provide a substantive answer; and if he will make a statement. [34539]

The Solicitor-General: The Cabinet Office, on an annual basis, publishes a report to Parliament on the performance of Departments in replying to Members/Peers correspondence. The Report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005, *Official Report*, columns 137–40WS. Reports for earlier years are available in the Library of the House.

In respect of correspondence from members of the public, my Department have provided statistics dating back to November of last year, when the Correspondence Unit was first set up. During the period 1 November 2004 to date we have replied to 91 per cent. of correspondence within 20 working days. Following tables show these figures.

LSLO correspondence unit: response to letters from 'general public'

	November 2004
	Number
Number of letters	59
On time	54
Out of time	6

Note:
Performance target reached: 92 per cent.

	December 2004
	Number
Number of letters	49
On time	43
Out of time	6

Note:
Performance target reached: 88 per cent.

	January 2005
	Number
Number of letters	96
On time	67
Out of time	29

Note:
Performance target reached: 70 per cent.

	February 2005
	Number
Number of letters	90
On time	81
Out of time	9

Note:
Performance target reached: 90 per cent.

March 2005

	Number
Number of letters	131
On time	120
Out of time	11

Note:
Performance target reached: 92 per cent.

April 2005

	Number
Number of letters	109
On time	98
Out of time	11

Note:
Performance target reached: 90 per cent.

May 2005

	Number
Number of letters	79
On time	7
Out of time	6

Note:
Performance target reached: 92 per cent.

June 2005

	Number
Number of letters	68
On time	58
Out of time	10

Note:
Performance target reached: 85 per cent.

July 2005

	Number
Number of letters	97
On time	94
Out of time	3

Note:
Performance target reached: 97 per cent.

August 2005

	Number
Number of letters	93
On time	87
Out of time	6

Note:
Performance target reached: 94%

September 2005

	Number
Number of letters	58
On time	54
Out of time	4

Note:
Performance target reached: 93 per cent.

October 2005

	Number
Number of letters	66
On time	63
Out of time	3

Note:
Performance target reached: 95 per cent.

November 2005

	Name
Number of letters	69
On time	69
Out of time	0

Note:
Performance target reached: 100 per cent.

Up to 7 December 2005

	Name
Number of letters	9
On time	9
Out of time	0

Note:
Performance target reached: 100 per cent.

Statutory Instruments

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General how many statutory instruments introduced by the Department had to be *(a)* withdrawn, *(b)* amended by a further statutory instrument and *(c)* reprinted because of defective drafting in each session since 1997; and what steps he (i) is taking and (ii) plans to take to prevent further such instances. [34535]

The Solicitor-General: None have been withdrawn or reprinted because of defective drafting. Two have been revoked and replaced by statutory instruments giving effect to new legislation.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

A120 (Expansion)

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps are being taken to safeguard the efficient use of agricultural land affected by the proposed expansion of the A120 between Braintree and Marks Tey. [35750]

Dr. Ladyman: I have been asked to reply.

The Highways Agency will seek to minimise the impact of the new A120 road improvement on agricultural holdings and farm practices, within a balanced environmental design strategy. The strategy, which is still in development stage, will consider agricultural land take, the severance of individual or associated farm units and the creation of non-viable land parcels, whilst maintaining farm access routes, or providing acceptable alternatives where necessary.

Animal Welfare

Jim Dowd: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the number of animals likely to need re-homing as a result of the introduction of the new welfare offence in the Animal Welfare Bill; and what percentage change she expects in the number of animals in need of re-homing. [34592]

Mr. Bradshaw: We have no statistics for the number of animals currently requiring re-homing. However the introduction of the welfare offence is not expected to increase overall numbers significantly. We believe that

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the majority of sanctuaries are run satisfactory, providing a valuable service to animal welfare. However, there is evidence that a minority pose a risk. The Animal Welfare Bill will enable this risk to be addressed through the introduction of secondary legislation. The Regulatory Impact Assessment published in conjunction with the Bill proposes that all sanctuaries should be required to register with local authorities on the basis of a veterinary assessment and be subject to a code of practice by 2009. The regulation of animal sanctuaries under the Animal Welfare Bill will enable reliable data to be built up by local authorities so that high-risk establishments can be identified and inspected.

We propose to work closely with welfare organisations and representatives of animal sanctuaries in preparing secondary legislation. This consultation will enable us to refine our thinking on key issues such as the criteria for regulating a sanctuary and the guidance which the code will give on rehabilitation and re-homing. The draft regulations and code will be subject to public consultation and there will also be the opportunity for discussion in Parliament.

Jim Dowd: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how many animal sanctuaries she estimates are open to the public in England; [34593]

(2) what recent estimate she has made of the number of animal sanctuaries there are in England. [34594]

Mr. Bradshaw: Because animal sanctuaries are not regulated there is a lack of comprehensive data on their numbers in England. The Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) which accompanied the Animal Welfare Bill, published on 14 October 2005, gave a conservative estimate of 700 sanctuaries in England and Wales based on previous consultations with animal sanctuary interests. It is not known what percentage of animal sanctuaries are open to the general public.

Jim Dowd: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what process her Department undertakes to estimate the number of animal sanctuaries; and what definition of a sanctuary is used. [34595]

Mr. Bradshaw: Animal sanctuaries are not regulated, so there is a lack of comprehensive data on their numbers in England. The Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) which accompanied the Animal Welfare Bill, published on 14 October 2005, gave a conservative estimate of 700 sanctuaries in England and Wales based on previous consultations with animal sanctuary interests.

There is no legal definition of an animal sanctuary. However, the term is generally taken to mean any establishment that takes in displaced, injured or unwanted animals, ranging from domestic pets to wild animals, re-homing or rehabilitating animals or providing long-term care.

Avian Influenza

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many bird deaths in quarantine have been investigated by qualified veterinary personnel since 2000; and in how many such cases avian influenza was identified as the cause of death. [24651]

Mr. Bradshaw: All birds which die in quarantine must be submitted to the Veterinary Laboratory Agency for investigation for Newcastle Disease and for Avian Influenza (A.I.).

Since 2000 no cases of A.I. have been discovered, apart from the recent case in Essex discovered on 21 October 2005.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether officials from her Department have made inspections of export facilities in endemic avian influenza H5N1 areas from which live birds are despatched to this country. [31406]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Food and Veterinary Office (FVO) of the European Commission is responsible for inspecting facilities in exporting countries and ensuring they comply with Community legislation for export to the Community. Currently the Community has a ban on live bird imports from countries where High Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) has been found.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on what basis any single batch of birds may be declared clear of Avian influenza virus H5N; what expert advice she has received on this matter; and what guidance she has promulgated. [32125]

Mr. Bradshaw: Batches of birds may be released under the current rules when either samples are taken from individual birds or from sentinel birds have been tested with negative results.

In addition, if birds have died in quarantine they must be sampled or a representative sample of the dead birds has be tested with negative results. The Local Veterinary Inspector must certify that the birds are free from signs of notifiable disease at the end of the quarantine period.

This is in accordance with Commission Decision 2000/666/EC and Chapter 21 of VIPER the instructions to the State Veterinary Service.

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 6W, on Avian influenza, when she expects the Pollution Prevention and Control Review to be completed; and how she will publicise the location of these landfill sites. [34307]

Mr. Bradshaw: The PPC Review referred to in the answer of 28 November is a review of all PPC authorised commercial landfill sites, to assess their potential suitability for the disposal of carcases in the event that the preferred disposal hierarchy of incineration and rendering capacity is exceeded.

The review will be completed early in the new year. Defra will write to each listed landfill operator, and to each local authority in whose area the landfill is located, informing them of the listing before the list is published. This will enable the risks and mitigation measures to be explained. The list will be available on the Defra website.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will take steps to promote the consumption of poultry this Christmas season accompanied by clear guidance that its consumption does not pose risks in regard to Avian influenza. [34494]

Mr. Bradshaw: Advice on food safety is a matter for the Food Standards Agency. They have already issued clear advice that, on basis of current scientific evidence, Avian flu does not pose a food safety risk for UK consumers. For people, the risk of catching the disease comes from being in close contact with live poultry that have the disease, and not through eating cooked poultry. The Agency will continue to monitor the most up-to-date information and evidence, as it becomes available and will keep an open mind as to any information that may lead to its advice being updated.

Promotion of poultry and poultry products is of course a matter for the industry.

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the recent statement by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation concerning culling wild birds in countries affected by Avian influenza; and if she will make a statement. [34722]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government is aware of this recent statement by the United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act and Animal Health Act both permit the killing of wild birds for particular purposes, such as preventing the spread of disease. However, there are currently no plans to recommend this as a disease control strategy.

The Government's current assessment is that the control of Avian influenza in wild bird populations is not feasible—from a logistical, environmental and biodiversity point of view.

The Government has already put measures in place aimed at reducing the risk of introduction and spread of Avian influenza in the United Kingdom.

It has increased levels of surveillance of wild birds, encouraged keepers to feed and water birds indoors, issued guidance on biosecurity and keeping birds separate from wild birds, banned the import of captive birds and controlled bird show and fairs.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps the Government are taking to ensure that quarantine facilities for cases of suspected avian influenza are properly run and maintained; and if she will make a statement. [35219]

Mr. Bradshaw: All commercial facilities are required to comply fully with the strict procedures and processes in place to ensure facilities are run in accordance with Community legislation.

Professor Dimmock's review is looking at procedures in general and expected to report later this month. If necessary we will take appropriate action to strengthen our quarantine arrangements.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with the *(a)* Turkish, *(b)* Romanian, *(c)* Russian, *(d)* Ukrainian, *(e)* Chinese and *(f)* European Government on avian influenza; and if she will make a statement. [35221]

Mr. Bradshaw: I have had discussions with ministerial counterparts in the EU on a regular basis since the H5N1 strain of the virus emerged in South East Asia four years ago.

Ministers and officials have been actively involved in discussions, and the provision of assistance, at international level on avian influenza. Recent examples have been:

The UK presidency has provided technical support (central research laboratories (CRL) and veterinary assistance) to many countries, including Romania.

Under the UK presidency Commission funds have been provided to enable OIE, the International Animal Health Organisation, to hold technical programmes on AI in Eastern Europe.

As presidency, the UK delegation has represented the EU at the international partnership on avian and pandemic influenza on 7 October; and the Geneva partners' meeting on avian and human pandemic influenza on 7–9 November.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to ensure wild birds are prevented from entering poultry houses; and if she will make a statement. [35222]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government has agreed with stakeholders and issued guidance on biosecurity for bird keepers. That guidance is on the Defra website and has been distributed very widely. It includes encouragement to keepers to minimise contact between poultry and wild birds by feeding and watering their birds indoors and maintaining buildings to ensure wild birds do not roost or nest in them. Further guidance to the industry on how to separate their birds from wild birds will issue shortly.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what emergency preparation plans the Government has put in place for a mass cull of birds to combat an outbreak of Avian influenza; and if she will make a statement. [35223]

Mr. Bradshaw: In the event of an outbreak of highly pathogenic Avian influenza Defra would immediately invoke the "Exotic Animal Disease Generic Contingency Plan". Disease control would include killing birds on the infected premises and dangerous contacts (premises likely to be contaminated by a direct link with the infected one). Several techniques are currently available for the humane killing of birds on farm, these include lethal injection, neck dislocation, percussion killers, mobile electrocution and exposure to gases.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment the Government has made of the effects of an outbreak of Avian influenza; and if she will make a statement. [35310]

Mr. Bradshaw: An Avian influenza outbreak in the UK could have a range of impacts, depending on its precise nature and scale, and bring serious consequences for the UK poultry industry and others. That is why we are doing all we can, such as working with our stakeholders, to manage the risk effectively.

A full animal disease contingency plan is in place to tackle the outbreak of Avian influenza and reduce the impact on poultry industry and others.

Biodiesel Industry

David Mundell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research the Government have commissioned into ways of developing the biodiesel industry. [33417]

Mr. Morley: The research commissioned by this Department focuses on the potential carbon savings from using biodiesel and the impacts on agriculture and the rural economy of growing oilseed rape as a biodiesel feedstock. In 2003, Sheffield Hallam university evaluated the comparative energy, environmental and socio-economic costs and benefits of biodiesel production in the UK. The Central Science Laboratory carried out two studies. The first, in 2002, looked at the prospects and potential impacts of liquid biofuels on UK agriculture, the farmed environment, landscape and rural economy. The second, in 2003, looked at industry support, cost of carbon savings and agricultural implications. Cambridge university is currently carrying out a review of the economics of energy crops, including those used for biofuels. DEFRA also commissions research supporting the sustainable development of arable crops, including oilseed rape.

Biodiversity Ministerial Group

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans the Inter-departmental Ministerial Group on Bio-diversity has to look at the role of UK-based companies providing financial support to illegal or ecologically unsustainable timber producers and manufacturers. [35075]

Mr. Morley: The Government are aware of the problems of support to unsustainable timber producers and manufacturers. The Department for International Development commissioned Chatham House, an independent research institute, to investigate the nature of the problem, and to identify possible options for moving forward. Their report was published in June 2005 and is available at www.illegallogging.info/papers/due_diligence_in_forestry_investment.doc. The Government are considering the content of the report.

The Government are also working with the private sector in timber consuming and timber producing counties to develop and promote legally sourced timber products and adopt and implement good business practices and improved market transparency. This is in response to the commitments made by the UK and other G8 countries to tackle illegal logging made at the UK presidency's G8 environment and development ministerial in March 2005.

There are no plans for the Inter-departmental Ministerial Group on Biodiversity to do additional work on this at present but it does discuss overall Government policy as it relates to global forestry.

Biomass Energy Generator (Winkleigh)

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with interested parties on the proposal for a biomass energy generator at Winkleigh in Devon; and what assistance her Department has given to the project. [33978]

Mr. Morley: Defra officials have had discussions with the Department of Trade and Industry, the Forestry Commission, the Government Office for the South West, Regen SW and Renergy Ltd. Ministers and officials have replied to correspondence from Peninsula Power and Winkleigh residents, giving advice on policy issues relevant to the project. No financial assistance has been given although farmers intending to supply energy crops to the power station will be eligible to apply for available planting grants.

Bovine TB

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the proposals are for the BCG vaccine in badgers trial planned for Gloucestershire; what the scale of the trial will be; what the timetable is for the trial; and in what area it will take place. [35777]

Mr. Bradshaw: The field study for the badger vaccine will cover an area of approximately 50 km squared near Cirencester, Gloucestershire and up to 500 badgers. Preparatory work is now under way to obtain landowners' permission and plan the initial field work (surveying setts and bait-marking) which will start in early 2006. Trapping and sampling of badgers will commence in June 2006. Vaccination will be carried out in September 2006, and then annually. The study is likely to run for three years.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the incidence of bovine TB caused by cattle-to-cattle transmission was in the latest period for which figures are available. [33813]

Mr. Bradshaw: The evidence in this area is complex. It is difficult to pinpoint sources of infection for individual herd breakdowns, particularly when infection by wildlife is a possibility, and the regional variation in the incidence of the disease complicates the overall picture. It is, therefore, not possible to put a precise figure on the number of cases of bovine TB (bTB) that can be attributed to cattle-to-cattle transmission (or to any other source of infection). It is clear, however, that "cattle-to-cattle transmission is of critical importance" (Independent Scientific Group on cattle TB, 3rd report, p41) and in low bTB incidence areas there is evidence that it could be responsible for around 80 per cent. or more of cases.

The evidence from work recently submitted for publication does suggest that cattle-to-cattle transmission is the main cause of TB spread in areas currently free, or relatively free, of cattle TB.

But the situation is quite different in the high incidence areas of the country where 85 to 90 per cent. of all confirmed breakdowns occur. Some herds in these areas are also infected by purchased cattle, but wildlife is a major source of new herd infection and in some counties it may be a more important source than cattle.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) whether animals suspected of being infected by bovine tuberculosis after an initial test are permitted further tests at the animal-owner's request; [34187]

(2) what steps are taken to verify a suspected case of bovine tuberculosis. [34277]

Mr. Bradshaw: Approved testing procedures and standards for cattle TB are set out in EC Directive 64/432/EEC, a trade directive covering health requirements for cattle and pigs. These arrangements are incorporated in domestic legislation the Tuberculosis Order, which are under sections 32 and 34 of the Animal Health Act 1981.

TB is confirmed by identification of visible lesions in the slaughterhouse and/or laboratory testing. Animals that react to the TB skin test are valued, removed from the farm and slaughtered. The farmer is compensated for 100 per cent. of the market value of the animal.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many farms in England have had animals slaughtered as part of the measures to prevent the spread of bovine tuberculosis in each of the last three years. [34188]

Mr. Bradshaw: The number of farms in England over the last three years that have had animals slaughtered to prevent the spread of bovine TB are given in the following table.

Farms affected by bovine TB

	Number of farms affected
January-December 2002	2,876
January-December 2003	3,127
January-December 2004	3,109
1 January-30 September 2005	2,854

Note:
Provisional data downloaded from the State Veterinary Service Data Warehouse on 2 December 2005. Subject to change as more data become available.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what statutory powers the Department has to take measures to prevent the spreading of bovine tuberculosis. [34189]

Mr. Bradshaw: The domestic legislation which provides for the notification of disease, compulsory testing, slaughter, valuation and compensation, and restriction of the movement of affected herds is set out in the Tuberculosis Orders made under sections 32 and 34 of the Animal Health Act 1981.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether officials investigating cases of bovine tuberculosis have the power to refer farmers to *(a)* trading standards officers and *(b)* other authorities. [34191]

Mr. Bradshaw: Officials from the State Veterinary Service (SVS) will report all breaches, or suspect breaches, of the TB order to local trading standards officials. The officers are also notified of all TB herd movement restrictions that are served as a result of overdue TB tests as well as when the disease is identified.

Officials from the SVS will notify all TB herd movement restrictions to the British Cattle Movement Service.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what procedures her Department's officials undertake to investigate bovine tuberculosis. [34192]

Mr. Bradshaw: Detailed information on testing and control for TB in cattle is available on the Defra website at http://www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/tb/index.htm.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many farms in England have produced positive skin tests for bovine TB 60 days after the first test in each month since 2001; and if she will make a statement. [34276]

Mr. Bradshaw: The number of farms in England that produced a positive skin test for bovine TB 60-days after the first test in each month since 2001 are given in the following five tables. All animals were subsequently slaughtered.

Table 1: Data for 2001 [1,2]

	Number of farms
January	106
February	106
March	0
April	7
May	26
June	29
July	41
August	42
September	56
October	73
November	68
December	113

Table 2: Data for 2002 [1,2]

	Number of farms
January	203
February	269
March	352
April	437
May	318
June	204
July	351
August	190
September	315
October	201
November	401
December	288

Table 3: Data 2003 [1]

	Number of farms
January	380
February	397
March	487
April	346
May	345
June	406
July	273
August	271
September	333
October	209
November	324
December	191

Table 4: Data 2004[1]

	Number of farms
January	351
February	295
March	451
April	329
May	240
June	289
July	230
August	247
September	185
October	245
November	382
December	236

Table 5: Data 2005[1]

	Number of farms
January	322
February	317
March	280
April	381
May	281
June	210
July	167
August	70
September	62
Total January 2001 to September 2005	13,664

Notes:

[1] Provisional data downloaded from the State Veterinary Service Data Warehouse on 2 December 2005. Subject to change as more data becomes available.

[2] In 2001, the TB testing and control programme was largely suspended due to the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD) outbreak. When testing resumed in 2002, resources were concentrated on herds with overdue TB tests which would have had a longer period in which to contract the disease. Also the proportion of high risk herds tested immediately after the FMD outbreak was greater than that prior to the outbreak. As a result, data for 2001 and 2002 are not comparable with other years.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many farms have gone out of business *(a)* three months, *(b)* six months, *(c)* 12 months, *(d)* 24 months and *(e)* 36 months after being closed by her Department after a suspected case of bovine tuberculosis. [34278]

Mr. Bradshaw: The information requested is not collected by Defra.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs at what meetings the Minister responsible for Animal Welfare discussed bovine tuberculosis in the last 12 months. [35780]

Mr. Bradshaw: I hold regular meetings with colleagues on a range of issues.

Carbon Dioxide

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what targets she has set for carbon dioxide reductions over the next *(a)* 20, *(b)* 30 and *(c)* 40 years. [35514]

Mr. Morley: The UK has two targets for reducing carbon dioxide emissions. In 1997 the UK Government set a national goal to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by 20 per cent. below 1990 levels by 2010. The 2003 Energy White Paper also set out a longer term goal of putting the UK on a path to reduce carbon dioxide emissions by some 60 per cent. by 2050, with real progress by 2020.

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will reassess the 60 per cent. by 2050 target for reducing UK carbon dioxide emissions. [34480]

Mr. Morley: The 2003 Energy White Paper accepted the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution's recommendation that the UK should put itself on a path towards a reduction in carbon dioxide emissions of some 60 per cent. from 1990 levels by about 2050. This figure is constantly kept under review in light of emerging scientific findings including the results of the Avoiding Dangerous Climate Change conference held as part of the UK's presidency of the G8 in Exeter earlier this year.

The Energy Review announced jointly by the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry on 29 November will assess progress against the four goals set by the 2003 Energy White Paper including the 2050 target.

Central Heating (Leeds)

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of houses in the Leeds West constituency she estimates had no central heating in each year since 1992. [35251]

Mr. Morley: We do not currently hold this data. However, detailed information on the percentage of households without central heating in each ward of Leeds Metropolitan district is available from the 2001 census, and can be explored in depth at http://neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk

Cetacean By-catch

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1053W, what discussions she has had with the French Government regarding French fishing vessels' compliance with the European Commission Observer Programme. [34847]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* None.

Commissioner Borg wrote to all member states on 14 November asking them to take all necessary steps to comply with the obligations of Council Regulation 812/2004, particularly those relating to monitoring of cetacean by-catch. Member states are required to report to the Commission by 1 June 2006. I anticipate they will report soon thereafter.

CFCs

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Environment Agency requests figures from recyclers on the amount of CFC recovered from recycled refrigerators. [R] [35662]

Mr. Bradshaw: Licences issued by the Environment Agency require operators of refrigerator treatment and recovery facilities to provide information on the quantity of CFC's recovered.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of the CFC removed from a refrigerator is from *(a)* the insulating foam and *(b)* the coolant. [35663]

Mr. Bradshaw: Between 25 per cent. and 33 per cent. of the CFC's removed from refrigerators is coolant and 66 per cent. to 75 per cent. is recovered from the foam.

The variation is due to differences in numbers of damaged refrigerators being received at the treatment plants. The percentage of damaged refrigerators which have lost most or all of the coolant varies between 40 per cent. and 70 per cent..

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many firms are accounting for all CFC gases *(a)* destroyed properly and *(b)* missing due to mishandling during the process of recycling refrigerators. [35664]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are 13 firms and one local authority operating CFC recovery and disposal facilities at present. Some firms operate more than one site. Operators provide information on numbers of refrigerators received, damaged, treated, the quantity of CFCs recovered and sent for destruction or destroyed on site.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many prosecutions her Department has pursued for releasing CFC while collecting refrigerators for recycling. [35665]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Environment Agency has taken six successful prosecutions and one resulted in a jail sentence. Some prosecutions involved more than one offence.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost is of recycling a refrigerator *(a)* with and *(b)* without the CFC from its (i) coolant and (ii) foam insulation. [35666]

Mr. Bradshaw: The cost of recycling a refrigerator is a contractual matter between local authorities and the waste management industry, and may vary from contract to contract.

Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she will make a statement on the operation of section 27 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. [35978]

Mr. Bradshaw: Section 27 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 came into force on 7 June this year, and provides clarification that chewing gum and smoking-related materials are litter for the purposes of Part 4 of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. It has always been the case that Defra considered these items to be litter but the legislation now confirms this for the avoidance of any doubt among practitioners.

Tackling these forms of litter is particularly important given the huge cost to local authorities of removing gum once it has become impacted, and the findings of the Local Environmental Quality Survey of England (LEQSE) which show that in both 2003–04 and 2004–05 smokers materials were found on 79 per cent. of the sites surveyed and so is one of the most widespread types of litter. Section 27 operates so as to encourage action to be taken by local authorities against these forms of litter through awareness-raising, public campaigns and enforcement action including the use of fixed penalty notices.

Climate Change

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment has been made of the potential impact on England and Wales of changes to the Gulf Stream as a result of climate change. [34876]

Mr. Morley: Research funded by Defra at the Met Office's Hadley Centre is aimed at determining the likelihood of changes as a result of global warming to the Atlantic Thermohaline Circulation (THC), of which the Gulf Stream forms an important component.

Although recent data collected by the Natural Environment Research Council suggest a possible recent weakening of components of the THC of up to 20 to 30 per cent., changes in the strength of the Gulf Stream itself or effects on temperatures have not been seen.

Latest Hadley Centre modelling results indicate that a sustained slowing of the THC over a few decades could have a cooling effect of about 1C. However, warming due to greenhouse gases is likely to be greater, leading to a net warming in coming decades.

No specific assessment has been made of the potential impacts of this scenario but it would likely mean that impacts would be reduced relative to current warming scenarios.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her policy is on the attribution of a carbon value to forest retention in developing countries as part of her climate change policy, with particular reference to the position she is taking on international climate change negotiations. [33698]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 1 December 2005]:* Our policy is that emissions reductions from reduced deforestation should be part of developing countries' participation in climate change agreements. Papua New Guinea and Costa Rica, supported by other countries making up the Coalition of Rainforest Nations, have proposed to the 11th Conference of Parties to the United Nations framework convention on climate change which met in Montreal from 28 November to 9 December this year that reductions below a national baseline could be used as a measure of achievement. This is an interesting proposal, although significant technical issues remain, including on how baselines would in practice be defined and reductions relative to them measured. These questions need to be resolved before this or any other proposal could provide a basis for quantification of emissions saved, and hence valuation in carbon markets. Participation under the

Kyoto protocol would be after the first commitment period, for which the rules are already set. We are working with other parties to establish a process to resolve the technical and related policy questions.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on her discussions with the US administration on climate change strategies. [35379]

Mr. Morley: Throughout 2005 we have engaged with the US administration on climate change issues. In particular, the UK's G8 presidency has succeeded in focusing US attention on energy and climate issues.

Cockle Beds (Pilling Sands)

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the plans of the North Western and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee to re-open cockle beds at Pilling Sands before the end of this year. [34872]

Mr. Bradshaw: Inshore fisheries management at Morecambe Bay, and the decision to re-open cockle beds at Pilling Sands is the responsibility of the North Western and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee. The Committee works together with other Government Agencies to ensure appropriate regulation of cockle fishing. I will be considering whether additional provision for effective inshore fisheries management needs to be made in the Government's planned Marine Bill.

Company Operating Regulations

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list meetings between her Department and the Treasury at which the decision to remove the obligation on businesses to publish operating and financial reviews was discussed. [35032]

Mr. Morley: Discussions were held at various levels, including between the Chancellor of the Exchequer and the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, before the decision was taken to remove the obligation on businesses to publish operating and financial reviews.

European Environmental Monitoring Programme

Sarah McCarthy-Fry: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether her Department is recommending a UK contribution of a quarter of gross domestic product to the European environmental monitoring programme; and what assessment she has made of the likely impact of such a move on the UK's contribution to addressing climate change. [R] [33464]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 1 December 2005]:* As policy lead on the joint European Commission and European Space Agency initiative Global Monitoring for Environment and Security (GMES), DEFRA has considered with other Government Departments the appropriate level of UK funding for the space component of the GMES programme. At the ESA ministerial on 5–6 December, the UK subscribed €8.86 million to the programme, equating to a quarter of the UK net national income share. This subscription will allow the UK to influence the shape and management of the GMES programme so that it can, inter alia, contribute towards understanding and mitigating the impacts of climate change.

Fixed Penalty Notices

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many fixed penalty notices have been issued by *(a)* community support officers and *(b)* police officers for (i) graffiti and (ii) fly-posting under paragraph 1(2)(ca) of Schedule 4 to the Police Reform Act 2002 in each of the last four years, broken down by police authority. [29345]

Mr. Bradshaw: The figures collected for graffiti and fly-posting fixed penalties do not distinguish between police employees and those authorised by local authorities. The power to issue fixed penalties in relation to graffiti and fly-posting offences under paragraph 1(2)(ca) of Schedule 4 to the Police Reform Act 2002 (as amended), is provided to community support officers, but not police officers. Under the penalty notice for disorder scheme as provided for under the Criminal Justice and Police Act 2001, police officers have the power to issue fixed penalty notices for the offence of criminal damage.

Foot and Mouth

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many confirmed foot and mouth cases *(a)* occurred in (i) 2002, (ii) 2003 and (iii) 2004 and *(b)* have occurred in 2005 in each county in England and Wales. [33552]

Mr. Bradshaw: None.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received on the outbreak of foot and mouth disease in Brazil; and if she will make a statement. [35282]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Competent Authority in Brazil has provided information via the European Commission on the situation with respect to recent outbreaks of foot and mouth disease. This data provides information on the action Brazil is taking to control the disease.

Following notification of the outbreaks action was taken to ban imports of meat from the affected areas, which may present a risk. This is in accordance with European Community legislation.

All meat imported into the EU from third countries must enter at designated Border Inspection Posts (BIPs) where it is subject to veterinary inspections. All consignments are subject to documentary and identity checks and at least 20 per cent. of consignments undergo physical checks. These ensure import conditions are met and that the products remain in a satisfactory condition during transport.

Any consignment that does not meet EU requirements, including that which may have been affected by the ban would be rejected and re-exported or destroyed.

Gas Supplies

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether it is her policy to relax pollution controls on coal-fired power stations in the event of a gas shortage this winter. [33664]

Mr. Bradshaw: Pollution controls on coal-fired power stations—and indeed on power stations and other large industrial installations generally—are a matter for the Environment Agency and are set in authorisations issued under the integrated pollution control (IPC) system or in permits under the integrated pollution prevention and control (IPPC) system which is replacing IPC.

Under these systems, the operator has to notify the Environment Agency of any change it wishes to make in the operation of the installation which has a bearing on the conditions of the authorisation or permit. It is then for the Environment Agency to consider whether and on what terms the change can be accepted, taking into account the circumstances in which the change has been proposed and their likely duration.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what further steps the Government are planning to take on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. [33627]

Mr. Morley: The Government are aiming to publish a revised UK Climate Change programme early next year which will set out additional policies and measures to further reduce the UK's greenhouse gas emissions.

Mr. Binley: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 1 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 652–3W, on greenhouse gas emissions, if she will produce an annual report to Parliament on greenhouse gas emissions. [35522]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 7 December 2005]:* As my hon. Friend, the Minister for Energy, has confirmed to the House, if Clause 2 of the Private Member's Bill "Climate Change and Sustainable Energy" is amended to the effect that producing such a report would be the responsibility of the Secretary of State and the Bill then becomes law, the Secretary of State will produce annual reports to Parliament on greenhouse gas emissions.

Household Waste

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much residential household refuse was collected in each year since 1997; and what proportion of refuse was recycled in each year. [34440]

Mr. Bradshaw: This information is collected through the Municipal Waste Management Survey of England and is published on the Department's website.

The information can be found in Annex A, Table 5 at:
www.defra.gov.uk/environment/statistics/wastats/mwb0304/index.htm

Chris Huhne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the average weight in kilograms of waste per household in each of the last 20 years. [36031]

Mr. Bradshaw: The estimated amount of waste arising from households in England is shown in the following table. Figures for 1996–97 to 2003–04 are from the Defra Municipal Waste Management Survey. Earlier data are only available for the years shown and are from the CIPFA Waste Survey.

	Kilogrammes per household per year
1983–84	1,055
1991–92	1,066
1993–94	1,093
1995–96	1,089
1996–97	1,117
1997–98	1,146
1998–99	1,146
1999–00	1,194
2000–01	1,196
2001–02	1,228
2002–03	1,233
2003–04	1,205

Media Relations

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much her Department spent on external media relations in each year since 2001. [29577]

Jim Knight: Since 2001 Defra's Communications Directorate has commissioned the following external media relations services:

Agency	*Project*	*Date*	*Cost (£)*
Good Relations	Sustainable Food and Farming	2002	5,900
Biss Lancaster	Your countryside you're welcome	2002	189,366.67
Red	Illegal Imports	2002	121,848.93
Country Porter Novelli	Sustainable Development	2002	16,243
Forster Company	Darwin Initiative	2003	11,170
Media Moguls	Illegal Food Imports Campaign Phase	July 2004 to March 2005	261,558.70
Media Moguls	Illegal Food Imports Campaign Phase 2	August 2005 to present	22,362.31
Amazon Public Relations	Launch of the Sustainable Development Strategy	January 2005 to May 2005	55,904.84
Amazon Public Relations	Sustainable Development case studies	August to date	18,750
Weber Shandwick	Climate Change	October 2005 to March 2006	60,000

All agencies provided specialist skills and services not currently available within Defra's Communications Directorate.

Peninsular Power Ltd.

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what indications have been given to Peninsular Power Ltd. on her Department's likely response to applications from that company for a relaxation of the catchment radius applicable to the proposed biomass energy generator at Winkleigh in Devon under the Energy Crops scheme. [33975]

Mr. Morley: No such applications have been received and no indications have been given as to the Department's likely response. The Department has a protocol for considering such applications. This requires the views of the statutory environmental agencies to be sought before a decision is made.

Pesticides Residues

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with other EU countries on setting a maximum residue level for pesticides. [35108]

Mr. Morley: Officials of the Pesticides Safety Directorate meet regularly with the European Commission and other member states in the EU Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health to set maximum residue levels for pesticides.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will publish the guidelines for statutory maximum residue levels for pesticides in relation to the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme. [35178]

Mr. Morley: Like food in the general supply chain, produce supplied as part of the School Fruit and Vegetable Scheme must comply with the provisions of the Pesticides (Maximum Residue Levels in Crops, Food and Feeding Stuffs) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 (as amended).

Poultry Carcase Disposal

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what criteria are used to determine the suitability of a potential landfill site for the disposal of poultry carcases; and if she will make a statement. [34305]

Mr. Bradshaw: The sites are being assessed against the criteria set out in the landfill protocol, originally developed for the disposal of carcases during the 2001 foot and mouth disease outbreak, and which is being updated as a generic protocol for the disposal of animal carcases from exotic animal disease outbreaks. Sites will be fully engineered landfills and be subject to a Pollution Prevention and Control (PPC) permit and thus compliant with the strict requirements of The Landfill (England and Wales) Regulations 2002 (as amended). A pre requisite for obtaining a PPC permit is compliance with the Environment Agency's policy for the protection of groundwater (PPG).

The protocol requires the following:

A good and robust leachate management system at the site ensuring the control of leachate head and the efficient collection, treatment and disposal of very high organic loading leachate for the next 20 years.

The site monitoring plan demonstrate that there is adequate monitoring of groundwater, surface water and leachate and there are contingency plans in place, should the monitoring indicate a potential problem.

That the gas management infrastructure should be planned to collect gas from the whole of the site and to be installed as soon as possible after final levels have been achieved. Combustion of the collected gas is essential.

A bird deterrent and management plan and an odour and vermin control plan should be in place and its effectiveness reviewed and tailored as appropriate to account for the disposal of animal carcases.

In addition to these environmental and public health criteria, which are assessed by the Environment Agency, the site will also be assessed by the State Veterinary Service for any biosecurity risk and only sites that do not pose a risk of disease spread will be used.

Private Members' Bills

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 889W, on private Members' Bills, when the information ceased to be collected; and if she will make a statement. [32535]

Jim Knight: The information requested has never been collected.

Quarantine

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs why there were no birds in quarantine at Pegasus Birds between 9 March and 16 September 2005. [30859]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 22 November 2005]:* It is purely a commercial matter for the importer how often the premises are used and it is common for quarantine premises to be empty for a significant part of the year.

The information previously available to us suggested that no consignments of birds had occupied the quarantine premises since March. It has now been established that a further set of records had been misfiled.

Though this does not materially alter the position as previously reported, we have now been informed that the quarantine premises in question accommodated a consignment of birds from 15 July to 18 August this year. The consignment is documented as comprising approximately 2,000 birds from Tanzania. There have been no reported cases of avian influenza in Tanzania.

The full written statement, issued on 1 December 2005, can be found at:

http://defraweb/corporate/ministers/statements/mb051201.htm

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment she has made of the regulation of quarantine facilities; and if she will make a statement. [35353]

Mr. Bradshaw: We are currently awaiting the outcome of an independent review of the avian quarantine system, which is expected to report in December, to see whether quarantine procedures need to be reviewed.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the timescale is for the review of quarantine arrangements. [35110]

Mr. Bradshaw: In keeping with Defra policy to publish scientific results and the evidence base behind our decision making, my Department will be making the results of the review public later this month.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent representations the Government have received on proposals to license quarantine facilities; and if she will make a statement. [35220]

Mr. Bradshaw: We have received none. Commission Decision 2000/666 already requires quarantine facilities or centres to be approved by the competent authorities. In England approval is carried out by the state veterinary service (SVS).

Each approval lasts for one year and is only renewed after a satisfactory re-inspection. Approvals may be withdrawn at any time should the approval requirements of the Commission decision not be met.

Recycling

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of *(a)* paper-based waste and *(b)* potentially recyclable plastic waste was generated by (i) domestic households and (ii) commercial premises in each of the last five years. [34873]

Mr. Bradshaw: Figures are available for the estimated total amount of paper and plastic materials consumed within the UK and therefore likely to become waste. No reliable estimates are available on the relative amounts from household and commercial premises. Consumption is defined as UK production plus imports minus exports. The Confederation of Paper Industries estimate that the UK consumed between 12.4 and 12.9 million tonnes of paper and board in each of the last five years. The British Plastics Federation estimate that the total amount of plastics consumed within the UK in 2001 was 4.7 million tonnes and this is expected to steadily increase to 5.3 million tonnes in 2005. All plastics are potentially recyclable, but the extent to which this occurs will depend on economic and logistic factors.

A packaging study by Valpak, the UK's largest packaging compliance scheme, has estimated that around 75 per cent. of paper packaging waste arises in the commercial and industrial waste streams and 25 per cent. originates from domestic households. Likewise, 36 per cent. of plastic packaging waste arises in the commercial and industrial waste streams and 64 per cent. comes from households.

Sheep Movement Restrictions

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what total compensation has been paid to date to United Kingdom farmers as a result of economic losses from restrictions on sheep movements. [35833]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is not Government policy to compensate for economic losses as a result of animal movement restrictions to safeguard animal health.

Sites of Nature Conservation Importance

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the site of nature conservation importance designation in protecting such sites; and if she will make a statement. [36453]

Jim Knight: Sites of nature conservation importance or other similar non-statutory designations, which we refer to generically as local sites, contribute significantly to delivering both UK and local biodiversity and geodiversity action plan targets. It is understood that there are over 35,000 local sites throughout the country.

The Government have re-affirmed the importance of the contribution such sites can make to our overall biodiversity objectives in the revised planning statement, "Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation" published in August this year. The planning statement states that local authorities should establish criteria-based policies in local development documents against which proposals for any development on, or affecting, such sites will be judged. These policies should be distinguished from those applied to the nationally important statutory sites.

In the new year, we also plan to publish guidance, developed with stakeholders, on the process for identification of these sites and the operation of partnerships concerned with local sites systems.

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what advice her Department has received from English Nature regarding sites of nature conservation importance and similar conservation designations. [36454]

Jim Knight: In consultation with stakeholders, my officials and English Nature have been drawing up good practice guidance on the process for identification of sites of nature conservation importance, which along with similar terms, we refer to generically as local sites. The guidance will also offer advice on the operation of partnerships concerned with administering local sites systems.

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether it is permissible for a local authority to rescind site of nature conservation importance status as a result of ecological degradation caused by the action or neglect of the owner or tenants of the protected site. [36455]

Jim Knight: Sites of nature conservation importance form part of the group of non-statutory designations generically referred to as local sites, and may be de-selected if their nature conservation interest deteriorates to such an extent that they no longer qualify as local sites. Government guidance on local sites, which will be produced in the new year, will suggest that where a site

has degraded, the potential for restoring the site's features of interest should be a consideration in determining whether a site should be de-selected.

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill will strengthen the protection provided by *(a)* site of nature conservation importance and *(b)* similar designations; and whether the Government have further plans to strengthen such protection. [36456]

Jim Knight: There are no specific measures in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill concerning sites of nature conservation importance or other similar non-statutory designations which we refer to generically as local sites. However, Natural England will have a broad purpose and range of powers relating to conservation of the natural environment, including a power to enter into management agreements with any person on any land if it would further its general purpose.

The Government have re-affirmed the importance of the contribution such sites can make to our overall biodiversity objectives in the revised planning statement: Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation' published in August this year.

In the new year, we also plan to publish guidance, developed with stakeholders, on the process for identification of such sites and the operation of partnerships concerned with local sites systems.

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition requirements take into account Site of Nature Conservation Importance status. [36457]

Jim Knight: Land managers claiming the single payment are obliged to meet the relevant Statutory Management Requirements (SMRs) and to maintain their land in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition (GAEC). The SMR and GAEC standards do not contain specific standards relating to the non-statutory Sites of Nature Conservation Importance. However the overall range of measures, especially those designed to achieve soil management and protection, and maintenance of habitats and landscape features, are expected to contribute to the conservation of interests within Site of Nature Conservation Importance.

Waste Management

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her estimate is for *(a)* each borough in Essex and *(b)* each London borough of the proportion of (i) household and (ii) industrial waste that was (A) recycled, (B) disposed of by incineration and (C) disposed of by landfill in each of the past five years. [34316]

Mr. Bradshaw: Data on the disposal of municipal waste are collected through the Municipal Waste Management Survey for England. The disposal of household waste is not disaggregated from municipal waste, however as household waste is the major constituent of municipal waste (comprising around 87 per cent. of all municipal waste), data for the disposal of municipal waste are a good approximation to household waste. The proportion of municipal waste by disposal route for the most recent five years, is in table 1. Data are presented for each waste disposal authority and unitary authority in Essex and London, which is the lowest level of detail available.

Data for the disposal of industrial waste are available for Government office regions only, and these are presented in table 2. Data are available for 1998–99 and 2002–03. Industrial waste is defined as waste from manufacturing, and oil, gas electricity and water supply sectors, but the data for 1998–99 also include waste from the transport, storage and communications sectors, and from hospitals. The data for the two years are therefore not directly comparable.

Table 1

Percentage

Government office region	*LA name*	*LA type*	*1999–2000*		
			Recycled and reused	*Landfilled*	*Incinerated*
Eastern	Thurrock Council	U	10	90	—
Eastern	Southend-on-Sea BC	U	17	83	0
Eastern	Essex County Council	D	17	83	—
London	Bexley LB	U	19	34	47
London	Tower Hamlets LB	U	3	97	0
London	London Corporation	U	1	99	—
London	Westminster City Council	U	4	42	54
London	East London Waste Authority	D	4	87	9
London	North London Waste Authority	D	7	45	49
London	Southwark LB	U	3	93	5
London	Lewisham LB	U	4	3	94
London	Greenwich LB	U	6	39	55
London	Sutton LB	U	26	74	—
London	Merton LB	U	12	88	—
London	Kingston-upon-Thames LB	U	16	84	—
London	Croydon LB	U	9	89	2
London	Bromley LB	U	11	89	0
London	West London Waste Authority	D	9	91	0
London	Western Riverside Waste Authority	D	8	92	—

			2000–01		
Government office region	*LA name*	*LA type*	*Recycled and reused*	*Landfilled*	*Incinerated*
Eastern	Thurrock Council	U	16	84	—
Eastern	Southend-on-Sea BC	U	22	78	0
Eastern	Essex County Council	D	21	79	—
London	Bexley LB	U	19	42	41
London	Tower Hamlets LB	U	2	98	0
London	London Corporation	U	2	98	—
London	Westminster City Council	U	4	41	54
London	East London Waste Authority	D	5	86	10
London	North London Waste Authority	D	9	41	51
London	Southwark LB	U	2	83	15
London	Lewisham LB	U	4	12	84
London	Greenwich LB	U	5	21	73
London	Sutton LB	U	22	78	—
London	Merton LB	U	14	86	—
London	Kingston-upon-Thames LB	U	16	84	—
London	Croydon LB	U	10	90	0
London	Bromley LB	U	12	88	—
London	West London Waste Authority	D	9	91	0
London	Western Riverside Waste Authority	D	7	93	—

			2001–02		
Government office region	*LA name*	*LA type*	*Recycled and reused*	*Landfilled*	*Incinerated*
Eastern	Thurrock Council	U	19	81	—
Eastern	Southend-on-Sea BC	U	20	80	0
Eastern	Essex County Council	D	23	77	—
London	Bexley LB	U	18	62	19
London	Tower Hamlets LB	U	2	98	0
London	London Corporation	U	1	99	—
London	Westminster City Council	U	5	40	55
London	East London Waste Authority	D	5	84	11
London	North London Waste Authority	D	7	49	44
London	Southwark LB	U	3	69	28
London	Lewisham LB	U	6	14	80
London	Greenwich LB	U	6	38	56
London	Sutton LB	U	15	85	—
London	Merton LB	U	12	87	1
London	Kingston-upon-Thames LB	U	16	84	—
London	Croydon LB	U	9	91	0
London	Bromley LB	U	12	87	1
London	West London Waste Authority	D	10	90	0
London	Western Riverside Waste Authority	D	8	92	0

			2002–03		
Government office region	*LA name*	*LA type*	*Recycled and reused*	*Landfilled*	*Incinerated*
Eastern	Thurrock Council	U	17	83	—
Eastern	Southend-on-Sea BC	U	22	78	0
Eastern	Essex County Council	D	25	75	—
London	Bexley LB	U	20	77	3
London	Tower Hamlets LB	U	3	97	0
London	London Corporation	U	1	99	0
London	Westminster City Council	U	5	35	60
London	East London Waste Authority	D	5	87	8
London	North London Waste Authority	D	9	48	44
London	Southwark LB	U	4	71	25
London	Lewisham LB	U	7	8	85
London	Greenwich LB	U	7	19	74
London	Sutton LB	U	18	82	—
London	Merton LB	U	12	88	0
London	Kingston-upon-Thames LB	U	16	84	—
London	Croydon LB	U	13	87	0
London	Bromley LB	U	13	65	22
London	West London Waste Authority	D	12	88	0
London	Western Riverside Waste Authority	D	8	91	1

Government office region	LA name	LA type	2003–04 Recycled and reused	Landfilled	Incinerated
Eastern	Thurrock Council	U	15	85	—
Eastern	Southend-on-Sea BC	U	22	78	0
Eastern	Essex County Council	D	26	74	—
London	Bexley LB	U	20	72	7
London	Tower Hamlets LB	U	4	96	—
London	London Corporation	U	1	99	—
London	Westminster City Council	U	6	33	61
London	East London Waste Authority	D	7	85	7
London	North London Waste Authority	D	11	48	41
London	Southwark LB	U	7	70	23
London	Lewisham LB	U	7	19	74
London	Greenwich LB	U	10	26	63
London	Sutton LB	U	26	74	—
London	Merton LB	U	12	88	0
London	Kingston-upon-Thames LB	U	19	81	—
London	Croydon LB	U	13	86	0
London	Bromley LB	U	17	58	25
London	West London Waste Authority	D	14	86	0
London	Western Riverside Waste Authority	D	11	89	0

Source:
DEFRA Municipal Waste Management Survey

Table 2

Percentage

Industrial waste	1998–99 Landfilled	Recycled and reused	Incinerated	2002–03 Landfilled	Recycled and reused	Incinerated
East of England	47	36	2	30	50	5
London	41	40	3	30	61	4

Source:
Environment Agency Survey of Commercial and Industrial Waste

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to develop a quality protocol for certified compost material to enable it to be defined as a product rather than waste. [31618]

Mr. Bradshaw: The definition of waste in force in the United Kingdom is the definition in Article 1*(a)* of the Waste Framework Directive (as amended). Whether or not a substance is discarded as waste, and when waste ceases to be waste, are matters which must be determined on the facts of the case and the interpretation of the law is a matter for the courts. The European Court of Justice (ECJ) has issued several judgments on the definition of waste which are binding on member states and their "competent authorities". The composting of waste is classified as a waste recovery operation under the Directive. This means that composting must be carried out under the terms of a waste management licence issued by, or a waste management licensing exemption registered with, the Environment Agency (England and Wales).

The ECJ has ruled that

"...whether [a substance] is waste, must be determined in the light of all the circumstances, regard being had to the aim of the Directive and the need to ensure that its effectiveness is not undermined."

In practice, this means that waste does not cease to be waste until it has undergone a complete recovery operation and has been fully recovered within the meaning of the directive. A complete recovery operation is one which has the effect of transforming waste into a product which is wholly interchangeable with another product and requires no additional regulation or supervision beyond that applicable to the product which it is replacing. Waste has not undergone a complete recovery operation if, after the operation has been carried out, it continues to present a danger typical of waste (e.g. it continues to be contaminated).

The Environment Agency considers that *(a)* source-segregated waste which, after composting, meets a recognised and suitable quality standard (e.g. BSI PAS 100) is likely to be fully recovered within the meaning of the directive; and *(b)* mixed waste which is composted is likely to remain waste until it is used in a further recovery operation (e.g. land treatment resulting in agricultural benefit or ecological improvement subject to control by the Agency under a licence or registered licensing exemption). These considerations are being taken into account in work currently being undertaken by the Environment Agency and the Waste Resources Action Programme (WRAP) on the development of a quality protocol for waste composting.

The Department supports the development of such protocols at national level and advocates their development at a European Union level. A key objective of our doing so is to enable our competent authorities, and those engaged in the recovery of waste, to determine with a high degree of certainty the point at which waste has been fully recovered for the purposes of the Waste Framework Directive and has ceased to be waste. This was reflected in the UK's response of 15 February 2005 to the European Commission's questionnaire on possible amendments to the directive linked to the Thematic Strategy on the prevention and recycling of

waste. In its response, the UK identified municipal/household waste which is recovered by means of composting or other biological transformation processes as a priority waste stream in this context. The UK's response is available at http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/waste/thematicstrat/questionnaire-ukresponse.pdf

Water Quality/Supplies

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the quality of the water supply in Tamworth. [35673]

Mr. Morley: Tamworth constituency is situated in the centre of the Glascote water supply zone of South Staffordshire Water plc. I am advised by the independent Drinking Water Inspectorate that all of the 1,384 tests carried out by the water company in this zone in 2005 have met the strict European drinking water standards.

The water supply to Tamworth is artificially fluoridated and there have been no breaches of the health based standard for fluoride of 1.5 mg/l in 2005.

Although unrelated to the quality of the drinking water supply, there has been recent local concern about the Glascote service reservoir which stores treated water. A nearby residential property is the subject of flooding and, as a consequence, the structural integrity of the reservoir was questioned. South Staffordshire Water plc have inspected and tested the reservoir and there is no evidence of leakage or damage. The flooding problem at the property is now being dealt with by Tamworth borough council.

Water

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with water companies on their ability to protect vulnerable individuals in the event of a breakdown in water supplies; and if she will publish *(a)* the protocol for identifying such individuals and *(b)* guidance on how support will be provided to them. [35776]

Mr. Morley: My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, issued a Security and Emergency Measures Direction in 1998 which sets requirements on water companies in relation to emergency planning and in dealing with water emergencies. In the event of a failure of the piped water supply, water companies are required to give priority to the domestic needs of the sick, the elderly, the disabled, hospitals, schools and other vulnerable sectors of the population. The minimum amount of water to be provided to all domestic customers when such a failure occurs is 10 litres per head per day. Those vulnerable customers who are housebound will be provided with supplies of bottled water. Water companies maintain a list of their vulnerable customers based on information provided by the customers, and in liaison with local authorities, health agencies and other support bodies.

TRANSPORT

A120

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the cost of constructing a new tunnel or bridge to cross the Braintree to Liverpool Street railway line for the proposed southern route of the A120. [35593]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency has included an estimated cost of £2 million in the A120 scheme proposals for the crossing of the Braintree to Liverpool Street railway. That cost will be reviewed as the scheme develops.

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the cost of the new crossing over the River Brain required by the A120 proposed southern route. [35594]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency has included an estimated cost of £500,000 in the A120 scheme proposals for the bridge crossing the River Brain. That cost will be reviewed as the scheme design is developed.

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether an assessment has been made of the likely impact on the A120 Proposed Southern Route of the additional heavy goods vehicle movements which are expected under plans to build a waste disposal plant on Rivenhall airfield. [35755]

Dr. Ladyman: No information on the waste disposal plant was available at the time the public consultation took place on the A120 Braintree to Marks Tey Improvement scheme. A proposal was submitted by developers in August 2005 after the public consultation period had ended.

Drawings for the proposed development show a junction with the Proposed Southern Route. The Highways Agency has responded to Essex county council, rejecting such a proposal.

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the public consultation on the expansion of the A120 between Braintree and Marks Tey complied with the Cabinet Office's code of practice on consultation in relation to the *(a)* necessary publicity within affected areas, *(b)* location of consultation exhibitions, and *(c)* publication and distribution of consultation documents. [35843]

Dr. Ladyman: The Cabinet Office code of practice on written consultations applies to national consultations. The public consultation for the A120 between Braintree and Marks Tey was local. However, the code of practice advises that the criteria should be applied wherever possible to local consultation.

The Highways Agency applied the principles of the code to its recent public consultation on route options for the A120 between Braintree and Marks Tey in relation to publicity, location of exhibitions and publication and distribution of consultation documents.

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what account was taken of the construction costs of the new crossings required by the A120 proposed southern route when judging whether the scheme achieved best value. [35844]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency has included an estimate cost of £24 million for these crossings in the A120 scheme proposals.

These costs were used in the economic assessment of the options taken to public consultation.

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the costs of the effect on railway services between Braintree and London Liverpool Street of the construction of a crossing for the proposed A120 southern route. [35845]

Dr. Ladyman: No estimate of the cost for the effects on rail users of providing a crossing has yet been prepared.

Should a railway crossing be required, any work to provide a crossing of the railway line would be taken forward in discussion with Network Rail with the aim of minimising disruption to the railway and passengers.

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the costs were of *(a)* stabilising and *(b)* rerouting electricity lines included in the total project budget for the A120 proposed southern route. [35846]

Dr. Ladyman: A preliminary estimate of £180,000 including VAT at present day prices has been obtained from EDF for the cost of stabilising and rerouting of electricity lines for the proposed A120 southern route. Major national grid power lines are to be avoided.

Airport Designation

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he expects *(a)* Luton, *(b)* London City, *(c)* Liverpool and *(d)* East Midlands airport to be designated under section 25 of the Aviation Security Act 1982 in the next three years; and if he will make a statement. [36469]

Ms Buck: On 21 November the Secretary of State for Transport announced that the Government would shortly commence an independent review of policing at airports. It will be a wide ranging review that it is expected will make recommendations by spring 2006. Until the review has been completed, it would not be appropriate to consider e designation of any additional airports.

Airport Security

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 558W, on airports (security costs), (1) how much each named airport has paid in policing costs for each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement; [36386]

(2) what the policing costs were at *(a)* Luton, *(b)* Liverpool, *(c)* London City and *(d)* East Midlands airport in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [36468]

Ms Buck: The costs of policing at non-designated airports such as those at Luton, Liverpool, London City and East Midlands is a matter for the local chief constable and the police authority, as the aerodrome manager is not obliged under section 25 of the Aviation Security Act 1982 to make a contribution. If the aerodrome manager has entered into a voluntary funding agreement with the chief constable, that is a commercial decision and not a matter to which the Secretary of State is a party.

The costs of policing at Heathrow, Gatwick, Stansted, Birmingham, Manchester, Aberdeen, Glasgow, Edinburgh and Prestwick, all of which are designated airports, are a matter for agreement between the aerodrome manager and the relevant police authority. Only if the aerodrome manager or the police authority ask the Secretary of State to make a determination under s26(3) of the Aviation Security Act 1982 does the matter of costs become a matter for the Secretary of State. The Secretary of State announced on 21 November 2005 that amendments to these provisions will be tabled in the Civil Aviation Bill which is currently being considered in another place.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received on the introduction of new security measures at North American airports for passengers travelling from the UK. [35860]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 8 December 2005]:* Responsibility for security measures at US airports rests with the US Government. As at airports in the UK and elsewhere, such measures typically evolve over time, and changes sometimes prompt representations to the Department.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions he has had with the transportation security administration regarding the screening of baggage for passengers travelling from the UK. [35861]

Ms Buck *[holding 8 December 2005]:* Responsibility for security screening at airports in the USA rests with the US Government, with whom we maintain a continuing dialogue across the full range of aviation security matters, including baggage screening.

Braintree Bypass

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what was the *(a)* total construction cost and *(b)* cost per mile of the dual carriageway Braintree bypass in 1989; and if he will express those costs at present day prices; [35609]

(2) what was the construction cost of the *(a)* crossing of the London to Liverpool Street railway line and *(b)* crossing of the River Brain required by the Braintree bypass in 1989; and if he will express those costs at present day prices. [35610]

Dr. Ladyman: These roads were constructed by Essex county council as local highway authority.

Coastguards

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make long service medals available to professional coastguards. [36709]

Dr. Ladyman: There are currently no plans to recommend a change. The intention of the Coastguard Auxiliary Long Service and Good Conduct Medal is to reward long and faithful service by volunteers.

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list departmental projects conducted by consultants in each year since 2000; what the cost was in each case; and what the total cost of employing consultants was in each year. [29062]

Ms Buck: I refer the hon. Member to the answer of 7 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1315W, given to the hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington (Tom Brake).

Departmental Expenditure

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much the Department and its agencies have spent on *(a)* the design and production of new logos and *(b)* employing external (i) public relations and (ii) graphic design agencies in each year since 2000, broken down by project. [33225]

Ms Buck: For details of how much the Department for Transport spent on design and production of new logos since 2000, I refer the hon. Member to the reply to the hon. Member for Twickenham (Dr. Cable) on 25 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 236W, which details the cost of branding. Separating out the individual costs of design and production of new logos could be done only at disproportionate cost.

For details of expenditure on employing external public relations, I refer the hon. Member to the reply to the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond) on 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 146W, which details the spend on external media relations since the Department for Transport formed in 2002–03.

The provision of the remaining information requested—the costs of external media relations and expenditure on graphic design agencies by project—could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Research

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what research projects commissioned by his Department are being undertaken; and what the publication arrangements are in each case. [32990]

Ms Buck: Details of research contracts awarded by DfT(c) are posted on the DfT website and are accessible, through the research database, at http://www.rmd.dft.gov.uk/. Publication arrangements are as shown under the science class of the DfT Publication Scheme (see extract at end). While delivery mechanisms may vary in Highways Agency and Maritime and Coastguard Agency, both agencies have adopted arrangements based on similar principles to the DfT(c).

DVLA

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 562W, on the DVLA, what percentage of complaints were subsequently reopened after the substantive response had been despatched in each year from 1997–98 to 2004–05. [36390]

Dr. Ladyman: DVLA does not keep statistics on the number of complaints that have been subsequently reopened following a substantive response.

Early Retirement

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many of his Department's employees have taken early retirement in each year since 1997. [34044]

Ms Buck: The Department was created on 29 May 2002 and the numbers of employees who have taken early retirement in each year since then are shown in the table:

	Number of employees
2002	57
2003	50
2004	105

The figures include those who have retired voluntarily with an actuarially reduced pension, those who have retired with benefits under the Civil Service Compensation Scheme and those who have retired on ill-health grounds.

Forest of Dean

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on public transport services in the Forest of Dean. [36248]

Ms Buck: It is for Gloucestershire county council, the local transport authority, in consultation with members of the community, key stakeholders and partners (including Forest of Dean district council), to determine local transport priorities and the provision of services.

Transport priorities are brought forward to Ministers through the Local Transport Plan process and my officials are currently assisting the local authority in the development of the second Local Transport Plan for Gloucestershire county council. During the first round of Local Transport Plans funding for the area increased from £15.78 million in 2000–01 to £17.49 million in 2005–06.

I understand that Gloucestershire county council already commits £1.6 million of its budget and disburses £1.1 million of Rural Bus Subsidy Grant from central Government to ensure the operation of bus services. Within the last year, bus patronage in the area has increased between 2 and 30 per cent. (and up to 50 per cent. on one route). The network of services in the Forest of Dean now carries substantially higher numbers of passengers at a lower subsidy cost.

I welcome these improvements and look forward to working with the authority as they build on their public transport strategy in their second Local Transport Plan.

Free Off-peak Bus Travel

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many pensioners in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Chorley will qualify for free off-peak local bus travel. [36773]

Ms Buck: The number of residents aged 60 or over who will qualify for free off-peak local bus travel from April 2006 are:

(a) Lancashire: 256,700

(b) Chorley: 20,800

Highways Agency

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what criteria the Highways Agency uses when assessing the impact of transport schemes on *(a)* commercial and *(b)* residential property; and what weighting is given to (i) the preservation of established residential properties and (ii) recent commercial developments. [35756]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency when assessing the impact of transport schemes takes into account both the natural and human environments. This includes consideration of the impacts schemes may have on both residential and commercial properties. The Agency makes every effort to avoid the majority of properties within a given area, in order to reduce the potential impacts of new routes on local towns and villages. However, it is not always possible to find a perfect solution.

The detailed appraisal of transport schemes is undertaken in accordance with the Department for Transport's web-based transport analysis guidance (WebTAG; http://www.webtag.org.uk). The guidance does not provide weighting which distinguishes between established residential property and commercial developments.

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidelines he has issued to the Highways Agency on timely response to statements of objection which arise from public consultations; and what upper limit for an acceptable response time he has set. [35758]

Dr. Ladyman: All statements received by the Highways Agency in response to public consultations are logged and assessed. All responses which require a reply are dealt with within 15 working days, either by a full or an interim reply. Where an interim reply is sent, this is followed up by a more detailed reply when information has been gathered.

All comments are summarised in a public consultation report which forms part of the decision process that identifies a preferred route.

Lamberhurst Bypass

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what funding schemes the Government have used to pay for the Lamberhurst bypass in East Sussex; and how much money was used in each scheme. [36593]

Dr. Ladyman: The Lamberhurst bypass was funded entirely by the Government's 10-year targeted programme of improvements (TPI). The estimated final cost of the scheme is £25.24 million.

The scheme was funded from the Highways Agency budget, which is part of the Department for Transport's voted expenditure.

M2

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answers of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 145–46W, on the M2, when he expects *(a)* the roadworks on the M2 between junctions 5 and 6 to be completed and *(b)* all lanes on both carriageways of the motorway between junctions 5 and 6 to reopen. [36597]

Dr. Ladyman: Due to adverse weather conditions, including fog, frost and rain, the resurfacing work on the M2 between junctions 5 and 6 was delayed. Completion is now expected on 16 December 2005 when all traffic management will be removed and both carriageways of the motorway will be open to traffic.

M5

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will conduct an evaluation of traffic flows at Junction 7 of the M5, with particular reference to *(a)* queuing on the slip road on the northbound carriageway and *(b)* related use of the Southern Link Road. [36243]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency will evaluate traffic flows at this junction. This will also include an assessment of movements to and from the Southern Link Road. Worcestershire county council are responsible for the Link Road.

Quiet Lanes

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department plans to publish regulations for local authorities on the designation of quiet lanes before 20 December 2005. [35682]

Ms Buck: The Department for Transport is currently finalising the work on the draft regulations and intends to publish them soon. But publication will not occur before 20 December.

Railways

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what progress has been made on developing passenger services on the Coventry-Nuneaton railway line; and what recent discussions he has had with Coventry city council on this. [34703]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 7 December 2005]:* The train service between Coventry and Nuneaton was restored in May 2005. Local authorities including Coventry city council have met with the Strategic Rail Authority to discuss their aspirations for longer term transport developments over the Coventry-Nuneaton corridor. My Department has not had any recent discussion with Coventry city council on this.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will take steps to encourage in-house maintenance on the railways. [35485]

Derek Twigg: This is an operational matter for Network Rail, which completed its programme to take all infrastructure maintenance in-house on 24 July 2004.

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the *(a)* capital and *(b)* revenue subsidy per passenger mile travelled was to bus companies by transport authorities in England for the most recent year for which information is available. [34861]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* In 2004–05 English local transport authorities, including Transport for London, spent a total of £854 million on revenue support for bus services, excluding re-imbursement to operators of the costs of providing concessionary fares. In that year there were 4,032 million passenger journeys made on all local bus services implying an overall average revenue subsidy of about 21p per journey. However, outside London only slightly over 20 per cent. of the local bus network receives revenue subsidy. Separate data on passenger numbers on these subsidised services is not collected by the Department so it is not possible to calculate average subsidy costs per journey for subsidised services outside London.

In 2004–05 local transport authorities, again including Transport for London, spent a total of £285 million on capital projects primarily to improve bus-related infrastructure and traffic management schemes to improve facilities for both commercial and subsidised bus services.

Road Schemes

Mr. Newmark: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what criteria are used in balancing the needs of local communities affected by road schemes with wider strategic objectives. [35842]

Dr. Ladyman: Under our appraisal criteria the impact of road schemes on local areas and communities is assessed very carefully, in particular impacts on noise, local air quality, townscape, landscape, biodiversity, safety, severance and land-use policy.

These impacts are judged alongside a scheme's costs and economic benefits, in particular, from reduced congestion, time savings to travellers and wider economic benefits in reaching an overall assessment of its justification.

Rochdale/Oldham Loop Line

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent on the Rochdale/Oldham loop line in the last eight years; and if he will make a statement. [34634]

Derek Twigg: Network Rail is responsible for operating, maintaining and renewing the main rail network, including the Oldham loop line. I have therefore asked them to reply directly to the hon. Member.

Statutory Instruments

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what training is given to *(a)* policy officials and *(b)* lawyers in his Department responsible for drafting statutory instruments; and if he will make a statement. [34258]

Ms Buck: Statutory instruments are drafted by departmental lawyers based on instructions from policy divisions. Where instruments amend primary legislation, Parliamentary Counsel are consulted.

As members of the Government Legal Service (GLS), departmental lawyers receive extensive training in the preparation and drafting of statutory instruments. This consists of a combination of lectures and practical exercises run by experienced practitioners in the GLS, coupled with training given by legal advisers who advise the parliamentary scrutiny committees. In addition, senior managers in the GLS take a close interest in the quality of statutory instruments and provide frequent feedback and on-the-job training to those with lead responsibility for drafting. This is an on-going process and part of the continuing education of government legal advisers.

Transport (Financial Support)

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will set out the financial support provided by *(a)* by central Government, *(b)* via local government and *(c)* via passenger transport authorities in England for (i) local bus services, (ii) local bus service infrastructure, (iii) rail services, (iv) rail infrastructure, (v) air services and (vi) aviation infrastructure in each year between 1995–96 and 2004–05. [32153]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 1 December 2005]:* The following table provides the information held centrally. The Department for Transport was formed in 2002.

Support for rail infrastructure is made through direct capital grants to Network Rail and London and Continental Railways.

Central Government support for aviation is in the form of research and development, international subscriptions, support for Royal Travel and loans to National Air Traffic Services. Direct support is not provided for air services or aviation infrastructure.

Financial support provided by the Department for Transport

£ million

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Local bus services[1]			
Central Government	332	350	359
Local government	436	461	470
Passenger transport authorities	742	876	853
Rail Services[2]			
Central Government	935	1,359	878
Passenger transport authorities	218	214	134
Rail infrastructure			
Central Government[3]	1,166	1,670	2,058

[1] Includes support for local bus service infrastructure.
[2] Source: National Rail Trends.
[3] Includes capital grant to London and Continental Railways for 2003–03 and 2003–04.

Trunk Road Schemes

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many trunk road schemes are experiencing cost overruns; what action he is taking to tackle such overruns; and if he will make a statement. [34710]

Dr. Ladyman: Of the 29 conventionally funded schemes formerly in the targeted programme of improvements (TPI), that have opened over the last four years, 16 are forecast to cost more than provided for, and 13 are forecast to cost less. The total cost of those schemes is estimated at £888 million, some £12 million less than programmed.

When faced with potential cost overruns, the Agency's approach is to work with the supply chain to drive down costs of construction.

Where that is not possible, cost increases are met from a Strategic Reserve contained within the risk allowance for the TPI. Where cost savings are made, these are fed back into the Strategic Reserve.

UK Air Passengers

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what average number of flights was taken by UK passengers *(a)* in 1997 and *(b)* in the latest year for which figures are available, broken down by social class. [35238]

Ms Buck: The results by socio-economic classification for 2003 are given as follows. Respondents in managerial/professional occupations had a higher mean number of air trips than those in lower occupational categories.

This data was not collected in 1997.

How many air trips in last year?

	Mean no flights (based on all)	*Base number*	*Mean (among those who had flown in last year)*	*Base number (all those who had flown in last year)*
Managerial and professional occupations	[1]3.6	417	5.3	277
Intermediate occupations	1.6	212	2.8	109
Routine and manual occupations	1.6	491	3.2	214
Never worked/long-term unemployed	[2]—	33	[2]—	7
All	2.3	1,153	4.1	608

[1] Figures are significantly different to the national average at the 5 per cent. level.
[2] Sample size too small for reliable estimates.
Source:
2003 British Social Attitudes Survey

Vehicle Certification Agency

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what bonuses the Chief Executive of the Vehicle Certification Agency has received since his appointment; and for what reasons in each case. [35828]

Ms Buck: The Chief Executive of the Vehicle Certification Agency has received one bonus since his appointment. It was performance related and part of his 2005 pay award as a senior civil servant.

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reasons the Vehicle Certification Agency is involved in the work of the management systems certification. [35829]

Dr. Ladyman: VCA, as the UK vehicle type approval authority, has the responsibility to test and certify vehicles and components to a range of EU Directives and ECE regulations. Part of that certification requires that VCA verifies the "conformity of production" arrangements of the manufacturer to ensure production vehicles and components continue to meet the standards. This is done through an audit of the manufacturer's quality management systems. With the introduction of ISO 9000—quality management systems—manufacturers requested VCA to extend the auditing service to include the issue of certificates. Therefore VCA became accredited by UKAS (United Kingdom Accreditation Service) to enable it to issue recognised certificates and be able to offer automotive related organisations management systems certification services on a commercial basis.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Commercial Ventures

Martin Horwood: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission if the House of Commons Commission will expand the number of commercial ventures in the House of Commons part of the parliamentary estate to include *(a)* a newsagent, *(b)* a bookshop, *(c)* a bank, *(d)* a laundrette and dry cleaners, *(e)* a pharmacy, *(f)* a stationers and *(g)* an Indian restaurant; and if the Commission will make an assessment of the contribution to public funds such services might make. [36330]

Nick Harvey: The House carries out a number of activities which have a commercial element, but which are predominantly aimed at providing services to Members and others on the parliamentary estate rather than having an outright profit objective. These include a wide range of catering venues and services including one which offers a curry each day; souvenirs; Post Office counters; a hairdresser; a florist; the parliamentary bookshop; a business travel agency; and the Westminster gymnasium. There are also smaller installations including ATMs and various vending machines. In addition, the House leases out external parts of the estate for specific retail activities; these include a retail chemist and pharmacy, a food retailer, a cafe, a dry cleaners and a public house. The House gets a normal market return on these leases. Newspapers are available for Members to read at a number of locations on the estate, and books, periodicals and videos are available from the Library.

There are no current plans to extend the House's commercial activities.

Telephone Lines

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission how many telephone lines are installed in each building in the House of Commons estate; how many of those lines are live; which companies the live lines are with; what the call charges are under the current contract; when the contract is up for renewal; and if he will make a statement. [36465]

Nick Harvey: Telephony on the parliamentary estate is provided by the Parliamentary Communications Directorate using a network of seven linked switches. There are currently 5,714 live lines on the 020 7219 xxxx range installed throughout the House of Commons as shown in the table:

Building	*Extensions in use*
1 Derby Gate	232
1 Canon Row	182
1 Parliament Street	295
2 Abbey Gardens	45
4 and 7 Millbank	1,007
Norman Shaw North	622
Norman Shaw South	272
Portcullis House	1,031
Palace of Westminster (Commons)	2,028
Total Commons	5,714

There are also 50 BT direct exchange lines at various locations throughout the estate and a further 208 mobile extension lines are allocated to House staff.

All incoming calls come via BT. Circuits installed with four suppliers BT, Cable & Wireless, Colt and O2 take outgoing calls depending on the destination of the call, the time of day and the tariffs available. These services are supplied under rolling contracts and the tariffs are regularly reviewed. The routing was adjusted earlier this year to take advantage of reduced tariffs.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Asian Tsunami

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much money the Government allocated to assist the victims of the tsunami in south east Asia; and how much of that money has been disbursed, broken down by recipient country. [33017]

Mr. Thomas: When the tsunami struck last December, the Government immediately allocated £75 million for relief and recovery needs. Nearly £67 million of this has been programmed through United Nations agencies, the Red Cross Movement and non-governmental organisations and DFID direct action. Of this figure, all but approximately £800,000 has been disbursed and this is earmarked to cover costs already incurred, and ongoing costs such as secondments of experts to United Nations agencies. Up to £7.5 million has been earmarked for disaster risk reduction initiatives in affected countries. This

allocation will be disbursed, against agreed programme activities into 2006. It is now likely that the remaining £500,000 of the £75 million allocated is not required for relief and recovery activities.

DFID has allocated £65 million to meet reconstruction needs in tsunami-affected areas. A total of £41 million of this has been committed. In Indonesia, we have so far programmed £34.3 million, including two contributions to the Multi Donor Trust Fund of £5.6 million and £20 million. A further £5 million has been committed for technical assistance to help ensure timely, accountable and equitable provision of reconstruction assistance and rebuilding of livelihoods. A total of £2.8 million has been committed to Sri Lanka, and to date £1.5 million of this has been programmed to support the capacity of the North East Provincial Council (NEPC) to plan and implement programmes and services. A total of £3 million has been committed to India to support the United Nations Recovery Framework for Post Tsunami Rehabilitation and Reconstruction. The remaining £24 million of the £65 million allocation for reconstruction has not yet been committed.

British Overseas Territories

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much funding his Department directed to each British Overseas Territory in each of the last seven years. [33755]

Mr. Thomas: DFID expenditure for the Overseas Territories for each of the financial years from 1998–99 to 2004–05 is set out in the table. A number of territories, for example Montserrat and St. Helena, still need significant levels of support to help meet basic needs and promote growth and, in the case of Pitcairn, a need now for budgetary aid to cover essential recurrent expenditure. Declining levels of support, for example in Anguilla, the British Virgin Islands and the Cayman Islands, follow increased prosperity and economic growth.

£000

	Programme expenditure
Anguilla	
1998–99	1,977
1999–2000	2,058
2000–01	2,234
2001–02	1,847
2002–03	1,044
2003–04	954
2004–05	1,216
Bermuda	
1998–99	—
1999–2000	13
2000–01	4
2001–02	—
2002–03	—
2003–04	—
2004–05	—
British Virgin Islands	
1998–99	622
1999–2000	517
2000–01	186
2001–02	83
2002–03	90
2003–04	11
2004–05	—
Cayman Islands	
1998–99	23
1999–2000	18
2000–01	20
2001–02	3
2002–03	—
2003–04	—
2004–05	[1]250
Falkland Islands	
1998–99	—
1999–2000	—
2000–01	—
2001–02	—
2002–03	—
2003–04	—
2004–05	—
Gibraltar	
1998–99	28
1999–2000	23
2000–01	27
2001–02	23
2002–03	6
2003–04	5
2004–05	1
Montserrat	
1998–99	31,096
1999–2000	22,640
2000–01	19,597
2001–02	23,710
2002–03	23,350
2003–04	24,757
2004–05	14,151
Pitcairn Islands	
1998–99	148
1999–2000	99
2000–01	18
2001–02	26
2002–03	53
2003–04	64
2004–05	1,314
St. Helena (and Tristan da Cunha)	
1998–99	8,806
1999–2000	9,362
2000–01	10,115
2001–02	10,106
2002–03	9,555
2003–04	10,525
2004–05	14,481
Turks and Caicos Islands	
1998–99	3,808
1999–2000	4,044
2000–01	2,845
2001–02	2,719
2002–03	1,532
2003–04	741
2004–05	1,187

[1] Emergency assistance (approximate figure) following Hurricane Ivan in September 2004.

In addition, the countries also benefit from DFID's "regional" Overseas Territories programme. Individual country shares of this cannot be attributed.

The European Development Fund also allocates funds for the UK Overseas Territories. Cumulative allocations since 1993 total some €86.33 million (the UK share of which is about €10.79 million or approximately £7.2 million). This sum, some of which is still being committed to or spent on approved development activities, has been shared among eligible UK Overseas Territories as follows.

Country	Euros	Thousand Sterling approximate
Anguilla	14,450	9,600
British Virgin Islands	4,900	3,300
Cayman Islands	1,600	1,070
Montserrat	24,900	16,600
St. Helena (and Tristan da Cunha)	18,150	12,100
Turks and Caicos Islands	16,280	10,850
Falkland Islands	3,700	2,460
Pitcairn Islands	2,350	1,570

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether he plans to increase his Department's spending on British overseas territories. [33760]

Mr. Thomas: DFID's funding for the overseas territories seeks to maximise economic growth and self sufficiency. For example we anticipate some increase in future years to accommodate the cost of the proposed airport for St. Helena. At this stage, I cannot be specific about amounts.

Cayman Islands

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his Department's work in helping to rebuild homes on the Cayman Islands. [33764]

Mr. Thomas: DFID and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) provided approximately £250,000 for emergency supplies and services in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Ivan. We have not provided specific assistance to rebuild homes. We understand, however, that the European Union is considering a request for support from the Cayman Islands Government.

CDC/Actis Capital

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development in which energy sector companies CDC/Actis Capital has invested. [35521]

Hilary Benn: CDC/Actis Capital have invested in the energy sector companies listed:

Ace Power Generation Anuradhapura (Pvt) Ltd.
Ace Power Generation Matara (Pvt)
Asia Power Co
Azito
Caribbean Basin Power Fund
CESC Limited
Compania Boliviana de Energia Electrica
Compania de Electricidad de Puerto Plata
DHL Trust
Dominica Electricity Services Ltd.
Empresa Energetica Corinto
Guyana Power and Light
Haina Investment Company
Haripur (Pvt) Ltd / Meghnaghat (Pvt) Ltd.
Hopewell Power (Philippines) Corporation
Hub Power Co Ltd.
Jamaica Private Power Co
Kelvin Power
La Compania de Electricidad de San Pedro De Macoris
Lanco Kondapalli
Liberty Power
Mirant Sual Corporation
Orzunil
Sidi Krir
St. Lucia Electricity Services Ltd.
Puerto Quetzal Power Ltd. Liability Co
Smith/Enron Cogeneration Limited Partnership
Songas Company Ltd.
Southern Cone Power Ltd.
Tsavo Power Co Ltd.
Umeme Limited

Child Treatment Fund

Mr. Gerrard: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether funding for the child treatment fund is included in the 10 per cent. of his Department's spending on HIV/AIDS to be spent on orphans and vulnerable children. [32207]

Mr. Thomas: Globally, access to AIDS treatment for children is low, despite the fact that, in the absence of treatment, 50 per cent. of children with HIV will die before their second birthday. In Mozambique and Malawi, for example, 5 per cent. and 7 per cent. of those on treatment are children, whereas equitable access would require coverage of approximately 13 per cent.

DFID has committed £150 million for support to children affected by AIDS from 2005–08. This funding will not be put through new instruments. However, this funding is being used to support a range of activities that will promote children's access to prevention and treatment, as well as to protection and care. For example, we are providing £10 million to Medecins Sans Frontieres for anti-retroviral roll out and prevention in South Africa.

We are also funding research into better medicines and diagnostics for children, such as the £4.8 million trial DFID and the Medical Research Council are co-funding on anti-retroviral treatment for children. An earlier DFID funded trial in Zambia has proven the efficacy of a cheap antibiotic, Cotrimoxazole, in reducing mortality in HIV positive children.

DFID will continue to ensure the needs of children and other vulnerable groups are addressed as we work towards scaling up to universal access to treatment by 2010, as agreed by the G8 and by the Millennium Review Summit. DFID is supporting UNICEF's Global Campaign on Children and AIDS that sets a target of providing treatment to 80 per cent. of children in need by 2010.

Colombia

Colin Burgon: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much money the UK Government are providing in 2005–06 to *(a)* the European Commission, *(b)* the Inter-America Development Bank and *(c)* the World Bank for projects in Colombia; and if he will list the projects concerned. [32666]

Mr. Thomas: Through its contribution of 18 per cent. to the European Commission's (EC) budget, the UK Government provided £5.4 million to Colombia over the three years 2001 to 2003 (the last years for which data is available). The EC supports the search for peace and the targeting of the roots and causes of the conflict. The following four sectors are priorities for EC co-operation with Colombia: social/economic development and poverty reduction; alternative livelihoods for cocoa farmers; public sector administrative and judicial reform; and the support and promotion of human rights. Specific areas of work include: initiatives to promote peace; resettlement of people uprooted by the conflict, support to make export sectors more efficient; reinforcement of the state of law and democracy; the protection of the environment and conservation of natural resources; landmines clearance; and science and technology research.

Colombia does not benefit from the concessional lending by the World Bank (WB) and Inter-American Development Bank (IDB) that is funded by donors such as the UK, given its relatively high income. It does, however, borrow from the WB and IDB on near commercial terms. The UK, therefore, contributes indirectly as a shareholder of these organisations. A table of current projects supported by IDB and WB are as follows.

Inter-American Development Bank: Colombia: approved projects

Approval date	*Project name*
May 2005	Strengthening the Expanded Programme on Immunization
December 2004	Rural Low-Income Housing Programme
December 2004	Private Participation and Concessions in Infrastructure
December 2004	Corporate Social Responsibility Practices in SMEs
September 2004	Promotion of Youth Entrepreneurship
September 2004	Sector Programme for Public Utilities
August 2004	Support Cluster Competitiveness
June 2004	Public Administration Reform Programme
June 2004	Support to The National Environmental System (SINA II)
January 2004	Modernization of Health Service Networks
October 2003	Urban Social Housing Programme
October 2003	Health Care and Social Security Reform Programme
April 2003	Programme to Strengthen the Office of the Attorney-General
March 2003	Social Emergency Programme
December 2002	Highway Development and Institutional Strengthening for Cundinamarca
August 2002	Use of Information and Communication Technologies
May 2002	Promotion of Co-operative Ventures Between Firms
March 2002	Social Infrastructure and Community Management for Peace
February 2002	Strengthening Capital Markets
February 2002	Business Linkages in the Garment Industry
January 2002	Institutional Strengthening for the District of Bogota
December 2001	Social Reform Programme
August 2001	Sector Programme for Sub national Fiscal Reform
April 2001	Promoting Foreign Investment in Colombian Enterprises
December 2000	Environmental Implementation for Cleaner Technologies
December 2000	Exporter Information on the Internet
November 2000	Isabella Grape Agribusiness Project
November 2000	Social Safety Net Programme
October 2000	Simplification Programme for the Business Sector
June 2000	Marketing Company for Micro enterprise Owners
March 2000	Prefeasibility Studies for the Azufral Geothermal
March 2000	Strengthening Offices of the Controller and Auditor General

World Bank: Colombia: active projects

Approval date	*Project name*	*Value (US$ million)*
1 November 2005	Social Safety Net Project	86.4
27 October 2005	1st Business Productivity and Efficiency Project	250
27 October 2005	Sustainable Development Inv Project	7
28 June 2005	Agricultural Transition	30
10 May 2005	Disaster Vulnerability Reduction First Phase	260
22 March 2005	Water and Sanitation Sector Support Project	70
10 June 2004	Integrated Mass Transit Systems	250
10 June 2004	Peace and Development Project (1st Phase)	30
19 August 2003	CUNDIMARCA Education Quality Improvement	15
13 March 2003	Bogota Urban Services Project	100
23 December 2002	Higher Education—Improving Access	200
22 January 2002[1]	Productive Partnerships Support Project	32
8 November 2001	Conflict Resolution Improvement	5
25 October 2001	Water Sector Reform Assistance	40
22 March 2001	Public Financial Management Project (02)	35.47
8 March 2001	Policy Based Guarantee	220.3
11 May 2000	Community Works and Employment Project	100
2 May 2000	Sierra Nevada Sustainable Development	5
11 April 2000	Rural Education Project	20
20 July 1999	Cartagena Water Supply, Sewerage and Environmental Management Project	85

[1] Judicial.

Colin Burgon: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which British non-governmental organisations in Colombia were given financial assistance by the UK Government in the last two years; and how much each received. [32667]

Mr. Thomas: Three projects are currently funded through DFID's Civil Society Challenge Fund:

War on Want in the promotion of workers and human rights in Southwest Colombia—£213,950 over the period December 2003 to March 2007.

Concern Universal to enable marginalised groups to demand and secure their constitutional rights (including access to clean water, adequate sanitation, access to healthcare and access to education)—£322,000 from April 2005 to March 2009.

Y-Care International, to strengthen the ability of 1,800 marginalised young people and children to contribute to community development and peace promotion—£10,796 in 2005–06.

DFID also approved an additional £7 million a year from 2005 for six international NGOs working in Latin America and the Caribbean. Of the six selected, CAFOD, Christian Aid, and the World Wildlife Fund (WWF) are active in Colombia and will benefit from these additional funds.

The Foreign and Commonwealth Office is currently funding two projects by Save the Children in Colombia worth £92,000 over the next two years. These projects aim to tackle child sexual abuse through strengthening local institutions and raising awareness through training of journalists in child rights.

Commission for Africa

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what timetable he has set to deliver the recommendations of the Commission for Africa. [30231]

Hilary Benn: I refer the hon. Member to the response I gave to the hon. Member for South Down (Mr. McGrady) on 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 54–55W.

Departmental Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans he has to relocate staff in his Department and related agencies into London and the South East. [31759]

Mr. Thomas: DFID has no plans to relocate staff into London or the South East. Our relocation plans are in keeping with Government policy with 85 posts being relocated to our office in East Kilbride over the periods 2004–05 and 2005–06.

Early Retirement

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many of his Department's employees have taken early retirement in each year since 1997. [34046]

Mr. Thomas: The number of DFID employees, who have taken early retirement in each year since 1997, are shown in the table.

	Number of employees
1997	26
1998	6
1999	9
2000	3
2001	9
2002	10
2003	24
2004	13
2005	[1]11

[1] To date

The figures include those who have retired voluntarily with an actuarially reduced pension, those who have retired with benefits under the civil service compensation scheme and those who have retired on grounds of ill-health.

Ethiopia

Dr. Fox: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans he has to take forward the Africa Commission's work on Ethiopia; what account he will take in his plans of *(a)* the participation of President Meles Zenawi, *(b)* the killing of demonstrators in Ethiopia by Ethiopian security forces and *(c)* the detention without charge of demonstrators; what plans he has to promote good governance in Ethiopia; and if he will make a statement. [34519]

Hilary Benn: The Commission for Africa has now completed its work, having successfully produced recommendations on the changes needed to reduce poverty. Prime Minister Meles contributed to the Commission's report, but it is up to individual countries to take these recommendations forward.

UK Ministers, and our ambassador in Ethiopia, have registered our concerns with Prime Minister Meles about the situation in Ethiopia, which resulted in deaths and injuries, and about the issue of detainees. We have urged the Government to launch an investigation into the violence.

As a result of these events the UK, in close co-ordination with other donors, has announced a review of our development programme. We have made it clear that principles of good governance must be central to our future development partnership.

Freedom of Information

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many freedom of information applications his Department has received; how many have taken more than 20 days to process; and how many of these gave rise to complaints about the time taken. [31217]

Mr. Thomas: Between 1 January and 30 June 2005, DFID received 151 freedom of information requests. Of these, 48 took more than 20 working days to complete. Requesters sought internal reviews on the timeliness of handling for three requests.

The Department for Constitutional Affairs is committed to publishing quarterly updates in relation to departmental performance under FOI, including information on both the volume and outcomes of requests. The bulletin for the second quarter was

published on 30 September 2005 and can be found on the DCA website at http://www.foi.gov.uk/statsapr-jun05.htm and in the Libraries of both Houses. The next bulletin will be published before Christmas, while an annual report will be published in early 2006.

HIV/AIDS

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions his Department has had with the Government of *(a)* Lesotho, *(b)* Swaziland and *(c)* Somalia on HIV/AIDS infection, prevention and treatment. [30768]

Hilary Benn: DFID officials have met on many occasions with Government officials and civil society organisations to discuss the HIV epidemic in both Swaziland and Lesotho.

In both countries, DFID is providing support for both prevention and care activities through a programme managed by the Southern Africa Development Community. The project is providing £7.5 million for the sub-region, of which £2 million is being spent in Lesotho and Swaziland respectively. The work focuses upon treatment of Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STDs), behaviour change and the promotion of condom use. DFID has also financed key posts within the Department of Health. In Swaziland, DFID support targets the provision of Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART) and in Lesotho it is directed towards monitoring and evaluation through the AIDS secretariat in the Ministry of Health.

In Lesotho, DFID is providing additional support (£1.7 million 2005–08) to develop the National AIDS Commission so that the country can develop a more co-ordinated response. This support is combined with assistance to the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS), to strengthen civil society and with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), to help the Government build work on HIV/AIDS into its economic and development planning.

Outside of these project activities, we have most frequently discussed issues of HIV and AIDS with officials in the National AIDS Councils of the respective countries. Because the epidemic continues to infect many people, our discussions concentrate on both prevention and care.

In Somalia, resources from the Global Fund were committed in June 2005. DFID is providing £00,000 to the UNDP to bridge the gap until Global Fund resources come online. DFID support to the UNDP will help to build capacity to the National AIDS Commissions in Somaliland and Puntland, and should benefit the entire population. The funding will also comprise support to Voluntary Counselling and Testing (VCT) and Anti-retroviral (ARV) programmes, which are likely to reach 1,000 people.

We are also contributing funding to UNAIDS for a 'five country strategy' which runs from 2004–06. The aim of the programme is to improve co-ordination on HIV and AIDS across all five countries. Approximately £950,000 will go to Somalia which equates to 26 per cent. of the total funding package for this programme.

Palestinian Refugees

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with Arab States about the provision of aid and assistance to Palestinian refugees; and if he will make a statement. [36168]

Hilary Benn: The United Nations Relief and Works Agency (UNRWA) is mandated by the UN General Assembly to provide education, health, relief and social services to Palestinian refugees. As a major contributor to the UNRWA, providing approximately £15 million this year, DFID has regular contacts with Arab States that are hosts of refugees or provide financial assistance to the UNRWA. Most recently, DFID participated in UNRWA's annual Hosts and Donors Meeting in Jordan and, as holding the EU presidency, made a statement on behalf of the EU. In September DFID participated in the annual Advisory Commission meeting which includes the four host authorities (Jordan, Lebanon, Syria and the Palestinian Authority) and seven other countries, including the UK.

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development when he will publish a Public Service Agreement delivery plan for 2004 Public Service Agreement target number 5. [29949]

Hilary Benn: We do not intend to publish the delivery plan for 2005–08, as this is an internal document. However, the Government regularly reports progress against PSA Target 5 in the annual Departmental and Autumn Performance Reports. These reports are publicly available on the DFID and other relevant Departments' websites. Details of the measurement systems underpinning the target are published in the PSA Technical Note, which is publicly available on the DFID website: www.dfid.gov.uk/pubs/files/PSA/technicalnotes.pdf

South Asia Earthquake

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what progress is being made in providing shelter for those made homeless by the South Asia earthquake. [35414]

Mr. Thomas: The UN has released a 90-day winter plan that builds on the response of the past eight weeks. The focus remains on providing shelter and food for those living at high altitudes. The Government of Pakistan and the humanitarian community continue to provide relief assistance to between 350,000 and 380,000 people who remain in remote areas, and to provide camp services for up to 250,000 people in official and self settled camps.

The United Nations has reported that a significant number of the tents provided are not winterised and efforts are under way to reinforce their protection against the winter conditions. The relief effort is also providing shelter using local materials with support for the construction of shelters with warm rooms.

DFID has provided 5,500 winterised tents directly, and is giving further assistance to shelter provision through its support to United Nations agencies and

non-governmental organisations working in this sector. DFID officials have, in consultation with the United Nations, identified a further package worth £1 million of the most urgently needed support to shelter provision. We are working with the United Nations to deliver this additional support as quickly as possible.

St. Helena

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the applications submitted by non-St Helenians for land purchase licences in each year since 1997; who the applicant was in each case; and what total land mass each application concerned. [34080]

Mr. Thomas: The "Governor in Council" has considered, or is considering, the following applications received since 1997. Decisions are made according to the Immigrants' Landholding (Restriction) Ordinance.

Date of application	*Name(s)*	*Land area(s) (Acres)*	*Remarks*
28 July 1997	Janet Lesley Barlow	0.29	Refused
20 October 1998	Rex Alan Bartlett and Cynthia Laura Barefoot	1.9	Granted
14 June 1998	Patrick Solan and Jean Solan	0.35	Withdrawn
23 February 1999	Per Richard Lochen	1.7	Granted
24 February 1999	Robin Castell	2.0	Granted
9 April 1999	Christopher John Grattan-Cooper and Lindsay Helen Grattan-Cooper	0.51	Granted
25 February 1999	Michel Dancoisne-Martineau	12.0	Granted
28 May 1999	Michel Dancoisne Martineau	69.0	Granted
	New Apostolic Church	0.37	Granted
5 August 1999	Kelly Kosky and Kathleen Ann Kosky	35.41	Granted
1 December 1999	Paul Oliver (Joint Ownership With Wife Who Is An Islander)	0.31	Granted
		0.21	
16 March 2000	Mikael Per Olsson	10.7	Leasehold interest, granted
12 August 2000	Eurnest Oliver Crouch and Ingrid Catharina Crouch	0.37	Withdrawn
13 November 2000	Jeremy Robert White (joint ownership with wife who is an islander)	1.05	Granted
6 September 2000	Mikael Per Olsson	0.8	Leasehold interest
12 January 2001	Christopher Armstrong	0.0374	Granted
11 January 2001	Michel Dancoisne Martineau	4.88	Granted
		53.42	
1 March 2001	John Michael Styles and Lynnette Mary Bloomfield	3.5	Granted
9 May 2001	Robin Anthony Fryatt (joint ownership with partner who is an islander)	0.45	Granted
		0.37	
12 May 2001	Janet Lesley Barlow	0.247	Withdrawn
24 July 2001	Richard David Harris	0.36	Withdrawn
1 September 2002	Jean Florence Albert	6.8	Granted
12 October 2003	Mark Loft (joint ownership with wife who is an islander)	0.19	Granted
9 November 2003	John Reid (joint ownership with wife who is an islander)	0.78	Granted
1 January 2004	Stephen Terry and Maureen Terry	0.32	Granted
16 March 2004	Yvonne Helen Clingham	0.60	Granted
21 May 2004	Nicholas Backhouse (husband of the late Cheryl Backhouse)	0.47	Pending
5 July 2004	John Lawrence Terry and Maria Diosa Terry	0.63, 1.14	Granted
5 September 2005	Jurgen Wolf and Johanna Wolf	0.32	Leasehold interest granted
12 April 2005	John Turner and Catherine Jane turner	2.0	Granted
1 July 2005	Frederick George	0.11	Granted
19 September 2005	Ronald Scanes and Fe valiene Scanes	1.14	Pending
26 April 2005	Shelco Investments	309.00	Pending
		8.50	
		5.20	
		72.99	
26 April 2005	Shelco Investments	0.052	Pending

As part of the St. Helena Access project, DFID is supporting the St. Helena Government to develop appropriate investment and tourism policies aimed at both encouraging economic development and protecting the island's interests.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many species of *(a)* insects and *(b)* plants are endemic to St. Helena. [34081]

Mr. Thomas: The standard work on the natural history of St. Helena and Ascension Island, jointly authored by Philip and Myrtle Ashmole and published in 2000, lists, as currently known to be endemic to St. Helena, approximately 385 species of invertebrates (of which approximately 285 are insects) and 50 species of plants (of which 37 are flowering plants and 13 are ferns).

The protection of St. Helena's unique biodiversity currently benefits from a programme funded under the joint DFID/FCO Overseas Territories Environment Programme which seeks to implement a protected area plan for the Central Peaks including the control of invasive species and the restoration of endemic plants. St. Helena continues to have access to the project for the protection and enhancement of its biodiversity. Work to mitigate the effects on and to further protect the island's biodiversity is also a key component of the project to introduce air access to St. Helena.

Tuberculosis

Mr. Burrowes: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what percentage of funding

allocated to direct budget support in 2005–06 in each country is attributable to the control and treatment of tuberculosis. [26072]

Hilary Benn: I refer the hon. Member to the response given to my hon. Friend the Member for Cardiff, North (Julie Morgan) on 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 870–71W.

Zimbabwe

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what the value of grants in aid made to Zimbabwe were in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [30160]

Hilary Benn: DFID has not made grants in aid to Zimbabwe in the last five years.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Audio Signing Services

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport which broadcasters covered by the Ofcom Code on Television Access Services did not broadcast *(a)* audio description and *(b)* signing during the first half of 2005. [36208]

James Purnell: The matter raised is the responsibility of Ofcom, as independent regulator. Accordingly, officials have asked the chief executive to respond directly to the hon. Member. Copies of the letter will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Broadcasting (Illegal Jamming)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what *(a)* representations she has received from broadcasters and *(b)* discussions she has had with the Office of Communications on the jamming of UK satellite communications system Telstar 12 and the European system Hotbird; and if she will make a statement. [34922]

James Purnell: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has not received any direct representations from broadcasters nor has she had discussions with the Office of Communications about the jamming of UK satellite systems.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the impact of the interruption within the UK of television services provided by *(a)* BBC World, *(b)* CNN, *(c)* Euro News, *(d)* JSTV and *(e)* others since September; and if she will make a statement. [34924]

James Purnell: The Office of Communications (OFCOM) received a report from Arquiva, the network operator responsible for transmission of Channel 5 television services in the UK on 25 October. This report notified the regulator of interference to the Telstar 12 satellite service.

The Telstar 12 satellite provides programme feeder links for Channel 5 television broadcasts. No detailed assessment of the interference is available but it is known that it caused interruption to Channel 5 broadcasts for several hours on a number of occasions over a period of approximately two weeks.

There were no complaints to OFCOM or DCMS officials of interference to any other UK broadcasting services sharing the satellite during the same period.

The interference has now ceased and there have been no further reports of interruption to Channel 5 or any other UK television broadcast stations using the affected satellite. DCMS officials nevertheless remain in touch with OFCOM and FCO officials to monitor the situation and will take appropriate steps should there be a re-occurrence of the problem.

Communion Wine

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations her Department has received from groups whose only alcoholic product on sale is communion wine; and when she received such representations. [34418]

James Purnell *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* The Government has received letters from two hon. Members, which enclose correspondence from their constituents on this matter. One is from a business that engages in the sale of communion wine and the other from a churchwarden. These letters were received on September 8 and 15, 2005, respectively.

My Officials are currently investigating the points raised and I will reply as soon as all the information has been collated.

Departmental Property

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much was paid by her Department in 2004–05 in rent for properties in *(a)* total, *(b)* each (i) region and (ii) nation of the UK and *(c)* London. [35941]

Mr. Lammy: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport paid rents for properties in London as follows in 2004–05. (This is the net figure after receipt of rental income from private sector tenants.)

£4,499,755

The Department did not pay any rent outside London in 2004–05.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much was paid by her Department in rates to each local authority in the UK in 2004–05; and how much was paid in *(a)* each (i) nation and (ii) region of the UK and *(b)* London. [35988]

Mr. Lammy: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport paid rates as follows in 2004–05.

City of Westminster, London—£716,655.07

London borough of Camden—£167,354.93

The Royal Parks Agency paid rates as follows in 2004–05.

City of Westminster council, London—£68,400

The Department did not pay any rates outside London in 2004–05.

Departmental Staff

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many staff are employed by her Department in each *(a)* region and *(b)* nation of the UK; and if she will make a statement. [35905]

Mr. Lammy: As at 1 December 2005 the Department for Culture, Media and Sport had 517 employees (502 full-time equivalents), which are all based in Central London.

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many and what proportion of each civil service grade in her Department is located in each *(a)* region and *(b)* nation of the UK; what the average salary is for each grade; and if she will make a statement. [35906]

Mr. Lammy: All 517 staff (502 full time equivalents) in the Department for Culture, Media and Sport are based in central London.

The average salaries for each grade at 1 December 2005, are shown in the following table.

Grade	*Civil service equivalent*	*Head count*	*Average salary (£)*
SCS payband 2 and above	—	10	101,067
SCS payband 1	—	20	63,794
A(U)	Grade 6	21	54,150
A	Grade 7	96	43,577
B	HEO/SEO	175	29,509
C	EO	128	21,490
D	AA/AO	67	17,524

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the value is of *(a)* pay supplements, *(b)* bonuses and *(c)* other incentive packages that are payable in her Department on the basis of geographic location; how many people are in receipt of each payment; and what the total cost to her Department of each payment was in 2004–05. [35907]

Mr. Lammy: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport does not pay supplements, bonuses or any incentive package to staff on the basis of geographical location.

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps are taken by the Department to support staff with mental ill-health. [36267]

Mr. Lammy: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has a range of measures in place to support staff with health problems, including mental ill-health. These include guidance for managers on supporting staff with mental health problems, and the services of a professionally trained staff counsellor and occupational health adviser. The Department also has a stress management policy to provide staff and managers with guidance on how to recognise and manage stress effectively, and offers a range of flexible working patterns to accommodate the individual needs of its staff.

The Department would also make reasonable adjustments for staff suffering fron mental ill-health in compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

National Lottery

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport on what basis moneys allocated to the Big Lottery Fund will be distributed between the nations of the United Kingdom. [36934]

Mr. Caborn: The Big Lottery Fund allocates their funding between the nations of the UK using a formula based on census data and modified by various deprivation factors. The current allocations used by the Big Lottery Fund are 77.5 per cent. for England, 11.5 per cent. for Scotland, 6.5 per cent. for Wales and 4.5 per cent. for Northern Ireland.

Newspaper Advertisements

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what responsibilities newspapers have to check on the legality of services advertised in their publications. [35588]

James Purnell: Marketers have primary responsibility for ensuring that advertisements are legal. Advertisements, and other marketing communications, should comply with the law and should not incite anyone to break it. Complaints about advertising should be made to the Advertising Standards Authority.

Olympic Sports (Young People)

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with local authorities on allocation of resources to promote involvement of young people in Olympic sports events; and what plans she has to create centres of sporting excellence in *(a)* Wales and *(b)* Blaenau Gwent in relation to participation in the 2012 Olympics. [35767]

Mr. Caborn: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has had no specific discussions with local authorities on this issue, but they will be fully involved in plans to maximise the benefits of hosting the Games by encouraging more young people to become involved in sport.

We have established a Nations and Regions Group to ensure the whole of the UK is engaged with and benefits from the Games in 2012. Each nation and region is also establishing a regional working group which will draw together all those who have a role to play in securing the benefits from 2012.

The Welsh Assembly Government is responsible for sport in Wales, including capital investment and funding support for talented athletes and centres of excellence. The Welsh Assembly Government will be discussing further proposals for support to talented young sports people to ensure Wales can claim its share of medals at the 2012 Games.

The Welsh Assembly Government is also committed to maximising the wider benefits of the 2012 Olympic Games. They have already established a dedicated Unit to take forward a co-ordinated approach to ensure Wales benefits from the sporting and economic opportunity of the Olympic Games. Local authorities in Wales will play a key role in this co-ordinated approach.

Olympic Games

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps she is taking to ensure that adequate preparations have been taken to ensure that skilled labour will be available to finish the construction of the Olympic Village and other Olympic facilities in a timely manner. [31554]

Mr. Caborn: The 'Procurement Principles' published by the interim Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) in September—which underpin the development of the ODA's procurement strategy—identify the importance of a programme of skills and training to maximise local benefits and secure the wider economic dividend.

The Department is working closely with the London Development Agency (IDA), the sector skills council for construction, Learning and Skills Council and other partners to quantify the detailed construction skills and employment requirements needed to deliver the London 2012 Olympic Games and Paralympic Games and to develop appropriate responses to address any gaps.

The Office of Government Commerce is undertaking a 2012 Construction Demand/Capacity Study which will bring together existing research and data across the construction industry, including that relating to skills issues. This will enable us to assess the ability of the industry to deliver significant capital development programmes, including the Olympics.

In addition, the LDA is in discussion with the local London boroughs to finalise a framework of initiatives which will assist residents in accessing employment opportunities in construction relating to the Games and also help the construction industry to meet the challenges of the project. Proposed interventions include brokerage services to assist residents from all sections of local communities to access skills training and construction employment, support for local construction businesses and a construction work force training programme.

Race Equality Impact Assessments

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many Race Equality Impact Assessments her Department completed between *(a)* April 2004 and March 2005 and *(b)* April 2005 and November 2005; and how many assessments in each period resulted in a change of policy. [32831]

Mr. Lammy: My Department has not completed any Race Equality Impact Assessments during these periods. We are currently looking at training needs within the Department to ensure that staff are fully aware of the importance of carrying out these assessment in relevant cases.

Sporting Facilities

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what targets her Department has set for the use of sporting facilities in England. [35712]

Mr. Caborn: We do not have a target specifically on use of sports facilities. But our aim is that by 2008 almost no one should be more than 20 minutes travel time from a range of good quality sports facilities.

More and better facilities are an important part of our wider sports policy participation objectives. DCMS has an ambitious PSA target to increase participation in sport among priority groups by 3 per cent. by 2008.

Tourism Bodies

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what changes *(a)* have been made and *(b)* will be made to the allocation of expenditure as identifiable or non-identifiable in the Department's Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis (PESA) as a result of the English Tourism Council being subsumed into Visit Britain; and what criteria were used for the allocation of identifiable and non-identifiable expenditure for VisitBritain in the most recent PESA. [35817]

James Purnell: Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses (PESA) shows expenditure by region based on the expenditure aggregate Total Expenditure on Services (TES), which excludes certain grants and transfers within the public sector. A full definition of TES is shown in annex E of PESA 2005 or on HM Treasury website at:

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/45E/2D/pesa2005_appendixe.pdf.

Grants to VisitBritain and its predecessors have not been included in the regional analyses in PESA. This position is under review.

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the value was of grants paid to the *(a)* English Tourism Council, *(b)* Greater London Authority and *(c)* Scottish Executive and VisitScotland in each year since 2001; and how these were allocated in terms of identifiable and non-identifiable expenditure in the Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses. [35818]

James Purnell: Table 1 gives details of the grants paid to the English Tourism Council (ETC) for the period 2001 to 2003 and Greater London Authority (GLA) for the period 2001 to 2005. My Department does not hold data for the Scottish Executive or VisitScotland, this data would be held by their offices.

Table 1

	ETC	*GLA*
2001–02	14.591	1.9
2002–03	14.125	1.9
2003–04	merged with VisitBritain	1.9
2004–05	n/a	1.9

In PESA 2005 expenditure on tourism by VisitBritain (which succeeded the British Tourist Association and the English Tourism Council) is classified as non-identifiable. However, this is under review. The criteria for classifying expenditure as identifiable or non-identifiable is published on the HM Treasury website http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/e13/8B/CRA%20memoranum.pdf in the annex B of the memorandum issued by HM Treasury and ONS. Treasury Government Expenditure by Region.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Airspace (Extraordinary Renditions)

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether United Kingdom security services personnel have travelled in an aircraft used for the purpose of an international rendition. [36443]

Mr. Straw: It is not the Government's policy to comment on intelligence matters.

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on how many occasions and at what locations officials in the United Kingdom security services have questioned individuals who have been subject to an international rendition or other involuntary transfer by United States officials. [36444]

Mr. Straw: It is not the Government's policy to comment on intelligence matters.

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether any aircraft used by United States officials for the purpose of an international rendition has landed at a UK airport. [36445]

Mr. Straw: I refer the right hon. and learned Member to the answer I gave him today (UIN 36414).

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information officials in the United Kingdom security services collect on *(a)* the detention of individuals in European states by or at the request of United States officials and *(b)* the transit through UK airports of aircraft used by United States officials for the purpose of international rendition. [36446]

Mr. Straw: It is not the Government's policy to comment on intelligence matters.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what the Government's policy is on the use of *(a)* UK airspace and *(b)* UK overseas territory for the purposes of extraordinary rendition flights involving those accused of terrorist activities; and if he will make a statement. [36673]

(2) whether the Government have made representations to the US Administration regarding reports of the use of British territory and overseas territories, including sovereign bases, for purposes of extraordinary rendition flights involving those accused of terrorist activities; and if he will make a statement. [36677]

Mr. Straw: I refer the right hon. and learned Member to the answer I gave the right hon. and learned Member for North East Fife (Sir Menzies Campbell) today (UIN 36414).

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received from his EU counterparts regarding the use of EU airspace for extraordinary rendition flights involving those accused of terrorist activities; and if he will make a statement. [36674]

Mr. Straw: At the request of my EU colleagues, as the EU President, I wrote to the United States (US) Secretary of State on 29 November about media reports of US rendition operations and detention camps in Europe. The Secretary of State replied on 6 December enclosing a copy of her public statement of 5 December, available at http://www.state.gov./secretary/rm/2005/57602.htm, by way of response.

Bangladesh

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Government of Bangladesh concerning terrorist incidents in Bangladesh; and if he will take steps to highlight to the international community recent incidents of attacks against the Christian community in Bangladesh. [36933]

Dr. Howells: I visited Bangladesh from 14 to 16 November. In meetings with the Prime Minister, Khaleda Zia, Home Affairs Minister, Lutfurzzaman Babar, and others, I raised the 17 August attacks and subsequent bombings. I underlined to them and others the need for this threat to be addressed seriously and reminded them of the UK's commitment to work with the Government of Bangladesh to counter terrorism and promote democracy and the rule of law.

We continue to be concerned about the situation of religious minorities including Christians in Bangladesh. I discussed this with representatives from minority communities during my visit and outlined, in a widely reported speech to senior politicians, religious figures, media and business professionals, the UK's concerns about acts of repression against minorities. The British High Commission in Dhaka closely monitors incidents of religious persecution and intolerance. These issues are highlighted in the 2005 Foreign and Commonwealth Office Annual Human Rights Report which is available in the Library of the House. We regularly raise human rights including religious persecution with the Government of Bangladesh, both bilaterally and together with EU partners.

Burma

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will take up with the Burmese authorities the case of Thet Win Aung, a prisoner of conscience in Burma. [36913]

Ian Pearson: Thet Win Aung is one of a number of political prisoners the EU has identified as being of particular concern. The EU raises their cases with the Burmese military regime at every opportunity. Most recently, our ambassador in Rangoon raised this with the Burmese Interior Minister on 26 October and the Minister of Foreign Affairs on 31 October.

Chagos Islanders

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on plans for the return of the Chagos islanders to their homes. [34050]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: There are no plans to allow the Chagossians to return to the Chagos Archipelago.

Two Orders in Council were made in June 2004: the British Indian Ocean Territory (Constitution) Order 2004 and the British Indian Ocean Territory (Immigration) Order 2004. These restored full immigration control over the entire British Indian Ocean Territory. In his written statement to Parliament on 15 June 2004, *Official Report*, columns 32–34WS, my hon. Friend, the former Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs, Bill Rammell stated,

> " ... full immigration control over the entire Territory is necessary to ensure and maintain the availability and effective use of the Territory for defence purposes, for which it was in fact constituted and set aside in accordance with the UK's treaty obligations entered into almost 40 years ago."

In the statement, Mr Rammell also said

> "... anything other than short-term resettlement on a purely subsistence basis would be high precarious and would involve expensive underwriting by the UK Government for an open-ended period—probably permanently."

The Government's position has not changed.

An application for judicial review of the Orders in Council will be heard by the High Court from 6 to 12 December 2005.

CIA Prisons (Europe)

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he first raised reports of secret Central Intelligence Agency prisons in European countries with the US authorities. [36676]

Mr. Straw: At the request of my EU colleagues, as the EU President, I wrote to the US Secretary of State on 29 November about media reports of US rendition operations and detention camps in Europe. The Secretary of State replied on 6 December enclosing a copy of her public statement of 5 December, available at http://www.state.gov./secretary/rm/2005/57602.htm, by way of response.

Colombia

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the Government will offer support to victims of human rights violations in Colombia. [35248]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We have consistently demonstrated our support to the victims of human rights violations in Colombia. We have done so through interventions with the Government of Colombia over specific human rights cases, either through the EU or bilaterally; through financial and political support to the Colombia office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) and its activities to improve the human rights situation; and through support to British and Colombian NGOs working in human rights in Colombia, including through projects funded by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Global Conflict Prevention Pool and the Global Opportunities Fund. Ministers regularly meet representatives of churches, trade unions and other organisations in civil society to address their concerns. We have regularly used high level visits between the UK and Colombia to highlight the importance we and the EU as a whole attach to human rights, especially to the rights of victims of the armed conflict to truth, justice and reparation. The most recent example of this was during the visit to the UK of Vice-President Santos on 28 November when he met my noble Friend, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. We will continue to ensure that human rights are at the heart of our policy, and indeed EU policy, towards the country.

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of human rights in Colombia; and if he will make a statement. [35250]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The human rights situation in Colombia remains grave. While we acknowledge that there has been a reduction in recent years in some human rights abuses, there is still a lot that needs to be done to improve the situation. During the visit to the UK by Vice-President Santos in late November, my noble Friend, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office raised human rights issues with him. We have made it plain to the Government of Colombia that we are willing to work with them to help bring an improvement to the situation in the country, either as a bilateral partner or through our EU membership. We will continue to look for ways to bring about change, working with other partners such as the UN and civil society, to achieve this goal.

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the Government will increase its financial support for the UN Human Rights Office in Bogotá to increase its capacity to observe the impact of the paramilitary demobilisation process on human rights; and if he will make a statement. [35253]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The UK is already a significant financial supporter of the office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (UNHCHR) in Bogota. In the financial year 2005–06 we provided £400,000 in voluntary contributions to the office of the UNHCHR in Geneva, £100,000 of which was allocated to the Colombia office. Such matters are decided on a case by case and annual basis. The funding level for financial year 2006–07 is likely to be considered in March 2006. We also provide political support for the mandate of the UNHCHR. We view it as an important component in the search for peace and one that seeks to protect and promote the human rights of all sectors of society, particularly victims of the armed conflict.

Correspondence

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he intends to answer the hon. Member for Buckingham's letter of 18 November. [34422]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I replied to the hon. Member's letter on 7 December.

Departmental Staff (Chronic Back Pain)

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what initiatives are being taken in his Department to help civil servants with chronic back pain. [34978]

Ian Pearson: All Foreign and Commonwealth Office staff have access to a full occupational health service provided by Capita Health Solutions through the FCO Healthcare Contract with International SOS. This includes work station assessments and advice on adjustments to working arrangements related to health problems. Training in manual handling is provided where appropriate.

Detention Centres (US Flights)

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what information *(a)* he and *(b)* his officials have received about flights operated by United States agencies stopping in the UK en route to detention centres in (i) European Union states, (ii) other European states, (iii) non-European countries other than the United States and (iv) Guantanamo Bay. [35273]

Dr. Howells: I refer my hon. Friend to the statement issued by the US Secretary of State on 5 December, available at http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/57602.htm, in response to my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary's letter to her of 29 November requesting clarification of reports of flights allegedly related to the transfer of terrorist suspects.

Eurozone (Poland)

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will ask the new Polish Government not to proceed with entry into the eurozone. [35435]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: No. It is for each new member state to pursue its own strategy for adoption of the euro appropriate to its circumstances, and in line with its obligations under the treaty establishing the European Community.

Falkland Islands

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what funds have been allocated to promoting tourism in the Falklands. [33897]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The promotion of Tourism in the Falkland Islands is the responsibility of the Government of the Falkland Islands. We have been informed that the Falkland Islands tourist board's budget for tourism development is £220,000.

Guantanamo Bay

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made to the United States administration over treatment of detainees at Guantanamo Bay. [34959]

Dr. Howells: We discuss Guantanamo Bay with the United States (US) Government on a regular basis. The US Government is well aware of our continuing concerns over the conditions of detainees there.

International Arrest Warrants

Dr. Starkey: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to his answer of 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 298W, on international arrest warrants, from which other UK Government Departments officials were present at the two meetings with officials of the Israeli Government; and whether suggestions were made at these meetings to amend *(a)* UK law and *(b)* guidance relating to international arrest warrants. [35279]

Dr. Howells: Officials from the Home Office attended both of these meetings and an official from the Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers attended one of them. The meeting discussed the legal background to the Almog case and its implications. As my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State at the Home Office, Andy Burnham wrote in his response to my hon. Friend on 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 596W, details of these meetings are confidential.

Israel

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 160W, on Israel, what he apologised for. [35270]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary apologised as a matter of courtesy to Israeli Foreign Minster Shalom in the event that the issuing of an arrest warrant for retired Israeli General Doron Almog had upset or embarrassed the Israelis. As I said in my answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 160W, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary also stressed that the Government had had no role in this matter and that it had been a private prosecution.

Mediterranean Countries

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of EU funding to encourage Mediterranean partners to make progress on democracy and good governance. [34939]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: In common with our partners in the EU Mediterranean Partnership, we recognise that much remains to be done to meet the aspirations set out in the 1995 Barcelona Declaration. However, EC funding is increasingly linked to progress, for example, on action plans, and leaders agreed at the 2005 Barcelona Summit to enhance their efforts in areas such as support for political pluralism and meeting international standards in the conduct of elections. One of the main achievements of the recent Summit was the announcement of a Governance Facility through which the EU will help support those countries ready to take bold steps on governance.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of progress towards the goal of establishing an EU/Mediterranean free trade area by 2010. [34940]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Progress towards Euro-Mediterranean free trade has been one of the main achievements of Euro-Mediterranean relations since the Euro-Mediterranean process was launched in 1995. Association Agreements covering free trade have been negotiated with all Southern Mediterranean partners. The liberalisation of trade in goods in the Mediterranean region is now a reality and most industrial goods originating in Southern Mediterranean countries enjoy duty free access to the EU. Conversely, Mediterranean countries are progressively dismantling tariffs on imports of EU industrial goods over a period of 12 years. The adoption in 2003 of a protocol on rules of origin has allowed economic operators to cumulate processing made in different countries of the region in order to obtain preferential treatment for their products more easily. Progress has also been made towards the conclusion of South-South agreements (eg the Agadir free trade agreement between Jordan, Egypt, Tunisia and Morocco in 2004).

At the recent Euro-Mediterranean Summit, Partners reiterated their commitment to the creation of a Free Trade Area by 2010 and agreed a set of measures to achieve this goal. This included the imminent launch of regional negotiations on services and investment and on agricultural products.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what resources the Government have committed to economic, political and social reform in southern Mediterranean countries. [34941]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office has an £8.5 million programme fund to help implement constructive engagement with the Islamic world and peaceful political and economic reform in Arab countries including southern Mediterranean countries. Through our membership of the EU, we also contribute towards the EU Mediterranean Partnership which since 1995 has provided the southern Mediterranean countries with financial support—around €1 billion a year in grants and another €2 billion a year in loans.

Montserrat

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government take to encourage British tourists to travel to Montserrat. [33680]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Responsibility for the development of tourism in Montserrat falls within the remit of the locally elected Montserratian Government. However, the UK Government are funding initiatives to help promote Montserrat as a tourist destination.

The Department for International Development (DFID) is supporting a three-year Tourism Development Project in Montserrat, to develop and market tourism products, and to reintroduce Montserrat to the regional and international tourism markets. It includes activities targeted specifically at British tourists, such as ensuring Montserrat is represented at major travel events in the UK.

DFID has also supported a 12-month publicity project for Montserrat, which included a recent photographic exhibition at the Mall Gallery in London with images of Montserrat 10 years on from the volcanic eruptions.

These initiatives, in addition to the resumption of fixed wing air services earlier this year which allow travellers to book through air tickets from the UK to Montserrat, encourage British tourists to travel to the island.

Palestine

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many times he has met members of the Palestinian Authority in the past 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [35132]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and I, along with other Members of the Government, regularly meet members of the Palestinian Authority (PA). Most recently I met with PA Foreign Minister Nasser al Qidwa, Finance Minister Salam Fayyad and Presidential Chief of Staff Rafiq Husseni during my visit to the region on 27–30 September. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary last held meetings with Foreign Minister Nasser al Qidwa, Prime Minister Ahmed Qurei and President Mahmoud Abbas in Barcelona on 28 November.

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures are being taken by the Palestinian Authority to fulfil its international obligations to reduce terrorism. [35432]

Dr. Howells: The Palestinian Authority (PA) President Mahmoud Abbas has publicly condemned all terrorist activities. The PA is working closely with the United States Security Co-ordinator (General Ward) in order to improve its effectiveness on security. Some progress has been made but much more needs to be done. The EU are working with the PA to expand the current EU Co-ordinating Office for Palestinian Police Support mission to increase the operational capacity of the Palestinian police force.

Russia

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made on the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement between the EU and Russia. [35077]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The EU enjoys close co-operation with Russia on a range of issues outlined in the 1997 Partnership and Co-operation Agreement, including on justice and home affairs and economic relations.

The Road Maps for the Four Common Spaces finalised at the May 2005 EU-Russia Summit formalised the EU-Russia dialogue in new areas not covered in the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement, in particular on external security issues including counter terrorism. Progress on these areas was welcomed at the UK-hosted EU-Russia Summit in October.

The EU and Russia are examining in more detail the implementation of the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement as part of early considerations on future EU-Russia relations following the scheduled expiry of the first 10-year term of the Partnership and Co-operation Agreement in 2007.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has received on the human rights situation in Russia. [35078]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Staff at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) and at our Embassy in Moscow are in regular contact with human rights non-governmental organisations (NGOs) who use the opportunity of these meetings to make representations and discuss a range of human rights issues in Russia.

In addition, during 2005 the FCO received 36 letters and 17 parliamentary questions about human rights and democracy in Russia.

Given this public interest about human rights in Russia and our broader objective of engagement with the Russian Government on human rights and democracy, staff at the FCO in London and at our embassy in Moscow raise human rights issues with their Russian Government interlocutors at every appropriate opportunity.

Security Services (Travel)

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether personnel in the United Kingdom security services have travelled in US-registered aircraft tail number *(a)* N313P and *(b)* N44982, formerly N8068V and N379P. [36413]

Mr. Straw: It is not the Government's policy to comment on intelligence matters.

Sensitive Products

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the consistency with which trade rules on the protection of sensitive products are applied to *(a)* developed and *(b)* developing countries. [35757]

Mr. Bradshaw: I have been asked to reply.

Sensitive products are a new concept which form part of the Doha Development Agenda's Framework Agreement. The number and treatment of sensitive products have yet to be decided in the context of the Doha Development Agenda and therefore they have yet to be applied. However, in line with Framework Agreement these sensitive products will be available to all WTO members—developing and developed—and will be subject to lesser tariff cuts than non-sensitive products.

In line with the principle of special and differential treatment for developing countries—based on the fact this is a development Round—developing countries will also have access to "special products". These special products are in addition to sensitive products and should be based on criteria of food security, livelihood security and rural development needs. Special products will be eligible for more flexible treatment, which has yet to be agreed.

St. Helena

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in what circumstances the Public Solicitor in St. Helena is allowed to undertake private work; and what mechanisms are in place to ensure that such work does not conflict with his public duties. [34083]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Public Solicitor is forbidden to undertake work outside his terms of reference, which require him, while being employed in the public service, to provide legal advice to the private sector.

Terrorist Suspects (Renditions)

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he was first informed that the United States was conducting international renditions of terrorist suspects; and what representations he has made to the US administration on such renditions. [36414]

Mr. Straw: The term "rendition" is currently being used to describe informal transfers of individuals in a wide range of circumstances. Whether any particular "rendition" is lawful depends on the facts of each individual case. Where we are requested to assist another State and our assistance would be lawful, we will decide whether or not to assist taking into account all the circumstances. We would not assist in any case if to do so would put us in breach of UK law or our international obligations. In particular, we would not facilitate the transfer of an individual from or through the UK to another State where there were grounds to believe that the person would face a real risk of torture.

Careful research by officials has been unable to identify any occasion since 11 September 2001, or earlier in the Bush administration, when we received a request for permission by the United States (US) for a rendition through UK territory or airspace, nor are we otherwise aware of such a case.

Additional research covering the remainder of the period of office of this Government (i.e. back to May 1997) has been undertaken. This shows there were some renditions via the UK during that period. Specifically, we have identified two definite occasions in 1998 when requests were made by the US. These occasions, for which records have been identified, were for transfer to the US for the person concerned to stand trial there. As the then Home Secretary I agreed these requests.

Although confirmatory records have yet to be identified, we believe that there may have been one or two other possible cases, also in 1998, which concerned requests by the US but for transfer to a third country. We have information on one such case which is incomplete and does not tellus whether the request was refused. We also have information on a case based on the recollection of officials involved in such matters, without any confirmatory records. The officials' recollection is that the case vas refused. It is likely, but not certain, that the two caes are in fact one and the

same. I have some recollection of such a case, but, given the passage of time, I cannot be certain. The search for records continues.

Trade Liberalisation

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what account he has taken of the World Bank's assessment that designating 2 per cent. of products as sensitive products could counter progress made in trade liberalisation in his assessment of the EU proposal to protect 8 per cent. of products as sensitive. [35752]

Mr. Bradshaw: I have been asked to reply.

The UK is aware of the research cited and is committed to substantial improvements in market access. We also believe that there should only be a minimal number of sensitive products. The number of sensitive products must be considered in light of the 'treatment' which is agreed for sensitive products and in the context of the tariff reduction formula. Only then is it possible to consider the impact of a certain number of sensitive products.

US Aircraft (Registration)

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on how many occasions the Government have asked the US Administration what the purpose has been of aircraft registered with the United States Central Intelligence Agency landing at United Kingdom *(a)* civilian and *(b)* military airports since 11 September 2001. [35807]

Mr. Straw: I refer to the hon. Member to the answer I gave the right hon. Member for North East Fife (Sir Menzies Campbell) today (UIN 36414).

US Detainees

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the Government know the identity of the detainees held by the United States and referred to in paragraph 78 of the report published in March 2005 by the Intelligence and Security Committee. [36404]

Dr. Howells: The International and Security Committee's Report described the circumstances under which UK personnel conducted or witnessed interviews with detainees held by the United States (US) authorities. Its main focus was not the identities of those detained. The Government do not have full details of all those detained by the US.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with the US Administration about reports of US detention facilities which use torture in Eastern Europe. [35520]

Dr. Howells: As EU President, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary wrote to the US Secretary of State on 29 November seeking clarification of media reports of Central Intelligence Agency detention camps in Eastern Europe.

I refer my hon. Friend to the US Secretary of State's statement and that of the Foreign Secretary of 5 December. These are available at http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/57602.htm and http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029391638&a=KArticle&aid=1133771542523 respectively.

Zimbabwe

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on Zimbabwe's discovery of uranium. [33928]

Ian Pearson: The recent statement by President Mugabe is not the first announcement of uranium discoveries in Zimbabwe. It is not yet clear if the uranium is viable for extraction, or if Zimbabwe intends to invest the considerable time and money required to develop this resource. Zimbabwe is a signatory to the Non Proliferation Treaty (NPT) and a member of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). In accordance with its NPT obligations, Zimbabwe has signed a nuclear safeguards agreement with the IAEA. Any proliferation in this area would, therefore, be subject to international oversight, in accordance with their safeguards agreement. We will continue to monitor the situation.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Ageing

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many gerontologists are on the boards of the *(a)* Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council and *(b)* Biotechnology and Biology Science Research Council; and if he will make a statement. [34228]

Alan Johnson *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* The information is as follows:

(a) The Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council's strategic advisory team for its 'Infrastructure and Environment Programme' has an independent member who is involved in ageing research.

(b) There are representatives on the Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council's boards, committees and panels who are researching aspects of ageing in humans and animals. Two scientists who are members of the healthy organism strategy panel (whose role it is to devise the future strategy for BBSRC sponsored ageing research) and two scientists who are members of grant-awarding committees are involved in such research. In addition, two members of the bioscience for industry strategy panel and four members of grant-awarding committees are from companies with major ageing research programmes.

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much Government funding has

been made available for the Biotechnology and Biology Science Research Council programme of experimental research on ageing programme for the years 2002 to 2005; if he will list the *(a)* organisations and *(b)* projects to which grants have been made in each year; and if he will make a statement. [34233]

Alan Johnson *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* BBSRC has awarded a total of £4.2 million through the experimental research on ageing initiative. Estimated spend by year is as follows:

	£
2001–02	68,000
2002–03	1,026,000
2003–04	1,286,000
2004–05	1,200,000
2005–06	592,000
2006–07	37,000

Further details on each grant can be found in the table including project title and name of the principal investigator.

Project Title	*Principal investigator and co-applicants*	*Grant address*
Androgen, neurotrophin and amnio-acid neurotransmitter receptors in pelvic floor motorneurones throughout adult life	Santer Watson A. H. D.	Cardiff University
The basis for decreased responsiveness to immune challenge in the elderly in vivo	Akbar A. N. Plunkett F. J.	Royal Free and University College Medical School
Gene expression profiling of brain and cognitive ageing in mice	Wilkinson L. Emson P.	Babraham Institute
Age-related changes in the hypothalamo-pituitary -adrenal axis: Role in immunesenescence and effect of DHEA replacement	Lord J. Salmon M.	University of Birmingham
Variations in the density and spatial properties of the achromatic and SWS-driven retinal ganglion cells with age	Anderson R. Chakravarthy U.	University of Ulster
The impact of replicative senescence on age-related tissue degeneration: an ovine model	Kipling D. Davis T. Jones C. J.	Cardiff University
Proteomics of yeast ageing	Morgan A. Pennington S.	University of Liverpool
Antioxidant response and resistance to oxidative stress in Drosophila with respect to ageing	McLellan L.	University of Dundee
Ageing in the parasitic nematode Strongyloides ratti.	Viney M. E. Gems D.	University of Bristol
Modification of 11–7 and the reversal of thymic involution in aged mice	Aspinall R.	Imperial College London
Cost of reproduction, caloric restriction, oxidative damage and ageing in Drosophila	Partridge L. Chapman T.	University College London
Structural and functional changes of muscle-tendon in ageing: implications for locomotion	Narici M. V. Minetti A. E. Maganaris C.	Manchester Metropolitan University
Antioxidant Response and resistance to oxidative stress in Drosophila with respect to ageing	Saunders R. D. C.	Open University
Extracellular reactive oxygen species as propagators of tissue ageing	Jackson M. Ashton T. McArdle A.	University of Liverpool
The effect of calorie restriction and lipoic acid supplementation on age-related redox status and transcription factor profile	Merry B. J.	University of Liverpool
Age-related changes in neuroendocrine signalling characterisation, underlying mechanisms and functional rescue	Ingram C. D.	University of Newcastle upon Tyne
Linking senescence and tissue degeneration through Werner's syndrome	Faragher R.G.A.	University of Brighton
Soft tissue ageing is characterised by a failure of matrix synthesis and the accumulation of fragmented matrix proteins	Smith R. K. Pitsillides A. A.	Royal Veterinary College
Development of small molecule inhibitors of WRN: a model system of ageing	Cox L. Green M. H. Naughton D. P. Rodriguez A. M.	University of Oxford

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he has made an assessment of the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee report Ageing: Scientific Aspects, published on 21 July 2005; and if he will make a statement. [34411]

Alan Johnson *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* The Government's response to the report was submitted to the House of Lords Science and Technology Committee on 4 November 2005 and I expect it to be published by the Committee in due course.

Bankruptcies

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many people living in *(a)* West Yorkshire, *(b)* Wakefield district and *(c)* Normanton constituency have been declared bankrupt in the last 12 months; and how many such declarations occurred during the Christmas period. [35409]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The regional breakdown available for the insolvency statistics is not directly comparable with standard administrative or electoral geographies. The insolvency "regions" are areas assigned to groups of official receivers and are based around the location of county courts where the cases are heard and of courts having jurisdiction over these. As such the Metropolitan County of West Yorkshire (including Wakefield) is best matched to the Leeds official receivers office, however there is some overlap with adjoining areas. The county courts covered

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by the Leeds Official Receivers Office are Bradford, Dewsbury, Halifax, Harrogate, Huddersfield, Keighley, Leeds, Otley, Pontefract, Skipton, Todmorden and Wakefield. Bankruptcy statistics are not available at a lower geographical level than official receivers offices.

The following table records the number of individual bankruptcy orders classified under the Leeds Official Receivers' Office for the period October 2004 to September 2005 as a whole and for the months of December 2004 and January 2005 separately.

Numbers of individual bankruptcies recorded under the Leeds official receivers office, October 2004 to September 2005

	Bankruptcy orders
12 month total	1,826
December 2004	114
January 2005	128

Bio-energy Capital Grants Scheme

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many grants have been awarded for projects to construct large scale electricity generators of greater than 20 MWe under the Bio-energy Capital Grants scheme; how much each grant was; to which company each was awarded; and if he will make a statement. [33981]

Malcolm Wicks: The capital grants are as follows.

Company	*Project*	*MW*	*Grant (£ million)*
E.on (Powergen)	Lockerbie	43	[1]18
Sembcorp/Wilton 10	Teesside	31.5	[1]11.9
Peninsula Power	WINBEG	23	[2]11.5

[1] Accepted.
[2] Grant undertaking of.

Biomass Energy Generator (Winkleigh)

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with interested parties on the proposal for a biomass energy generator at Winkleigh in Devon; and what assistance his Department has given to the project. [33977]

Malcolm Wicks: I have had no direct discussions with any of the parties involved.

The developer company Peninsula Power is presently in receipt of a grant undertaking of £11.5 million from DTI under its Bio-energy Capital Grants scheme and my officials have met routinely with the applicant company as required by the grant process. They have also dealt with a considerable correspondence from Winkleigh residents regarding the proposed project.

Broadband

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which post code areas in Westmorland and Lonsdale do not have access to broadband; and on what date broadband will be available in each of those areas. [34128]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* The information is not available in the form requested.

Great progress has been made towards providing broadband access everywhere and 99.6 per cent. of the population is now covered. This is considerable progress against the 2003 (80 per cent.) and 2004 (93 per cent.) figures.

BT considers that it is not financially viable to enable the remaining exchanges. Regional development agencies are working to address the gaps in broadband access at a local level.

Business Start-ups

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many new business start-ups there were in *(a)* the East of England, *(b)* Suffolk and *(c)* the constituency of Bury St. Edmunds in each of the last five years. [35466]

Alun Michael: The information is as follows:

Business Start Ups in the East of England, Suffolk and St. Edmundsbury

It is difficult to give absolutely firm figures of business start-ups. One measure is the number of registrations for VAT but VAT registrations do not capture all start-up activity. Businesses are unlikely to be registered if they fall below the compulsory VAT threshold. Only 1.8 million out of 4.3 million enterprises were registered for VAT at the start of 2004.

Information for VAT registrations is not available at a constituency level. Figures for St. Edmundsbury local authority district are therefore provided.

	2000	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
VAT Registrations					
East of England Government Office Region	17,595	16,555	17,710	18,510	17,580
Suffolk County	2,040	1,860	2,075	2,130	2,050
St. Edmundsbury	295	295	340	310	345
VAT Registrations per 10,000 adults					
East of England Government Office Region	39.9	37.5	40.1	41.9	39.8
Suffolk County	37.0	33.7	37.6	38.6	37.2
St. Edmundsbury	36.2	36.2	41.7	38.0	42.3

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many new business start-ups there were in *(a)* England, *(b)* Northamptonshire and *(c)* Kettering constituency in each year since 1997. [36145]

Alun Michael: It is difficult to give absolutely firm figures of business start-ups. One measure is the number of registrations for VAT but VAT registrations do not capture all start-up activity. Businesses are unlikely to be registered if they fall below the compulsory VAT

threshold. Only 1.8 million out of 4.3 million enterprises were registered for VAT at the start of 2004.

According to Barclays bank's latest survey of business creation, which includes non-VAT registered firms, there were 428,200 business start-ups in England in 2003 and a further 425,100 in 2004.

Barclays data show that there were 5,300 business start-ups in Northamptonshire in 2003 and a further 5,100 in 2004. Data for counties are not available before 2003. Data for Kettering constituency are not provided, since Barclays do not produce sub-county level data at present. Data for 2005 will be available in spring 2006.

DTI figures based solely on VAT registrations for England, Northamptonshire county and Kettering constituency are shown as follows for 1997 to 2004. Data for 2005 will be available in autumn 2006.

VAT registrations: 1997 to 2004

	England	*Northamptonshire county*	*Kettering constituency*
1997	159,730	2,050	330
1998	160,235	2,065	345
1999	155,390	2,140	330
2000	157,615	2,055	345
2001	148,835	1,955	315
2002	155,175	1,990	320
2003	166,505	2,270	385
2004	158,535	2,270	395

Source:
Business Start-ups and Closures: VAT Registrations and De-registrations 1994 to 2004, Small Business Service, available at http://www.sbs.gov.uk/vats

Carbon Emissions

Mr. David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much Government funding will be available in the next 10 years to UK electricity generators who wish to make use of carbon capture equipment to reduce emissions. [35036]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government have made available £35 million for demonstration projects in carbon abatement technologies and this includes the £10 million announced by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer during his pre-Budget speech. These technologies will involve the use of carbon capture equipment.

Also, the climate change programme review is considering the possibility of incentives for carbon reduction from fossil fuel use.

Clean Coal

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research the Department is funding into clean coal; and if he will make a statement. [34636]

Malcolm Wicks: Since 1999 the Department provided £13 million to the Cleaner Coal Technology Programme and an additional £3.5 million for collaborative Cleaner Coal Technology projects with the USA. The Department's Carbon Abatement Technology Programme has also provided £4 million for new Carbon Abatement Technologies including Cleaner Coal Technologies under its first call for project proposals during 2005–06.

The Government has also made available £35 million. This includes the £10 million announced by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his pre-Budget speech, for demonstration projects in Carbon Abatement Technologies which will involve carbon capture and storage.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on his Department's policy on the use of clean coal technology. [34799]

Malcolm Wicks: The Carbon Abatement Technologies Strategy which I announced on 14 June this year sets out the Government's policy and views for the future support for cleaner coal technologies. Copies of the Strategy are available in the Libraries of the House and at http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/coal/cft/cct/pub/catreportlinked.pdf

Clear Skies/Photovoltaics Programmes

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the expenditure on the Clear Skies and Major Photovoltaics Demonstration Programme was in each year since 2002. [35434]

Malcolm Wicks: The information is as follows.

For Clear Skies the details are as follows:

	£
2003	200,722
2004	1,386,556
2005	1,977,599

For the Major Photovoltaics Programme the details are as follows:

	£
2002–03	966,176
2003–04	2,885,094
2004–05	6,792,174
2005–06	4,207,354

Construction Act Review

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) if he will consult in the forthcoming Construction Act Review on outlawing *(a)* pay when certified and *(b)* pay when paid arrangements; [37016]

(2) if he will consult in the forthcoming Construction Act Review on introducing measures to increase certainty on when a debt is created. [37017]

Alun Michael: Officials at the Department of Trade and Industry and Welsh Assembly Government are currently preparing an analysis of the responses to their consultation on "Improving Payment Practices in the Construction Industry". The analysis will be published shortly and will set out the proposals we intend to take forward. We have already undertaken to consult further

on amendments to the legislation. The construction industry and its stakeholders will have the opportunity to scrutinise the proposals at that stage.

Correspondence

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for North Essex of 28 October concerning the Government's energy policy. [32425]

Malcolm Wicks: I have received the hon. Member's letter and have now replied.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much his Department has spent on the purchase of branded *(a)* L.P. bags, *(b)* plastic carrier bags and *(c)* pens in each year since 1997. [35449]

Alan Johnson: A response cannot be provided to this question as the Department's records do not capture this level of detail. Finding this information would exceed the disproportionate cost threshold.

Departmental Staff (Chronic Back Pain)

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what initiatives are being taken in his Department to help civil servants with chronic back pain. [34974]

Alan Johnson: The DTI provides medical and other advice, through their Occupational Health Services and through disability management advisers and specialist assessors where appropriate, to identify the appropriate support for employees with medical conditions, including chronic back pain.

Domestic Accidents

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what initiatives his Department is taking to help reduce the number of serious accidents in the home. [36207]

Mr. Sutcliffe: None. The Department has for many years maintained advice on its website on safety in the home. However, the Department's role is to ensure that the right regulatory framework is in place to ensure the safety of consumers. In some product sectors, such as toys, there is specific safety legislation, and new General Product Safety Regulations came into force on 1 October 2005. Other Departments offer advice on e.g. fire safety in the home, but generally other organisations are better placed to take forward safety campaigning and to provide advice on safety in the home.

Doorstep Selling

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what regulations govern doorstep selling; what action his Department is taking to combat aggressive doorstep selling; and if he will make a statement. [36212]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Doorstep selling is governed by the Consumer Protection (Cancellation of Contracts Concluded Away from Business Premises) Regulations 1987.

In the light of an OFT market study of doorstep selling, my Department has been consulting on ways to improve consumer protection when buying goods or services on the doorstep. In parallel we have been considering the impact of the Unfair Commercial Practices Directive (UCPD), which is specifically directed at aggressive and misleading sales practices towards vulnerable consumers.

Ministers will be considering next steps and intend to publish a final government response as soon as possible.

Electricity Supplies

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action his Department is taking to ensure security of electricity supply this winter. [31739]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government believe that security of energy supply is best delivered by ensuring that market mechanisms provide incentives to energy suppliers to meet demand. This includes financial penalties, which can be very stringent depending on the overall balance of the market, where suppliers fail to balance the amount of electricity supplied by them to the national grid with the amount of electricity used by their customers. Responsibility for deciding how best to meet demand—for example, by restoring mothballed generating plants or building up coal stocks or back-up fuel for gas-fired power stations—rests with the electricity supply industry itself.

Energy (EU Relations)

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the EU's international relations on energy issues in relation to *(a)* the EU-Russia energy dialogue, *(b)* the South East Europe energy treaty, *(c)* the EU-OPEC dialogue and *(d)* the energy charter treaty. [34931]

Malcolm Wicks: As I reported at the EU Energy Council on 1 December, a number of developments have taken place or are about to take place under the UK presidency of the EU with respect to the EU-Russia Energy Dialogue, the Energy Treaty with South East Europe EU-OPEC dialogue and the Energy Charter Treaty.

EU-Russia Energy Dialogue

The first EU-Russia Permanent Partnership Council on Energy was held in London on 3 October. Ministers discussed the work and future programme of the four Thematic Groups on Energy Efficiency, Trade, Investment and Infrastructure. The Council endorsed an interim list of actions for the groups to take forward. The work of these groups is proving valuable to both partners in the Dialogue and allows us to engage Russia on key issues, including those that are important in the run-up to the St. Petersburg G8 summit in 2006, where energy will be a priority.

EU-OPEC Energy Dialogue

The overall aim of the dialogue is to promote oil market stability and improve mutual understanding. At the dialogue meeting on 2 December in Vienna, we shared perspectives on recent oil market developments and discussed issues of common interest regarding technology. Expert-level roundtable meetings are being organised to develop practical areas of co-operation.

The EU Energy Dialogues with both Russia and OPEC are an important part of a broader approach to developing the EU's relationship with major energy suppliers. This was one of the issues discussed at the informal EU Heads of State meeting at Hampton Court on 27 October which considered the challenges of globalisation.

Treaty establishing an Energy Community (with South East Europe)

I am pleased to confirm the signature of this treaty on 25 October. This treaty should facilitate the reconstruction of energy infrastructure in the Western Balkans, the establishment of an efficient energy market in the region and, eventually, its integration with the EU internal market, to the mutual benefit of these countries and EU member states.

Energy Charter Treaty

The negotiations on a Protocol on Energy Transit have continued with increased vigour under the UK presidency but we are not in a position to announce a final protocol. A conference is to be held on 9 December.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the progress made during the UK presidency on the EU's security of energy supply. [34932]

Malcolm Wicks: The UK's presidency of the EU's Council of Ministers continues until the end of December; progress to date has been made on a number of fronts. This includes:

EU Market Liberalisation: The best means we have of ensuring our energy supplies is the development of an open and competitive EU energy market. It is for this reason that I pressed the Competition Commissioner to undertake a competition inquiry into the state of the European Energy Market in electricity and gas (announced in June 2005). The UK has also supported the Commission's report on implementation of the existing directives in electricity and gas. The interim report of the competition inquiry and the 2005 implementation report were both published on 15 November. The UK facilitated substantive discussion of the two reports at the Energy Council on 1 December, where, on the basis of presentations by Commissioners Kroes and Piebalgs, the presidency was able to conclude that secure electricity and gas supplies at competitive prices, delivered on open, transparent and competitive markets are crucial to Europe's competitiveness and that full implementation of the second electricity and gas directives was paramount.

There have also been important steps taken on Energy Efficiency. At the UK's Energy Council on 1 December, energy efficiency was recognised as making an important contribution to all three primary energy objectives of competitive markets, security of supply and tackling climate change. Negotiations have been ongoing during the UK presidency on the Energy End-Use Efficiency and Energy Services Directive. We have worked hard to reach a Council position under our presidency and we expect the final agreement of the European Parliament on 14 December. In addition, we have pushed for more long-term action, facilitating discussion of the Commission's Green Paper on energy efficiency. We also held a successful conference on Energy Efficiency on 2–3 November in London.

The UK has also furthered the EU's relations with external actors during our presidency, with a view to enhancing our security of supply (as per parliamentary answer 2005/2255). The UK held Permanent Partnership Council on Energy with Russia on 3 October, participated in the EU-OPEC dialogue, on behalf of the Council, in Vienna on 2 December; and facilitated the signing of a treaty establishing an Energy Community (with South East Europe), signed on 25 October. The UK has also been working with the Energy Charter Secretariat ahead of their annual conference on 9 December, particularly on the long running negotiations on a Protocol on Energy Transit.

Finally, the potential for a European Energy policy was discussed at the Hampton Court Heads of State Informal in October. The Commission plans to take this forward through a Green Paper in 2006 and with a view to reporting to the 2006 December European Council. The EU's Security of Energy Supply will be an important feature of this document, on which the UK will continue to work with the Commission.

Energy Market Liberalisation

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on liberalisation of the energy market in the EU. [34644]

Malcolm Wicks: At the Energy Council on 1 December, the Commission presented two reports—DG TREN's "Report on progress in creating the internal gas and electricity market" (Council Document 14800/05) and DG Competition's "Energy Sector Inquiry: Issues Paper"—on the further development of the internal energy market and possible structural barriers to competition within this sector. These were hard hitting and outlined serious deficiencies in the market. The Council agreed on the need for more work on implementing existing legislation and on releasing more information.

The Council also unanimously agreed that secure supplies of electricity and gas, delivered on open, transparent and liberalised markets, are crucial for Europe's competitiveness.

I am grateful for the commitment to further action given by the Commission at the Council. We will support proposals that help to accelerate the development of the internal market and, separately, expect the Commission to take early enforcement action against any who are acting against the interests of consumers.

Energy Policy

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the Government's energy *(a)* policy and *(b)* review; and when the review will be completed. [34167]

Malcolm Wicks: A written statement on the Energy Review was set before the House on 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 12–13WS. The statement contained the Review Terms of Reference, which stated that we aim to bring forward proposals on energy policy next year.

The review team will report to my right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in early summer.

Energy Review

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Energy Review will consider *(a)* the (i) level and (ii) targeting of research and development funding in the energy sector and *(b)* the role of (A) Government and (B) Ofgem in ensuring (1) security of supply, (2) affordable energy and (3) progress towards environmental targets. [34183]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* As the terms of reference of the review make clear, the Review is focussed on policy measures to help us deliver our objectives beyond 2010—to maintain secure energy supplies, to tackle fuel poverty, to reduce carbon emissions and to promote competitive markets. It will consider a wide range of options, including the role of current generating technologies and new and emerging technologies. We believe that Ofgem as an independent economic regulator is central to the competitive operation of UK energy markets.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the written statement on the Energy Review of 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 10–12WS, if he will list the membership of the review team; and which Department each works for. [36054]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 8 December 2005]:* I will lead the Energy Review, which will be taken forward by a cross-departmental team.

The review team will be based in DTI, with secondees from DEFRA, Department for Transport, HM Treasury and the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit. In addition there will be input from ODPM and FCO.

The devolved Administrations and territorial Departments are already involved and will continue to be involved throughout the course of the review.

Energy Supplies

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what percentage of total energy supply he expects *(a)* fossil fuels, *(b)* renewables and *(c)* nuclear to supply by (i) 2020, (ii) 2040 and (iii) 2060. [35525]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 7 December 2005]:* The following table shows the DTI's November 2004 projection of percentage shares of fuels in the future energy supply mix for 2020. There are significant margins of uncertainty attached to such estimates. Estimates are not available for later years. Work to update projections is currently under way.

2020

	Percentage
Fossil	91
Renewable	6
Nuclear	3
Total	100

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what cost-benefit analyses have been undertaken on different strategies to secure sufficient energy for the United Kingdom without increasing greenhouse gas emissions. [35841]

Malcolm Wicks: The 2003 Energy White Paper published the result of extensive modelling of the costs of different options for reducing carbon dioxide emissions over the period to 2050. The analysis is available at: http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/whitepaper/phase2.pdf

In November 2005 my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced that there would be a review of energy policy which would report in summer 2006. This will involve further analysis of the costs of different options for meeting the Government's long-term targets for reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

Fuel Demand

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to provide for an increase in demand for fuel. [33630]

Malcolm Wicks: I understand that the question pertains to heating oils. My Officials are in regular contact with operators in the UK oil industry to monitor market developments and to help ensure that they are best able to meet increased demand for heating oil during the winter.

Although production and refining capacity is still tight by historical standards, conditions in the global oil market have eased since prices spiked in the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita. This has allowed oil and oil product stocks to build in both Europe and the US and left the market better able to cope with higher demand in the winter.

Gas Prices

Jonathan Shaw: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the price differentials between *(a)* gas spot and *(b)* forward prices and the impact upon energy intensive users; and if he will make a statement. [33895]

Malcolm Wicks: The price differentials for the last three months are given in the table.

Average price in	*Spot (p per therm)*	*Forward price for contract in quarter 4, 2005 (p per therm)*	*Forward price for contract in quarter 1, 2006 (p per therm)*
September	27.5	50.8	68.7
October	32.7	n/a	67.2
November	80.7	n/a	81.0

n/a = Not applicable

Note:

That the forward contract for quarter 4, 2005 was not available after September 2005.

The choice of the type of contract to enter into is a commercial decision to be made by each firm, within the context of their own risk management strategy and balancing a number of factors.

Spot prices for November were volatile and rose, in part, due to nervousness about a tight winter supply demand balance. The Government understand that this creates tough trading conditions for energy intensive users. We will continue to work closely with industry to help, wherever possible, to mitigate the situation and

reduce the impact on industrial customers, particularly large users. We are in close contact with high-energy users who have been affected by the price increases.

The recent price spike has not had an impact on all of industry. For example, for the less energy intensive users contracts with suppliers may be on a fixed price basis which are lower than the EU average.

Heat Pumps (Grants)

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what grants are available for the replacement of old boilers with ground source heat pump systems; what the average grant awarded is; and if he will make a statement. [35070]

Malcolm Wicks: Under the Clear Skies Programme grants of £1,200, regardless of system size, are available for the installation of ground source heat pumps.

Hydro-power

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much money the Government have invested in hydro-power technologies in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [33488]

Malcolm Wicks: It has not been possible to collate all public expenditure and other Government support since 1997 for hydropower in the time available at proportionate cost. However, it is possible to detail direct DTI expenditure on hydropower for these years through the New and Renewable Energy Programme. This are set out in the following table.

	£
1996–97	142,000
1997–98	57,000
1998–99	80,000
1999–2000	138,000
2000–01	60,000
2001–02	130,000
2002–03	200,000
2003–04	85,000
2004–05	0

There have also been sums allocated to Community and Household projects through the "Clear Skies" scheme. Grants have been allocated for hydro projects totalling; 2003–04 £67,000, 2004–05 £187,955 and 2005–06 £95,880.

Identity Cards

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the *(a)* total and *(b)* net cost of (i) integrating the proposed identity card scheme into his Department's IT systems and (ii) the ongoing operation of the scheme within his Department. [31114]

Alan Johnson: The Department has not finalised current best estimates of the cost of using the ID Cards Scheme to support the services which it oversees.

Inward Investment

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the value of inward investment grants made to English regional development agencies was in each year since 2001; and how these grants are dealt with in the allocation of expenditure as identifiable or non-identifiable in his Department's public expenditure statistical analyses. [35859]

Alun Michael: The total value of inward investment grants made to the English regional development agencies by UK Trade and Investment since 2001 is detailed in the following table:

Financial year	*Grant (£ million)*
2001–02	12.78
2002–03	12.93
2003–04	12.93
2004–05	13.23
2005–06	15.23

Notes:

1. Grants to individual regional development agencies are made via the single pot formulaic distribution method.
2. The grants to the regional development agencies are classified as non-identifiable in the 2005 public expenditure statistical analyses.

Isle of Grain Gas Terminal

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what limit there is on the number of companies that can use the liquefied natural gas import facilities at the Isle of Grain terminal. [34185]

Malcolm Wicks: There is no limit on the number of companies that can use the LNG import facilities at the Isle of Grain. The primary capacity has been auctioned by the terminal owner, and is fully contracted to two parties. If they do not use their contracted capacity, it should be made available to other parties under "use it or lose it" ("UIOLI"). Under the regulatory regime applying to this terminal, enforced by Ofgem, the terminal owner is required to facilitate UIOLI arrangements. On 5 December Ofgem announced that the terminal owners and primary capacity owners are improving the arrangements for transparency and UIOLI at the Isle of Grain facility.

IT Projects

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many IT projects which cost over £1 million and were introduced since 1997 are in use in his Department. [26613]

Alan Johnson: Due to a change in the Department's accounting system during 2003–04, and the devolved nature of the ICT, consistent data on the number of IT projects cannot be obtained without disproportionate cost.

Low Carbon Building Programme

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how the £30 million funding package recently announced for the Low Carbon Building Programme is expected to be spent *(a)* on programmes and *(b)* across the six-year period outlined in the June consultation paper. [33951]

Malcolm Wicks: £1.5 million of the £30 million funding package has been brought forward to extend the Clear Skies and PV programmes. £28.5 million will be spent over three years on the Low Carbon Buildings programme, which is due to start in April 2006.

Long term commitment to the micro-generation sector needs to be seen in the wider context of the micro-generation strategy (to be published April 2006) that will seek to tackle some of the non grant barriers that are currently hindering development of a sustainable micro-generation market.

Maladministration

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many payments for maladministration have been made by *(a)* his Department, *(b)* its agencies, *(c)* its non-departmental public bodies and *(d)* other bodies for which his Department has responsibility in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [32247]

Alan Johnson: It is the policy of my Department, its agencies, and the non-departmental public bodies it sponsors, to make financial redress in accordance with the guidance set out in Chapter 18.7 and Annexes 18.1 and 18.2 of Government Accounting. However, the information requested for these organisation is not held centrally and could be collected only at disproportionate cost.

Manufacturing/Processing Industries

Kitty Ussher: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what Government assistance is available to *(a)* small and *(b)* large manufacturing firms in Burnley and Padiham. [33899]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* Manufacturing firms in Burnley and Padiham are eligible for financial support from a range of schemes available throughout the north west. For SMEs these include the grant for research and development and a variety of venture capital funds. In addition, manufacturing firms in parts of Burnley and Padiham are also eligible for selective finance for investment and the north west business investment scheme for SMEs.

A range of non-financial assistance is available from Business Link and the Manufacturing Advisory Service. The latter is funded by DTI and delivered in the north west by the Manufacturing Institute. It offers the region's manufacturing firms free diagnostic visits and support for projects to help boost performance and competitiveness. The North West Development Agency is also proposing to develop an advanced manufacturing centre on the former Michelin site.

Businesses across the country were recently involved in enterprise week. This encouraged young people to become involved in enterprise and develop entrepreneurial skills. There were many events in the north west, of which six tailored for organisations rather than individuals took place in Lancashire, including the 'Arts for Enterprise: Gallery Glass' event, which was held in Burnley and aimed to encourage adults to utilise often under-used materials for window decorations.

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent assessment he has made of the *(a)* state of and *(b)* future prospects for (i) manufacturing industry and (ii) process industries in (1) Hartlepool constituency, (2) the Tees Valley sub-region and (3) the North East Region. [35181]

Alun Michael: The Government is committed to supporting a high value, high skill manufacturing sector, capable of introducing new products and processes into the economy, creating new markets, and improving the prosperity of the regions. The manufacturing and process industries within Hartlepool, the wider Tees Valley and North East region are demonstrating the transition to higher value manufacturing, competitive within global markets—including through the newly formed North East Process Industries Cluster (NEPIC). The Government is also encouraged to see the high profile which the manufacturing and process sectors in the Tees Valley have within the North East's Regional Economic Strategy, and the work of ONE North East and local partners.

Maternity Payments (Adopters)

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will increase maternity payments to adopters in line with those paid to natural parents. [34490]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Since its introduction in April 2003, statutory adoption pay has been paid at the same standard rate and for the same length of time as statutory maternity pay (SMP) and maternity allowance (MA). We intend to continue the existing approach as we increase both the standard rate and the payment period. The Work and Families Bill will enable us to meet our commitment to extend the payment period of SMP, MA and SAP from the current 26 weeks to 39 weeks from April 2007, with an ambition to extend to one year by the end of this Parliament.

Micro-generation

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much has been spent in financial year 2005–06 under each micro-generation installation scheme; and what the projected spend for this full financial year is for each scheme. [33964]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is as follows.

Clear Skies

£

2005–06	*Amount*
Spend	1,977,599
Allocated	2,029,320
Total[1]	4,006,919

[1] Projected spend for 2005–06.

Photovoltaics Demonstration Programme

£

	Amount
Spend	5,141,374
Allocated	8,854,206
Total[1]	13,995,580

[1] Projected spend for 2005–06.

Miners (Compensation)

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he has taken to accelerate the process of providing compensation to the widows and families of deceased miners; and if he will make a statement on the waiting time for compensation. [35787]

Malcolm Wicks: Two fast-track processes have been introduced to the respiratory disease scheme, one specifically for claims concerning deceased miners. These processes have enabled an additional 60,000 claims to be settled in the last nine months, for total compensation in excess of £125 million. We anticipate that fast-track payments could be made to a further 75,000 claimants, mainly in respect of deceased miners. These changes to the schemes should result in the time taken to settle all claims to be reduced by two years.

Nuclear Power

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects to make a statement on Government policy on the nuclear industry. [35378]

Malcolm Wicks: The recently announced energy review will be bringing forward proposals next year on energy policy to help us deliver our medium and long-term objectives. The review will be examining a wide range of options including civil nuclear power.

Anne Moffat: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which companies have expressed an interest in *(a)* building and *(b)* operating a new generation of nuclear power stations in the UK. [34007]

Malcolm Wicks: Many companies regularly express interest publicly in a variety of energy infrastructure projects that relate to a number of different generating technologies, including nuclear, renewables, gas and carbon capture and storage.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the future of nuclear power. [35524]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 7 December 2005]:* The recently announced Energy Review will bring forward proposals next year on energy policy to help us deliver our medium and long-term objectives. The Review will be examining a wide range of options including civil nuclear power.

Ofgem

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will amend the remit of Ofgem to require it to give more encouragement to *(a)* decentralised energy and *(b)* low-carbon technologies. [36055]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 8 December 2005]:* Ofgem's general duties already require them to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development as well as to have regard for the environment when making their decisions. The Secretary of State has also issued social and environmental guidance to Ofgem which allows them to contribute to broader Government policies without compromising the principle of independent regulation. There is therefore no need to amend their statutory duties. Government are committed to providing a framework which allows markets to make long term investment decisions with confidence. Stability and regulatory certainty are an important part of this. Changing the well understood duties of the regulator would inject unwelcome uncertainty in energy markets.

Open Cast Mining

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what guidance he has issued to successor companies to British Coal on their position under exemptions in relation to restoring open cast coal working on their sites; [34484]

(2) what level of bond operators of open cast sites are required to hold to enable restoration of sites to be carried out; [34488]

(3) what assessment he has made of the impact on former coal areas of British Coal being exempt from providing restoration bonds since it was privatised. [34489]

Malcolm Wicks: No guidance has been issued nor assessment made in relation to these matters. Where site restoration bonds are required, the level will be determined by the relevant mineral planning authority in light of the specific circumstances of the site concerned.

Peninsular Power Ltd.

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what evidence he took into account in satisfying himself, for the purposes of its application for a grant under the Bio-energy Capital Grants scheme, that Peninsular Power Ltd. had access to adequate financing to complete the proposed project relating to a biomass energy generator at Winkleigh in Devon; [33979]

(2) what evidence he took into account in satisfying himself, for the purposes of its application for a grant under the Bio-energy Capital Grants scheme, that Peninsular Power Ltd. was *(a)* credible, *(b)* possessed the right skills and track record and *(c)* were organised in an appropriate manner to ensure the project to construct a biomass energy generator at Winkleigh in Devon was well planned and managed. [33980]

Malcolm Wicks: Peninsula Power, as applicants under the scheme, met all laid-down criteria for a developer company to demonstrate availability of finance before the issue of a grant offer letter. Peninsula Power also demonstrated at the application stage that that they would have access to the required project development skills and experience.

Any offer of grant under the Bio-energy Capital Grants scheme remains an undertaking of support for an agreed period of time. The development of bio-energy projects is a complex process and the offer is subject to evidence of timely progress on a range of milestones. The milestones to be achieved before any grant drawdown could be triggered, include evidence of availability of adequate finance, securing of planning consent, and development of biomass fuel supply chains.

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has been made to *(a)* Torridge district council and *(b)* Devon county council concerning the grant of planning permission to Peninsular Power Ltd. in respect of a biomass energy generator at Winkleigh in Devon. [33983]

Malcolm Wicks: No representations have been made by DTI Energy Group to either Torridge district council or Devon county council. National policy on development of renewable energy projects is set out in Planning Policy Statement 22.

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with the South West Regional Development Agency about the payment of public funds to cover Peninsular Power Ltd.'s costs associated with the project to construct a biomass energy generator, which are not eligible under the Bio-energy Capital Grants scheme. [33984]

Malcolm Wicks: DTI routinely discuss matters of common interest with regional authorities and agencies regarding the projects it is supporting within their regions. Here, SWRDA funded elements of this project not eligible under the capital grants scheme from their own budgets as part of their own local bio-energy strategy.

Regional Development Agencies

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how best practice and key incentives are proactively shared between the regional development agencies; what regular meetings are held at board and operational levels; and if he will make a statement. [28918]

Alun Michael: The RDAs proactively share best practice and information on key incentives and initiatives at both senior and operational levels. For example at senior level the chairs of the agencies meet every six weeks to discuss their collective agenda and one of the standing items on the agenda is a best practice slot where two chairs will give presentations on projects from their own RDA. Copies of the presentation are circulated to all RDAs after the meeting, and are available upon request. Chairs also meet with Government Ministers every six weeks and there is a regional showcase item on the agenda. One of the chairs will give a presentation on a key initiative that illustrates the broader theme of the meeting. For example the chair of the East of England development agency recently gave a presentation on higher education provision in the region as part of a wider discussion on the skills agenda.

The RDA directors meet their peers quarterly to discuss issues of mutual interest and best practice. There are six groups covering the following areas; strategy, finance, communications, enterprise, development (regeneration) and skills.

At operational level there are a number of networks that support the RDA directors, including one, whose purpose is to support best practice in relation to RDA performance management, reporting and evaluation framework.

In addition, at operational level there are a number of networks that support the RDAs in their lead roles. These groups communicate mainly through e-mail, but will meet occasionally to discuss common issues and share best practice. The areas the groups cover include; planning, transport, sustainable development, diversity, and the voluntary and community sector.

The RDAs have established the Office of Project Advice and Training jointly with English Partnerships and the Welsh Development Agency which aims to promote best practice in project appraisal, delivery and evaluation. The office has both a technical and strategic role. The technical role is to develop and share best practice in project appraisal, delivery and evaluation, and to disseminate this advice within the agencies and their partners. The strategic role is to influence and advise both Departments and agencies on the implications of new responsibilities and government initiatives based on their technical knowledge and expertise in project processes and agency procedures. This helps avoid duplication of effort, maximises the use of resources and so achieves value for money.

Following the publication of the Egan report all RDAs have established regional centres of excellence which will help RDA staff and regeneration practitioners share and promote best practice in their work. The regional centres will work closely with the National Centre, which is being established in Leeds.

Best practice is shared among representatives from the RDAs responsible for managing Business Link in the regions at the Business Link Implementation Group. Recommendations from that group are ratified by the Business Link Strategy Board, which is made up of representatives from the RDAs that have a wider responsibility for co-ordinating the delivery of business support in the regions.

Renewable Energy

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average grant awarded for school renewable energy projects was under his Department's Clearskies programme. [32847]

Malcolm Wicks: 71 schools have been offered grant funding totalling £1,152,596, this equates to an average of £16,234 per school.

Skilled Workers

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps the Government are taking to reduce the loss of skilled workers to areas outside the European Union. [23455]

Alan Johnson: The mobility of skilled people is positive and beneficial for career development and the UK is making significant gains as a result of such international mobility. Recent research shows that almost all highly cited UK academic staff who went abroad subsequently returned and that the UK was one of the most dynamic and highly regarded locations for higher education careers. In fact the UK was a magnet for both young researchers at the beginning of their careers as well as established academics, gaining 40 per cent. more staff than it lost over an eight-year period, from highly cited academics to postdoctoral staff.

In addition, we have introduced several initiatives to encourage foreign national students to stay on after education in the UK by raising PhD stipends, improving professional training in PhDs, improving postdoctoral pay and conditions and developing entrepreneurship.

Small Business Research Initiative

Kitty Ussher: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will place in the Library the guidelines issued to all Government Departments in implementing the mandatory small business research initiative. [35492]

Alun Michael: The guidelines issued to Government Departments regarding the small business research initiative are currently being revised. A copy of the revised guidance will be placed in the Library shortly.

Sunday Trading

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent representations he has received about the extension of Sunday trading hours; and if he will make a statement. [35815]

Mr. Sutcliffe: We have received representations from a range of stakeholders on the issue. My officials are preparing a cost-benefit analysis of the case for further liberalisation of the Sunday trading laws.

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans the Government have to extend the six hour limit on Sunday trading by large stores. [36620]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Officials are carrying out a full cost benefit analysis of the scope for further liberalisation of Sunday trading. To assist in this we are inviting independent researchers to carry out a thorough assessment of the effects of liberalising Sunday trading in whole or in part, including the impact on jobs, retailers, the needs of consumers and the impact on economic growth. The Government will then come forward with proposals, after discussions with businesses, consumers, religious groups and employees.

Tourist Industry

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent assessment he has made of the *(a)* state of and *(b)* future prospects for the tourist industry in (i) Hartlepool constituency, (ii) the Tees Valley sub-region and (iii) the North East Region. [35182]

Alun Michael: Since 1 April 2003, the English Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) have had strategic responsibility for tourism. This has helped to unlock a whole range of benefits for the industry, including clearer business support and links to wider services and resources.

One NorthEast recently commissioned research by Global Tourism Solutions into the economic impact of tourism in the North East. This showed that in 2004:

tourism in Hartlepool is worth £39 million and supports 900 jobs (Full Time Equivalents);

in Tees Valley, tourism was worth £339 million and supported around 7,000 jobs;

in the North East region, tourism was worth £1.8 billion and supported around 38,000 jobs;

a total of 8.7 million overnight tourists visited the region in 2004, a 3 per cent. increase on the previous year.

North East England Tourism Strategy, published in January 2005, sets out the region's target to increase tourism by 1.3 million domestic visits and 0.7 million visits per annum by 2010 against the baseline year of 2003.

One NorthEast investment in tourism continues through its capital programme, and activities in regional marketing, business development, strategic planning and project development. For example, it is expected that Tees Valley will benefit from:

£20 million new investment at Durham/Tees Valley airport

Development of the Coastal Arc

Regeneration of Darlington Town Centre worth £200 million

Middlesbrough Institute of Modern Art, £15 million project (currently under construction)

One NorthEast is also investing £7 million over the next three years in a strategy to improve the image of North East England, a campaign which was awarded the World Travel Award for the world's best regional marketing campaign.

Trading Standards

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether he plans to relocate certain responsibilities for supervision of trading standards from local to central Government. [33783]

Mr. Sutcliffe: As announced in the pre-Budget report on 5 December the Government will set up the Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO) to work in partnership with national regulators and Trading Standards and Environmental Health Departments within local authorities to deliver a risk based approach to business inspection and enforcement.

Service delivery will remain at a local level led by Trading Standards and Environmental Health. The LBRO will be tasked with building on existing good practice to improve the overall efficiency and effectiveness of local authority regulatory services, promoting and supporting risk based approaches at a local level and minimising the inspection burden on business. It will develop a co-ordinated strategy for all Trading Standards and Environmental Health enforcement and inspection activities affecting

businesses that operate in more than one local authority area, building on existing arrangements with local authorities continuing to play a lead role.

Zirconium Silicate (Iran)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether an export of zirconium silicate from the UK to Iran requires an export licence. [34700]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* Zirconium silicate may be controlled under entry 1C234 of the EC Regulation, as follows:

"Zirconium with a hafnium content of less than 1 part hafnium to 500 parts zirconium by weight, as follows: metal, alloys containing more than 50% zirconium by weight, compounds, manufactures thereof, waste or scrap or any of the foregoing. Note: 1C234 does not control zirconium in the form of foil having a thickness of 0.10mm or less."

Additionally, its export may potentially be controlled, on a case by case basis, where the goods are to be used in connection with a WMD programme.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which UK agencies are investigating the circumstances relating to the interception by the Bulgarian authorities at the beginning of September of a truck travelling from the UK to Iran, containing zirconium silicate; and whether these investigations are *(a)* separate from and *(b)* in conjunction with investigations by the Bulgarian authorities; and if he will make a statement. [34701]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* Investigation of alleged breaches of UK export controls are the responsibility of HM Revenue and Customs. However I believe the goods in question were not controlled under UK export controls and did not therefore require an export licence.

DEFENCE

Blake Inquiry Report

12. **Meg Hillier:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects the report of the inquiry by Nicholas Blake QC into the investigations of the deaths of young soldiers at Deepcut to be published. [36107]

Mr. Ingram: Nicholas Blake's plan is to publish his report after the House returns in January. His report will be published in full, as will my response to it.

Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) Project

13. **Mr. Francois:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the landing ships dock (auxiliary) project. [36108]

Mr. Ingram: The Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) project continues to make progress towards the completion of the four Bay Class vessels. Mounts Bay, the first ship built by BAE Systems in Glasgow, has begun her final sea trials prior to the Ministry of Defence acceptance. Build and testing continues on the remaining three ships.

Friendly Forces (Identification)

14. **Mr. Kidney:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what steps he has taken to improve identification in combat of friendly forces. [36109]

Mr. Ingram: Combat Identification is a vital element of combat effectiveness and we constantly seek to improve our capability which involves tactics and training as well as technology. Recent steps include fielding a Coalition Blue Force Tracking system for helicopters and the Bowman communications system. We also take account of operational experience, and for example are following up as a matter of priority the recommendations of the recently completed Board of Inquiry into the Challenger blue-on-blue incident in Operation Telic.

BAE Systems Puriton

15. **Mr. Liddell-Grainger:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future of BAE Systems Puriton. [36110]

Mr. Ingram: I am aware that BAE Systems Land Systems have announced that their site at Puriton near Bridgwater is to be closed as part of the company's rationalisation plans. This is a commercial decision for the company and we are satisfied with the alternative arrangements they intend to put in place.

Arctic Emblem

16. **Mr. Hancock:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made with the introduction of the Arctic emblem. [36111]

Mr. Touhig: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State recently met Commander Eddie Grenfell at his request to discuss the Arctic Emblem. Commander Grenfell had submitted a design of his own for consideration. We have since sent him a developed version of this design and I understand he is consulting his fellow veterans.

Once the design has been agreed, we can progress with the contract and manufacturing stages, after which the Emblem will be despatched to eligible veterans. We have already received a number of applications.

Iraq

17. **Mr. Rob Wilson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the security situation in Iraq. [36112]

John Reid: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier today.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what date he first asked Sir Ronnie Flanagan to investigate policing in Iraq; and if he will make a statement. [36940]

John Reid: I asked Sir Ronnie Flanagan on 21 October, in his capacity as HM Chief Inspector of Constabulary, to conduct the review of policing in Iraq.

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what remit has been given to Sir Ronnie Flanagan for his review of the Iraqi police force; when his report is due; and if he will make a statement. [36052]

John Reid *[holding answer 8 December 2005]:* We keep progress on Security Sector Reform under close review and as part of that process we have asked Sir Ronnie Flanagan to provide both his objective assessment of the UK's policing programme in Iraq, and recommendations as to how to increase the effectiveness and neutrality of the wider Iraqi Police Service. Sir Ronnie has not yet concluded his assessments but we expect that he will report early in the new year.

Relief Effort (British Armed Forces)

18. **Mr. Neil Turner:** To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what role British armed forces are playing in aid and rebuilding efforts in countries affected by natural disasters. [36113]

John Reid: The United Kingdom armed forces provide humanitarian assistance in support of the Department for International Development. For example, we have provided significant and wide ranging assistance to the Pakistan earthquake relief effort, which has included: three heavy lift Chinook helicopters, a specialist 86-man light engineering team, a four-person mobile medical team, four logistics planners, three C-130 transport aircraft as part of the NATO air-bridge, and 24,000 vegetarian and halal ration packs.

Recruitment

20. **James Duddridge**: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make a statement on recruitment trends for the UK armed forces. [36115]

Mr. Touhig: In the first six months of this financial year the armed forces gained 8,810 new recruits from civilian life. This represents 47 per cent. of the recruiting target and is comparable to the position at the same point last financial year.

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on recruitment trends in the UK armed forces. [35348]

Mr. Touhig: In the first six months of this financial year the armed forces gained 8,810 new recruits from civilian life. This represents 47 per cent. of this year's recruiting target. This level of achievement is comparable to the position at the 6-month point in the last financial year.

Although armed forces recruitment is an area of concern, the level of interest and the number of applications has increased in recent months. It is now a matter of converting this interest into actual recruits. The Services continue to undertake numerous and varied initiatives, both at national and local level, aimed at increasing the level of recruitment.

A sustained Recruiting Training and Retention Plan is providing a coordinated focus on Royal Marine recruiting.

Infantry recruiting has now been highlighted as a main effort for the Army. In January 2006 an Infantry recruiting multi-media recruiting campaign is planned. The campaign is in the early days of development but will be designed to demonstrate the exciting and rewarding lifestyle and ethos of the Infantry.

Recruitment remains buoyant across all branches and trades within the RAF.

Commonwealth War Graves Commission

21. **Shona McIsaac**: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, if he will make a statement on the work of the Commonwealth War Graves Commission. [36116]

Mr. Touhig: The Commonwealth War Graves Commission continues its important work worldwide in maintaining around one and three quarter million war graves and memorial commemorations to Commonwealth Service men and women who died in the two world wars.

War Memorials (Redevelopment)

22. **Mr. Crausby**: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, what plans he has to protect war memorials in buildings being redeveloped. [36117]

Mr. Touhig: Where a building is to be redeveloped, any war memorial is considered as part of the planning process.

We work closely with regimental associations and other interested parties to ensure that memorials in buildings being redeveloped are either incorporated within the refurbished building or moved to a suitable new location.

If the memorial is within a listed building, or is itself listed, the local authority must be approached for listed building consent prior to removal and appropriate re-siting.

Defence Export Service Organisation

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Defence Export Service Organisation maintains records in its *(a)* UK offices and *(b)* overseas offices of the occasions on which it has provided lists of agents to customers. [36844]

Mr. Ingram: The Defence Export Services Organisation occasionally receives requests for lists of agents. When received, such requests are treated in the same way as other routine requests for information, responses to which are not, in general, put on the record.

Investment Appraisals Board

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how decisions of the Investment Appraisals Board are *(a)* recorded and *(b)* implemented; and if he will make a statement. [36159]

Mr. Ingram: The Investment Approvals Board considers proposals for major investments in equipment, estates, support and business change projects and, where appropriate, makes recommendations to Ministers as to whether such investments should be approved. Recommendations take the form of submissions to Ministers or, for lower value projects, advice within their delegated powers to project owners to proceed or otherwise. There is no Investment Appraisals Board.

Landing Ships Dock Project

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) Project. [36099]

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) Project. [36104]

Mr. Ingram: The Landing Ships Dock (Auxiliary) project continues to make progress towards the completion of the four Bay Class vessels. Mounts Bay, the first ship built by BAE Systems in Glasgow, has begun her final sea trials prior to The Ministry of Defence acceptance. Build and testing continues on the remaining three ships.

Territorial Army

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Territorial Army personnel qualified for their 10 years' continuous service medal in each of the past 10 years. [33578]

Mr. Touhig: The Volunteer Reserves Service Medal, instituted on 31 March 1999, is awarded for 10 years reckonable continuous service. The information requested is shown in the following table.

	Total
1999	1,375
2000	1,001
2001	917
2002	810
2003	593
2004	319
2005	46
Total	5,061

Relief Effort (Pakistan)

Mr. Mahmood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence, how the UK armed forces have assisted the relief effort in Pakistan. [36105]

Mr. Ingram: UK armed forces have provided significant and wide-ranging assistance to the Pakistan earthquake relief effort. This has included three heavy lift Chinook helicopters, a specialist 86-man light engineering team, a four-person mobile medical team, four logistics planners, three C-130 transport aircraft as part of the NATO air-bridge, and 24,000 vegetarian and halal ration packs.

White Phosphorus

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions white phosphorus weapons have been used by British forces during the invasion and occupation of Iraq; and at what level of command their use was authorised. [33282]

John Reid: British armed forces have used white phosphorus on Operation Telic in Iraq primarily as a smoke screen to provide cover and thus protection for our soldiers, or for target illumination. Its use in Iraq is a tactical decision authorised by commanders on the ground. Although white phosphorus does have a recognised anti-personnel effect, our armed forces go to great lengths to ensure that civilian and non-combatants are not harmed during operations; guidelines issued to British military personnel on its use emphasise that it should not be deployed as an anti-personnel weapon. Information on the number of occasions it has been used by British armed forces in Iraq is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

CABINET OFFICE

Departmental Expenditure

Martin Horwood: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much the Cabinet Office and its agencies have spent on *(a)* the design and production of new logos and *(b)* employing external (i) public relations and (ii) graphic design agencies in each year since 2000, broken down by project. [33200]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The following table details the projects and the amount the Cabinet Office has spent on the design and production of new logos, employing external public relations agencies and employing external graphic design agencies since 1 April 2004. The figures are exclusive of VAT.

The Cabinet Office does not hold central records for this activity before 1 April 2004 and to provide the information requested before that date would incur disproportionate costs.

£

Project	*Amount*
Design and production of new logos	
2004–05	
Development of Equalities Review Team	2,050.00
Development of Leaders UK logo	500.00
Development of Preparing for Emergencies logo	17,000
Development of Government Communications Network logo	9,780.00
2005–06	
Development of Government Communication Network "Live" logo	15,622.00
Employing external PR agencies	
2004–05	
Public Relations support for the Better Regulation Taskforce (BRTF)	34,250.00
2005–06	
Public Relations support for the Better Regulation Taskforce (BRTF)	68,630.00

Project	Amount
Employing external design agencies	
2004–05	
Design of Government Social Research leaflet	854.00
Design of Government Social Research exhibition stand	872.50
Design and production of departmental Welcome Magazine	2,739.28
Design of internal Government Car and Despatch Service leaflet	427.00
Design and production of Government Car and Despatch Service annual report	12,292.00
Design of guide for children attending charity receptions at 10 Downing Street	1,109.00
Design of Civil Service Survey poster	1,700.00
Design of template for cross departmental reports	7,800.00
Layout of Better Regulation Taskforce annual report	2,290.00
Design of Public Appointments Unit induction folder	1,000.00
Design and layout of RIU transposition	1,100.00
Redesign of Regulatory Impact Unit Code	60.00
Design of e-Envoy School and Community Sport report	1,675.00
Design of Regulatory Impact Unit Bereavement report	2,457.50
Design of Regulatory Impact Unit Direct Payment report	693.00
Design of CSIA Infosec Competencies	1,187.50
Design of Fast Stream Times Top 100 entry	750.00
Design of Fast Stream case studies and copy writing	450.00
Design of Fast Stream flow chart	470.00
Design services Fast Stream report cover	472.50
Design and layout of Fast Stream competencies	270.00
Redesign of Public Appointments Unit binder cover/spine	392.00
Redesign of Ministerial Group pack cover	200.00
Design of Regulatory Impact Unit report	596.50
Design of Online Graduate Recruitment Service	1,500.00
Design of Work Foundation Report	899.00
Design of Work Foundation Case Studies	755.00
2005–06	
Design of Central Sponsor for Information Assurance leaflets	110.00
Layout of Fast Stream recruitment leaflet	315.00
Design of Cabinet Office exhibition stand	870.00
Design of internal Cabinet Office newsletter Issue 378	900.00
Design of internal Cabinet Office newsletter Issue 376	1,187.00
Design of internal Cabinet Office newsletter Issue 377	815.00
Design of display panel for IT professional launch	475.00
Redesign of OPSR Booklet	958.00
Design of Public Appointments Unit electronic newsletter	360.00
Design of Public Appointments Unit "Play a Part" newsletter	400.00

IT Projects

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many IT projects have been developed for his Department since 2001; and whether he has agreed to make public the Gateway Reviews for these projects *(a)* in full and *(b)* in part. [23514]

Mr. Jim Murphy: According to available records, the number of information technology projects developed for my Department since 2001 is 120. The figure is based on IT projects developed or enhanced since April 2001 and includes corporate and business unit specific IT projects.

I have not agreed to make public either in full or in part, the Gateway Reviews for those IT projects which have gone through the Gateway Review process.

Nuclear Power (Birt Report)

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will place in the Library a copy of the report produced by Lord Birt on nuclear power. [36588]

Mr. Jim Murphy: There is no such report.

PRIME MINISTER

Appointments

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Prime Minister when he will appoint a Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster. [36242]

The Prime Minister: The appointment of the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster will be announced in due course.

Broadcasting (Illegal Jamming)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Prime Minister whether in his bilateral discussions with President Colonel Gadaffi he *(a)* sought and *(b)* obtained assurances that access to Libya and the region by Western television and radio services via satellite communication would not be impeded by Libyan authorities or official agencies; and if he will make a statement. [34919]

The Prime Minister: I have discussed a number of bilateral and international issues with Colonel Gadaffi. Internationally the Government continue to work to eliminate barriers to freedom of expression and information and to create an environment in which free

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speech and a free media flourish. The British ambassador in Tripoli has also raised the issue with the Libyan authorities at a senior level.

Citygate Public Affairs Ltd

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Prime Minister what meetings his Office has held with Citygate Public Affairs Ltd. since July. [36754]

The Prime Minister: My Office does not maintain a central list of such contacts. Ministers and civil servants, including special advisers, meet many people as part of the process of policy development and business delivery. All such contacts are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Ministerial Code, Civil Service Code, Code of Conduct for Special Advisers and Guidance for civil servants on contacts with lobbyists and people outside Government.

Departmental Expenditure

Martin Horwood: To ask the Prime Minister how much the office and its agencies have spent on *(a)* the design and production of new logos and *(b)* employing external (i) public relations and (ii) graphic design agencies in each year since 2000, broken down by project. [33201]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my office forms part of the Cabinet Office. I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Murphy) today.

Departmental Property

Mr. Weir: To ask the Prime Minister how much was paid by his Department in 2004–05 in rent for properties. [36000]

Angus Robertson: To ask the Prime Minister how much his Office paid in rates in 2004–05. [36013]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my Office forms part of the Cabinet Office. I have therefore asked my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office (Jim Murphy) to reply. A copy of the reply will be placed in the Library of the House.

Energy Review

Peter Law: To ask the Prime Minister what considerations underpinned his decision to launch the energy review at the Confederation of British Industry conference. [35805]

The Prime Minister: I made my speech at the Confederation of British Industry conference following the written ministerial statement made earlier that morning by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (Alan Johnson), 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 12–13WS.

Extraordinary Renditions

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Prime Minister when he was first informed that the United States was conducting international renditions of terrorist suspects; and what representations he has made to the US administration on such renditions. [36442]

The Prime Minister: I refer the right hon. and learned Member to the answers I gave the right hon. Member for Ross, Skye and Lochaber (Mr. Kennedy) at Prime Minister's Questions on 7 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 862–63.

I also refer the right hon. and learned Member to the answer given to him by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary (Jack Straw) today.

Guantanamo Bay

Peter Law: To ask the Prime Minister what reports he has received on the compliance with the Geneva human rights accords in respect of the United States detention camp at Guantanamo Bay. [35784]

The Prime Minister: The United States Government regard the detainees at Guantanamo Bay as "enemy combatants" under the Laws of War and not as Prisoners of War under the Geneva Convention.

I also refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Walsall, North (Mr. Winnick), at Prime Minister's Questions on 7 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 867.

Invoice Payments

Mr. Amess: To ask the Prime Minister on what occasions his office did not pay valid invoices *(a)* within 30 days and *(b)* after the agreed credit period within financial year 2004–05. [35971]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my office forms part of the Cabinet Office. I have therefore asked my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Murphy) to reply. A copy of the reply will be placed in the Library of the House.

Ethiopia

Tim Farron: To ask the Prime Minister if he will make representations to Meles Zenawi on the human rights situation in Ethiopia. [37141]

The Prime Minister: I, my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn) and my noble Friend the Foreign Office Minister for Africa (Lord Triesman) have raised concerns about the current situation in Ethiopia with Prime Minister Meles over recent months.

I have also asked Lord Triesman to reiterate my concerns to Prime Minister Meles when he visits Ethiopia later this month.

Ministerial Travel

Mr. Hands: To ask the Prime Minister (1) pursuant to his answer of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1661W, on ministerial travel, which aspects of travel on the London Underground are covered by the code; [36634]

(2) pursuant to his answers of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1661W and 5 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1038W, on ministerial travel, what account he takes of the guidance document Travel by Ministers in deciding whether to travel by underground on official business. [36635]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave on 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1661W and 5 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1038W.

I also refer the hon. Member to the answer given to him by my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House of Commons (Mr. Hoon) during the Business Statement on 8 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1006.

Opinion Research/Public Relations

Mr. Weir: To ask the Prime Minister what the total value was of *(a)* public opinion research and *(b)* public relations contracts awarded by his Department in 2004–05 in (A) each (i) nation and (ii) region of the UK and (B) London. [36001]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my Office forms part of the Cabinet Office. I have therefore asked my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office (Jim Murphy) to reply. A copy of the reply will be placed in the Library of the House.

Terrorism

Grant Shapps: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his oral answer of 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 298, to the right hon. and learned Member for Folkestone and Hythe (Mr. Howard), and his answer of 5 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1039W, on terrorism, if he will estimate the number of police officers required to analyse 750 gigabytes of data within a 90-day period. [37255]

The Prime Minister: As I set out in my answer to the hon. Member on 5 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1038W, the decision on the number of police officers deployed to focus on a particular area of an investigation, such as analysing data, is the responsibility of the chief constable of the force concerned.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Olympic Games

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps are being taken to enhance the skills base to enable people to participate in sustainable construction for the 2012 Olympic Games. [35835]

Phil Hope: ConstructionSkills, the Sector Skills Council responsible for recruiting and training the UK's construction work force, has announced a special team—Constructing London 2012—to deliver locally available construction skills to build the Olympic and Paralympic infrastructure operating as part of the Strategic Forum Olympic Task Group. Constructing London 2012 will work with partners to recruit and train local people ensuring that building the Olympic infrastructure provides sustainable skills and job opportunities for people resident in East London through a range of newly targeted initiatives.

In addition, the recently announced Construction National Skills Academy will have a significant impact on developing construction skills for the Olympic infrastructure and other London-based construction projects. One of its first on-site centres is expected to be launched in the Thames Gateway area during the last quarter of 2006.

A significant proportion of ConstructionSkills' 2006 "Inspire Scholarships" will be targeted on Olympic projects. These provide around £9,000 to support undergraduates on construction-related degree courses through university.

Academies

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many new providers have expressed an interest in funding new academies; how much each such provider has indicated it may make available; which authorities each is interested in operating in; and if she will make a statement. [34708]

Jacqui Smith: The Department for Education and Skills has spoken to in excess of 230 organisations and individuals about sponsorship of academies. In general, academy sponsors are required to provide 10 per cent. of the capital costs of establishing an academy, up to a cap of £2 million. This can be from a single organisation or individual or a group of sponsors. It is not possible to state how much each potential sponsor has indicated it may make available. Discussions with potential sponsors may focus on the programme as a whole or on specific academies. As such it is not possible to state which authorities each is interested in operating in.

Adult Education

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1613W, on adult education, what percentage of colleges charged fees to adults for a first full level 2 course, in each year since 2001–02. [35825]

Bill Rammell: Reliable Information about the prior qualifications of learners, that would enable us to identify those who have paid tuition fees for a first full level 2 qualification, is not available at a college level for the years since 2001/02. Information is available about those studying for a full level two qualification and paying tuition fees but not whether such qualifications are a first level 2 qualification for the individual.

In a recent survey of learners[1] in FE a third of learners on a first full level 2 course said they paid fees.

[1] Prior Qualifications of Adult Learners in Further Education. DfES Research Report 677.

Agency Staff

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the costs of *(a)* temporary and agency staff and *(b)* consultants fall within (i) gross administration costs and (ii) staff costs as referred to on page 12 of the Resource Accounts 2004–05. [35613]

Maria Eagle: The treatment of such costs in the Department's Resource Accounts follows standard Government accounting conventions. The cost of temporary and agency staff fall within both gross administration costs and staff costs. The costs of consultants may be charged to either gross administration costs or programmes depending on the nature of the work on which they are engaged. Where consultants are charged to administration costs, they are treated outside staff costs.

Basic Skills Agency

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to her answer of 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 475W, on the Basic Skills Agency, if she will list the local authorities which are not members of a Quality Mark partnership. [36023]

Phil Hope: The local authorities which are not members of a Quality Mark partnership are:

Blackburn with Darwen
Camden
City of London
Cumbria
Hammersmith and Fulham
Haringey
Herefordshire
Isles of Scilly
Lewisham
Rutland
Solihull
Stoke-on-Trent
Westminster
Windsor and Maidenhead
Wokingham

Behaviour and Attendance

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if she will list the schools included in the Primary National Strategy's Behaviour and Attendance Pilot; and how they were selected; [34024]

(2) if she will make a statement on the progress and findings of the Primary National Strategy's Behaviour and Attendance Pilot; [34026]

(3) what guidance her Department has produced for schools on Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning; and if she will make a statement. [34019]

Jacqui Smith: 25 local authorities were selected to take part in the Primary National Strategy Behaviour and Attendance pilot on the basis of social deprivation and geographic spread. Steering groups within each authority selected the schools to be involved. Participation was voluntary.

The pilot had four strands: curriculum materials to develop children's social, emotional and behavioural skills; different models of local authority support for schools where behaviour or attendance was a key issue; small group interventions for children needing extra help with social, emotional and behavioural skills; and behaviour and attendance audit and staff training materials. Different schools piloted different combinations of these strands.

Within the pilot 253 primary schools took part in the piloting of the Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning (SEAL) curriculum resource for at least a year. A list of these schools has been placed in the Library.

About 100 primary schools tested different models of local authority support. A similar number piloted small group interventions. All primary schools in the pilot authorities were encouraged to trial the audit and training materials.

The Primary Behaviour and Attendance pilot has been evaluated by London University's Institute of Education. Their report found evidence of positive impacts on behaviour and learning. We therefore decided to make enhanced versions of the SEAL and audit and training materials available to all primary schools.

The SEAL materials became available in June 2005. They provide a structured, whole-curriculum resource together with clear guidance for staff on how to use it. Using the SEAL resource is entirely voluntary, but there has been a high level of demand from schools. Over half of all primary schools have now ordered it.

Building Schools for the Future

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which local authorities have received money under the Building Schools for Future programme; and how much each has received. [34354]

Jacqui Smith: Local authorities will receive monies under the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme after their particular projects achieve contract signature. None have reached this stage yet, but we anticipate the first contract signatures to take place in 2006. There are 17 authorities in pathfinder and wave 1 (2005–06) of BSF and for this approximately £2.2 billion has been allocated; there are 11 authorities in wave 2 and 11 in wave 3, and again approximately £2.2 billion has been allocated for each wave. It is not possible to be more specific as the allocations to individual authorities were indicative and would weaken the competitive tendering process. If a bidder (or bidders) knows the value of a project when it goes to market, i.e. an allocation of £75 million to build three schools, there is the possibility that they will all price their bid at around this mark, rather than a truly competitive price.

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions she has had with other Government Departments concerning using the Building Schools For The Future funds for providing sports facilities. [36472]

Jacqui Smith: Building Schools For The Future (BSF) aims to renew all secondary schools in England in 15 waves of investment starting from this year. This can include new and refurbished sports facilities. Our aims include making high quality sports facilities in schools available to the wider community.

BSF was developed in consultation with a large number of other Government Departments. Its aims on sport have been discussed with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport and with other bodies including Sport England. My colleague, Lord Adonis, has regular meetings with the Minister of State for Sport which include discussion of sports provision in schools through the programme.

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will ring-fence funding for sport in the Building Schools for the Future budget. [36666]

Jacqui Smith: Building Schools for the Future (BSF) is a long-term strategic programme to renew and rebuild secondary schools in England and to bring about educational transformation over 15 waves of investment starting this year. It would restrict the successful delivery of new school facilities were we to ring-fence funding through BSF for sport, or indeed for any other aspect of a successful school. Existing provision for sports will vary from authority to authority and school to school.

BSF requires local authorities and schools to have the widest visions of what can be achieved across a group of schools. We set out clear expectations and guidance as to what our aims are in terms of the type of facilities that schools could provide. This includes an expectation that pupils will have access to 21st-century sports facilities, which can be shared with the local community. It is best that local authorities and schools then have the flexibility to achieve this in a way that is most appropriate for their local circumstances.

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will ensure that the Building Schools for the Future budgets includes funds for Olympic sport facilities. [36667]

Jacqui Smith: Building Schools for the Future (BSF) funding is for investment in secondary school buildings in England. Facilities for the Olympic Games in 2012 are separately funded. BSF aims include new and refurbished sports facilities in schools, which will be available to the wider community.

Bullying

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures she is taking to work with the police, education authorities and schools to combat bullying. [35510]

Jacqui Smith: We work with all three of the police, education and local authorities to combat bullying, both directly and through the DfES funded work of the Anti-Bullying Alliance (ABA). The Department works with particular groups of police on particular projects. For example, we have worked with Leicester city police on countering racist bullying and with Haringey police on countering homophobic bullying. The police have been involved in anti-bullying week.

The nine ABA regional co-ordinators work with statutory and voluntary organisations with an interest in tackling bullying, and in all regions this includes the police.

We have published guidance for local authorities and schools on specific aspects of tackling bullying. Through our conferences we have offered a platform to share good practice and learn from the most successful.

The ABA has established regional network partnerships of lead officers from 146 local authorities in the nine Government office regions. These promote best practice and develop innovative and practical approaches to tackle bullying at a strategic level.

Anti-bullying work has a high profile within the national strategies behaviour strands. There are secondary national strategy behaviour and attendance consultants in every LA working directly with schools to tackle a range of behaviour issues including bullying.

Careers/Connexions Services

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the running costs *(a)* were of the careers service in the last year of its operation and *(b)* have been of the Connexions service in each year since it was set up; and what assessment she has made of these costs. [36196]

Maria Eagle: I set out the annual budgets of the careers service and the Connexions service since 1994–95 in my answer of 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1282W to the hon. Member. We do not hold separate information on the running costs of the careers service or Connexions service. However, we commissioned an independent study in 2003 which estimated that the total administrative costs (including such things as training, communications, transport for outreach work and ICT) of Connexions Partnerships as a percentage of total costs was 25 per cent.

Connexions does of course deliver more than a careers service. We have been consulting on proposals to embed its information, advice and guidance (IAG) and targeted support work more firmly in integrated services for young people.

Education (Southend-on-Sea)

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average A level point score per candidate was in Southend-on-Sea local authority for each year from 1997 to 2005. [34817]

Jacqui Smith: The A Level average point scores per 16 to 18-year-old candidate for Southend-on-Sea local authority can be found in the following table.

	APS per candidate
1997/98	17.2
1998/99	17.8
1999/2000	17.8
2000/01	17.7
2001/02	272.6
2002/03	257.3
2003/04	293.9
2004/05	308.3

Point score calculations

1997/98–1999/2000: The average GCE A/AS point score per student entered for the equivalent of 2 or more A/AS examinations, with a point score based on the following tariff:

Table 1

A Level		*AS*		*AGNVQ*	
Grade	*Points*	*Grade*	*Points*	*Grade*	*Points*
A	10	A	5	Distinction	18
B	8	B	4		
C	6	C	3	Merit	12
D	4	D	2		
E	2	E	1	Pass	6

2000/01: The average point score per student entered for at least one A level or Advanced GNVQ, based on the points tariff shown in table 1.

2001/02: The average GCE/VCE A/AS point score per student. The point score for each grade are as follows (based on the UCAS points tariff).

Table 2

GCE/VCE AS	*GCE/VCE A level*	*VCE A level Double Award*	*Score*
—	—	AA	240
—	—	AB	220
—	—	BB	200
—	—	BC	180
—	—	CC	160
—	—	CD	140
—	A	DD	120
—	B	DE	100
—	C	EE	80
A	D	—	60
B	—	—	50
C	E	—	40
D	—	—	30
E	—	—	20
N/U/X	N/U/X	U	0

2002/03–2004/05: The average GCE/VCE A/AS and key skills point score per candidate. Points are as in table 2 but with a key skill at Level 3 pass equivalent to 20 points.

Education Maintenance Allowance

Edward Miliband: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of the relevant cohort in Doncaster North is eligible for an education maintenance allowance, broken down by ward. [35599]

Maria Eagle: It is not possible to accurately estimate what percentage of young people will be eligible for education maintenance allowance (EMA) at sub-national level. However, for the academic year 2005/06, we estimate that around 55 per cent. of young people in full-time education nationally will be eligible for EMA. Eligibility in Doncaster local education authority as a whole is likely to be higher than this.

Free School Meals

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils there were on *(a)* primary, *(b)* secondary and *(c)* special schools rolls in (i) England, (ii) London and (iii) each London borough in each of the last five years; and how many (A) took and (B) were eligible for free school meals in each case. [35421]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information has been placed in the House Libraries.

Edward Miliband: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in Doncaster North constituency receive free school meals; and what the figures were in each year since 1997. [35679]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is shown in the table.

Maintained nursery, primary and secondary schools[1]: school meal arrangements, 1997 to 2005, position in January each year, Doncaster North parliamentary constituency

	Number on roll[2]	*Number of pupils taking free school meals*	*Percentage taking free school meals*	*Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school means*	*Percentage known to be eligible for free school meals*
Maintained nursery and primary					
1997	9,294	2,469	26.6	2,822	30.4
1998	9,470	2,149	22.7	2,595	27.4
1999	9,314	2,038	21.9	2,456	26.4
2000	9,166	1,963	21.4	2,264	24.7
2001	8,951	1,828	20.4	2,123	23.7
2002	8,871	1,698	19.1	2,006	22.6
2003	8,620	1,572	18.2	1,907	22.1
2004	8,501	1,606	18.9	1,865	21.9
2005	8,335	1,410	16.9	1,737	20.8
Maintained secondary					
1997	4,535	752	16.6	1,279	28.2
1998	4,563	647	14.2	1,180	25.9
1999	4,651	675	14.5	1,107	23.8
2000	4,721	632	13.4	1,116	23.6
2001	4,756	598	12.6	990	20.8
2002	4,845	470	9.7	929	19.2
2003	4,927	518	10.5	905	18.4
2004	5,005	539	10.8	863	17.2
2005	4,988	507	10.2	848	17.0

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Prior to 2003 includes dually registered pupils and excludes boarding pupils, from 2003 onwards includes dually registered pupils and boarding pupils.
Note:
Based upon school level numbers of pupils who had a free school meal on 20 January 2005.
Source:
Annual Schools Census.

Gifted Pupils

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many members of the National Academy of Gifted and Talented Youth there are in each school in Worcestershire. [36400]

Jacqui Smith: This information is set out in the following table. Membership of the National Academy is available to pupils aged 11 to 19 in the top 5 per cent. nationally.

Worcestershire LEA area schools

	NAGTY members
Secondary	
Arrow Vale Community High School	0
Baxter College	0
Bewdley High School and Sixth Form Centre	1
Bishop Perowne C of E High School	0
Blessed Edward Oldcome Roman Catholic High School	1
Christopher Whitehead High School	0
Droitwich Spa High School	0
Dyson Perrins C of E High School	6
Elgar Technology College	14
Evesham High School	0
Hagley Roman Catholic High School	78
Hanley Castle High School	0
Haybridge High School and Sixth Form	296
King Charles I School	0
Kingsley College	118
Malvern, The Chase	55
Martley, The Chantry High School	52
North Bromsgrove High School	18
Nunnery Wood High School	1
Pershore High School	58
Prince Henry's High School	3
South Bromsgrove Community High School	0
St Augustine's Catholic High School	0
Stourport High School-Language College	0
Tenbury High School	0
Trinity High School and Sixth Form Centre	30
Waseley Hills High School and Sixth Form Centre	1
Wolverley High School	0
Woodrush Community High School	0
Middle Deemed Secondary	
Alvechurch C of E Middle School	0
Aston Fields Middle School	0
Bewdley Wribbenhall Middle School	0
Bewdley, St Anne's Middle School	5
Bredon Hill Middle School	46
Bromsgrove, Catshill Middle School	0
Bromsgrove, Parkside Middle School	0
Evesham, Blackminster Middle School	0
Evesham, Simon de Montfort Middle School	0
Evesham, St Egwin's C of E Middle School	0
Ipsley C of E Middle School	0
Kidderminster, Birchen Coppice Middle School	0
Kidderminster, Comberton Middle School	0
Kidderminster, Franche Middle School	8
Kidderminster, Sion Hill Middle School	0
Kidderminster, St John's C of E Middle School	1
Redditch, Birchensale Middle School	10
Redditch, Church Hill Middle School	0
Redditch, Dingleside Middle School	0
Redditch, Ridgeway Middle School	0
St Bede's Catholic Middle School	1
St John's C of E Foundation Middle School	0
Stourport-on-Severn, Burlish Middle School	0
Stourport-on-Severn, Lickhill Middle School	0
The Sladen C of E Middle School	0
Walkwood C of E Middle School	1
Windmill C of E Middle School	0
Woodfield Middle School	0
Community Special	
Blakebrook School	0
Chadsgrove School	0
Manor Park School	0
Pitcheroak School	0
Redgrove School	0
Rigby Hall Day Special School	0
Riversides School	0
Rose Hill School	0
Stourminster Special School	0
Thornton House School	0
Vale of Evesham School	0
Independent	
Abberley Hall School	0
Abbey College	0
Bowbrook House School	0
Bredon School	2
Bromsgrove School	4
Green Hill School	0
Heathfield School	0
Holy Trinity School	2
Madinatul Uloom Al Islamiya School	0
Madresfield Early Years Centre	0
Malvern College	0
Malvern Girls' College	1
New Elizabethan School	0
Royal Grammar School	1
Saint Michael's College	0
St James's School	1
St Mary's Convent School	17
Sunnyside School	0
The Alice Ottley School	92
The King's School	1
The Knoll School	0
The River School	0
Whitford Hall and Dodderhill School	0
Winterfold House School	0
Non-Maintained Special	
RNIB New College, Worcester	0
Independent School Approved For SEN Pupils	
Sunfield School	0
Total[1]	925

[1] NAGTY Membership in Worcestershire

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many and what percentage of children from each secondary school in Eddisbury have joined the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth. [35611]

Jacqui Smith: This information is set out in the following table. Membership of the National Academy is available to pupils aged 11–19 in the top 5 per cent. nationally.

School name	Type of establishment	Total pupils	NAGTY members	Percentage of members
Bishop Heber High School	Community	1,092	0	0.0
Hebden Green Community School	Community special	113	0	0.0
Jonagold School	Independent special	7	0	0.0
Lambs Grange School	Independent special	18	0	0.0
Oaklands School	Community special	115	0	0.0
Tarporley Community High School	Community	1,034	40	3.9
The Verdin High School	Community	200	0	0.0
Woodford Lodge High School	Community	641	0	0.0

Grammar Schools

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of pupils in *(a)* Kent and *(b)* Buckinghamshire attend (i) grammar schools and (ii) secondary schools which are not grammar schools. [35118]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information is given in the table.

Maintained secondary schools and city technology colleges[1]: Full-time equivalent number and percentage of pupils by type of school[2] as at January 2005—Kent and Buckinghamshire local authority areas

	Kent LA		Buckinghamshire LA	
	Number[3]	Percentage[4]	Number[3]	Percentage[4]
Grammar schools	31,256.0	31.2	14,849.0	42.7
Other maintained secondary schools	67,565.5	67.4	19,961.0	57.3
City technology colleges	1,379.0	1.4	[5]—	[5]—
Total	100,200.5	100.0	34,810.0	100.0

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Excludes dually registered pupils.
[3] Full-time equivalent number—part-time pupils are counted as 0.5.
[4] The number of pupils by school type expressed as a percentage of the total number of pupils in maintained secondary schools, academies and city technology colleges.
[5] Not applicable; no schools of this type.
Source:
Annual Schools Census

Head Teachers

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures she is taking to reduce the burden of administration on head teachers. [35511]

Jacqui Smith: First we are determined that head teachers have the time and support to provide good leadership to manage their schools. That is why from the start of this school year every head teacher has a contractual entitlement to "dedicated headship time". Head teachers must have dedicated time to lead their schools, as well as manage them.

And with the right leadership much school management can be delegated effectively. Through our workforce remodelling agenda we are supporting schools in recruiting very many numbers of administrative and support staff to free school leaders to lead and teachers time to teach. This ensures the best use of resources to improve outcomes for children.

We are also establishing a new relationship with schools; this will strip away clutter and bureaucracy in schools. Key aspects include the introduction of an improved and streamlined data collection system, more user-friendly communications (ordering publications online when the schools require them rather than when DfES sends them out automatically) and fewer of them; and a Single Plan from which Ofsted and other bodies will draw on information about the school and its performance. This will make the planning process more coherent and less time-consuming.

We remain determined to make sure our policies have the maximum impact on standards with the minimum burden on head teachers. That is why we have announced in the recent Schools White Paper that the independent Implementation Review Unit, (IRU) will continue to serve until at least 2008. The IRU, which is a group of practising head teachers and senior staff in schools will therefore continue to scrutinise our policies and ensure that we understand the impact of our initiatives on schools and how best to introduce them from a schools perspective.

Higher Education

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what *(a)* the cash cost and *(b)* the resource cost for income contingent loans for full-time higher education students was in England in 2003–04; and what the equivalent allocations are for (i) 2005–06, (ii) 2006–07 and (iii) 2007–08. [35187]

Bill Rammell: Student loans are budgeted and accounted for using resource costs: forecasts of future cash expenditure on student loans are used only to help cash management in the Department and across Government.

(a) The cash costs for income contingent loans for full-time higher education students are shown in table 1.

Cash cost/allocations of Maintenance and Fee Loans (England and Wales)

£ million

Financial year	*Amount*
2003–04	[1]2,399
2004–05	[1]2,474
2005–06	[2]2,679
2006–07	[2]3,290
2007–08	[2]4,050

[1] Outturn.
[2] Allocation.
Note:
Table 1—Cash costs/allocations for income contingent loans for full-time higher education students.

The figures are given for England and Wales because the cash implications of the devolution of student support to the National Assembly for Wales from Academic Year 2006/07 have yet to be completed.

(b) The resource costs for income contingent loans for full-time higher education students are shown in table 2.

Resource cost/allocations (England and Wales)[1]

£ million

Financial year	*Maintenance loans*	*Fee loans*
2003–04	745	—
2004–05	755	—
2005–06	598	—
Resource allocations England[2]		
2006–07	572	141
2007–08	576	349

[1] DfES Departmental Annual Report 2005, table 12.2.
[2] DfES DAR 2005, table 12.2, adjusted to take account of Wales Devolution (England only).
Note:
Table 2—Resource costs/allocations for income contingent loans for full-time higher education students.

Resource costs/allocations are shown for England and Wales prior to the devolution of student support to the National Assembly for Wales in financial year 2006–07, and for England only thereafter.

From financial year 2005–06 the student loans resource accounting and budgeting charge is reduced as a result of the change in the Treasury Discount Rate from 3.5 per cent. to 2.2 per cent. This affects comparison of resource costs between financial year 2004–05 and financial year 2005–06.

Learning and Skills Council

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 598W, on the Learning and Skills Council, why the figure for the administration costs in 2004–05 differs from that provided in Learning and Skills Council Annual Report and Accounts 2003–04. [35824]

Bill Rammell: The apparent difference is presentational and the following table shows the separate components that made up the LSC Administration costs for the 2003–04 LSC Annual Accounts, and the answer of 9 November. The costs in both cases total the same. The difference is that the LSC Accounts show five categories under the Administration heading. The written reply of 9 November has combined three of these categories, Depreciation, Loss on Disposal, and Loss on Impairment categories into one.

£000

	2003–04	
	Admin costs LSC accounts	*LSC admin costs written answer of 9 November 2005*
Staff Costs	149,097	149,097
Other Costs	82,937	82,937
Depreciation	13,946	—
Loss on disposal of obsolete fixed assets	157	—
Loss on Impairment	2,996	—
Depreciation, impairment and losses	—	17,099
Total Administration costs	249,133	249,133

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 178W, on the Learning and Skills Council, what the reason is for the difference between the sum reported for expenditure on Local Intervention and Development in the answer and the total expenditure on Local Intervention and Development reported in the Learning and Skills Council Annual Report and Accounts 2004–05. [36581]

Bill Rammell: The figures in the following table are from the statutory accounts and are correct. The reason for the discrepancy with the figures quoted pursuant to the answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 178W on the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) is that, for operational purposes, the LSC combine the Learner Participation and Local Intervention and Development Fund (LIDF) into one budget. The reporting of these budgets separately is purely for statutory reporting purposes and cannot be accurately disaggregated.

£000

Financial year 2004–05	*Statutory accounts*	*Answer 28 November 2005*
Learning Participation	6,396.6	6,548.7
School Sixth Forms	1,654.8	1,654.8
Local Intervention and Development	278.0	125.9
Capital	372.3	372.3
Administration	233.2	232.9
AME	20.8	20.8
Total	8,955.7	8,955.4

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 178W on the Learning and Skills Council, what the reason is for the difference between the figures reported and the figures in the Learning and Skills Council Annual Report and Accounts 2004–05. [36582]

Bill Rammell *[pursuant to the reply, 28 November 2005, Official Report, c. 178W]:* On the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) I confirm that the figures in the following table from the LSC 2004–05 statutory accounts and are correct. The reason for the discrepancy with the figures quoted in the answer on 28 November is that for operational purposes the LSC combine the Learner Participation and Local Intervention and Development Fund (LIDF) into one budget and some

£152.1 million appropriate to LIDF was included under Learning Participation. The disaggregation of these budgets is purely for statutory reporting.

£000

Financial year 2004–05	Statutory accounts	Answer 28 November 2005
Learning Participation	6,396.6	6,548.7
School Sixth Forms	1,654.8	1,654.8
Local Intervention and Development	278.0	125.9
Capital	372.3	372.3
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AME	20.8	20.8
Total	8,955.7	8,955.4

Missing Children

Helen Southworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children in local authority care were reported missing from care to the police in the last year for which figures are available, broken down by *(a)* local authority area, *(b)* age and *(c)* sex. [36475]

Maria Eagle: The information requested is not collected centrally by the Department. Details of looked after children with at least one missing placement, in the years ending 31 March 1994–2004 may be found on the Department's website at: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/VOL/v000569/index.shtml.

National Curriculum

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will amend the national curriculum in *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools to include a section that informs students of the benefits of wearing seat belts; and if she will make a statement. [36189]

Jacqui Smith: There is sufficient scope within the non-statutory framework for personal social and health education for schools to explore road safety, including the wearing of seat belts. The Department has issued "Safety Education: Guidance for Schools" to support schools in developing effective approaches to teaching and learning in safety education.

Parental Rights

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether she plans to shift the legal presumption in legal disputes concerning parental rights towards providing a more equal balance between mothers and fathers; and if she will make a statement. [26999]

Maria Eagle: There is no statutory presumption concerning parental rights in the Children Act 1989. Instead, the Act requires the court to have the welfare of the child as its paramount consideration in determining any question relating to his or her upbringing. It is clear that, in general, the children of separating parents will benefit from ongoing meaningful relationships with both of their parents, so long as these are safe and in their best interests. However, we believe that the addition to the Children Act 1989 of a statutory presumption focused on parental rights would lead to a move away from the current clear focus on the needs of children and towards focusing on the wishes of parents. We consider such a move to be harmful to the interests of children.

Post-16 Education

Edward Miliband: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of teenagers in Doncaster North have stayed in education after reaching 16 years of age in each year since 1995. [35600]

Bill Rammell: The percentage of 16-year-olds in full-time education at the end of 2004 was estimated to be 73.3 per cent.—the highest ever rate. Percentage figures on participation in education by young people are not available for parliamentary constituencies, but are available for local authorities—including Doncaster LEA. These were published in the Statistical First Release "Participation in education and training by 16 and 17-year-olds in each local area in England"—SFR11/2005 published on 31 March 2005.

The publication is accessible on the DfES website via the link, http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000568/index.shtml

The specific figures are available through the following link: http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000568/SFR11-2005tables_lea.xls

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether the learning participation and school sixth forms categories of the grant letter equate to the adults and young people categories of the Learning and Skills Council annual report and accounts 2004–05. [36605]

Bill Rammell: I confirm that the learning participation and school sixth forms categories of the 2004–05 LSC grant letter do equate to the adults and young people categories in the LSC annual report and accounts 2004–05.

Prison Education

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 946W, on prison education, what proportion of the £1.05 million for higher education and access to higher education courses for offenders in custody is expected to be spent on fees for external tutors attending prisons. [35737]

Phil Hope: On the basis of information up to June, the Open University have estimated that up to £140,000 may be spent on fees for external tutors during 2005.

School Buildings Repair

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the backlog of school buildings repair and maintenance work in Southend; and if she will make a statement. [34132]

Jacqui Smith: Based on data supplied to the Department by the Authority in 2003, schools in Southend have repair and maintenance requirements of £20 million. Costs have been updated to current costs.

In addition to backlog repair work, the figure covers work needed over a five year period from the dates of the assessments, including cyclical and scheduled maintenance.

Southend and its schools have been allocated nearly £26 million of capital support over the next three years (2005–08).

School Improvement Partners

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the *(a)* pay levels and *(b)* gender balance will be of school improvement partners who (i) are also serving head teachers and (ii) are not head teachers but are drawn from the complement of local authority educational advisory and related staff. [35145]

Jacqui Smith: Pay levels are not determined centrally, because school improvement partners work under contract to the maintaining authorities of the schools with which they work. In each case it is for the authority to negotiate the pay level, either with the school improvement partner or with the school improvement partner's employer. We have no plans to set up central records of pay levels.

The gender balance of the school improvement partners is not determined in advance. At present there are school improvement partners for about one fifth of the secondary schools in England. The numbers, broken down by gender, are given in the following table.

	Women	*Men*
Serving head teachers	28	57
Local authority educational advisory staff	39	39
Independent consultants	6	7
Total	73	103

Among those who are not head teachers, there is no gender imbalance. Among the head teachers, the proportions of men and women match closely the proportions among secondary head teachers as a whole:

	Women	*Men*
Percentage of secondary head teachers (2003)	32.5	67.5
Percentage of secondary head teacher school improvement partners	32.9	67.1

School Nursing

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many school nurses there were in England in each of the past 10 years. [24431]

Mr. Byrne: I have been asked to reply.

School nurses were counted fully for the first time in the September 2004 national health service work force census, which showed that there were 2,409 qualified nurses working as school nurses. The next count will be available from the September 2005 census.

Schools (Haringey)

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools in Hornsey and Wood Green are expected to run a deficit in the 2005–06 financial year; what the reasons given for a forecast deficit are in each case; and if she will make a statement. [36758]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not yet available. The Department is due to collect the section 52 outturn data relating to the 2005–06 financial year from October 2006.

Secondary Schools (Ethnic Composition)

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the ethnic composition is of the pupil population at each secondary school in the *(a)* West Yorkshire and *(b)* Greater Manchester Metropolitan area. [34709]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested has been placed in the House Libraries.

Sector Skills Bodies

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills why the Learning and Skills Council received more grant-in-aid in 2004–05 from her Department than initially set out in the grant letter for that period. [36580]

Bill Rammell: Following the issue of the grant letter for 2004–05 we identified the need for additional resources to enable the LSC to deliver what the Department required. The key components of this additional resource were for local infrastructure and development, school sixth forms, learner participation, education maintenance allowance and a technical increase in the administrative budget to cover depreciation and cost of capital (previously carried on the Department's accounts). This increased the LSC's overall funding form the grant letter budget of £8,674 million to a total expenditure of £8,955 million.

Student Loans

Jo Swinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many people normally resident in *(a)* England, *(b)* Wales and *(c)* Scotland in the last six years applied for a student loan through the Student Loans Company. [36210]

Bill Rammell: The number of students domiciled in England, and Wales receiving a student loan from the Student Loan Company in academic years 2000/01 to 2005/06 (provisional as at 23 November 2005) is given in the table.

Domicile of student

Thousand

	England	*Wales*
2000/01	605	38
2001/02	646	41
2002/03	670	42
2003/04	683	43
2004/05	692	42
2005/06 (provisional)	691	42

Source:
Student Loans Company

Data include loans taken out for both mortgage style loans and student support scheme loans but exclude fixed rate part-time loans as equivalent data are not available.

The numbers of loan applications which the question asks for are not available for mortgage style loans, therefore, the number of full-time loans taken out has been provided for both loan types included in the table; applications for loans will be marginally higher than loans taken out

Data relating to students domiciled in Scotland are the responsibility of the Scottish Executive and have not been included with the answer.

Student Violence

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what assessment she has made of the frequency of violent acts committed by students in *(a)* England and *(b)* London; [23554]

(2) what estimate she has made of the percentage of violent acts committed by students *(a)* previously disciplined for violent acts or other disciplinary infractions and *(b)* who have no previous disciplinary record in 2004–05. [23556]

Bill Rammell: Information on violent acts committed by Further and Higher Education students is not collected centrally.

Sure Start

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what total public expenditure has been on Sure Start in the period 1999 to 2005; and how much the national evaluation of Sure Start has cost to date. [36325]

Beverley Hughes: Details of annual expenditure since 1999 on Sure Start, child care and nursery education are published in Table 12.2 of the Department for Education and Skills' Departmental Report (Cm 6522), as follows. To reflect the increasing integration of services for young children and families, from 2003–04 funding for child care and nursery education was merged into Sure Start.

Financial year	*Sure Start*	*Child care*	*Nursery education*	*Total*
1999–2000	7	56	150	213
2000–01	56	65	247	368
2001–02	134	109	224	467
2002–03	216	158	306	680
2003–04		721		721
2004–05[1]		927		927

[1] Outturn in DfES Resource Accounts 2004–05 (HC 686)

A comprehensive national level evaluation of Sure Start local programmes (SSLPs) is examining the implementation, cost-effectiveness and impact of Sure Start for children, families and communities. It also provides support to SSLPs on their local evaluations. The National Evaluation runs from 2001 to 2008 and will cost £20.3 million in total.

Teachers

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 192W, on teachers, what assessment she has made of the reasons for some schools not yet successfully introducing planning, preparation and assessment time. [36206]

Jacqui Smith: We have now validated the successful implementation of planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) time in 95 per cent. of all schools in England. However, we are aware of only three schools that are not yet fully compliant. Each case identified has been very different and colleagues from the National Remodelling Team—and its network of regional and local advisers—have worked and continue to work with individual schools to find workable, practicable and sustainable solutions to particular difficulties or issues they may have encountered.

This support has been supplemented by advice and guidance from our social partners on the Workforce Agreement Monitoring Group.

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teachers on extended sick leave are within *(a)* six months, *(b)* one year, *(c)* eighteen months and *(d)* two years of the official retirement age. [36949]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not held centrally.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol-related Crime

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many arrests were made by the British Transport police for *(a)* selling alcohol or attempting to sell alcohol to a person who is drunk, *(b)* selling alcohol or attempting to sell alcohol to an individual under 18 years, *(c)* being drunk and disorderly, *(d)* being drunk and incapable and *(e)* violence against the person, broken down by British Transport police area in each year for which figures are available. [31170]

Derek Twigg: I have been asked to reply.

The number of arrests for being drunk and disorderly, being drunk and incapable, and for violence against the person is given in the following table. The information requested in parts *(a)* and *(b)* can be provided by the British Transport police only at disproportionate cost. There is no offence of drunk and disorderly behaviour in Scotland.

Number

Offence category	*BTP Area*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Drunk and Disorderly	London North	60	103	73	102	108	99
	London South	69	80	99	91	141	116
	London Underground	42	44	54	62	98	112
	North Eastern	95	178	157	167	171	104
	North Western	117	117	82	126	162	104
	Wales and Western	66	94	113	101	114	108
	Force Total	449	616	578	649	794	643
Drunk and Incapable	London North	10	12	7	5	11	4
	London South	5	7	18	5	7	7
	London Underground	4	2	2	2	0	4
	North Eastern	1	1	2	0	7	5
	North Western	5	2	3	3	1	0
	Scottish	2	4	6	7	8	6
	Wales and Western	12	20	21	10	15	13
	Force Total	39	48	59	32	49	39
Violence against the person[1]	London North	144	234	216	251	324	365
	London South	325	364	369	390	424	455
	London Underground	299	265	307	359	411	491
	North Eastern	78	113	141	126	159	185
	North Western	139	129	134	199	220	205
	Scottish	25	20	21	28	56	47
	Wales and Western	121	167	195	193	241	284
	Force Total	1,131	1,292	1,383	1,546	1,835	2,032

[1] It should be noted that changes in the National Crime Recording Standards (NCRS) in 2002 led to a rise in the number of crimes recorded.

Asylum/Immigration

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 14 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1215W, on asylum seekers, what recent reassessment he has made of this policy. [35323]

Mr. McNulty: The situation is unchanged. Asylum seekers who make their application for asylum in Northern Ireland may receive support, including accommodation, there. However Northern Ireland is not currently a dispersal area.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many calls made to the hotline for hon. Members at the immigration and nationality directorate were made by each hon. Member in each year since 2001. [35586]

Mr. McNulty: The number of calls made to the immigration and nationality directorate's (IND) MPs' hotline are as follows:

	Number
2002	23,712
2003	26,952
2004	31,393
2005 (to 30 November)	31,546

Border Management Programme

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what plans he has to evaluate the effectiveness of the border management programme. [34729]

Mr. McNulty: The White Paper "One Step Ahead—A 21st Century Strategy to Defeat Organised Crime" tasked HM Revenue and Customs, IND and the police to work together to develop options for providing more effective border controls through enhanced inter-agency co-operation.

The border management programme is intended to develop this capacity for more effective working between the agencies in order to maximise border security whilst minimising the impact on legitimate traffic. The programme commenced a number of trials in early 2005 to test various aspects of shared working at the border.

Emerging findings are being considered and plans for further development of the programme and implementation are currently being established. These will include arrangements for further review, and ongoing monitoring and evaluation processes.

Chronic Back Pain

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what initiatives are being taken in his Department to help civil servants with chronic back pain. [34972]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office with its Executive agencies has put in place a number of initiatives and arrangements to help civil servants with chronic back pain and promote employee health and wellbeing more generally. These initiatives include fast-track access to assessment and treatment for those with back pain and other musculoskeletal disorders, workstation assessments to ensure correct posture, and manual handling training to reduce the risk of back injury.

Correspondence

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letters

from the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green of 5 July, 19 July and 5 October 2005, regarding a constituent Mr. Rastgouy; what the average response time to hon. Members' inquiries to the Immigration and Nationality Directorate is; and if he will make a statement. [28844]

Mr. McNulty: The Director-General of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) wrote on 21 November 2005. The average time taken in 2004–05 to answer Members' letters on IND-related matters was 32 days.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter of 10 August from the hon. Member for East Worthing and Shoreham about Mr. and Mrs. Bloxham of Sompting, West Sussex. [34197]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* I replied to the hon. Member on 6 December 2005.

Susan Kramer: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letters of 9 September and 9 November 2005 from the hon. Member for Richmond Park concerning Mr. John Maurice Mubita, reference: M1203172. [35623]

Mr. McNulty: I replied to the hon. Member on 30 November 2005.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Minister of State for Immigration will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green of 28 September 2005 on behalf of Mr. Fredjan Prenga (Home Office ref: P1044999/correspondence reference PREN004/CJB). [36399]

Mr. McNulty: The Director-General of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate replied to the hon. Member's letter of 28 September 2005 to the Immigration and Nationality Directorate on 27 October. I wrote to the hon. Member in reply to her letter to me of 2 November on 6 December.

Custodial Sentences (Southend)

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* minors and *(b)* adults normally resident in Southend are serving custodial sentences. [34140]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information is not recorded centrally on the home address of prisoners in England and Wales. Information is, however, held on the court that a prisoner is committed to or sentenced at.

On 31 October 2005 there were 1,006 sentenced prisoners held in prison establishments in England and Wales who were sentenced at courts in Essex, as recorded on the Prison Service IT system. 880 of these were adults and 126 were young adults or juveniles (i.e. aged between 15 and 20).

Custody Leavers (Judicial Review)

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many judicial reviews have been carried out in the last three years of local authority decisions about the care of young people coming out of custody. [35058]

Fiona Mactaggart: The requested information in not held centrally.

Departmental Properties

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much was paid by his Department in 2004–05 in rent for properties in *(a)* total, *(b)* each (i) region and (ii) nation of the UK and *(c)* London. [35944]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This information is not held centrally and could be calculated only at disproportionate cost.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much was paid by his Department in rates to each local authority in the UK in 2004–05; and how much was paid in *(a)* each (i) nation and (ii) region of the UK and *(b)* London. [35989]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This information is not held centrally and could be calculated only at disproportionate cost.

Deportation

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many foreign nationals residing in Scotland have been *(a)* issued with deportation orders and *(b)* subject to forced returns to Iraq in each month since May 2003; and if he will make a statement. [34737]

Mr. McNulty: The Home Office does not currently hold or record this specific data required and is unable to collate data by areas within the United Kingdom to the level of detail requested to give an accurate response to this request.

Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many immigration cases there have been involving alleged domestic violence in a foreign country in the past three years. [35065]

Dr. Howells: I have been asked to reply.

There are no statistics kept on entry clearance applications made overseas by individuals who might have been involved in domestic violence.

Although it is possible that some individuals seeking entry clearance for the UK may be victims of domestic violence, there is no provision under the immigration rules for entry to the UK on these grounds. There is therefore no requirement or incentive for an applicant seeking entry clearance at any of our visa issuing missions overseas to declare that they have been subject to domestic violence, as their applications will be considered on other grounds.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many arrests have been made under the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 since its introduction; and if he will make a statement. [21977]

Fiona Mactaggart: The measures within the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004 are being introduced gradually and as resources become available. The new powers of arrest, which the Act creates under section 10(1) have not been implemented in England and Wales, so data on the number of arrests for domestic violence related incidents under these powers are not available. However, once the new powers of arrest are implemented data will be routinely collected.

Currently, as part of the Police Performance Assessment Framework, all police forces are required to collect data on the percentage of arrests for domestic violence where a power of arrest already exists. Additionally, from April 2005 we have introduced a Key Diagnostic Indicator, which will compare these figures against the Crown Prosecution Service figures for the number of prosecutions related to domestic violence. An analysis of the figures will be available on a quarterly basis from each Local Criminal Justice Board area.

Electronic Tagging

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people in Milton Keynes are electronically tagged on early release from prison. [20829]

Fiona Mactaggart: As of 13 October, the number of prisoners released on the Home Detention Curfew scheme (HOC) from HMP Woodhill was 12. The area in which electronically tagged prisoners reside upon release is not recorded centrally.

Freedom of Information

Mr. Roger Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many Freedom of Information applications his Department has received; how many have taken more than 20 days to process; and how many of these gave rise to complaints about the time taken. [31218]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Freedom of Information Act came into effect on 1 January 2005. Between January and June 2005 the Home Office received 1,047 Freedom of Information requests. Of these requests 486 (46 per cent.) were replied to within deadlines permitted within the Act, 358 (34 per cent.) being within the 20 working day period. It took longer than 20 working days to process 561 (54 per cent.) of requests for information. The Department is aware of 11 internal review requests solely in relation to the time taken to respond to requests.

The Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) is committed to publishing quarterly updates in relation to departmental performance under Freedom of Information, including information on both the volume and outcomes of requests. The bulletin for the second quarter was published on 30 September 2005 and can be found on the DCA website at http://for.gov.uk/statsapr-jun05.htm and in the Library. The next bulletin will be published before Christmas, while an annual report will be published in early 2006.

Home Detention Curfew Scheme

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of prisoners released on the Home Detention Curfew Scheme in each year between 1999–2000 and 2004–05 had re-offended as at 31 August 2005; and how many offences such prisoners committed in each year. [30404]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information as to re-offending while subject to Home Detention Curfew (HDC) is set out in the following table. Statistics as to re-offending by prisoners released on HDC once they have left the scheme are not available.

	1999	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*[1]	*Total*
Number released on HDC	14,760	15,515	13,649	20,457	21,197	19,311	11,598	116,487
Number of offenders who committed an offence while subject to HDC	319	231	218	394	1,196	1,349	348	4,055
Percentage of those released who committed an offence while subject to HDC	2.2	1.5	1.6	1.9	5.6	7.0	3.0	3.5
Number of offences committed by those offenders	648	372	408	699	2,138	2,269	537	7,071

[1] To 31 August 2005.

Independent Monitoring Boards

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many current independent monitoring board members have served *(a)* less than one year, *(b)* between one and three years and *(c)* more than three years; and if he will make a statement. [16381]

Fiona Mactaggart: On 3 October 2005, 274 current Independent Monitoring Board members had served less than one year; 509 members had served between one and three years; and 1,023 members had served more than three years.

Judicial Proceedings (Rights)

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on progress towards his Department's target of increasing year on year the satisfaction of victims and witnesses while respecting the rights of defendants. [26697]

Fiona Mactaggart: Performance against my Department's targets is published in the annual report and the autumn performance report available in the Library and on the Home Office website (www.homeoffice.gov.uk).

Life Prisoners

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what conditions need to be met by a life prisoner to enable him or her to be considered for parole. [34499]

Fiona Mactaggart: The question of a lifer sentence prisoner's suitability for release cannot be considered until the prisoner has served the minimum period of imprisonment considered necessary for the purposes of retribution and deterrence (the tariff period). Exceptionally, the Secretary of State may release a life sentence prisoner prior to tariff expiry where he is satisfied that exceptional circumstances exist to justify such action on compassionate grounds. All life sentence prisoners are entitled to have their suitability for release considered by the independent Parole Board on, or shortly before, the expiry of their tariff. They will then be entitled to further reviews of their detention at no more than two yearly intervals thereafter.

There is no other specific condition imposed on a life sentence prisoner in relation to his or her consideration for release. Once the tariff has been served, the general issue governing release is the level of risk of serious harm that the prisoner may pose to others. The responsibility for assessing such risk and for directing the release of a tariff expired life sentence prisoner is now a matter for the Parole Board. The board is required by statute to satisfy itself that "it is no longer necessary for the protection of the public that the prisoner should be confined", and to direct release when it is so satisfied.

The Parole Board will take relevant factors into account when making its assessments of risk in individual cases. The various key factors are set out in Directions given by the Secretary of State under section 32 (6) of the Criminal Justice Act 1991. Copies of the latest Directions are available from the Library.

Murder Statistics

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* men and *(b)* women have been (i) prosecuted and (ii) convicted and given a custodial sentence for (A) killing and (B) murdering a child under 16 years in each of the past 20 years. [35278]

Fiona Mactaggart: It is not possible to identify those people prosecuted and convicted of killing and murdering a child under the age of 16 as the data collect on the court proceedings database held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform does not have details as to age of the victim.

National Offender Management Service

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will publish the business case for the National Offender Management Service. [19224]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 18 October 2005]:* The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) Strategic Business Case was published on the NOMS website www.noms.homeoffice.gov.uk on 20 October.

Offenders

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how frequently he met his colleagues from other Departments to discuss the *(a)* education and training, *(b)* work prospects and *(c)* healthcare of offenders in the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [34322]

Fiona Mactaggart: Since his appointment, my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary has had a programme of regular bilateral meetings with his colleagues in other Departments to discuss cross cutting issues including those impacting on offenders. In the last 11 months, the Home Secretary met bilaterally with my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (Ruth Kelly) on one occasion: my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (Mr. Hutton) on three occasions and my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Health (Ms Hewitt) on one occasion. These meetings are supplemented by regular and detailed discussions with Junior Ministers. The Government are committed to reducing re-offending by tackling accommodation, education and health issues that affect offenders as set out in the National Reducing Re-Offending Delivery Plan launched on 22 November.

Prison Service

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much money the Prison Service has paid out in *(a)* out-of-court settlements and *(b)* other compensation for complaints of assault brought by inmates against staff in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [16362]

Fiona Mactaggart: During the financial year 2004–05, the Prison Service paid £69,083 in out-of-court settlements to prisoners following alleged assaults by staff. This figure excludes payments to prisoners alleging mistreatment at Wormwood Scrubs during the 1990s.

Statistics available centrally indicate that no other form of compensation was given to prisoners in response to complaints of assault by staff during the same period. Figures for previous financial years could be obtained only at disproportionate costs.

Prisons

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people in Essex are electronically tagged on early release from prison. [19056]

Fiona Mactaggart: As of 13 October, the number of prisoners released on the Home Detention Curfew scheme (HDC) from Her Majesty's Prison Bullwood Hall and Her Majesty's Prison Chelmsford was 17.

The area in which electronically tagged prisoners reside upon release is not recorded centrally.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will ask Jamie Oliver to assess prison food and suggest ways of improving it. [20500]

Fiona Mactaggart: The National Audit Office (NAO) is currently undertaking a study of catering and physical exercise within prisons. Part of the study includes research by Professor John Edwards into the nutritional qualities of meals for prisoners. The Prison Service always welcomes suggestions on improving catering and is currently waiting on the NAO report to see what action may be needed.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average cost per *(a)* breakfast, *(b)* lunch and *(c)* dinner is in prisons. [20501]

Fiona Mactaggart: The average public sector Prison Service daily food cost per prisoner for 2004–05 was £1.85. The average cost per meal per prisoner is based on the understanding that breakfast, lunch and dinner account for approximately 20 per cent., 40 per cent. and 40 per cent. respectively of the daily food cost. Using these figures the average cost per meal per prisoner was: breakfast 37.5p; lunch 73.8p; and, dinner 73.8p. But these percentages may vary from one establishment to another dependant on a variety of issues including seasonal choices of product and the local regime.

Daily food costs per prisoner are based on average national figures as individual governors of prisons have had the authority to set their own catering budgets since 1994. Prisons are required to meet the minimum nutritional standards as laid down in Prison Service Order 5000 (Catering Manual) but there is no set financial formula that prisons are required to follow on the cost of each meal.

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance he has issued to prison governors in respect of the dietary requirements of diabetic inmates; and if he will make a statement. [20874]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 1 November 2005]:* The Prison Service Catering Manual provides general food policy guidance to all prisons. The manual, Prison Service Order 5000, provides full guidance on hygiene and food safety, nutritional requirements and diets for special groups. Prisons and their national health service (NHS) partners are implementing the National Service Framework (NSF) for diabetes. In line with the NSF, improvements in the treatment of diabetics in prison include: better identification on reception into prison; assuring an appropriate diet; the establishment of specialist diabetes clinics in prison; closer links with NHS diabetes services; the introduction of retinopathy screening and practice-based registers as well as improved continuity of treatment on transfer or release.

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to minimise the effect of passive smoking on prison *(a)* employees and *(b)* inmates; what guidance he has issued to prison governors in respect of his policy on the sharing of cells between smoking and non-smoking inmates; and if he will make a statement. [20876]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 1 November 2005]:* Each prison develops its own "no smoking" policy in line with current health and safety advice and taking into account the type of establishment it is, its population and the special needs of that population. Such local arrangements also require staff to be protected from the effects of passive smoking. Wherever possible prisoners should not be required to share accommodation with a smoker if they so request.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many girls under the age of 18 years there are in adult prisons in England and Wales. [29913]

Fiona Mactaggart: On 30 September 2005, there were 80 females under the age of 18 in prison establishments in England and Wales as recorded on the Prison Service IT system. These were all aged 17 and were located in separate juvenile units attached to female establishments that hold young adult or adult women, or in designated juvenile accommodation on young adult wings within such establishments. Females under the age of 17 who are committed to custody are not normally placed in prison or YOI accommodation but in secure children's homes or secure training centres.

Probation Service

Mrs. Gillan: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many trained probation officers there were in each probation area in each of the last five years. [23831]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information is not available for the full period requested. Data collected prior to 1 April 2003 is unreliable, and is not directly comparable with the more accurate figures collected since that time. The figures presented in the table show full-time equivalent (FTE) figures at the close of each quarter from 1 April 2003 to 30 June 2005.

In addition, the information required to breakdown the number of Probation Officers in post by Area in Quarter 1 2003–04 is no longer held. As a result, only the total figure has been provided for this period.

	2003–04				*2004–05*				*2005–06*
	Quarter 1	*Quarter 2*	*Quarter 3*	*Quarter 4*	*Quarter 1*	*Quarter 2*	*Quarter 3*	*Quarter 4*	*Quarter 1*
Avon and Somerset	—	96.40	112.90	110.40	151.90	148.10	153.70	153.30	154.40
Bedfordshire	—	57.30	61.10	62.60	56.40	58.00	61.00	66.00	65.00
Cambridgeshire	—	75.50	85.35	75.97	74.90	75.60	78.27	76.27	73.70
Cheshire	—	116.10	112.30	114.30	109.60	113.80	113.90	114.65	121.00
Cumbria	—	59.90	59.90	56.30	53.60	52.90	57.50	58.00	59.20
Derbyshire	—	117.60	106.70	102.70	112.90	125.60	109.20	107.50	108.50
Devon and Cornwall	—	136.80	149.35	146.30	141.76	141.60	149.10	150.30	151.10
Dorset	—	63.00	68.00	63.10	60.86	62.56	66.79	70.29	67.64
Durham	—	72.00	86.50	87.50	87.50	89.50	90.70	95.83	91.50
Dyfed Powys	—	46.70	46.30	43.70	43.20	42.70	49.10	46.70	48.10
Essex	—	106.00	111.20	117.50	116.80	112.90	120.11	120.20	115.00
Gloucestershire	—	52.30	56.40	55.40	55.40	54.99	59.69	59.19	55.76
Gwent	—	69.10	68.10	69.20	65.60	65.10	67.30	65.30	52.10
Hampshire	—	155.90	173.59	178.60	175.90	168.50	190.40	188.90	179.90
Hertfordshire	—	63.70	65.90	71.99	71.99	72.70	71.70	75.10	71.10
Humberside	—	121.78	139.78	138.78	135.39	131.89	147.91	147.68	146.91
Kent	—	138.35	148.55	154.95	152.15	144.40	146.20	145.53	142.13
Lancashire	—	243.20	243.60	246.10	243.50	237.10	253.20	250.40	241.10
Leicestershire	—	126.00	125.00	130.70	134.20	140.80	138.20	134.70	136.10

	2003–04				2004–05				2005–06
	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Quarter 1	Quarter 2	Quarter 3	Quarter 4	Quarter 1
Lincolnshire	—	64.20	61.60	60.60	57.60	64.00	63.60	64.40	63.10
London	—	795.70	840.50	862.50	864.80	874.60	835.41	834.54	820.07
Greater Manchester	—	414.70	399.80	387.58	370.20	373.20	404.40	406.26	402.21
Merseyside	—	243.90	241.50	238.44	242.03	237.43	268.43	267.24	264.24
Norfolk	—	72.68	76.88	84.18	80.88	77.68	79.85	82.60	80.16
North Yorkshire	—	66.20	75.80	75.60	78.30	75.20	88.60	93.60	88.60
North Wales	—	58.70	67.10	67.50	71.80	72.80	84.20	83.20	83.70
Northamptonshire	—	69.00	65.00	63.00	59.00	65.00	66.63	72.54	70.99
Northumbria	—	223.30	252.26	253.10	251.80	274.06	267.95	263.76	259.16
Nottinghamshire	—	166.00	171.50	160.90	156.18	168.02	166.11	165.91	161.01
South Wales	—	155.60	157.60	172.30	169.60	169.70	195.90	191.48	188.50
South Yorkshire	—	183.50	203.00	202.40	196.80	195.50	212.70	208.10	203.90
Staffordshire	—	148.70	147.10	146.20	148.40	156.40	152.30	152.70	151.60
Suffolk	—	82.25	81.75	85.15	82.25	82.80	83.00	83.40	83.58
Surrey	—	56.70	63.90	66.55	62.50	62.10	68.30	66.67	69.85
Sussex	—	121.20	123.30	126.60	128.41	127.79	128.74	128.84	129.70
Teesside	—	64.60	76.60	74.85	74.35	84.85	87.65	87.24	95.90
Thames Valley	—	163.00	176.70	182.00	175.00	169.30	176.40	175.80	164.00
Warwickshire	—	55.00	55.00	53.21	52.80	55.15	51.33	52.93	54.06
West Mercia	—	123.31	125.46	125.90	121.84	142.58	141.30	138.10	137.10
West Midlands	—	374.50	429.20	406.82	403.97	447.50	444.50	446.30	443.50
West Yorkshire	—	275.57	310.48	313.86	321.16	320.58	343.37	331.88	335.37
Wiltshire	—	41.90	48.90	50.10	44.10	41.50	44.30	43.30	39.30
Total	5,831.10	5,937.84	6,271.45	6,85.43	6,257.32	6,376.48	6,584.94	6,566.63	6,469.84

Re-offending

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the most recent re-offending rates are of *(a)* minors and *(b)* adults from Southend. [34025]

Fiona Mactaggart: Re-offending rates are not currently available on a regional basis.

Secure Training Centres

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many children in secure training centres have been referred under the Children Act 2004 to local social services departments for reasons of child protection in each of the last three years. [35060]

Fiona Mactaggart: References are made under the Children Act 1989. Each secure training centre has a protocol, agreed with the local authority, which governs referrals. The protocol is ratified by the local Area Child Protection Committee. Where a young person (or any other person) makes a complaint which raises child protection issues, it is passed to the local authority social services department for its consideration. It is for the social services department to decide whether an investigation is warranted under section 47 of the Children Act 1989. The following table lists the number of referrals made by each centre over the last three years.

Referrals to local authorities by secure training centres of children under child protection procedures

	2002	2003	2004
Hassockfield	39	25	37
Oakhill	n/a	n/a	26
Medway	16	45	29
Rainsbrook	20	15	21

Travellers

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many travellers have been convicted for not paying tax on their motor vehicles in each of the last eight years; [33867]

(2) how many travellers were convicted of criminal offences in the last five years, broken down by crime. [33868]

Fiona Mactaggart: It is not possible to provide the information requested, as travellers cannot be identified on the Court Proceedings Database held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform.

Voter Registration

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of the population is registered to vote in each constituency in the United Kingdom *(a)* ranked in descending order and *(b)* broken down by region and ranked in descending order. [36887]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 12 December 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning the percentage of the population who are registered to vote in each Parliamentary Constituency. I am replying in her absence. (36887)

I am placing in the House of Commons Library tables showing the requested information.

Population data by Parliamentary Constituency are not available on an annual basis, consequently the tables have been prepared from 2001 Census data. Constituencies in Scotland, therefore, are those that were in place prior to the last election.

In order to give an estimate of the number of electors on Census day (29 April 2001), a weighted average is taken of the 1 February 2001 and 1 December 2001 electoral data. Data are given for Parliamentary electorate. Data for the local/European electorate, by Parliamentary Constituency are not readily available for 2001.

For the purposes of answering this question, we have assumed that you are interested in the percentage of the population aged 18 and over who are registered to vote. However it should be noted that the percentage of residents who are registered to vote in each

Constituency is not a reliable estimate of the registration rate of the eligible population: the resident population aged 18 and over is not the same as the number of people eligible to vote.

The UK Parliamentary electorate excludes residents of countries other than the UK and the Commonwealth and includes UK citizens resident abroad. In addition not everyone who is usually resident is entitled to vote (foreign citizens from outside of the EU and Commonwealth. prisoners, etc, are not eligible) and people who have more than one address may register in more than one place. Also there is inevitably some double counting of the registered electorate as electoral registration officers vary in how quickly they remove people from the registers after they have moved away from an area or after they have died. This latter is the main reason why in some Constituencies the population aged 18 and over is less than those registered to vote. These factors may have a different impact from place to place.

Furthermore, you should note that the Office for National Statistics (ONS) has revised the mid-2001 population estimates since the publication of the 2001 Census results. In September 2003, revisions were made that added approximately 193,000 to the population of England and Wales. This revision primarily related to the addition of a number of young males that were not captured by the Census. In September 2004, ONS made further revisions as a result of concluding studies designed to improve population estimates in the areas that proved hardest to count in the 2001 Census in England and Wales. The results of this work showed that the Census worked well in most areas, but that there were a few cases where it was not able sufficiently to adjust for exceptional circumstances. The analysis showed that there was a need for revisions to the 2001 Census based population estimates of around 107,000 for England and Wales as a whole. The adjustments were included in the new mid-year population estimates for 2001, published in 2004. The census database itself was not revised following the publication of these adjustments. More details on these issues can be found at: www.statistics.gov.uk/lastudies

Any comparison of these data with figures for other years should be made carefully as electoral legislation and other changes (such as EU expansion) can change the size of the electorate.

Vulnerable Witnesses

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many vulnerable witnesses used intermediaries provided for in the special measures for vulnerable witnesses under the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 in each of the pilot schemes; and if he will make a statement. [29342]

Fiona Mactaggart: Examination of a witness through an intermediary under section 29 of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 is currently available in six pathfinder areas: Merseyside; West Midlands; Thames Valley; South Wales; Norfolk; and Devon and Cornwall. Evaluation of the pathfinders will be completed by the end of March 2006 after which plans will be made for further roll out of the scheme in England and Wales.

The latest available information about the number of times that intermediaries have been used is given in the attached table.

We have issued recently information packs entitled 'What's my story?' and 'Intermediaries: Giving a voice to vulnerable witnesses' copies of which have been placed in the Library. These materials are being used to promote awareness and understanding of the intermediary scheme in the pathfinder areas.

Area	*Intermediary scheme start date*	*Number of witnesses assisted by an intermediary as at 15 November 2005*[1]
Merseyside	23 February 2004	11
West Midlands	13 September 2004 (Wolverhampton area) 1 November 2004 (all courts in West Midlands)	20
Thames Valley	2 October 2004	51
South Wale[2]	1 February 2005	2
Norfolk	1 February 2005	5
Devon and Cornwall[3]	20 June 2005	9
Total		98

[1] Data refer to the number of witnesses for whom the Office for Criminal Justice Reform has provided a registered intermediary where the intermediary has, or is expected to, carried out a communication needs analysis relating to the witness or has assisted them to understand questions or to make their answers understood during a criminal investigation or trial. Data refer only to pathfinder areas where notification of availability of the intermediary special measure has been made in accordance with section 18(2) of the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999.

[2] In South Wales trials are restricted to Cardiff Crown Court, Cardiff Magistrates' Courts, The Vale of Glamorgan Magistrates' Courts, Newcastle and Ogmore Magistrates' Courts, Miskin Magistrates' Courts.

[3] In Devon and Cornwall trials are restricted to Plymouth Crown Court and Plymouth Magistrates' Court.

Young Offenders

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many young offenders have been intensively supervised in the community in each year since 1997. [35431]

Fiona Mactaggart: The numbers of young offenders who have been intensively supervised under the Intensive Supervision and Surveillance Programme in each financial year since its introduction in July 2001 are shown in the following table.

Financial Year	*Number*
July 2001 to March 2002	876
April 2002 to March 2003	3,342
April 2003 to March 2004	4,705
April 2004 to March 2005	4,960
March 2005 to September 2005	2,760
Total	16,643

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Barker Review (Government Response)

Martin Horwood: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what *(a)* calculations and *(b)* data sets his Department used for the (i) price and (ii) supply elasticity of housing in working out a response to the Barker Review of Housing Supply. [33693]

Yvette Cooper: The Government published as part of the response to the Barker Review a major study on the relationship between housing supply and affordability. This underpins the Government's response to the Barker Review.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

As part of the project, a nine-region model was developed to examine the relationship between housing supply and affordability (specified as the ratio of lower quartile house prices to lower quartile earnings). The model consists of three interrelated modules: demographic module, housing module and a labour market module.

This model is a step forward from previous analysis, including the Barker Review. For the first time we are able to model nationally and regionally the relationship between housing supply and affordability. Previous analyses looked only at prices at national level and were not able to take into account the interactions between the demographics and housing and labour markets.

The report and its technical annex give details of all the key relationships and elasticities. The report is available at www.odpm.gov.uk.

Designated Growth Areas

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1688–89W, on designated growth areas (1) what plans his Department has to make available to local authorities information regarding infrastructure costs in designated growth areas; [31847]

(2) what assessment he has made of *(a)* the adequacy of existing infrastructure in designated growth areas and *(b)* whether the infrastructure is sufficient to support planned growth; and if he will make a statement; [31852]

(3) what *(a)* assessment will be made of infrastructure requirements and *(b)* infrastructure will be put in place in designated growth areas before planned development begins; [31853]

(4) what assessment *(a)* has been made and *(b)* is planned to be made of (i) the age profile of those expected to move into designated growth areas and (ii) the effect of that profile on the (A) infrastructure and (B) housing needs of those areas. [31854]

Yvette Cooper: The Government have stated on a number of occasions that building sustainable communities means more than building new houses and that additional infrastructure and services will be required in support of a growing population as well as the existing population.

Infrastructure results vary widely from one area to another and from one development to another, and so it is not possible to apply a general formula to growth plans. In order to underpin the plans for the growth areas, studies were commissioned on the growth areas (e.g. the 2002 Milton Keynes and South Midlands study undertaken by Roger Tym and Partners) and on individual locations within the growth areas (e.g. the 2003 Milton Keynes and Aylesbury Growth Area studies, also prepared by Roger Tym and Partners). These studies have included information on infrastructure requirements and costing and have been made public in order to inform the regional planning documents relevant to the growth areas (e.g. the Milton Keynes South Midlands Sub-Regional Strategy). The sub-regional strategies are now being taken forward at local level and local partners are doing their own work to prioritise and cost the infrastructure associated with growth. The Government are not planning to commission additional studies to estimate infrastructure requirements and costs for each of the growth areas.

Both housing development and infrastructure investment are on-going activities. The allocation of individual houses and expenditures on infrastructure to "growth" and "background levels" is not a practical option. Nor is it practical or desirable to halt all development until all of the investment contemplated in support of that development is in place. Indeed, infrastructure requirements will change over time, reflecting, for example, the detailed geography of housing and jobs, as well as changes in technology, consumer preferences and service provision. Rather, infrastructure needs to be put in place on a timely basis to support growth in a locality and needs to be planned for on a dynamic basis. We look to local partners, in particular the local delivery vehicles, to construct their business plans accordingly and to work with regional and national bodies in prioritising funding towards timely provision of infrastructure.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has produced variant population projections for the four growth areas. These were done at local authority level and projected forward population projections based on current population trends and likely additional housing due to the area being a growth area. The assumed additional population was based on past trends regarding births, deaths, household formation rates and migration.

Government looks to regional and local partners to plan dynamically for changing demographics. For example, the Learning and Skills Councils in the Milton Keynes South Midlands sub-region have collaborated on a study on the long-term learning and skills needs of the area. This study embraces a variety of demographic scenarios and recognises the need to take a strategic approach to planning infrastructure which is adaptable to a range of scenarios.

Fire Services

Mr. Clapham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list occasions since 1975 when fire and rescue authorities have been unable to cope with *(a)* a major fire or rescue incident and *(b)* civil disturbance; and which Fire and Rescue Authority fire control room was involved in each case. [36056]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

John Mann: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many call outs each retained fire service in North Nottinghamshire has had in each of the last five years. [36231]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

John Mann: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many times out-of-county fire appliances have been called to emergencies in Nottinghamshire due to Nottinghamshire services being already engaged in each of the last 10 years. [36232]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost will be of removing the Wiltshire Fire Services Control Room from the joint services control room at Devizes when the Regional Control Room in Taunton has been completed. [35683]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Specific figures are not yet available for moving individual fire control rooms, as the FiReControl business case only exists at national level. The one-off gross cost of implementing networked regional control centres in England is forecast to be £160 million.

For Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Authority there may be a financial penalty associated with withdrawing from the tri-service arrangements at Devizes. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is in discussion with the authority about meeting such costs under the "new burdens" rules.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many IT and communication systems are used by the South West Fire Services; how he will unify them; and how much this will cost. [35684]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not hold central information on all the IT and communication systems used by the South West fire and rescue services. There are no plans to unify them all, though the services will have a common radio system under Firelink, and share a regional control centre under FiReControl.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the budgets are for setting up the regional fire control centres located at *(a)* Belmont Business Park, Durham, *(b)* Lingley Mere Business Park, Warrington, *(c)* Cambridge Research Park, *(d)* Willow Farm Business Park, Castle Donnington, *(e)* Wolverhampton Business Park, *(f)* Paragon Business Park, Wakefield, *(g)* Blackbrook Business Park, Taunton and *(h)* Kite's Croft, Fareham; and if he will make a statement. [34587]

Jim Fitzpatrick: FiReControl is a national project. There are no separate budgets for each regional control centre. For information on the one-off costs of delivering FiReControl, I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for North Thanet (Mr. Gale) on 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 358W.

Mr. Alan Williams: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many cases were recorded of attacks on firemen while working on emergencies in each year since 2003–04; how many have been recorded in 2005–06; how many prosecutions were pursued; and what sentences were imposed on those found guilty in each case in which all proceedings are complete. [35862]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The information is as follows:

(a) The office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) has been maintaining records of attacks on firefighters since April 2004. Prior to that date their was no requirement for the fire and rescue service to report attacks on firefighters.

Since April 2004 there has been in place a procedure for attacks on firefighters to be notified to the ODPM using the Fires and Incidents of Special Interest (FOSI) reporting procedures as detailed in Dear Chief Fire Officer (DCOL) letter 3/2004 issued 1 April 2004. This procedure was updated by the issue of Fire and Rescue Service Circular 5/2005 issued on 15 February 2005.

(b) ODPM to date has no available information on the numbers of prosecutions pursued and what sentences were, if any, imposed on those found guilty.

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* part-time and *(b)* full-time firefighters serviced (i) Suffolk and (ii) Bury St. Edmunds constituency in each year since 1997. [35464]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The number of firefighters employed by Suffolk fire and rescue service between 1997 and 2005 is set out as follows:

Number

Date[1]	*Retained duty system firefighters*	*Whole-time firefighters*
1997	423	256
1998	414	252
1999	400	256
2000	396	249
2001	404	248
2002	401	253
2003	415	250
2004	399	244
2005[2]	428	257

[1] Information provided refers to the work force at 31 March.
[2] Figures are provisional.
Source:
The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's annual returns.

Information on the number of firefighters employed at constituency level is not available centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Growth Areas Directorate

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister to whom the Head of the Department's Growth Areas Directorate reports. [34076]

Yvette Cooper: The Head of Growth Areas Division reports to the Director, Sustainable Communities Directorate.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister with which division in the Department for Transport the Head of the Department's Growth Areas Directorate liaises on transport matters. [34078]

Yvette Cooper: Growth Areas Division liaises mainly with Regional and Local Transport Delivery Division in the Department for Transport.

Homelessness

Grant Shapps: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the number of individuals made homeless in the last 12 months following private landlords obtaining *(a)* an order of possession and *(b)* a bailiff's order from the courts. [32722]

Yvette Cooper: The number of individuals made homeless due to an order of possession or a bailiff's order from the courts is not collected centrally. Information is collected quarterly from local authorities about the number of households accepted as homeless, in priority need and consequently owed a main homelessness duty. This includes reasons for loss of the last settled home, and distinguishes those involving rent arrears on a private dwelling, the ending of an assured shorthold tenancy, and other reasons for the loss of tied accommodation or a rented dwelling (including local authority owned accommodation). As shown in the following table, some 23,200 households became homeless for one of these reasons (around 20 per cent. of all acceptances) between July 2004 and June 2005.

Reasons for loss of rented settled home: July 2004 to June 2005—England

	Total households[1]
Rent arrears on private sector dwellings	1,570
Loss of rented/tied accommodation due to:	
Termination of an assured shorthold tenancy	15,280
Other reasons	6,370
Total of above reasons	23,220

[1] Households found to be eligible for assistance, unintentionally homeless and in a priority need category, and consequently owed a main homelessness duty.

Source:

ODPM P1E homelessness returns (quarterly)

Housing

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of the *(a)* housing action trusts, *(b)* European Structural Fund Objective 3, *(c)* Connexions Grant, *(d)* Neighbourhood Renewal, *(e)* Housing Investment Programme and *(f)* London Development Agency grant funding stream from the Government office for London was made available to the London borough of Croydon in 2004–05. [35224]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The information is as follows.

(a) In 2004–05 the London borough of Croydon received no funding under the Housing Action Trusts programme. Only the Stonebridge Housing Action Trust in the London borough of Brent received funding in that year.

(b) Total ESF Objective 3 funding allocated to London in 2004–05 was £132,350,629, of which schemes in the London borough of Croydon received £5,051,705.

(c) Total funding of £73,014,270 was available for Connexions Partnerships in London in 2004–05. The South London Connexions Partnership, which covers the London boroughs of Croydon, Bromley, Kingston, Merton, Richmond and Sutton, received £10,842,518 in 2004–05. Some of this funding was allocated to projects working across the sub-region, from which Croydon would have benefited, while the South London Connexions Partnership allocated £2,393,051 specifically to Connexions services in Croydon.

(d) In 2004–05 the London borough of Croydon received Neighbourhood Renewal Funding of £824,387. Total Neighbourhood Renewal Fund for London 2004–05 was £110,087,967.

(e) Croydon received Housing Investment Programme funding of £4.53 million in 2004–05, from a total of £208 million allocated to London boroughs on a formulaic Generalised Needs Index basis in that year.

(f) In 2004–05 Government grant to the London Development Agency was £329,337,081. The total funding made available by the London Development Agency to projects in the London borough of Croydon was £1,073,112 in that year. In addition the London Development Agency funds a number of areas of work which benefit the whole of London, including work to promote tourism, employment and business, social inclusion and regeneration.

Integrated Regional Strategy

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost was of producing the Integrated Regional Strategy for the East of England; how many copies have been made; and how many copies were downloaded from the internet each month since it was published. [35169]

Yvette Cooper: The total cost of producing the Integrated Regional Strategy (IRS) in the East of England is £12,601, including the 1,000 copies that have been printed to date.

It is impossible to state how many copies of the IRS have been downloaded from the East of England Regional Assembly's website. The web page that contains the link to the document has received 3,020 hits since publication.

Local Government

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to review the operation of procedures for deciding who is in a politically restricted post in local government. [35115]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister consulted last year on a review of the regulatory framework governing the political activities of local government employees. We intend to publish our conclusions on this shortly.

Mobile Phone Companies

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he plans to publish Professor Phil Allmendiger's report with Arup on codes of best practice for mobile phone companies. [19683]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister commissioned the University of Reading and Arup to undertake an independent study to assess the impact that the Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development has had since its introduction, how local authorities have implemented the code and how the public perceives its operation. Plans are to publish this report in the new year.

Mobile Telephone Masts

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he plans to make the Arup report on mobile telephone masts publicly available. [32381]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister commissioned the University of Reading and Arup to undertake an independent study to assess the impact that the Code of Best Practice on Mobile Phone Network Development has had since its introduction, how local authorities have implemented the code and how the public perceives its operation. Plans are to publish this report in the new year.

Planning

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the average length of time to process a *(a)* planning application, *(b)* major planning application and *(c)* planning appeal in (i) 1997 and (ii) the latest year for which figures are available. [33501]

Yvette Cooper: The information available from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on the time taken by local authorities to process planning applications are the percentages of applications for planning permission and related consents which are decided within eight weeks, between eight and 13 weeks and in more than 13 weeks. The statistics are used to monitor performance against the government targets that 60 per cent. of applications for major development should be decided within 13 weeks, that 65 per cent. of applications for minor development should be decided within eight weeks, and that 80 per cent. of applications for other development (predominantly householder applications) should be decided within eight weeks.

In 1996–97, local authorities determined on average 57 per cent. of major applications within 13 weeks, 57 per cent. of minor applications within eight weeks and 69 per cent. of other applications within eight weeks.

In the year ending June 2005, the latest data available, local authorities determined on average 61 per cent. of major applications within 13 weeks, 69 per cent. of minor applications within eight weeks and 84 per cent. of other applications within eight weeks.

The Planning Inspectorate's performance in processing a planning appeal is measured against ministerial targets which are reviewed annually.

Time taken to decide 80 per cent. of planning appeals—1996–97

	Written representations	*Hearings*	*Inquiries*
Target	22 weeks	43 weeks	51 weeks
Outturn	25 weeks	47 weeks	56 weeks
Number of appeals decided	9,686	1,512	831

Change to target introduced in 2004–05—now measured against a 50 per cent. target

	Written representations	*Hearings*	*Inquiries*
Target	16 weeks	30 weeks	30 weeks
Outturn	30 weeks	40 weeks	43 weeks
Number of appeals decided	13,668	2,894	847

Regional Policy

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what research he has evaluated on whether regional *(a)* economic and *(b)* social differences have changed since 1997. [31855]

Yvette Cooper: To support the 2004 PSA target to make sustainable improvements in the economic performance of the English regions, independent research to summarise the economic base was commissioned in 2004. The report of this work "Regional Growth Report" was published in September 2004 and is available from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at: http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1139483.

Statutory Instruments

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what training is given to *(a)* policy officials and *(b)* lawyers in his Department responsible for drafting statutory instruments; and if he will make a statement. [34314]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Statutory instruments are drafted by departmental lawyers based on instructions from policy divisions. Where SIs amend primary legislation, parliamentary counsel are consulted.

As members of the Government Legal Service (GLS), departmental lawyers receive extensive training on the preparation and drafting of statutory instruments. This consists of a combination of lectures and practical exercises run by experienced practitioners in the GLS, coupled with training given by legal advisers who advise the parliamentary scrutiny committees. In addition, senior managers in the GLS take a close interest in the quality of SIs and provide frequent feedback and on the job training to those with lead responsibility for drafting. This is an on-going process and part of the continuing education of government legal advisers.

Tax Revenue

Chris Huhne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the annual tax revenue from applying business rates to the land holdings of development and property companies. [36032]

Mr. Woolas: None.

Thames Gateway

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 820W, on Thames Gateway, if he will place in the Library copies of the strategic flood risk assessments held by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the relevant Government office for the regions. [22296]

Yvette Cooper: Copies of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessments for the Thames Gateway will be publicly available on the internet. The document requested is an external publication produced by the Thames Gateway London Partnership. At the present time, Strategic Flood Risk Assessments have been completed for the London area of the Thames Gateway. This is available on the Thames Gateway London Partnership website at http://www.thames-gateway.org.uk/social-inc-content.

asp?id:=16. Copies of the Strategic Flood Risk Assessments for North Kent and South Essex will be publicly available when the final reports are produced.

Town and Parish Councils

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of town and parish councillors gained office as a result of a contested election. [35381]

Mr. Woolas: Information about the proportion of town and parish councillors that have gained office as a result of a contested election is not collected centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many town and parish councils in England have achieved Quality Parish Council status. [35382]

Mr. Woolas: There are currently 230 town and parish councils in England which have achieved Quality Parish status.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many town and parish councils there are in England, broken down by district or unitary level local authority area; and how many levy their own precept in each case. [35383]

Mr. Woolas: There are about 8,700 parish and town councils in England. Volume 2 of the latest edition of the Municipal Year Book lists parishes under the relevant county and district council area. Information about how many parish and town councils levy their own precept is not collected centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many town and parish councillors there are in England. [35384]

Mr. Woolas: There are approximately 70,000 town and parish councillors in England.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the main local services funded through the levy of town and parish council precepts are. [35388]

Mr. Woolas: Town and parish councils have powers to provide various services which are funded by precept. A list of their main statutory functions is as tabled. Principal authorities have powers to delegate services to town and parish councils. Central Government do not hold centrally a breakdown of spending by town and parish councils.

Powers and duties of parish councils

Function	*Powers and duties*	*Statutory provisions*
Access land	Power to enforce byelaws made by another authority	Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, s. 17
Allotments	Duty to provide allotments. Power to improve and adapt land for allotments, and to let grazing rights	Small Holdings & Allotments Act 1908, ss. 23, 26, and 42
Baths and washhouses	Powers relating to provision of public baths, washhouses and bathing huts	Public Health Act 1936, ss. 221–223 and 225–227
Burial grounds, cemeteries and crematoria	Power to acquire and maintain Power to provide Power to agree to maintain monuments and memorials Power to contribute towards expenses of cemeteries	Open Spaces Act 1906, Ss 9 and 10 Local Government Act 1972, s. 214 Parish Councils and Burial Authorities (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1970, s. 1 Local Government Act 1972, s. 214(6)
Bus shelters	Power to provide and maintain shelters	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1953, s. 4
Bye-laws	Power to make bye-laws in regard to pleasure grounds Cycle parks Baths and washhouses Open spaces and burial grounds Mortuaries and post-mortem rooms Public Conveniences	Public Health Act 1875, s. 164 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, s.57(7) Public Health Act 1936, s.223 Open Spaces Act 1906, ss.15 and 12 Public Health Act 1936, s.198 Public Health Act 1936, s. 87
Clocks	Power to provide public clocks	Parish Councils Act 1957, s.2
Closed churchyards	Powers as to maintenance	Local Government Act 1972, s.2 15
Commons	Power for parish council to contribute to expense relating to scheme for the regulation and management of a common	Commons Act 1899, s.5
Common pastures	Powers in relation to providing common pasture	Smallholdings and Allotments Act 1908, s.34
Conference facilities	Power to provide and encourage the use of facilities	Local Government Act 1972, s.144
Community centres	Power to provide and equip buildings for use of clubs having athletic, social or recreational objectives	Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 s.19
Crime prevention	Powers to install and maintain equipment and establish and maintain a scheme for detection or prevention of crime	Local Government and Rating Act 1997, s.31
Drainage	Power to deal with ponds and ditches	Public Health Act 1936, s.260

Powers and duties of parish councils

Function	*Powers and duties*	*Statutory provisions*
Entertainment and the arts	Provision of entertainment and support of the arts	Local Government Act 1972, s.145
Financial assistance	Duty to require information	Local Government Act 1972, S.137A
General powers	Power to incur expenditure for certain purposes	Local Government Act 1972, s. 137
Gifts	Power to accept	Local Government Act 1972, s.139
Highways	Power to maintain footpaths and bridle-ways Power to light roads and public places Provision of litter bins Powers to provide parking places for bicycles and motor-cycles, and other vehicles Power to enter into agreement as to dedication and widening Power to provide roadside seats and shelters Consent of parish council required for ending maintenance of highway at public expense, or for stopping up or diversion of highway Power to complain to highway authority as to unlawful stopping up or obstruction of highway or unlawful encroachment on roadside wastes Power to provide traffic signs and other objects or devices warning of danger Power to plant trees and lay out grass verges etc. and to maintain them	Highways Act 1980, ss.43, 5 Parish Councils Act 1957, s.3; Highways Act 1980, s.301 Litter Act 1983, ss.5,6 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, ss.57, 63 Highways Act 1980, ss.30, 72 Parish Councils Act 1957, s.1 Highways Act 1980, ss.47, 116 Highways Act 1980, s.130 Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, s.72 Highways Act 1980, s.96
Investments	Power to participate in schemes of collective investment	Trustee Investments Act 1961, s.11
Land	Power to acquire by agreement, to appropriate, to dispose of Power to accept gifts of land	Local Government Act 1972, ss.124, 126, 127 Local Government Act 1972, s.139
Litter	Provision of receptacles	Litter Act 1983, ss.5,6
Lotteries	Powers to promote	Lotteries and Amusements Act 1976, s.7
Mortuaries and post mortem rooms	Powers to provide mortuaries and post mortem rooms	Public Health Act 1936, s.198
Open spaces	Power to acquire land and maintain	Public Health Act 1875, s.1 64 Open Spaces Act 1906, ss.9 and 10
Parish documents	Powers to direct as to their custody	Local Government Act 1972, s.226
Public buildings and village hall	Power to provide buildings for public meetings and assemblies	Local Government Act 1972, s.1 33
Public conveniences	Powers relating to provision of public conveniences	Public Health Act 1936, s.87
Recreation	Power to acquire land for or to provide public walks, pleasure grounds and open spaces and to manage and control them Power to provide gymnasiums, playing fields, holiday camps Provision of boating pools	(see Local Government Act 1972, Sched.14para.27) Public Health Act 1875, s.164 Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1890 s.44 Open Spaces Act 1906, ss.9 and 10 Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976, s.19 Public Health Act 1961, s.54
Town and country planning	Right to be notified of planning applications	Town and Country Planning Act 1990, Sched 1, para.8
Tourism	Power to encourage visitors and provide conference and other facilities	Local Government Act 1972, s.144
Traffic calming	Powers to contribute financially to traffic calming schemes	Highways Act 1980, s.274A
Transport	Powers in relation to car-sharing schemes, taxi fare concessions and information about transport Powers to make grants for bus services	Local Government and Rating Act 1997, s.26, 28 and 29 Transport Act 1985, S.106A
War memorials	Power to maintain, repair, protect and alter war memorials	War Memorials (Local Authorities' Powers) Act 1923, s.1; as extended by Local Government Act 1948, s.133
Water supply	Power to utilise well, spring or stream and to provide facilities for obtaining water from them	Public Health Act 1936, s.1 25

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the average total combined cost of clerking, insurance and audit fees for town and parish councils in England in the last year for which figures are available. [35389]

Mr. Woolas: Information about the cost of employing parish council clerks and the cost of insuring town and parish councils in England is not collected centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Information provided by the Audit Commission shows that parish and town councils and parish meetings collectively paid approximately £1.9 million in audit fees for the year 2003–04.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average precept at band D levied by town and parish councils in England was in each of the last 10 years. [35390]

Mr. Woolas: Reliable figures for the average band D council taxes set by parish and town councils in each of the last 10 years are not available. This is because—although the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister collects information on the total amounts of council tax precepted by parish and town councils—information on the taxbases (numbers of band D-equivalent dwellings) to which the precepts relate, which is needed to calculate average figures, is not collected centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

As stated in Table A2b of "Local Government Financial Statistics England No. 16 2005", the average band D council tax set by parish and town councils for 2005–06 has been estimated to be £42. But this is dependent upon an estimate of the taxbase for the area to which the precepts relate which is not robust enough to give a reliable set of figures over time.

The total amount of council tax precepted by parish and town councils in England in each of the last 10 years are tabled as follows. While this gives a broad indication of the trend in average precepts, it also reflects an increase in the number of parish and town councils, with about 150 new ones having been created since 1997.

£ million

Financial year	*Total amount precepted by parish and town councils*
1996–97	133
1997–98	144
1998–99	154
1999–2000	165
2000–01	181
2001–02	193
2002–03	210
2003–04	226
2004–05	242
2005–06	260

NORTHERN IRELAND

Cataract Operations

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cataract operations were carried out by the NHS in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [36383]

Mr. Woodward: Information on the number of cataract operations carried out in acute hospitals in Northern Ireland in each year from 1995–96 to 2004–05 (the latest year for which data are available) is shown in the following table.

	Number of cataract operations
2004–05	8,381
2003–04	8,501
2002–03	7,666
2001–02	7,187
2000–01	7,178
1999–2000	6,746
1998–99	6,487
1997–98	6,224
1996–97	5,556
1995–96	5,677

Source:
Hospital Inpatient System

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average waiting time is in Northern Ireland for a cataract operation. [36384]

Mr. Woodward: Waiting list information is collected by time band. It is therefore not possible to calculate the arithmetic mean (average) length of time waiting. It is however possible to identify the median or mid-point waiting time band.

The median waiting time band for in-patients who were waiting for a cataract operation at 30 September 2005 was 3–5 months.

Child Abuse Allegations

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much government funding has been set aside by the Council of Catholic Maintained Schools to meet the cost of potential child abuse allegations in the maintained sector of schooling in Northern Ireland. [36507]

Angela E. Smith: The Council for Catholic Maintained Schools does not set aside specific funding for the handling of child abuse allegations. Such matters are dealt with as part of the council's duties from within its annual recurrent budget.

Class Sizes

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average class size for *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in the integrated sector in Northern Ireland was in each of the last 10 years. [36315]

Angela E. Smith: The average class size for primary schools in the integrated sector in Northern Ireland was as follows:

	Average class size
1995–96	23.0
1996–97	22.8
1997–98	23.2
1998–99	23.8
1999–2000	24.3
2000–01	24.7
2001–02	24.9

	Average class size
2002–03	24.9
2003–04	24.5
2004–05	24.8

Notes:
1. The average class size quoted refers to year 1 to year 7 pupils in composite and non-composite classes.
2. The figures include controlled integrated and grant maintained integrated schools.

The requested information in respect of secondary schools was not collected at the time, and any attempt to do so retrospectively would be problematic and could be done only at disproportionate cost.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average class size is in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in the Southern Education and Library Board area. [36316]

Angela E. Smith: The average class size in primary schools in the Southern Education and Library Board area in 2004–05 was 22.7 pupils.

The requested information in respect of secondary schools was not collected at the time, and any attempt to do so retrospectively would be problematic and could be done only at disproportionate cost.

Note:
The average class size quoted refers to year 1 to year 7 pupils in composite and non-composite classes.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average class size was in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in the (i) Banbridge, (ii) Lurgan and (iii) Portadown area in each of the last 10 years. [36317]

Angela E. Smith: The requested information is as follows:

	Schools in		
	Banbridge	*Portadown*	*Lurgan*
1995–96	24.6	23.6	24.9
1996–97	25.9	23.6	25.2
1997–98	25.9	23.4	24.9
1998–99	25.4	23.2	24.8
1999–2000	25.5	23.0	24.6
2000–01	255	23.8	243
2001–02	24.7	24.1	24.4
2002–03	25.1	24.2	23.8
2003–04	26.7	23.3	23.7
2004–05	26.5	23.3	24.1

Note:
1. The average class size quoted refers to year 1 to year 7 pupils in composite and non-composite classes.
2. Data refers to schools located within the specified towns. Schools that are no longer open have not been included (except in the case of amalgamations).

The requested information in respect of secondary schools was not collected at the time, and any attempt to do so retrospectively would be problematic and could be done only at disproportionate cost.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the ratio of children to computers in each primary school in *(a)* Banbridge, *(b)* Lurgan and *(c)* Portadown was in each of the last 10 years. [36318]

Angela E. Smith: Information in the form requested is not readily available.

Neither the Department of Education (DE) nor the Education and Library Boards hold this level of detail. The only information available relates to the computers provided by DE under the Classroom 2000 Initiative (C2k).

The C2k service is provided as a core allocation to schools at no charge to their delegated budgets. It provides almost 40,000 PCs to all grant-aided schools in Northern Ireland. Rollout of the C2k service began in December 2001 and was completed in June 2004. C2k computers were provided to primary schools based on pupil numbers strictly in accordance with the following ratios:

Key Stage	*Ratio (computers:pupils)*
KS1	1:14
KS2	1:10

In aggregate, this equates to one PC is for every 12 pupils in each grant-aided primary school. Individual schools may also purchase additional ICT equipment from their delegated budgets or from other sources. Schools are not required to provide an inventory of this additional equipment. This means that the ratios quoted above represent the absolute minimum in any grant-aided school.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average class size was for *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools in the (i) controlled and (ii) maintained sector in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [36505]

Angela E. Smith: The average class size for primary schools in the controlled and maintained sectors in Northern Ireland was as follows:

	Controlled sector	*Maintained sector*
1995–96	24.0	24.1
1996–97	24.1	24.0
1997–98	23.8	23.8
1998–99	24.2	23.9
1999–2000	24.2	23.6
2000–01	24.0	23.4
2001–02	23.6	23.2
2002–03	23.5	23.1
2003–04	23.4	22.9
2004–05	23.2	22.8

Notes:
1. The average class size quoted refers to year 1 to year 7 pupils in composite and non-composite classes.
2. The figures for the controlled sector do not include controlled integrated schools.

The requested information in respect of secondary schools was not collected at the time, and any attempt to do so retrospectively would be problematic and could be done only at disproportionate cost.

Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessments

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the office holders in

the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessments at the time the current guidance for relationships and sexuality education was drawn up. [36257]

Angela E. Smith: Membership of the Northern Ireland Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessment at the time the current guidance for relationships and sexuality education was drawn-up (1999–2000) was as follows:

Chairman

Dr. Alan Lennon

Members

Mr. Brian Carlin

Mr. John Ellison

Mr. Donal Flanagan

Mr. Brian Henry

Miss Christine McGowan

Mr. Wilbert McKee

Professor Harry McMahon

Dr. Paul Madden

Mrs. Margaret Martin

Mr. Denis Moloney

Dr. Wilfred Mulryne

Ms Anne Murray

Miss Sheila Shanagher

Mr. Gordon Topping

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much public funding the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessments has received in each of the last five financial years. [36258]

Angela E. Smith: The information sought is as follows:

£000

	Public funding received
2000–01	11,230
2001–02	12,317
2002–03	13,996
2003–04	16,275
2004–05	17,302

These figures relate to funding provided by the Department of Education and, from 2003–04, also from the Department of Employment and Learning.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost was of preparing and publishing the Council for the Curriculum, Examinations and Assessments' current guidance for relationships and sexuality education in primary schools and post-primary schools. [36259]

Angela E. Smith: The cost of preparing and publishing the current guidance on relationships and sexuality education was £14,585.00.

Dentistry

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many dentists in *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* Upper Bann are accepting NHS patients; and if he will list the dentists concerned in Upper Bann. [36333]

Mr. Woodward: During the quarter ending November 2005, there were:

(a) 686 dentists in Northern Ireland with new NHS patient registrations and;

(b) 41 dentists in Upper Bann parliamentary constituency with new NHS patient registrations. The names of these dentists can be found in Table 1.

These new NHS patient registrations refer to patients who had not been registered with the dentist at the end of the previous quarter. These may have resulted from patients moving between dentists or may have been re-registration of patients who have not attended the dentist for some time and whose registrations will therefore have expired. Registrations may also have been due to registering for the first time, for example, children or people coming to reside in Northern Ireland.

Table 1: Dentists in Upper Bann parliamentary constituency who have registered new NHS patients during the quarter ending November 2005

Initial	*Surname*
K.	Adair
W. N.	Armstrong
A. S.	Armstrong
A.	Barker
H.	Burnett
M.	Copeland
S.	Crowe
B.	Friel
E.	Haughey
M. C.	Haycock
B. P. M.	Henry
S.	Herron
J. E. J.	Hulatt
I. J.	Hulatt
P. W.	Lamont
P. G.	Lawson
D. A.	Little
N.	Magee
P. J.	Maguire
D. J.	Maguire
I.	Martin
S.	Matchett
H. K.	McAllister
A.	McAreavey
G. P.	McCleary
S.	McConville
M.	McDonald
C. A.	McGreevy
C.	McGreevy
P. D.	McGuigan
D. J.	McKinney
D. H.	Millar
J. R.	O'Reilly
J.	Orr
K.	Palmer
R. A.	Smith
L. J.	Spence
A. J.	Stewart
P.	Teggart
H.	Topping
J.	Vaughan

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the 10 highest-paid employees in his Department; what the *(a)* job title and *(b)* salary including bonuses is of each; and whether the individual concerned is (i) a civil servant and (ii) a contractor in each case. [27576]

Mr. Woodward: The 10 highest-paid employees in the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) are civil servants. Their salary ranges can be found in the NIO Departmental Report 2005 (Table 7—Senior Civil Service Salaries), a copy of which is in the Library of the House.

Information on civil service reward, including colleagues at senior levels, is available at http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/index.asp

Examinations (Remarking)

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many pupils in Northern Ireland have requested to have their *(a)* GCSE and *(b)* A level examination papers re-marked in each of the last 10 years; and how many pupils had their grade improved as a result of re-marking in each year. [36319]

Angela E. Smith: The Council for the Curriculum, Assessment and Examinations has supplied details for candidates taking its examinations from 2001 when the information was computerised. This does not include candidates taking examinations with a number of other awarding bodies that offer GCSEs and A levels in Northern Ireland.

Series	*Total "A" level requests*	*Total "A" level upgrades*	*Total GCSE requests*	*Total GCSE upgrades*
2001				
Spring	153	0	3	0
Summer	1,462	168	1,515	291
Winter	[1]—	[1]—	16	1
2002				
Spring	81	0	0	0
Summer	1,768	158	1,627	344
Winter	[1]—	[1]—	18	5
2003				
Spring	161	0	3	0
Summer	2,156	203	2,027	533
Winter	[1]—	[1]—	33	2
2004				
Spring	181	1	3	0
Summer	1,956	224	2,472	645
Winter	[1]—	[1]—	44	12
2005				
Spring	186	2	0	0
Summer	2,265	237	2,927	705

[1] No A level examinations held in winter session

Floral Displays

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent by local authorities on floral displays in each council area in the Province in each of the last five years. [36354]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Fugitives

Lorely Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what estimate he has made of the cost of setting up the system for dealing with terrorist fugitives from justice proposed in the Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill. [34780]

Mr. Hain: The overall cost of the scheme envisaged in the Bill will depend on the numbers of eligible individuals. This is not known at this stage. It is therefore not possible to fully predict the costs of the scheme. The costs will be met from within the NIO's existing resources.

GPs

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many prior booked general practitioner appointments members of the public in Northern Ireland failed to keep in each of the last five years. [36380]

Mr. Woodward: The Department does not centrally hold information on missed appointments at GP surgeries. This could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Hospital Admissions

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people resident in the Republic of Ireland have been admitted to hospital in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [36378]

Mr. Woodward: The total number admissions[1] classified as an in-patient, day case or regular day/night admission at hospitals in Northern Ireland where the patient was recorded as a resident in the Republic of Ireland is given in the following table. Patients may have been admitted on more than one occasion.

Number of admissions[1] to hospital in Northern Ireland for residents of the Republic of Ireland

	Number
1995–96	1,485
1996–97	1,304
1997–98	1,424
1998–99	1,286
1999–2000	1,936
2000–01	2,669
2001–02	2,442
2002–03	2,324
2003–04	2,488
2004–05	2,910

[1] Deaths and discharges are used as an approximation for admissions

Source:
Hospital Inpatients System

Residents of countries within the European Union are entitled to treatment if they are taken ill while visiting another European Union state. Patients may also be transferred to another country under formal contractual arrangements between individual hospitals or health boards if the treatment required is not

available locally. Consequently residents from the Republic of Ireland are sometimes treated in Northern Ireland and vice versa.

Hypothyroidism

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many members of the public have complained about their NHS treatment for hypothyroidism in the Province in the last year for which figures are available; and what assessment he has made of the level of satisfaction with NHS treatment of hypothyroidism in the Province. [36350]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not available.

Influenza Vaccine

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the percentage uptake of vaccine for influenza was by those who were eligible in the Province in each of the last five years; and what the uptake has been to date in 2005. [36351]

Mr. Woodward: Information on the percentage uptake of vaccine for influenza in each of the last five years is detailed in the following table.

Percentage

	Uptake in over-65s	*Uptake in under-65s 'at risk'*
2000–01	68	n/a
2001–02	72	n/a
2002–03	72	56
2003–04	73	64
2004–05	73	65
2005–06[1]	59	51

n/a = There was no requirement to monitor uptake in this category during these years.

[1] The figures for 2005–06 only included those vaccinated up to the end of October 2005. The vaccination campaign does not end until 31 January 2006. Final 2005–06 influenza vaccination uptake figures will not be available before the beginning of April 2006.

Source:

Communicable Disease Surveillance Centre (Northern Ireland) (CDSC(NI)).

Irish Language Policy

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland during which periods the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has pursued an Irish language policy since 1997. [36352]

Angela E. Smith: The UK Charter for Regional or Minority Languages is an international convention designed to protect and promote regional and minority languages. In Northern Ireland it applies to Irish and Ulster-Scots. The UK Government signed the Charter on 2 March 2000 and it was ratified on 27 March 2001. The Charter came into force on 1 July 2001.

As Inter-departmental Charter Implementation Group, chaired by the Department of Culture, Arts & Leisure and comprising all Government Departments that operate in Northern Ireland, developed guidance for public servants to help them meet their obligations under the Charter. Interim guidance on Irish was issued to departments on July 2001 to assist in handling approaches to and from the public. Further guidance on both Irish and Ulster-Scots was issued in January 2005 and was revised in June 2005.

Since May 2005, the Department of Agriculture and Rural Development has been using this guidance in drafting its own Language Policy for Irish and Ulster-Scots and it is hoped to have this finalised by early next year.

National Industrial Symbiosis Programme

Lorely Burt: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland why Northern Ireland is not included in the National Industrial Symbiosis Programme. [36019]

Angela E. Smith: I understand from my noble Friend, Lord Rooker, that Northern Ireland received Barnett consequentials as part of the 2004 Spending Review. They were received as a result of funding allocated to DEFRA for increases in the standard rate of landfill tax. As part of the priorities and Budget process, decisions on the allocation of resources have to be taken in the context of local needs and priorities. Therefore, in this instance, it was decided to allocate these resources elsewhere within the Northern Ireland Block where the need is greatest.

NDPBs

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list those of his Department's advisory non-departmental public bodies which the Government is required to *(a)* consult prior to legislative proposals and *(b)* publish its response to advice from. [34684]

Ms Angela E Smith: The Government are required to *(a)* consult prior to legislative proposals the following advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by Northern Ireland Departments and the Northern Ireland Office:

The Drainage Council for Northern Ireland

The Statistics Advisory Committee

Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside

Northern Ireland Clinical Excellence Awards Committee

The Poisons Board

Boundary Commission (not required to consult but legislation is not possible without the Commission having reported recommendations following a review)

The Northern Ireland Building Regulations Advisory Committee

and *(b)* publish its response to advice from:

Northern Ireland Clinical Excellence Awards Committee

The Poisons Board

Boundary Commission

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which of the advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by his Department *(a)* have a statutory base, *(b)* publish their advice to Government, *(c)* publish an annual report and *(d)* lay an annual report before Parliament; and if he will indicate in each instance whether this is under a statutory requirement. [34685]

Angela E. Smith: The following advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by the Northern Ireland Departments and the Northern Ireland Office:

(a) have a statutory base

The Disability Living Allowance Board for Northern Ireland

The Charities Advisory Committee

The Drainage Council for Northern Ireland

Northern Ireland Water Council

The Statistics Advisory Committee

Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside

Historic Monuments Council

Historic Buildings Council

The Poisons Board

Boundary Commission

Independent Assessor of Military Complaints Procedures

Office of the Oversight Commissioner

The Northern Ireland Building Regulations Advisory Committee

(b) publish their advice to Government

The Drainage Council for Northern Ireland (in so far as minutes of its meetings are published)

Advisory Council on Infrastructure Investment (not a statutory requirement)

Northern Ireland Clinical Excellence Awards Committee (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000)

Boundary Commission (under a statutory requirement)

Independent Assessor of Military Complaints Procedures (under a statutory requirement)

Law Reform Advisory Committee for Northern Ireland

(c) publish an annual report

The Disability Living Allowance Board for Northern Ireland (no statutory requirement to do so but has a statutory requirement to present an annual report which is published on its website)

Northern Ireland Clinical Excellence Awards Committee (under the Freedom of Information Act 2000)

Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside

Historic Monuments Council

Historic Buildings Council

Law Reform Advisory Committee for Northern Ireland

(d) lay an annual report before Parliament

Historic Buildings Council (statutory requirement)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which of the advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by his Department *(a)* hold public meetings, *(b)* conduct public consultation exercises, *(c)* conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests, *(d)* publish a register of members' interests, *(e)* publish agendas for meetings and *(f)* publish the minutes of meetings; and whether in each case this is under a statutory requirement. [34686]

Angela E. Smith: The following advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by the Northern Ireland Departments and the Northern Ireland Office:

(a) hold public meetings

Research and Education Advisory Panel (no statutory requirement)

(b) conduct public consultation exercises

Research and Education Advisory Panel (no statutory requirement)

Boundary Commission (by statutory requirement)

The Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside

Law Reform Advisory Committee for Northern Ireland

(c) conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests

Research and Education Advisory Panel (no statutory requirement)

Law Reform Advisory Committee for Northern Ireland

(d) publish a register of members' interests

Research and Education Advisory Panel (no statutory requirement)

Boundary Commission

(e) publish agendas for meetings

Research and Education Advisory Panel (no statutory requirement)

Northern Ireland Water Council (no statutory requirement)

Statistics Advisory Committee (Freedom of Information requirement)

Northern Ireland Clinical Excellence Awards Committee (Freedom of Information requirement)

(f) publish the minutes of meetings

Drainage Council for Northern Ireland (no statutory requirement)

Research and Education Advisory Panel (no statutory requirement)

Advisory Council on Infrastructure Investment (no statutory requirement)

Statute Law Committee (has not met for some time but intention would be to publish via departmental website—no statutory requirement)

Northern Ireland Water Council (no statutory requirement)

Statistics Advisory Committee (Freedom of Information requirement)

Northern Ireland Clinical Excellence Awards Committee (Freedom of Information requirement)

Council for Nature Conservation and the Countryside (no statutory requirement)

Historic Buildings Council (no statutory requirement)

Historic Monuments Council (no statutory requirement)

The Northern Ireland Building Regulations Advisory Committee (Freedom of Information requirement)

Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what public consultation was conducted before the Government presented the Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill; [34628]

(2) if he will discuss with mental healthcare professionals the impact of the Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill. [35042]

Mr. Hanson: The Government's proposals to deal with terrorist suspects 'on the run' were published in May 2003 alongside the Joint Declaration. This issue had arisen in the context of talks with the parties.

Discussions about the technical operation of the scheme envisaged by the Bill have been conducted with interested authorities, including the PSNI.

A number of victims groups, church leaders, political parties and relevant staff associations were informed of the legislation in the 24 hours preceding introduction. Ministers have subsequently met with a number of those organisations to discuss the legislation.

There have been no discussions with healthcare professionals. However, Ministers will consider any requests for such meetings or discussions.

Nursing Staff

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland why nursing staff in Northern Ireland have been matched and banded differently from nursing staff in England and Wales. [36358]

Mr. Woodward: The Agenda for Change matching and banding processes are not yet fully completed in England, Wales or Northern Ireland. In the absence of final outcomes, it is impossible to make any meaningful comparisons at this stage.

PricewaterhouseCoopers

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which Government Departments in Northern Ireland which have worked with PricewaterhouseCoopers on their e-business strategies and e-government requirements *(a)* were and *(b)* are represented on the Project Board for the Northern Ireland Civil Service Electronic Human Resources contract. [34336]

Angela E. Smith: The Government Departments which have worked with PricewaterhouseCoopers on their e-business strategies/e-government requirements and *(a)* were and *(b)* are represented on the Project Board for the Northern Ireland Civil Service e-HR contract are; the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure, the Department of the Environment, the Department for Regional Development, the Office of the First and Deputy First Minister, the Department of Finance and Personnel, the Department of Enterprise Trade and Industry and the Department of Education

Public Administration (Savings)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will break down the £200 million annual savings that were indicated would be achieved in Northern Ireland as a result of the implementation of the Review of Public Administration by main budget heading. [36610]

Angela E. Smith: Consultants have estimated savings from the RPA decisions at £140-£200 million per year. These estimates are based on benchmarks of best practice achieved by other organisations and can be broken down as follows.

£ million

Organisation	*Estimated savings*
Local government	54–73
Education	18–30
Health	41–71

Note:
It is also estimated that a further £27 million could be saved through joined up working arrangements.

The estimates are very tentative and the actual figures will depend on how the proposals are implemented. The actual savings achieved will be available for reallocation to front line services in Northern Ireland.

Punishment Attacks

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many punishment attacks have been attributed by security forces in Northern Ireland to *(a)* the UDA, *(b)* the UVF, *(c)* the LVF, *(d)* the Provisional IRA, *(e)* the Continuity IRA and *(f)* the Real IRA for each of the last 15 months. [32139]

Mr. Woodward: I have been advised by the PSNI that 'punishment attacks', (known officially as 'Casualties') by attribution to specific organisations is not possible. However, you may find the following table on 'Casualties as a result of paramilitary style shootings and assaults' for each month since June 2004 to September 2005 of use. You may also find reports of the Independent Monitoring Commission a useful resource. Website: www.tsoshop.co.uk. You should note that the attribution is as perceived by the PSNI and that statistics are provisional and may be subject to minor amendment.

Casualties as a result of paramilitary style shootings and assaults

Month	*Loyalist Shootings*	*Republican Assaults*	*Shootings*	*Assaults*
2004				
June	11	9	2	3
July	7	6	2	4
August	9	2	4	1
September	9	8	1	1
October	11	4	0	4
November	4	5	0	6
December	2	5	1	5
2005				
January	4	5	4	4
February	6	5	2	5
March	4	5	0	5
April	5	3	2	3
May	11	9	0	5
June	3	13	0	3
July	6	4	2	1
August	7	6	0	0
September	9	9	0	0
Total	108	98	20	50

Quangos

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many members of *(a)* the Ulster Unionist Party, *(b)* the SDLP, *(c)* the Alliance Party, *(d)* the DUP and *(e)* the former Women's Coalition are members of a quango in Northern Ireland. [36560]

Angela E. Smith: Those appointed to the boards of public bodies in Northern Ireland are not required to declare if they are members of a political party. However, they are asked to declare any significant political activity they may have undertaken in the five years prior to the date of their application.

Information on the declared political activity of applicants and appointees to bodies sponsored by 'Northern Ireland's 11 Government Departments and the Northern Ireland Office can be found in the Public

Appointments annual report for 2004–05 and the NIO departmental report for 2005. These reports are available from the Library of the House and can be found on the internet at www.ofmdfmni.gov.uk/public-appointments and www.nio.gov.uk/departmental_report2005.pdf .

Road Upgrades

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to initiate an upgrade of the main road from Belfast International Airport to the M1 Moira Junction. [35851]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Roads Service Dr. Malcolm McKibbin has been asked to write to the hon. Lady in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcom McKibbin, dated 12 December 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding what plans he has to initiate an upgrade of the main road from Belfast International Airport to the M1 Moira Junction. I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

The main road from the Belfast International Airport to the M1 is via the A57 Templepatrick Road to Killead Roundabout and then the A26, joining the M1 at the Moira junction. The A26 is one of five Key Transport Corridors in the Province.

The Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan (RSTN TP) announced by the then Minister for Regional Development, John Spellar MP, on 22nd March 2005, presented a range of multi-modal transport initiatives to manage, maintain and develop Northern Ireland's Key Transport Network up to the year 2015.

During preparation of the RSTN TP, the transport links to Belfast International Airport were examined and it was concluded that the three roads radiating from the Killead Roundabout, including the A26, provided good links to the strategic road network, servicing Northern Ireland and beyond.

Nevertheless, three widened single carriageway schemes on the A26 have been included in the Plan to improve safety and provide overtaking opportunities.

Differential Acceleration Lanes have been contructed at the Nutts Corner roundabout at a cost of approximately £800k and a 0.8 kilometre climbing lane has been provided on the south bound section of this route at Carnkilly Road and Furze Road at a cost of £260K. A further climbing lane is planned on the A26 near Glenavy.

It is also proposed to provide part time signals at the junction of the eastbound off-slip from the M1 and the Moira roundabout at a cost of £40k to improve traffic management.

Although the Belfast Metropolitan Transport Plan (BMTP) did not recommend any specific major improvements to the A26/A57, it did recommend that route management strategies be undertaken on all key strategic routes. I can advise that it is planned to commence a route management strategy along the A26 during 2006/07, which will consider what other improvements may be necessary.

Schools (Abuse Claims)

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many complaints of *(a)* physical abuse and *(b)* sexual abuse were forwarded to the police by (i) Roman Catholic Diocesan officials and (ii) schools in the maintained sector in Northern Ireland in each year for which figures are available. [36314]

Mr. Woodward: The Police Service of Northern Ireland do not hold this information on a central record. To obtain such details would require a manual trawl of crime files which would be at disproportionate cost.

Secondary Teachers

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many secondary school teachers in Northern Ireland have *(a)* a first class degree, *(b)* a 2:1 degree, *(c)* a 2:2 degree, *(d)* a third class degree and *(e)* no degree. [36310]

Angela E. Smith: The number of current teachers in secondary schools in Northern Ireland who have *(a)* a first class degree, *(b)* a 2:1 degree, *(c)* a 2:2 degree, *(d)* a third class degree and *(e)* no degree are as follows:

Table 1: Teachers currently employed in secondary schools

	School type		
	Secondary	*Special*	*Total*
Higher degree	286	17	303
First class degree	179	23	202
2:1 degree	1,949	206	2,155
2:2 degree	1,863	168	1,031
Third class degree	160	8	168
Pass degree	1,838	207	2,045
No degree	1,174	245	1,419
Total	7,449	874	8,323

Notes:

1. Contains full-time and pro-rata teachers.
2. "Pass degree" column includes teachers' records with one of the following degree classifications: no classification, unknown classification and Pass degree classification.
3. "No degree" column refers to teachers with no degree details recorded on Teachers' Pensions, Pay and Administration system or teachers whose only degree qualification held is unverified; these teachers hold other teaching qualifications.
4. These figures have been compiled from the teachers paid in relevant schools in November 2005.

Table 2: Current temporary/substitute teachers

	Number
Higher degree	380
First class degree	320
2:1 degree	2,945
2:2 degree	2,973
Third class degree	268
Pass degree	2,835
No degree	6,534
Total	16,255

Notes:

1. Contains ALL temporary and part-time hourly paid teachers.
2. "Pass degree" column includes teachers' records with one of the following degree classifications: no classification, unknown classification and Pass degree classification.
3. "No degree" column refers to teachers with no degree details recorded on Teachers' Pensions, Pay and Administration system or teachers whose only degree qualification held is unverified; these teachers hold other teaching qualifications.
4. These figures have been compiled from ALL substitute/temporary teachers currently held on the system.

Sperrin Lakeland Trust

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will take steps to ensure a fair representation from the Omagh area in filling vacancies within the Board of Sperrin Lakeland Trust. [35847]

Mr. Woodward: Appointments to the board of Sperrin Lakeland Health and Social Services Trust will be made in accordance with the Department's appointment procedures, which are governed by the Code of Practice issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland.

I have the ultimate responsibility for these appointments which will be based solely on merit. Non-executive directors are not appointed to represent any particular interest or group but because of the personal skills and experience they possess which will assist the running of the trust.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what *(a)* the criteria are and *(b)* selection process is for filling the vacancies for the Board of Sperrin Lakeland Trust. [35849]

Mr. Woodward: The information is as follows.

(a) For the position of trust non-executive director in Sperrin Lakeland HSS Trust, candidates had to meet five standard essential criteria, namely:

Making an impact with others;

Committing to the non-executive role;

Thinking strategically;

Analytical thinking; and

Learning and self-development.

Shortlisting was required and the specific desirable criteria for these posts were experience in the fields of:

Human resources; or

Finance; or

Health and social care.

(b) The standard departmental public appointments selection process, which is consistent with the Code of Practice issued by the Commissioner for Public Appointments for Northern Ireland, is underway to fill the non-executive director vacancies. The outcome is expected in the near future.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people are on the public appointments list to be considered for vacancies on the Board of Sperrin Lakeland Trust; and when he expects the vacancies within the Board of Sperrin Lakeland Trust to be filled. [35850]

Mr. Woodward: The Department advertises appointment opportunities widely and has established a database of potential candidates, who have been assessed as suitable to be considered for a range of appointments. Two-hundred and twelve candidates were contacted about the vacancies on the board of Sperrin Lakeland Trust. Interviews took place on 28 November and 5 and 6 December 2005 and a decision will be made in the near future.

Sustainable Development

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how often the group of deputy secretaries known as the sustainable development champions within the Department of the Environment met in each of the past 12 months; and if he will list the occasions on which the Permanent Secretary of the Department of the Environment chaired such a meeting. [35342]

Angela E. Smith: A Sustainable Development Champion has been nominated from each of the 11 departments within the Northern Ireland Civil Service. A meeting of the champions as a group was held on 7 June 2005 shortly after their nominations were finalised. The Permanent Secretary of the Department of the Environment chaired the meeting on 7 June 2005 and also chaired bilateral meetings with Champions on 2 and 4 August 2005 and the 8 and 13 of September 2005.

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the sustainable development strategy for Northern Ireland will be published by the Department of the Environment. [35345]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of the Environment proposes to publish the Sustainable Development Strategy for Northern Ireland by the end of March 2006.

Tyrone County Hospital

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the *(a)* correspondence, *(b)* meetings and *(c)* discussions he has had with those (i) against and (ii) in favour of his plans for acute services and accident and emergency at the Tyrone County Hospital; and if he will make a statement. [35319]

Mr. Woodward: In recent months there have been a large number of meetings with local communities and their representatives in relation to the future provision of acute services in the Sperrin Lakeland area. These meetings are ongoing.

On 11 October I issues for consultation the paper Making Services Safer in Sperrin Lakeland Trust. The consultation period lasted for six weeks, ending on 25 November.

A significant volume of written comment has been received in response to the proposals set out in the consultation document. This also must be set in the context of three years of consultation about services across Northern Ireland and including Sperrin Lakeland. My officials are now collating and analysing those recent comments for consideration and the Department will publish a summary of the responses received in the near future.

Ulster Scots and Gaelic

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to reconstitute the membership of the Ulster Scots Agency Board. [34771]

Mr. Hain: The provisions for making appointments to the Boards of the North South Implementation Bodies are made in the North/South Co-operation (Implementation Bodies) (Northern Ireland) Order 1999. The British and Irish Governments have decided to extend the periods of appointment of all current Board members by a further year until 12 December 2006, but on the understanding that, since both Governments are committed to an early restoration of devolution and the institutions, the terms of office may be subject to review in the event of political progress.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will ensure equality of funding between Ulster Scots and Gaelic. [36546]

Mr. Hanson: Her Majesty's Government remains wholly committed to affording equal respect and recognition to the Irish and Ulster Scots languages and culture. The funding provided to each reflects their differing ranges of projects, programmes and supported organisations and is determined on the basis of the approved actions in their respective annual business plans.

Vehicle Excise Duty

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland paid the *(a)* full rate of vehicle excise duty and *(b)* reduced rate for carbon emission vehicles in each of the last 10 years. [36508]

Angela E. Smith: In 2001, a system of relating the rate of vehicle excise duty payable by cars and light vans to the level of CO_2 emission was introduced. Cars and light vans registered before 1 March 2001 pay excise duty according to their engine size. Breaking down the CO_2 category by band could be undertaken only at disproportionate costs.

The number of cars and light vans licensed in these categories at 31 December each year since 2001 is set out in the following table.

	Category		
	By CO_2 emission	*By engine size*	*Total*
31 December 2001	55,519	589,449	644,968
31 December 2002	126,011	540,720	666,731
31 December 2003	200,728	511,185	711,913
31 December 2004	274,411	462,787	737,198

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many motorists in Northern Ireland have been found guilty of non-payment of vehicle excise duty in each of the last 10 years. [36509]

Angela E. Smith: It is the policy to offer out of court settlements to motorists detected driving unlicensed vehicles. Summons are only issued where this course of action has failed.

The number of cases which attracted payment for vehicle excise duty offences over each of the past 10 years were:

	Number
1995–96	27,611
1996–97	26,116
1997–98	24,802
1998–99	14,897
1999–2000	13,158
2000–01	15,428
2001–02	15,966
2002–03	13,932
2003–04	10,876
2004–05	24,464

Vehicle Licence Detection Units

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many mobile vehicle licence detection units were in operation in Northern Ireland in *(a)* 2000 and *(b)* 2005. [36766]

Angela E. Smith: Wheel-clamping units were introduced in Northern Ireland in 1998 and camera detection units in 2001. The number of detection units for each of the two years are:

2000

1 wheel-clamping

2005

2 wheel-clamping

3 permanent camera, and

3 temporary camera units

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what criteria are used to determine the siting of mobile vehicle licence detection units in Northern Ireland. [36767]

Angela E. Smith: Mobile vehicle detection is undertaken by automatic number plate reader (ANPRs) units. ANPRs are deployed on a rolling programme across Northern Ireland. The main criterion is to maximise the potential to detect unlicensed vehicles but recognising the need to ensure that the siting does not cause a traffic hazard.

ANPRs are also deployed as requested by PSNI to assist in joint exercises with other enforcement authorities.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many vehicle owners were prosecuted as a result of mobile vehicle licence detection units in Northern Ireland in each year since 2000. [36768]

Angela E. Smith: Units to wheel-clamp unlicensed vehicles were introduced in Northern Ireland in 1998 and camera detection units in 2001. Output from the wheel-clamping units is measured in the number of vehicles clamped not prosecutions. Separate recording of prosecutions arising from enforcement action by camera units did not begin until 2003–04. For vehicle excise duty offences it is the normal policy to offer out of court settlements rather than proceed direct to court. Resulting from camera detections, in 2003–04 1,695 people paid out of court (OCS) settlements and 217 were prosecuted in court. In 2004–05, 1,830 paid OCSs and 306 were prosecuted in court.

Violent Offender and Sex Offender Register

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the Police Information Technology Organisation's roll out of the Violent Offender and Sex Offender Register in Northern Ireland. [34557]

Mr. Hanson: The Violent Offender and Sex Offender Register (ViSOR), is a secure, confidential, fully auditable national database which allows the police, probation and prison services to monitor and manage sexual and violent offenders and others who may cause serious harm to the public. The Police Service of

Northern Ireland has full connectivity to ViSOR and will be implementing it throughout the organisation within the next few weeks. Northern Ireland Prison Service is considering how they might use ViSOR in the future and the Probation Board for Northern Ireland is also investigating access to ViSOR.

Zebra Mussels

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he has taken to deal with the outbreak of zebra mussels in Lough Neagh. [36556]

Angela E. Smith: I can confirm that zebra mussels have become established in Lough Neagh at Kinnego Marina. They are expected to spread and reach maximum numbers in three or four years time. This will have uncertain implications for fish, birds, water abstraction, navigation and other interests within the Lough. Nothing can be done to eradicate them or prevent their spread within Lough Neagh.

Officials are investigating their present distribution and putting in place a monitoring programme to track their future expansion and impact on other biological elements in the lake. Users have been alerted to the situation and we will work closely with them to develop mitigation measures.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Legislative Consultation

Mr. Amess: To ask the Leader of the House if he will list those of his Department's advisory non-departmental public bodies which the Government are required to *(a)* consult prior to legislative proposals and *(b)* publish their response to advice from. [34671]

Nigel Griffiths: The Office of the Leader of the House of Commons does not sponsor any advisory non-departmental public bodies.

Pay Rise (Hon. Members)

Bob Spink: To ask the Leader of the House what recent representations he has received regarding the pay rise for hon. Members; and if he will make a statement. [35654]

Mr. Hoon: As Leader of the House, I receive comments on a regular basis from a range of Members on the next SSRB Review of Parliamentary Pay and Allowances.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Archbishop Peter Smith

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what recent discussions her Department has had with Archbishop Peter Smith about the operation of the Mental Capacity Act 2005; and if she will make a statement. [33786]

Ms Harman: The Mental Capacity Act is about helping vulnerable people, and those who care for them, to make decisions. It provides a clear legal framework and safeguards to ensure that decisions will always be taken in the individual's best interests.

Throughout the development of this legislation the Government have listened to those with an interest in it. This includes Parliament, people who may lack capacity and their carers and families, many voluntary organisations and the Catholic Church. There have been no recent discussions with the Catholic Church on the operation of the Mental Capacity Act.

The Act is due to be fully implemented by April 2007. The Government will continue to work closely with all stakeholders who have an interest up to that date and beyond to ensure that we deliver the real benefits that the legislation sets out.

Chelmsford Crown Court

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will place in the Library a list of the cases tried by each of the Crown court judges sitting at Chelmsford Crown Court in each of the last five years for which information is available. [36187]

Ms Harman: A list of the cases tried by each of the Crown court judges sitting at Chelmsford Crown Court in each of the last five years has now been placed in the Library.

Information Commissioner

Peter Law: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the adequacy of resources made available to the Information Commissioner to carry out his responsibilities; and what discussions she has had with the Information Commissioner on ways to speed up the processing of Freedom of Information Act appeals made to his office. [35802]

Ms Harman: The Secretary of State is in regular dialogue with the Information Commissioner about his responsibilities under the Freedom of Information Act. The Information Commissioner has analysed his current workload and concluded that the high volume of appeals that he is processing at present are a result of the initial influx of requests that public authorities experienced in the first few months of FOI implementation.

Legal Costs

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what limits apply to legal costs for personal injury cases; and what plans there are to raise the limits. [33414]

Ms Harman: Certain limits apply to the costs recoverable in cases under the small claims track and in relation to trials in fast track cases. In addition, Part 45 of the Civil Procedure Rules also provides for other fixed costs and fixed success fees in certain circumstances. The Government have no current plans to raise these limits.

National Security Appeals Panel

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether the judgments have been published in each case decided by the National Security Appeals Panel under *(a)* section 28 of the Data Protection Act 1998 and *(b)* section 60 of the Freedom of Information Act 2000 in each calendar year since its inception; and if she will make a statement. [31830]

Ms Harman: I refer the member for Hornsey and Wood Green to the answer I gave on 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 643W.

Royal Household

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 5 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1058W, on state prayers, what constitutes the Royal Household for the purposes of her reply; to which *(a)* members of HM the Queen's family and *(b)* officials it extends; and if she will make a statement. [36261]

Ms Harman: For the purposes of the reply quoted, The Royal Household is taken to include those employed by members of the Royal Family who are authorised to act on behalf of the member of the Royal Family in fulfilling his or her public and official roles. When the term Royal Family is used in an official context it refers to The Queen and those members of Her Majesty's family who regularly undertake official duties and functions on Her Majesty's behalf.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Adviser Discretionary Fund

Helen Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the average payment was from the Adviser Discretionary Fund in each year since July 2001; and how many people received payments from the fund in each year; [35080]

(2) what maximum amount can be claimed under the Adviser Discretionary Fund in any 12-month period; when this was last revised; and how he notifies the House of such changes; [35081]

(3) how much his Department spent on the Adviser Discretionary Fund in each year since July 2001; and how much his Department has budgeted to spend on it in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07 and *(c)* 2007–08. [35082]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to my hon. Friend.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 12 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions asking what the average payment was from the Adviser Discretion Fund (ADF) in each year since July 2001, how many people received payments from the fund, what maximum amount can be claimed from the fund in any 12 month period, when this was last reviewed, how the House is notified of such changes, how much the Department spent on ADF in each year since July 2001, and how much the Department has budgeted to spend on it in the current year and 2006–07 and 2007–08. These areas fall within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Information relating to the total spend, the average value of a payment and the number of awards made for each year since ADF was introduced in July 2001 is contained in the table below. The number of individuals that have received an award of ADF is not available because a customer may access the ADF more than once if necessary.

£

	Total spend	*Average payment*	*Number of awards*
2001–02	5,687,775	60	104,388
2002–03	16,285,006	76	138,370
2003–04	33,621,757	97	345,189
2004–05	40,543,285	99	409,389

£28,044,000 has been allocated for the ADF in this financial year. Jobcentre Plus has not yet agreed final ADF allocations for the 2006–07 and 2007–08 financial years.

On 9 May 2005 the procedures governing the administration of the ADF changed. The maximum amount that can be paid to a customer through ADF in any 12 month period without a business case to support the payment was reduced from £300 to £100. As this relates to a change of operational procedures and not a change in the nature of the ADF, it was not considered necessary to notify the House.

I hope this is helpful.

Agency Staff

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many full-time equivalent staff were employed by *(a)* the Employment Service, *(b)* the Benefits Agency and *(c)* Jobcentre Plus in each of the last five years; and what the projected staff levels are in each organisation for the next three years. [34385]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 12 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions concerning how many full time equivalent staff were employed by a) the Employment Service b) the Benefits Agency and c) Jobcentre plus in each of the last five years, and the projected staff levels in Jobcentre Plus for the next three years. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

The tables below show full time equivalent staff for each organisation for the last five financial years.

Year ending 31 March	*Employment Service*	*Benefits Agency*
2001	34,110	70,510
2002	34,040	68,081

In 2002, following the formation of the Department for Work and Pensions, the Benefits Agency and Employment Service ceased to exist. As work from the Benefits Agency was divided between the Pensions Service and Jobcentre Plus, a direct comparison of total staffing before and after this change cannot be made.

Year ending 31 March	Jobcentre Plus
2003	78,512
2004	79,044
2005	73,900

The projected staffing levels for Jobcentre Plus the next three years are:

	Projected staffing levels
31 March 2006	71,008
31 March 2007	68,350
31 March 2008	66,461

I hope this is helpful.

Benefit Exit Rates

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have come off benefits and entered work in *(a)* West Yorkshire and *(b)* Normanton constituency since 2001. [31564]

Margaret Hodge: The information is not available in the format requested.

The Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No 244—Destination of benefit leavers 2004—showed that nationally, 62 per cent. of claimants leaving income support, incapacity benefit or jobseekers allowance entered employment of 16 hours or more a week. Copies of the report are available in the Library.

Benefits Helpline

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions why the automated response on the *(a)* income support and *(b)* incapacity benefit telephone helpline was in Welsh only on 30 November. [34596]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 12 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning why the automated response on the *(a)* Income Support and *(b)* Incapacity Benefit telephone helpline was in Welsh only on 30 November. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

For those customers who wish to contact the Wrexham Processing Centre there are two telephone numbers they can use, one for those wanting to speak in Welsh and the other for those preferring to use English. I am not aware that there was a problem with the English Language line on 30 November. Having investigated this matter, I can confirm that the English Language line is operating correctly.

There is an issue with the Welsh Language telephone line incorrectly providing an English greeting, although once the customer has selected the option for the benefit they wish to discuss, they are transferred to a Welsh speaking member of staff. We are working with British Telecom to rectify this problem as a matter of urgency.

I hope this is helpful.

Customer Management Systems

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the areas where the customer management system is in use; and when he expects the system to be rolled out to all areas. [34286]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 12 December 2005:

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has asked me to reply to your question concerning the deployment of the Customer Management System (CMS) in the Jobcentre Plus network. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

The following list shows the areas where CMS is in full or partial use. CMS is being implemented in tandem with the wider rollout of the Jobcentre Plus service and I expect this to be substantially completed by Summer 2006.

Region/District	Fully rolled out-partial rollout
East Midlands	
Derbyshire	Full
Leicestershire	Full
Lincolnshire and Rutland	Partial
Northamptonshire	Full
Nottinghamshire	Partial
East of England	
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	Partial
Cambridgeshire	Partial
Norfolk	Partial
Essex	Partial
Suffolk	Full
London	
Brent, Harrow and Hillingdon	Partial
Central London	Partial
City and East London	Partial
Lambeth, Southwark and Wandsworth	Partial
North London	Partial
South East London	Partial
South London	Partial
North East London	Partial
West London	Full
North East	
City of Sunderland	Partial
Durham	Partial
Gateshead and South Tyneside	Full
Northumbria	Full
Tees Valley	Full
North West	
Cheshire and Warrington	Partial
Cumbria	Full
Lancashire East	Partial
Greater Manchester Central	Partial
Greater Manchester East	Partial
Greater Manchester West	Partial
Greater Mersey	Full
Lancashire West	Partial
Liverpool and Wirral	Full
Scotland	
ADGI	Partial
Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders	Partial
Forth Valley and Fife	Partial
Glasgow	Partial
HICC	Partial
Lanarkshire and East Dunbartonshire	Partial

Region/District	Fully rolled out-pa: tial rollout
South East	
Bucks and Oxon and Berkshire	Partial
Hampshire	Partial
Kent	Partial
Surrey and Sussex	Partial
South West	
Devon and Cornwall	Full
Dorset and Somerset	Full
Gloucester, Wiltshire and Swindon	Partial
West of England	Partial
Wales	
Bridgend	Full
Cardiff and Vale	Full
Eastern Valleys	Partial
N.W. Wales	Partial
S.E. Wales	Full
Swansea Bay	Partial
West Wales	Partial
Wrexham and N.W. Coast	Partial
West Midlands	
Birmingham and Solihull	Partial
Black Country	Partial
Coventry and Warwickshire	Partial
Staffordshire	Partial
The Marches	Partial
Yorkshire and Humberside	
Barnsley Doncaster and Rotherham	Partial
Bradford	Partial
Calderdale and Kirklees	Partial
East Yorkshire and Humber	Partial
Leeds	Partial
North Yorkshire	Partial
Sheffield	Full
Wakefield	Partial

I hope this is helpful.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average number of days taken *(a)* to call back and *(b)* from call back to interview date for each Customer Management System centre was in the last period for which figures are available. [34273]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 12 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning what the average number of days taken is *(a)* to call back and *(b)* from call back to interview date for each Customer Management System centre. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Our aim is to call customers back within 24 hours of the inbound call. The latest data we have available is for week ending 25 November 2005 where the average across all contact centres is 1.6 days. The call back data for each CMS contact centre operating call-backs for the same period is listed in the table below.

Week ending 25 November 2005

Contact Centre	Time taken to call customer (days ahead or day ahead)
Blackburn	2
Bootle	4
Bridgend	1
Coventry	3
Derby	1
Dundee	3
Garston	1
Grimsby	1
Halifax	Within 1
Hastings	1
Lincoln	1
Marton Mere	3
Middlesbrough	1
Newcastle	3
Paisley	1
Pembroke Dock	2
Poole	2
Sheffield	1
Taunton	3
Telford	1
Torquay	Within 1

We have an internal standard to complete work-focused interviews within 4 days of initial contact with the customer. Twelve of our centres captured data from 273 Local Service Outlets over a sample period from 16th September 2005 to 25th November 2005 on the waiting times for these interviews. This information is in the table.

Week ending	Average waiting time in days
16 September 2005	7.2
23 September 2005	7.7
30 September 2005	8.0
7 October 2005	7.8
14 October 2005	8.5
21 October 2005	8.0
28 October 2005	7.6
4 November 2005	7.3
11 November 2005	6.2
18 November 2005	5.0
25 November 2005	5.3

I hope this is helpful.

Debt Advisers

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many debt advisers are working in *(a)* West Yorkshire, *(b)* Wakefield district and *(c)* Normanton constituency; and whether staffing levels are planned to increase over the Christmas period. [35406]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to my hon. Friend.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 12 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning how many debt advisers are working in *(a)* West Yorkshire *(b)* Wakefield district and *(c)* Normanton constituency and whether staffing levels are planned to increase over the Christmas period. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

No debt advice is given by Jobcentre Plus staff in any Jobcentre including West Yorkshire. In addition to dealing with general benefit entitlement and providing help to customers to move into work, staff handle Crisis Loan and Budgeting Loan applications but do not offer or give debt advice.

Staff resources over the Christmas period has been finalised, with staffing levels set in order to deal with anticipated numbers of benefit claims and predicted Crisis Loan applications.

I hope this is helpful.

Denise Christina Arathoon

Andrew Miller: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much the Department has spent on *(a)* administrative and *(b)* legal proceedings in relation to Denise Christina Arathoon. [24520]

Mrs. McGuire: It is not possible to accurately quantify the administrative costs as all administrative work resulting from the court case will be absorbed within normal work processes.

The Department spent an estimated £10,350 on the legal proceedings. This includes Mrs. Arathoon's legal costs in the Court of Appeal, but does not include work done by the Department's staff.

Departmental Reviews/Publications

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list *(a)* reviews undertaken and *(b)* departmental publications issued on (i) housing benefit and (ii) council tax benefit since 1997. [23447]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Department keeps both housing benefit and council tax benefit under constant Review.

The Department publishes a number of handbooks and guidance manuals, together with necessary amendments, to aid local authorities in the administration of these benefits. In addition, the Department issues circulars and bulletins to local authorities, which provide necessary information on a more immediate basis. Since 1997, the Department has issued 407 administration circulars, 175 fraud circulars, 64 subsidy circulars, 18 general bulletins and 19 urgent bulletins.

The Department also publishes research and statistical reports. A list of reports relating to housing benefit and council tax benefit, together with details of relevant web sites, has been placed in the Library.

Economic Regeneration (Ribble Valley)

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the Department's contribution to economic regeneration in Ribble Valley. [34069]

Margaret Hodge: Since 1997 claimant unemployment has fallen by 34 per cent., long term unemployment by 68 per cent. and long term youth unemployment by 67 per cent. in Ribble Valley. The number of out of work lone parents has fallen by 33 per cent. and those claiming incapacity benefits has fallen by 8 per cent. over the same period.

East Lancashire Jobcentre Plus district has made a significant contribution to these successes. In addition to the new deals, which have helped 840 people in to work, they also operate Action Team for Jobs, Progress2Work Linkup and Workstep helping a broad range of the local community to improve their skills and find work.

Specific success stories include the Ethnic Minority Outreach programme. This small team works with the local Asian community by, for example, announcing recruitments in mosques and placing adverts in local businesses. Since May 2005, 116 people have been helped in to jobs by this team.

The Pathways to Work Incapacity Benefit Reforms Pilot has been operational in East Lancashire since April 2004 and is already achieving excellent results and feedback. The district achieved 1,179 job entries from the sick and disabled group of customers during the period April 2004 to March 2005 in comparison with 384 for the same period the year before.

The district is also involved in the Extension of the Pathways to Work Pilot. The Extension Pilot has been operational In East Lancashire from 7 February 2005 and to date has resulted in 70 customers returning to work.

Housing Benefit

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 14 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1271W, on housing benefit, what factors explain the variation in the proportion of tenants whose local housing allowance is being paid direct to the landlord in each of the nine Pathfinder authorities. [29994]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Department has not undertaken any further analysis to identify additional factors that influence the variation in the proportion of tenants whose local housing allowance is being paid directly to the landlord in Pathfinder areas.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the cost of raising the restriction on the number of hours a week a housing benefit recipient can study to *(a)* 20 hours and *(b)* 24 hours. [33027]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available from which to make such an estimate.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) if he will meet representatives of the Foyer Federation to discuss the impact of housing benefit regulations on the ability of young people in housing need to achieve qualifications below degree level; [33028]

(2) what assessment he has made of the merits of ending the restriction on the number of hours a week a housing benefit recipient can study if they are retaking GCSEs, studying for A-Levels or for an NVQ at level 3 or below; [33029]

(3) what assessment he has made of the effects of the 16 hour housing benefit rule on the number of young people over the age of 19 who are able to take up education and training opportunities without losing their homes; and if he will make a statement; [33046]

(4) if he will amend the 16 hour rule for housing benefit for young people between the ages of 19 and 21 years. [34171]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 1 December 2005]:* Work to review the interaction between study rules and benefits is on-going.

Ministerial colleagues have already met and discussed through correspondence a wide range of issues relating to the rules on study and housing benefit with representatives from the Foyer Federation.

Individuals receiving housing benefit can currently study for qualifications below degree level, as long as it is for less than 16 guided learning hours a week. This is not always a significant barrier as many full-time Learning and Skills Council courses are just over 12 guided learning hours a week.

It is a matter of record that the policy of both this and previous Governments has been to exclude most, but not all, full-time students from entitlement to housing benefit; since 1990 financial support for those students opting to study full time has been seen as the responsibility of the education system, rather than the benefit system.

One of the outcomes of the recent Social Exclusion Report "Review of Financial Support, Supporting Young People to Achieve" is that from April 2006, if someone is in non-advanced education when they turn 19 they can continue to receive certain benefits, including income support, and therefore housing benefit, and education maintenance allowance until they have completed their current course of study or reach age 20.

This is clearly an improvement on the previous situation, but it is likely that there will still be some young people who have had to abandon their attempts to catch up on learning because they reach 20 before they have finished their course. Because of this, the Government are committed to keeping this new age limit under review.

Additionally, we recognise that for some a different approach may be needed. Consequently, from next September as part of the New Deal for Skills we will be piloting in some Jobcentre Plus districts the effect of allowing low skilled jobseekers to take up full-time further education courses as a route into work when a lack of skills is considered to be a significant barrier.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average administration cost per claimant was of housing benefit in each of the last five years in each benefit authority. [34283]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Department does not collect management information relating to the cost to local authorities of administering housing benefit under the existing national scheme. The Department has recently commissioned a research project looking into the overall administration costs of housing benefit and council tax benefit which may help us obtain an indication of these costs in the future.

Mr. McGovern: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the cost of removing the single room rent upper limit on housing benefit provisions for those aged under 25 years. [36041]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 8 December 2005]:* The cost of removing the single room rent upper limit on housing benefit for those aged under 25 years in the private rented sector has been estimated to be at least £60 million per year.

Inactive Benefits

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many recipients of inactive benefits in Coventry South moved back to work in 2004–05. [33510]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* The information is not available in the format requested. The Department for Work and Pensions Research Report No 244—Destination of benefit leavers 2004—showed that nationally, 62 per cent. of claimants leaving income support, incapacity benefit or jobseekers allowance entered employment of 16 hours or more a week. Copies of the report are available in the Library.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many existing incapacity benefit claimants who voluntarily entered the Pathways to Work pilots had been claiming benefit for *(a)* one month, *(b)* two to three months, *(c)* three to six months, *(d)* six to 12 months, *(e)* 12 to 24 months and *(f)* 24 months and over prior to entering the pilot; and what proportion found work. [25136]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* The available information is in the tables.

Incapacity benefit claimants who have volunteered to enter Pathways to Work—Total

Length of claim prior to entering pilot	*Pathways starts*	*Job entries*	*Job entry proportion (percentage)*
Less than three months	910	230	26
Three to six months	650	310	47
Six to 12 months	1,850	650	35
12 to 24 months	2,720	1,030	38
More than 24 months	6,400	2,190	34

Incapacity benefit claimants who have volunteered to enter Pathways to Work—attended Work Focused Interviews (WFIs)

Length of claim prior to entering pilot	*WFIs attended*	*Job entries*	*Job entry proportion (percentage)*
Less than three months	760	170	22
Three to six months	270	130	47
Six to 12 months	750	290	38
12 to 24 months	1,110	420	38
More than 24 months	2,440	910	37

Incapacity benefit claimants who have volunteered to enter Pathways to Work—attended Work Focused Interviews (WFIs) and Choices starts

Length of claim prior to entering pilot	*WFIs and Choices starts*	*Job entries*	*Job entry proportion (percentage)*
Less than three months	130	70	55
Three to six months	80	50	63
Six to 12 months	220	130	58
12 to 24 months	350	160	47
More than 24 months	760	370	48

New incapacity benefit claimants eligible for mandatory entry in to Pathways to Work

	Total	*Job entries*	*Job entry proportion (percentage)*
Total Pathways Starts	135,460	15,190	11
Work Focus Interviews Attended	44,460	6,990	16
Work Focus Interviews Attended and Choices start	9,920	3,500	35

Notes:
1. Data is to the end of August 2005.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.
3. Incapacity benefit durations of one month cannot be identified separately.

Source:
Pathways to Work Evaluation Database

Income Support

Vera Baird: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will apply the same rules for payment of carer's allowance and income support to carers of people who are in receipt of low rate disability living allowance while applying for a higher rate due to their condition worsening as applies to the payment of those benefits to carers of people whose application for disability living allowance is still being processed; and if he will make a statement. [36598]

Mrs. McGuire: The rules governing entitlement to carer's allowance and any consequent entitlement there might be to a carer premium in the income-related benefits or to a carer's additional amount in pension credit, are the same in both circumstances.

Integrated Benefits

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the failed call rate has been for Jobcentre Plus areas operating integrated benefit system pilots; [28387]

(2) what is the average duration of telephone benefit applications in integrated benefit system pilot areas. [28390]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 12 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions concerning failed call rates and durations of calls for new claims to working age benefits. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

It may be helpful if I explain that, to make a claim in an area operating the new Jobcentre Plus model, the customer calls a contact centre. Contact centre staff ask the customer a series of questions to assess their potential eligibility to Jobcentre Plus benefits. They then arrange to call the customer back to complete the claim form, which is sent to the customer to check and sign. They will also arrange a work focused interview at the customer's local Jobcentre Plus office where this is appropriate.

Our aim is to answer 90% of calls made to the contact centre. The most recent information we have is for week ending 4 November 2005 when we answered 81.5% of calls.

With regard to the duration of telephone benefit applications, we do not hold information on the average length of telephone calls to gather all the information necessary to complete a claim form. However we do have the average length of the initial call made by the customer. The most recent information shows that this is taking an average of 12 minutes.

I hope this is helpful.

Job Vacancies

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many job vacancies there are in Tamworth constituency; how many there were on the same date last year; and what the vacancy rate in England is per 1,000 of population. [35670]

Margaret Hodge: Nationally the number of vacancies remains at a historically high level. The latest vacancy survey by the Office for National Statistics (ONS) estimates there were 605.1 thousand unfilled vacancies in the quarter to October 2005, compared to 638.4 thousand this time last year. The ONS vacancy ratio for the UK for October 2005 (the latest data) is 2.3. This is the number of vacancies per 100 employee jobs. The specific information requested on the vacancy rate for England is not available.

More than 10,000 new vacancies are placed at Jobcentres every working day and at least as many again come up through other recruitment channels. In the Tamworth constituency 427 vacancies were notified to Jobcentre Plus in November 2004, rising to 662 in October 2005.

Jobcentre Plus

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the latest estimate is of the cost of rolling out the Jobcentre Plus programme; what the annual running cost will be; and what the cost of running Jobcentre offices was in the last year of their operation. [28700]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 12 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning: the latest estimate of the cost of rolling out the Jobcentre Plus programme; what the annual running cost will be; and what the cost of running Jobcentre offices was in the last year of their operation. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

The latest cost estimate for completion of the rollout programme is just in excess of £2 billion against an original budget of £2.2 billion. The latest estimate of the running costs for the whole of Jobcentre Plus for 2005–06 is £2,592 million. The latest

estimate on the annual savings on running costs that can be expected once the rollout programme is completed amounts to £20 million per annum.

Running costs are not monitored at the level of individual Jobcentre offices so I am unable to answer the final question raised. The information is not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

I hope this is helpful.

Mr. Anthony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what consultations have been undertaken to assess *(a)* the impact of Jobcentre Plus's Response to Displayed Vacancies system on (i) employment figures and (ii) local communities and *(b)* the effectiveness of the system; [30361]

(2) what analysis has been undertaken to assess the cost of implementing Jobcentre Plus's Response to Displayed Vacancies system. [30362]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 12 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions concerning Jobcentre Plus' Response to Displayed Vacancies (RDV) system. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Prior to the creation of Jobcentre Plus, the Employment Service embarked on its Modernising Employment Service (MES) programme. Part of this programme was to change RDV (card vacancies) to touch screen kiosks or "Jobpoints", whilst ensuring that the needs and expectations of individual customers were met. As RDV was the preceding system, I have taken your question to be referring to Jobpoints.

A wide variety of research has been carried out to assess the impact of these changes, and the use of Jobpoints, on local communities and the effectiveness of Jobcentre Plus systems. This includes:

a Jobseeker Direct Customer Satisfaction Survey;

a quantitative telephone survey of over 3,000 Jobcentre Plus customers;

Greater London Enterprise carried out three sweeps of the Qualitative Employer Survey and the Customer Service Centre Case Studies;

an Econometric/Statistical Analysis of the impact of MES;

Jobcentre Case Study research and analysis of the Jobseeker Surveys;

a follow-up national telephone survey of 3,411 Jobcentre Plus customers to provide representative data on customers' experience of, views on, and satisfaction with, Jobcentre Plus services; and

a Jobcentre Plus National Customer Satisfaction Survey.

Furthermore, an independent evaluation of customers' reactions to these changes, carried out in January 2003, showed that between 31% and 48% of jobseekers reported an increase in the numbers and types of vacancies they looked at, the number of applications made, and their confidence in getting a job.

An analysis of the costs to Jobcentre Plus of introducing Jobpoints was included in the overall MES evaluation in 2003. When set alongside reduced resources for operational delivery during MES implementation, this supported the conclusion that MES enabled improved efficiency, accuracy, flexibility and responsiveness of work processes.

I hope this is helpful.

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the national performance targets are for Jobcentre Plus; and what the performance of Jobcentre Plus offices in *(a)* Torquay, *(b)* Paignton and *(c)* Brixham has been against those targets. [32063]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 12 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question regarding what the National Performance Targets are for Jobcentre Plus; and what the performance of Jobcentre Plus offices in *(a)* Torquay, *(b)* Paignton and *(c)* Brixham has been against those targets. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

For the April 2005 to March 2006 operational year, Jobcentre Plus has been set six targets. They are:

Job Entry Target—to achieve a total points score of 6,659,148 based on the job entry outcomes Jobcentre Plus achieves;

Monetary Value of Fraud and Error (MVFE) Target—by March 2006, to reduce losses from fraud and error in working age Income Support (IS) and Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA) to no more than 5.2 percent of the monetary value of these benefits paid during the year;

Customer Service Target—to achieve 81 percent customer service level in the delivery of the standards and commitments set out in the Customers' and Employers' Charters;

Employer Outcome Target—at least 84 percent of employers placing their vacancies with Jobcentre Plus will have a positive outcome;

Business Delivery Target—to ensure that specified key Jobcentre Plus business processes are delivered efficiently, accurately and to specified standards in 90.3 percent of cases checked.

You asked for specific performance information against National Performance targets at the Jobcentre Plus offices in Brixham, Paignton and Torquay. Because of the way in which Jobcentre Plus is structured, and the way information on performance is collated, we cannot provide target information at local office level.

I hope this is helpful.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1664W, on benefits, which Jobcentre Plus contact centres are operating some clerical processes due to problems with the customer management system; how many were operating such processes in each week since 1 June; and if he will make a statement. [32939]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 12 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning which Jobcentre Plus contact centres are operating some clerical processes due to problems with the CMS system and how many were operating such processes in each week since 1st June. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Since the 1st June, none of our CMS contact centres have been operating clerical processes as a direct result of problems with the CMS system. Customers have experienced difficulties getting through to some of our contact centres because our business has been going through significant change. We have taken steps to address this by introducing temporary adjustments, including

some clerical processes, to streamline business processes whilst we go through this transitional period. These temporary adjustments have been implemented as follows:

August 2005 in three contact centres: Derby, Lowestoft and Sheffield;

September 2005 in five contact centres: Coventry, Derby, Hastings, Lowestoft, Sheffield; and

October 2005 in nine contact centres: Coventry, Derby, Hastings, Lincoln, Lowestoft, Pembroke Dock, Poole, Sheffield and Torquay.

The nine contact centres that implemented temporary adjustments in October continue to operate these. Plans are in progress to reintroduce the non-clerical process to these centres during the course of the operational year.

I hope this is helpful.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent meetings he has had about the performance of Jobcentre Plus. [33915]

Margaret Hodge: Ministers meet with the chief executive and senior officials of Jobcentre Plus on a regular basis to discuss all aspects of Jobcentre Plus business.

Hywel Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average time taken is for *(a)* callback and *(b)* interview under the Customer Management System for customers who contact Jobcentre Plus through the medium of (i) Welsh and (ii) English; and what the average time taken was in each of the last three months. [34172]

Margaret Hodge [holding answer 2 December 2005]: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 12 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning the average delay for callback and interview under the Customer Management System for customers who contact Jobcentre Plus through the medium of Welsh and English; and what the average delays were in each of the last three months. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Our aim is to call customers back within 24 hours of the inbound call. The current average waiting time for a call back in November across all contact centres is 1.9 days. In the week ending 25 November the average waiting time for a call back is 1.6 days. This is a significant improvement on the average of 4.9 days in September and 3.3 days in October.

We do not collect information on average call back times specifically for customers speaking the Welsh language. These call backs are made by our Bridgend contact centre, along with those to English language speakers. Currently the average call back time in Bridgend is one day, in September this figure was 3.8 days and in October it was 4.5 days.

We have an internal standard to complete work-focused interviews within 4 days of initial contact with the customer. Twelve of our centres captured data from 273 Local Service Outlets over a sample period from 16th September 2005 to 25th November 2005 on the waiting times for these interviews. This information is in the table.

Week ending	*Average waiting time in days*
2005	
16 September	7.2
23 September	7.7
30 September	8.0
07 October	7.8
14 October	8.5
21 October	8.0
28 October	7.6
4 November	7.3
11 November	6.2
18 November	5.0
25 November	5.3

I hope this is helpful.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions in which areas Jobcentre Plus offices have replaced Benefit Agency offices; and when he expects the remaining Benefit Agency offices to be replaced by Jobcentre Plus offices. [34287]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 12 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning which areas Jobcentre Plus offices have replaced Benefit Agency offices and when he expects the remaining Benefit Agency offices to be replaced by Jobcentre Plus offices. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Since the inception of Jobcentre Plus in 2002 we have been refurbishing and replacing the offices of the former Benefits Agency and Employment Service, on a rolling programme, to enable us to deliver the new, integrated Jobcentre Plus service. We are now in the final phase of rollout and every Jobcentre Plus district has live Jobcentre Plus offices and some districts are already completely rolled out. The following table lists all Jobcentre Plus districts, and where they are in the rollout programme.

Region and district	*Fully rolled out/ partial rollout*
East Midlands	
Derbyshire	Full
Leicestershire	Full
Lincolnshire and Rutland	Partial
Northamptonshire	Full
Nottinghamshire	Partial
East of England	
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	Partial
Cambridgeshire	Partial
Norfolk	Partial
Essex	Partial
Suffolk	Full
London	
Brent, Harrow and Hillingdon	Partial
Central London	Partial
City and East London	Partial
Lambeth, Southwark and Wandsworth	Partial
North London	Partial
South East London	Partial
South London	Partial
North East London	Partial
West London	Full
North East	
City of Sunderland	Partial
Durham	Partial
Gateshead and South Tyneside	Full
Northumbria	Full
Tees Valley	Full

Region and district	Fully rolled out/ partial rollout
North West	
Cheshire and Warrington	Partial
Cumbria	Full
Lancashire East	Partial
Greater Manchester Central	Partial
Greater Manchester East	Partial
Greater Manchester West	Partial
Greater Mersey	Full
Lancashire West	Partial
Liverpool and Wirral	Full
Scotland	
ADGI	Partial
Edinburgh, Lothians and Borders	Partial
Forth Valley and Fife	Partial
Glasgow	Partial
HICC	Partial
Lanarkshire and East Dunbartonshire	Partial
South East	
Bucks and Oxon and Berkshire	Partial
Hampshire	Partial
Kent	Partial
Surrey and Sussex	Partial
South West	
Devon and Cornwall	Full
Dorset and Somerset	Full
Gloucester, Wiltshire and Swindon	Partial
West of England	Partial
Wales	
Bridgend	Full
Cardiff and Vale	Full
Eastern Valleys	Partial
North West Wales	Partial
South East Wales	Full
Swansea Bay	Partial
West Wales	Partial
Wrexham and North West Coast	Partial
West Midlands	
Birmingham and Solihull	Partial
Black Country	Partial
Coventry and Warwickshire	Partial
Staffordshire	Partial
The Marches	Partial
Yorkshire and Humberside	
Barnsley Doncaster and Rotherham	Partial
Bradford	Partial
Calderdale and Kirklees	Partial
East Yorks and Humber	Partial
Leeds	Partial
North Yorkshire	Partial
Sheffield	Full
Wakefield	Partial

By summer 2006 the rollout programme will be substantially complete and all of our customers will have access to an integrated jobs and benefit service.

I hope this is helpful.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions which Jobcentre Plus contact centres are operating some clerical processes; and if he will make a statement on the *(a)* reasons for and *(b)* extent of clerical processing in each case. [34384]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 12 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning which Jobcentre Plus contact centres are operating some clerical processes; and if he will make a statement on the *(a)* reasons for and *(b)* extent of clerical processing in each case. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Jobcentre Plus is undertaking a massive change programme. By making substantial investment in improved IT, including the introduction of the Customer Management System (CMS), we are modernising and improving our service to customers which enables us to provide easier access to our services for all our customers, irrespective of their geographical location.

Change on this scale does create challenges in maintaining levels of service. We know that some customers experienced difficulties in getting through to some of our contact centres in August and September. Robust plans were developed and implemented to improve performance. These include the introduction of clerical processes in some contact centres and the combining of the inbound and outbound call where appropriate. We have also strengthened recruitment plans supported by robust training programmes. These plans have been successful and we have seen week on week improvements in customer service since the beginning of September.

On 30 November 2005 nine contact centres were using some clerical processes to process claims. The numbers shown below are the percentage of claims being processed in contact centres using these clerical processes.

	Percentage
Coventry	70
Derby	14
Hastings	53
Lincoln	32
Lowestoft	20
Pembroke Dock	14
Poole	12
Sheffield	48
Torquay	20

I hope this is helpful.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) if he will make a statement on the measures used to assist Employment Service and Benefits Agency staff in the cultural transition to Jobcentre Plus; [34387]

(2) what assessment has been made of staff views on the transition to Jobcentre Plus; and if he will place copies in the Library. [34388]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 12 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions concerning the measures used to assist Employment Service and Benefits Agency staff in the cultural transition to Jobcentre Plus and the assessments made on staff feedback related to this transition. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive.

The Jobcentre Plus programme, called 'Pulling Together', was at the heart of our aim to create and sustain a unified culture within Jobcentre Plus. It was delivered in every Jobcentre Plus site and its objectives were:

Embedding the DWP Values in all teams—Our Values are, Achieving the Best, Making a Difference, Looking Outwards and Respecting People

Developing leadership skills

Giving our people the tools and support to build the new culture

Improving the level of customer service

Sharing good practice so that teams would take forward the best of both legacy agencies

The spirit of Pulling Together was established as being something for local units to implement, with a deliberately 'light touch' from the centre. Fundamental to Pulling Together activity was the development of action plans to address local issues linked to the programme's key objectives. Facilitated planning sessions provided the opportunity for our people to consider issues relating to their transition to Jobcentre Plus. Any issues which could not be resolved locally, were fed up the line for resolution at either regional or national level.

Following the success of the Pulling Together programme we have recently launched our new Culture Change programme, called Working Together which focuses on providing our managers with the support, resilience and tools they need to lead their people through change. It also addresses the cultural issues emerging from our staff survey results.

The annual DWP Staff Attitude Survey provides a key mechanism for our people to comment on a range of important issues. I will arrange for a copy of the 2004 survey and the key actions we took in response, to be placed in the House of Commons Library. This feedback enables us to identify those areas where we can take action to address emerging issues and improve our working environment.

These annual surveys provide a good picture of how things are working and changing across our business. We place great importance on the feedback received from our people and are always looking to improve the way we capture this information.

I hope this is helpful.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what services are provided by Integrated Jobcentre Plus customer-facing offices. [34389]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 12 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question regarding what services are provided by integrated Jobcentre Plus customer facing offices. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Jobcentre Plus is gradually replacing social security offices and Jobcentres. Our customers can now make enquiries about their benefits and about job opportunities in one place.

The services available in our customer facing offices include:

Personal Advisers to provide tailored support to our customers and help with job readiness;

telephone contact facilities through dedicated 'customer access phones' giving access to other Jobcentre Plus services;

a new appointment system to reduce queuing and waiting times; benefit assessment at the new claims stage;

touchscreen 'Jobpoints' giving access to the largest database of vacancies in Europe;

general advice and direction; and

'employer suites' in some offices—providing recruitment facilities for employers.

The design and layout of the Jobcentre Plus offices also provides a modern, professional and welcoming environment for all our customers.

I hope this is helpful.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many calls have been made by claimants from 'warm phones' within Jobcentre Plus offices to Jobcentre Plus call centres in each month since 2003; how many of these calls *(a)* were handled by an adviser and *(b)* received an engaged tone; and what the average wait was to speak to a call centre adviser in each month. [35362]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 12 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning how many calls have been made by claimants from 'warm phones' within Jobcentre Plus offices to Jobcentre Plus call centres in each month since 2003; how many were *(a)* handled by an adviser and *(b)* received an engaged tone, and what the average wait was to speak to a call centre adviser in each month. This is something, which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of the Agency.

We do not hold centrally the information required to answer your question on calls from Jobcentre Plus 'warm phones' and this could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many crisis loan applications have been received from people who are waiting for their benefit claims to be processed by JobCentre Plus, broken down by contact centre. [34272]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 12 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning how many Crisis Loan applications have been received from people who are waiting for their benefit claims to be processed by Jobcentre Plus, broken down by Contact Centre. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

The information is not available in the format requested, as Crisis Loan delivery is not part of the Contact Centre network. Jobcentre Plus is in the process of moving its Crisis Loan application process to a telephony service, for all but exceptional cases. This service will be operated by Social Fund personnel, outside the Contact Centre network. Many Districts are already operating in this way.

I hope this is helpful.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total processing times are for new *(a)* jobseeker's allowance and *(b)* income support claims in (i) JobCentre Plus areas and (ii) areas where JobCentre Plus is not yet rolled out. [34274]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 12 December 2005:

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has asked me to reply to your question concerning the total processing times for *(a)* Jobseeker's Allowance and *(b)* Income Support claims in (i) Jobcentre Plus areas and (ii) areas where Jobcentre Plus is not yet rolled out. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

The Department is currently rolling out its integrated Jobcentre Plus offices with 680 sites currently completed. At the same time, we are rationalising and centralising the sites where benefit processing is carried out.

The information is not available in the format requested because processing centres keep statistics about the number of claims that are cleared and how long it took. The statistics show where the claim was processed, not where it originated so processing centres have no means to differentiate between claims that have been made via the new integrated Jobcentre Plus offices and the existing Jobcentres.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what instructions have been issued to Jobcentre Plus and Customer Management System staff on the advice they should offer to customers who state they are suffering financial hardship while awaiting an interview and processing of their claim. [34275]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 12 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning the instructions issued to Jobcentre Plus and Customer Management System staff on the advice they should offer to customers who state they are suffering financial hardship while awaiting an interview and processing of their claim. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as chief executive of Jobcentre Plus.

If a customer states that they are suffering financial hardship during the inbound call to a contact centre then staff are advised to try to book an immediate call back to complete the claim form. If this is not possible then staff will notify the relevant benefit processing centre to ask them to consider an interim payment or Social Fund referral.

If a customer states that they are suffering financial hardship when we complete the outbound call then contact centre staff aim to arrange for an emergency interview at the local office to progress the claim urgently. If this is not possible then contact centre staff will book the first available appointment and then pass the customers details onto the relevant benefit processing centre for them to consider an interim payment or Social Fund referral.

The instructions issued to staff if Jobcentre Plus advises them of the method of meeting the urgent need and should be considered in order:

hastening the payment of the customer's main benefit;

considering an Interim Payment on account of benefit: (an Interim Payment can be considered paid even if there are delays in arranging a Work Focused Interview);and/or

considering a Social Fund Crisis Loan

Jobseekers Allowance (Musicians)

Mr. Swire: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the amount of Jobseeker's Allowance claimed by self-employed musicians since 1998. [36230]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information requested is not available.

New Deal

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many long-term unemployed people have been trained in each month of the new deal 50+ scheme in the Canterbury travel-to-work area. [34137]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 8 December 2005]:* Information on the number of people being trained through new deal 50 plus in the Canterbury travel to work area is not available. new deal 50 plus is a voluntary programme designed to help people aged 50 or over who have been claiming benefits for six months or more back into the labour market. It is one element of the Government's strategy to address age discrimination and improve the employment prospects of older people. In the constituency of Canterbury, new deal 50 plus has helped around 200 people into work up to August 2005.

Although the new deal 50 plus programme does not contain a training element, personal advisers can refer people on the programme who are interested in training to opportunities offered either by other Jobcentre Plus programmes, or those offered by colleges and other organisations.

Once in work, new deal 50 plus customers can claim a training grant of up to £1,200 for training and development related to the job, and a further £300 for life-long learning.

Pension Credit

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people claiming pension credit have *(a)* enrolled with Jobcentre Plus services, *(b)* joined welfare-to work programmes and *(c)* moved into work with Jobcentre Plus support in (i) the UK, (ii) England, (iii) Wales and (iv) Scotland; and if he will make a statement. [34740]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 12 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question regarding how many people claiming pension credit have enrolled with Jobcentre Plus services, joined welfare-to work programmes and moved into work with Jobcentre Plus support in the UK, England, Wales and Scotland and if he will make a statement. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Unfortunately, I am not able to provide the information you have requested. We are, however, working to identify Pension Credit recipients as a separate customer group in the future.

Pensions

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the total costs in 2004–05 of *(a)* basic state pension, *(b)* second state pension and *(c)* other benefits paid to UK pensioners in other countries of the European Union. [34788]

Mr. Timms: The available information is in the following tables.

£ per week

Benefit	*Total benefit*
Basic state pension	12,042,200
Additional state pension	77,700

£ per year

Benefit	Total benefit
Winter fuel payments	4,535,000

Notes:

1. The figures are based on data from the 5 per cent. samples, but they have been adjusted to make their totals consistent with the WPLS data. These figures are therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation.
2. The data are taken from an extract of PSCS as at 31 March 2005.
3. In certain cases, caseload figures for certain countries are nil or negligible, hence the expenditure has also been suppressed.
4. Certain caseloads produced from the 5 per cent. sample data are under 500 and are subject to a high degree of sampling error, hence the associated expenditure values should only be used as a guide to the current situation.
5. The winter fuel payment estimate includes Gibraltar, Norway, Iceland, Liechtenstein and Switzerland.
6. State pension information is recorded on a weekly basis.
7. Total weekly benefit figures have been rounded to the nearest hundred pounds.

Sources:

State Pension—DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) 100 per cent. data and 5 per cent. samples.

Winter Fuel Payments—DWP Information Directorate 100 per cent. data

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what proportion of women aged between *(a)* 40 and 44, *(b)* 45 and 49, *(c)* 50 and 54 and *(d)* 55 and 59 years would receive less than a full basic state pension if from 2006–07 until their retirement it was assumed they made full national insurance contributions. [35374]

Mr. Timms: The information requested is shown in the following table:

United Kingdom

Age in 2006–07	Number of women with less than a full BSP at SPA, based on own contribution record	Proportion (percentage)
40 to 44	355,000	16
45 to 49	333,000	17
50 to 54	670,000	36
55 to 59	1,304,000	66

Notes:

1. Estimates are based on the Lifetime Labour Market Database 2, 2003–04. This is a 1 per cent. sample of the national insurance records.
2. It has been assumed that individuals accrue entitlement to basic state pension between 2003–04 and 2006–07 at the same rate at which they have accrued basic state pension over their working life to date.
3. Every year between 2006–07 and state pension age is treated as a qualifying year for basic state pension.
4. Women who have interacted with the national insurance recording system at some point during their working lives, but who are not estimated to be resident in the UK in 2003–04, are excluded.
5. It is assumed that all women who appear on the Lifetime Labour Market Database 2 in 2003–04 and who are estimated to be resident in the UK, survive until state pension age, and that there is no migration.
6. Figures are given as a proportion of the total number of women in each age group estimated by the Government Actuary's Department to be resident in the UK in 2004.
7. Entitlement to basic state pension is based on women's own national insurance records. Entitlement that may be derived from husband's records is not available.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will estimate the cost of paying a full basic state pension, regardless of contributions, to all pensioners aged 75 years or over in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2010, *(c)* 2020, *(d)* 2030, *(e)* 2040 and *(f)* 2050. [35375]

Mr. Timms: The information requested is in the following table.

Great Britain (£ billion, 2005–06 price terms)

	Gross cost	Net of IRBs	Net of IRBs and tax
2006	2.0	1.4	1.4
2010	2.2	1.6	1.5
2020	2.7	1.9	1.9
2030	2.2	1.6	1.6
2040	2.1	1.5	1.5
2050	2.3	1.7	1.6

Notes:

1. The policy change is assumed to take place from 2006–07.
2. Gross costs are estimated by the Government Actuary's Department and are consistent with the pre-Budget report 2004 assumptions.
3. Savings in income-related benefit (IRBs) such as pension credit and housing benefit, and potential increases in tax revenue, are estimated using the DWP policy simulation model and April 2006 benefit rates. Savings are assumed to be a constant proportion of the estimated gross cost over time.
4. It is assumed that the rate of basic state pension is uprated in line with prices growth (plus underpin) from year to year.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of men in the UK who will reach the age of 65 years in *(a)* 2006, *(b)* 2017 and *(c)* 2027 will have national insurance contributions of (i) 44 years or more, (ii) 41 to 43 years, (iii) 36 to 40 years, (iv) 31 to 35 years, (v) 26 to 30 years, (vi) 21 to 25 years, (vii) 16 to 20 years, (viii) 11 to 15 years, (ix) 6 to 10 years, (x) 1 to 5 years and (xi) 0 years. [35981]

Mr. Timms: The information is not available in the format requested. Such information that is available is in the following table:

National insurance contribution years for men reaching state pension age in the 2004–05 tax year—United Kingdom

	Men	
Years	Number	Percentage
0	[1]—	[1]—
1 to 5	[2]1,000	[1]—
6 to 10	[2]1,000	[1]—
11 to 15	[2]1,000	[1]—
16 to 20	[2]2,000	[1]—
21 to 25	5,000	2
26 to 30	5,000	2
31 to35	10,000	4
36 to 40	14,000	5
41 to 43	15,000	5
44 or more	228,000	81
Total	282,000	

[1] Nil or negligible.
[2] High degree of sampling error.

Notes:

1. Figures are shown to the nearest thousand and may not add up due to rounding.
2. Figures exclude people who have interacted with the National Insurance Recording System at some point during their working lives but who are not estimated to be resident in the UK in 2003–04.

3. Figures are based on the Lifetime Labour Market Database 2, which is a 1 per cent. sample of the national insurance records. It is not possible to use this historical information to predict numbers of qualifying years for basic state pension with sufficient accuracy to answer this question for future years as requested. The model used by the Government Actuary's Department to forecast entitlement to basic state pension is based on aggregate level data, that does not permit accurate distributional analysis in the manner requested.
4. Figures refer to the number of qualifying years accrued by men at state pension age in the 2004–05 tax year. For the purpose of this table a year of Home Responsibilities Protection (HRP) is treated as a qualifying year. (Although strictly HRP acts to reduce the requisite number of qualifying years needed for a full basic state pension (BSP), therefore men and women will not always require 44 and 39 qualifying years respectively).
5. For the reason noted in 2, and others, this table should not be used to infer entitlement to BSP. For example:
The first and second contribution conditions must be satisfied to qualify for BSP. The first contribution condition is satisfied through paid contributions from earnings or by paying voluntary Class 3 contributions during one tax year (either must be equivalent to 52 weeks at the Lower Earnings Limit (LEL)). Having satisfied this first contribution condition, a person must acquire a further 9 (for women) or 10 (for men) qualifying years through a combination of contributions and NI credits. This second contribution condition is also known as the 25 per cent. de minimis rule.
The table does not represent any entitlement to BSP that may be derived from a partner's contribution record.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of women in the UK who will reach the age of *(a)* 60 in (i) 2006 and (ii) 2017 and *(b)* 65 in 2027 respectively will have national insurance contributions of (A) 44 years or more, (B) 41 to 43 years, (C) 36 to 40 years, (D) 31 to 35 years, (E) 26 to 30 years, (F) 21 to 25 years, (G) 16 to 20 years, (H) 11 to 15 years, (I) 6 to 10 years, (J) 1 to 5 years and (K) 0 years. [35982]

Mr. Timms: The information is not available in the format requested. Such information that is available is in the following table:

National insurance contribution years for women reaching state pension age in the 2004–05 tax year—United Kingdom

	Women	
	Number	*Percentage*
0 years	[1]1,000	—
1–5 years	6,000	2
6–10-years	16,000	5
11–15 years	30,000	9
16–20 years	34,000	11
21–25 years	43,000	13
26–30 years	56,000	17
31–35 years	64,000	20
36–40 years	42,000	13
41 to 43 years	16,000	5
44 or more years	14,000	4
Total	321,000	

'—' nil or negligible
[1] High degree of sampling error
Notes:
1. Figures are shown to the nearest thousand and may not add up due to rounding.
2. Figures exclude people who have interacted with the National Insurance Recording System at some point during their working lives, but who are not estimated to be resident in the UK in 2003–04.
3. Figures are based on the Lifetime Labour Market Database 2, which is a 1 per cent. sample of the national insurance records. It is not possible to use this historical information to predict numbers of qualifying years for basic state pension with sufficient accuracy to answer this question for future years as requested. The model used by the Government Actuary's Department to forecast entitlement to basic state pension is based on aggregate level data, that does not permit accurate distributional analysis in the manner requested.
4. Figures refer to the number of qualifying years accrued by women at State pension age in the 2004–05 tax year. For the purpose of this table a year of Home Responsibilities Protection (HRP) is treated as a qualifying year. (Although strictly HRP acts to reduce the requisite number of qualifying years needed for a full basic state pension (BSP), therefore men and women will not always require 44 and 39 qualifying years respectively).
5. For the reason noted in 2, and others, this table should not be used to infer entitlement to BSP. For example:
The first and second contribution conditions must be satisfied to qualify for BSP. The first contribution condition is satisfied through paid contributions from earnings or by paying voluntary class 3 contributions during one tax year (either must be equivalent to 52 weeks at the Lower Earnings Limit (LEL)). Having satisfied this first contribution condition, a person must acquire a further nine (for women) or 10 (for men) qualifying years through a combination of contributions and NI credits. This second contribution condition is also known as the 25 per cent. de minimis rule.
The table does not represent any entitlement to BSP that may be derived from a partner's contribution record.

Winter Fuel Payment

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what criteria were used to decide that the winter fuel payment *(a)* would not be means-tested and *(b)* would be paid to British pensioners overseas; and if he will make a statement. [37139]

Mr. Timms: The winter fuel payment is not means-tested because we want a simple and cost effective payment that ensures all pensioners can turn up their heating in the winter months without worrying about the cost.

The payment was introduced to help pensioners in Great Britain with their fuel bills. We are obliged under European law to continue paying the winter fuel payment to people who qualify for a payment in Great Britain and then move to another European Economic Area country or Switzerland.

Unemployment

Mr. Wills: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of economically inactive *(a)* men and *(b)* women are (i) aged 18 to 34, (ii) aged 35 to50 and (iii) aged 51 to 64 years; and how many of each sex in each age range have expressed an interest in working. [31628]

Margaret Hodge: The information requested is in the tables.

United Kingdom working age inactivity rates—summer 2005

	Working age inactive people		*Proportion of all working age inactive people*	
Age	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
18–34	763,583	1,723,943	25	37
35–50	593,131	1,499,471	20	32
51–64	1,280,508	1,075,221	42	23
All working age	3,029,582	4,657,563	—	—

Note:
Figures are for the United Kingdom.
Source:
Labour Force Survey, ONS

Number of inactive people who have declared an interest in working in United Kingdom

	Male				Female			
Age	*Seeking work, unavailable to start*	*Percentage of working age inactive people*	*Would like work, not seeking*	*Percentage of working age inactive people*	*Seeking work, unavailable to start*	*Percentage of working age inactive people*	*Would like work, not seeking*	*Percentage of working age inactive people*
18–34	41,808	5	189,956	25	68,864	4	431,438	25
35–50	22,842	4	224,237	38	40,080	3	398,055	27
51–64	9,121	1	250,207	20	8,347	1	173,699	16
All	102,323	3	752,151	25	149,462	3	1,079,660	23

Note:
Figures are for the United Kingdom.
Source:
Labour Force Survey, ONS

Work-based Learning

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much has been allocated to work-based learning for unemployed adults in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07 and *(c)* 2007–08 at (i) Level 1, (ii) Level 2 and (iii) Level 3. [33357]

Margaret Hodge: The amount allocated for Work-Based Learning for Adults (WBLA) and Short Intensive Basic Skills for this year is set out as follows:

WBLA/SIBS forecast expenditure 2005–06

	National forecast
WBLA	94,432,659
SIBS	11,626,851
Total	106,059,510

Notes:
1. Allocations for the 2006–07 and 2007–08 financial years are not yet available.
2. Figures exclude allowance payments, associated admin costs and nationally funded expenditure.
3. Allocations are not broken down by different levels of training.
Source:
Jobcentre Plus Financial Strategy Division

Wrexham Benefit Processing Centre

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many telephone calls to the Wrexham Benefit Processing Centre concerning *(a)* income support, *(b)* jobseeker's allowance and *(c)* incapacity benefit were (i) unanswered and (ii) answered outside the length of time recommended by the Department since closure of the Rhyl Benefits Office. [34622]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 12 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning how many telephone calls to the Wrexham Benefit Processing Centre concerning *(a)* Income Support *(b)* Jobseeker's Allowance and *(c)* Incapacity Benefit have gone (i) unanswered and (ii) answered outside the length of time recommended by the department since closure of the Rhyl Benefits Office. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

As you know, the processing of Jobseeker's Allowance, Income Support and Incapacity Benefit, previously undertaken at Rhyl Social Security Office, transferred to the Wrexham Processing Centre at the beginning of August.

The Processing Centre has a customer service target to answer telephone calls within 30 seconds and to answer 90% of all calls made. The tables below detail the average performance in the period from August to November.

	Total number of:			*Percentage of calls offered which are answered*
Benefit type	*Inbound calls*	*Calls answered*	*Calls abandoned*	
Income Support	87,781	79,660	8,121	91
Jobseeker's Allowance	30,677	27,974	2,703	91
Incapacity Benefit	44,092	41,063	3,029	93
Total	162,550	148,697	13,853	91

Benefit type	*Average number of calls not answered within 30 seconds (percentage)*
Income Support	47
Jobseeker's Allowance	27
Incapacity Benefit	34

Incoming telephone calls to the Processing Centre are monitored on a daily basis and extra staff have recently been allocated to both the Income Support and Jobseeker's Allowance Teams, to process benefits and answer telephone calls. Additionally, we are currently training a number of extra Incapacity Benefit Processors, who are scheduled to take up post in early January. We are confident these steps will help us to significantly reduce the number of calls that are answered outside the customer service target of 30 seconds.

I hope this is helpful.

TREASURY

Child Benefit

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the rates of child benefit were for *(a)* the first child and *(b)* subsequent children in each year since 1980–81; and if he will make a statement. [36184]

Dawn Primarolo: The rates of child benefit since November 1980 are shown in the following table:

£ per week

Date	*First child*	*Other children*	*One parent benefit*
24 November 1980	4.75	4.75	3.00
23 November 1981	5.25	5.25	3.30
22 November 1982	5.85	5.85	3.65

£ per week

Date	First child	Other children	One parent benefit
21 November 1983	6.50	6.50	4.05
26 November 1984	6.85	6.85	4.25
25 November 1985	7.00	7.00	4.55
28 July 1986	7.10	7.10	4.60
6 April 1987	7.25	7.25	4.70
11 April 1988	7.25	7.25	4.90
10 April 1989	7.25	7.25	5.20
9 Apr 1990	7.25	7.25	5.60
8 April 1991	[1]8.25	7.25	5.60
7 October 1991	9.25	7.50	5.60
6 April 1992	9.65	7.80	5.85
12 April 1993	10.00	8.10	6.05
11 April 1994	10.20	8.25	6.15
10 April 1995	10.40	8.45	6.30
8 April 1996	10.80	8.80	6.30
7 April 1997	11.05	9.00	[2]17.10
6 April 1998	11.45	9.30	[3]17.10
12 April 1999	14.40	9.60	17.10
10 April 2000	15.00	10.00	17.55
6 April 2001	15.50	10.35	17.55
10 April 2002	15.75	10.55	17.55
April 2003	16.05	10.75	17.55
April 2004	16.50	11.05	17.55

[1] Higher rate for first child introduced
[2] OPB merges with mainstream CHB to become CHB (Lone Parent)
[3] From 6 July 1998 CHB (LP) ceased for new lone parents. Transitional Protection for existing recipients and some lone parents in receipt of other specified social security benefits.

The rate for the first child has increased by 25 per cent. in real terms since 1997.

Child Trust Fund Accounts

Mr. Davey: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many child trust fund accounts have been opened using initial vouchers worth *(a)* £250 and *(b)* £500. [36811]

Dawn Primarolo: All children eligible for the child trust fund receive a £250 voucher. Children from low income families receive an additional £250 paid directly into their child trust fund account when the family's child tax credit award has been finalised.

Information on the number of child trust fund vouchers issued and the number of accounts opened are published on the HMRC website at http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/child_trust_funds/child-trust-funds.htm. The latest set of figures was published on 30 November 2005.

Closed Religious Orders

Steve Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the cost to the Exchequer of the tax relief associated with the charitable status of closed religious orders in the last period for which figures are available. [36974]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs do not maintain figures on the cost of tax relief associated with closed religious orders.

Clubs

Jeff Ennis: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* working men's clubs and *(b)* other private members' clubs there were in (i) Barnsley, East and Mexborough and (ii) South Yorkshire in (A) 1997 and *(b)* 2004. [35622]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 12 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question concerning how many *(a)* working men's clubs and *(b)* other private members' clubs there were in (i) Barnsley East and Mexborough and (ii) South Yorkshire in (A) 1997 and (B) 2004. (35622)

The number of working men's clubs and other private members' clubs recorded on the Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR) in the specified areas are detailed in the table below. The figures include only such clubs that are registered for VAT.

	Standard Industrial Classification	
	55401—Licensed clubs	91330—Activities of other membership organisations not elsewhere classified
Barnsley East PC		
1997	10	10
2004	20	20
South Yorkshire county		
1997	130	330
2004	145	320

Working men's clubs are included within licensed clubs. Private members' clubs are included within activities of other membership organisations not elsewhere classified. The classification system does not identify working men's clubs and other private members' clubs separately.

These figures are based on the same criteria as used in NS publication "UK Business: Activity. Size and Location" and are consistent with that publication and can be found at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/ukbusiness

All figures have been rounded to the nearest five to avoid disclosure.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the *(a)* salary bill was and *(b)* administrative costs were for his Department in (i) each (A) nation and (B) region of the UK and (ii) London in 2004–05. [35875]

John Healey: Staff costs and administration costs for the Treasury in 2004–05 are shown in Schedule 2 on page 20 of the Department's resource accounts http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/3A6/1E/resource_accounts_2004-5.pdf.

The resource accounts consolidate the costs of the core Treasury, the Debt Management Office and the Office of Government Commerce. All costs for the Treasury and the DMO arise in London. The staff costs of the OGC are analysed by country and region for the purposes of the annually published public expenditure statistical analysis, and the analysis for 2004–05 was as follows.

£000

	OGC	Core Treasury and DMO	Total
Scotland	407	—	407
Yorkshire and Humberside	1,150	—	1,150
Eastern	5,689	—	5,689
London	11,160	60,730	71,890
Total	18,406	60,730	79,136

As a small Department, the Treasury is not required to supply country and regional analyses of other administration costs. The accounting system is not designed to capture costs other than staff costs on a country and regional basis and therefore this information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much was paid by his Department in rates to each local authority in the UK in 2004–05; and how much was paid in *(a)* each (i) nation and (ii) region of the UK and *(b)* London. [35995]

John Healey: The Treasury paid £1,710,000 in rates in 2004–05, all to the City of Westminster.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Weir: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff were employed by non-departmental public bodies and agencies for which he has responsibility in 2004–05 in *(a)* total and *(b)* each (i) nation and (ii) region of the UK and *(c)* London. [35895]

John Healey: Details on individual Departments' non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) are set out in the annual Cabinet Office publication, "Public Bodies". Copies of the 2004–05 publication are available in the Library and can be accessed via:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/the_future_of_the_civil_service/agencies_and_public_bodies/public_bodies_directory/index.asp

Information relating to staff employed in Departments and agencies, including by region, is set out in the annual Cabinet Office publication "Civil Service Statistics", which is available in the Library of the House and can be accessed via:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/mangement_of_the_civil_service/statistics/contents_for_civil_service_statistics_2004_report/list_of_tables_and_charts/index.asp

The latest figures are as at 1 April 2004. It is expected that the data as at 1 April 2005 will be published early in the new year.

England and Scotland Expenditure

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the mechanism employed in public expenditure statistical analyses to differentiate between spending that can only be identified on a national basis between Scotland and England and expenditure that can also be identified on a regional basis within England; and how this mechanism affects the allocation of identifiable and non-identifiable expenditure between Scotland and England; [35856]

(2) if he will list programmes in the public expenditure statistical analyses where it is possible to provide a spending comparison between Scotland and England but not between the English regions; how these are allocated in terms of identifiable and non-identifiable expenditure for Scotland and England; and if he will make a statement. [35857]

Mr. Des Browne: Public expenditure statistical analyses (PESA) shows figures for expenditure that can be identified as benefiting a particular statistical region of the UK. Statistical regions include Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland and the English regions.

PESA also shows expenditure that cannot be identified as benefiting a particular statistical region of the UK. This is generally expenditure that is deemed to be non-identifiable across the UK. But it also includes some spending in England or England and Wales, where the equivalent spending in Scotland is devolved, and is therefore classified as identifiable for the benefit of Scotland.

This mainly affects certain public order and safety expenditure. Other programmes of expenditure similarly affected but with small effects on the aggregates include elements of enterprise and economic development, environment protection, general public services, science and technology, and agriculture, fisheries and forestry.

The overall effect of treating these spending programmes as non-identifiable is not likely to be substantial when comparing spending per head in the countries and regions of the UK.

In July 2005 HM Treasury sought views from readers for the further development of PESA. The Treasury will be publishing a response to the consultation in the new year. The response will include options for further improvements in the country and regional analysis in PESA, such as whether to increase the extent to which expenditure is attributed to regions—together with a preliminary assessment of the effects of chances and the costs and difficulties of doing so.

Enterprise Summer School (Wales)

Adam Price: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he plans to hold an Enterprise summer school in Wales. [36063]

John Healey: Enterprise summer schools will be rolled out across England, Scotland, Northern Ireland and Wales in summer 2007.

EU Budget

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the UK's net contribution to the EU budget in each of the next five years; and if he will make a statement. [36728]

John Healey: The Government's latest forecast of UK net contributions to the EC Budget, which covers the period to 2007–08, was included in footnote 3 to Table B17 of the pre-Budget report (Cm 6701, page 257) published on 5 December 2005.

EU Legislation

Keith Vaz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the proportion of the burden of administration on business that arises from EU legislation; by how much this burden has been reduced by the European Commission during the EU's presidency; and whether this reduction meets Government targets. [34934]

Mr. Jim Murphy: I have been asked to reply.

The Government announced on 15 September this year that a cross-government project to identify, measure then cut the admin burden placed on businesses, charities and the voluntary sector by Government regulation, which includes European Union regulation, had begun.

We have had an active dialogue with the European Commission during our presidency, and are already showing them the benefits of our approach. One third of the legislative proposals that the Commission screened for impacts on competitiveness were withdrawn in September 2005 and a month later, the Commission adopted a simplification programme involving over 1,400 legal instruments.

In addition my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister announced on the day of the CBI conference on Tuesday 29 November that the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, Department of Trade and Industry and the Health and Safety Executive are publishing initial draft simplification plans. The results of the measurement exercise, targets and further initial plans for reductions will be published as part of the Budget next year.

Iraq

Chris Huhne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the cost of the intervention in Iraq from the beginning of operations until the end of this financial year *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by each service; and from what budgets that cost has been met. [36060]

Mr. Des Browne: The net additional costs of operations in Iraq, as recorded in the Ministry of Defence's Annual Reports and Accounts total £3,068 million as follows:

Financial year	*£ million*
2002–03	847
2003–04	1,311
2004–05	910

The costs of operations in Iraq in 2005–06 will depend on force levels and operational tempo.

The net additional costs of operations nave been met from the Reserve. The Treasury does not capture costs for each service.

Legislation

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what activities have been made unlawful by legislation introduced by his Department since 1 May 2001; and if he will make a statement. [36058]

John Healey: The following activities have been made unlawful by legislation made by the Treasury since 1 May 2001:

Making funds available to a person listed under one of the financial sanctions regimes without a licence;

Knowingly or recklessly providing false information in order to obtain a licence to make funds available to a person listed under one of the financial sanctions regimes;

Supplying restricted goods to a person listed under the al-Qa'ida and Taliban (United Nations Measures) Order 2002 (S.I. 2002/111);

Providing technical assistance or training to a person listed under that Order.

The following further activities have been made unlawful by legislation made by the Treasury since 1 May 2001, unless a person has authorisation from the Financial Services Authority:

Issuing electronic money;

Arranging and advising on regulated mortgage contracts;

Dealing as agent and arranging deals in contracts of insurance;

Assisting in the performance and administration of contracts of insurance;

Advising on the merits of buying or selling contracts of insurance.

National Insurance (Musicians)

Mr. Swire: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on what date his Department informed the Department for Culture, Media and Sport that self-employed musicians were liable to pay Class 1 National Insurance contributions. [36227]

Dawn Primarolo: The Department of Social Security, which was then responsible for policy on National Insurance Contributions issued a press release on 15 July 1998 to announce the revised National Insurance arrangements for actors and musicians and changes to legislation from 17 July 1998. The Department for Culture, Media and Sport were closely involved in the discussions leading up to the changes announced which covered actors and musicians.

Nuclear Energy

Peter Law: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what research his Department has conducted on the costs of nuclear energy. 35838 [35838]

Malcolm Wicks: I have been asked to reply.

The 2003 Energy White Paper published the results of extensive modelling of the costs of different options for reducing carbon dioxide emissions over the period to 2050. The analysis is available at: http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/whitepaper/phase2.pdf.

The Department is also aware of other recent studies providing estimates of the costs of nuclear energy, notably those by the Royal Academy of Engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Chicago.

In November 2005 my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced that there would be a review of energy policy which would report in summer 2006. This will involve further analysis of the costs of different

options, including nuclear energy, for meeting the Government's long-term targets for reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

Oil Tax

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the impact on *(a)* jobs and *(b)* investment in the oil industry in the North Sea of the proposed increase in supplementary oil levy. [36861]

John Healey: The changes announced in the pre-Budget report were subject to detailed analysis to ensure that they delivered the Government's objectives of striking the right balance between oil producers and consumers, by promoting investment and ensuring fairness for taxpayers.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent discussions his Department held with *(a)* the UK Offshore Operators Association, *(b)* the trade unions and *(c)* other interests on (i) oil taxation and (ii) the impact of a supplementary levy for corporation tax on the oil industry. [36862]

John Healey: Treasury Ministers and officials have regular meetings with oil industry representatives including UKOOA, the trade unions and individual oil companies. Such meetings will cover a range of issues relating to the oil industry, including the North Sea fiscal regime.

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he informed the First Minister of Scotland of the proposed changes to the supplementary levy for corporation tax on the oil industry in advance of his pre-Budget report statement; and what discussions his Department held with the Scottish Executive on the impact on jobs and investment in Scotland of the proposed increase to the levy. [36863]

John Healey: The Chancellor of the Exchequer does from time to time hold discussions with the First Minister of Scotland on a range of subjects. Decisions on taxation are a matter for the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Pensions Commission

Lorely Burt: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the public expenditure implications of the proposals in the Pensions Commission's second report; and if he will make a statement. [35625]

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the affordability of the pension proposals made in the second report of the Pensions Commission; and if he will make a statement. [35695]

Mr. Des Browne: I refer the hon. Members to the answer given by the Economic Secretary to the Treasury to the hon. Member for East Dunbartonshire (Jo Swinson) on 8 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1445W.

Rent Costs

Mr. Weir: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much was paid by his Department in 2004–05 in rent for properties in *(a)* total, *(b)* each (i) region and (ii) nation of the UK and *(c)* London. [35893]

John Healey: The Treasury paid £456,000 in rent in 2004–05, all for properties in London.

Self-invested Personal Pensions

Mr. Duncan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he plans *(a)* to prohibit investment by self-invested personal pensions directly into a residential property, *(b)* to prohibit such investments if they are for personal use and *(c)* to allow such investment only through an institutional fund. [36262]

Mr. Des Browne: The Chancellor announced at the pre-Budget report (PBR) that self invested personal pensions (SIPPs) and all other forms of self-directed pensions will be prohibited from obtaining tax advantages when investing in residential property, and certain other assets from April 6 2006.

The Government remain committed to encouraging investment in a range of assets as part of pensions saving and is therefore minded to allow SIPPs to invest in genuinely diverse commercial vehicles that hold residential property, such as the proposed UK Real Estate Investment Trust model (UK-REIT) that was outlined at PBR.

Adam Price: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the chronology was for the development of Government policy in relation to the use of self-invested pension schemes for investment in residential property over the last five years; [36074]

(2) how many *(a)* Treasury and *(b)* HM Revenue and Customs staff have worked on the new residential self-invested personal pension proposal over the last four years, broken down by grade; [36062]

(3) what assessment he has made on the likely effect of the changes to self-invested personal pensions announced in the pre-Budget report on *(a)* take-up and *(b)* anticipated cost of tax revenue contained in the relevant Regulatory Impact Assessment [36067]

Mr. Des Browne *[holding answer 8 December 2005]:* Like all policy developments, announcements on pension tax simplification have been made in pre-Budget reports and Budgets and a number of Treasury and HM Revenue and Customs staff have worked on the policy. The Regulatory impact Assessment focused on the impact of pension tax simplification of which self-invested personal pensions are only a small part.

Silent Calls

John Hemming: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 525W, on silent calls, what estimate the Inland Revenue made in 2004–05 of the number of silent calls made from its offices and those of its contractors using predictive dialler technology. [35054]

Dawn Primarolo: Full information is not available on the number of calls where contact was made but operators were not available and it is therefore not possible to make meaningful estimates.

HMRC recognises that silent calls can cause people concern which is why, when using an outbound dialler, a caller line identity is always displayed so anyone missing a call would have the option of calling the number back. Additionally HMRC configures its predictive diallers to ensure the minimum of silent calls in line with Ofcom guidelines.

Tax Allowances

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the tax allowances that have been introduced since 1997; by what percentage each such allowance has changed since its introduction; and if he will make a statement. [36464]

Dawn Primarolo: The main rates and allowances are set out each year in the Economic and Fiscal Strategy Report and Financial Statement and Budget Report. Copies of this are available in the House Library. More detailed information on individual tax allowances and reliefs with an estimate annual cost of at least £50 million can be found in the HM Treasury publication, "Tax ready reckoner and tax reliefs". Recent versions can be found on the HM Treasury website and historic copies are held in the House Library.

Information on minor tax expenditures and structural reliefs where the costs are less than £50 million is published on the HMRC website. Historic versions are published in "Inland Revenue Statistics".

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many tax credit overpayments were disputed in each month from January to October; and if he will make a statement; [19255]

(2) how many disputed cases of overpaid tax credits there were in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* each month since January 2005; and if he will make a statement. [20013]

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answers to the hon. Member for Tatton of 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, columns 2385–86W, on tax credits, if he will update the tables to include figures for the months of August to November. [35339]

Dawn Primarolo: For the number of disputed overpayments of tax credits in 2004–05 and for the period 1 January 2005 to 31 May 2005, I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, column 2385W to the hon. Member for Tatton (Mr. Osborne).

The number of disputed tax credits overpayments in each month from June 2005 to October 2005 were around:

Month	*Number*
2005	
June	28,000
July	35,000
August	30,000
September	30,000
October	33,000

The number of disputed overpayment requests for June 2005 has been updated. The figure given in my previous answer only included receipts to the last Friday in the month of June rather than to 30 June 2005.

Information for November 2005 is not yet available.

For the number of appeals recorded against tax credits decisions in each month:

Month	*Number of appeals received (UK)*
2005	
July	2,175
August	2,465
September	1,305
October	1,380

Note:
Rounded to the nearest five cases.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff at the Tax Credits Office have received bonus payments in each month from January 2003 to October 2005; what the total amount of bonuses paid has been; what has been the largest single payment; and if he will make a statement. [28212]

Dawn Primarolo: The (former) Inland Revenue introduced a Team Bonus scheme from 1 April 2003. Team Bonus payments were paid annually to directorates of the Inland Revenue which had contributed exceptionally towards achievement of the Department's PSA targets.

The Tax Credit Office (TCO) qualified for team bonuses in 2003–04 and 2004–05. The maximum amount each individual in the TCO could receive was set centrally for the inland Revenue, according to grade.

In 2003–04 all relevant targets were met and people received the maximum available bonus.

For 2004–05 the targets and achievement were:

Percentage

	Percentage of maximum bonus payment available for achievement of target	*Target to qualify for team bonus*	*Associated PSA Key Target*	*TCO Performance against Bonus Target*
Decide 97 per cent. of claims, change of circumstances and renewals within 30 working days of receipt —excluding ceased household cases.	60	97	95	95.9
Deliver quality casework of which 90 per cent. is fully satisfactory or better than standard	20	90	90	97
Decide 94 per cent. of claims, changes of circumstances and renewals accurately	20	94%	90	96.5

As the first target was not met, bonus payments in 2004–05 were only 40 per cent. of the maximum available.

The number and value of Team Bonus payments made to staff who had worked or were working in the Tax Credit Office (TCO), in 2003–04 and 2004–05 was around:

	Number of individual staff in receipt of annual team bonus payment	*Value (£)*	*Average payment (£)*
31 July 2004	3,850	938,542	243
31 July 2005	3,755	425,229	113

The largest single annual payment made was £520, made in 2004.

The Director of TCO has the discretion to award special bonuses to recognise exceptional performance and the dates and values of payments made are:

£

Quarter ending	*Total value of directors bonuses awarded*
2003	
April	3,700
November	5,650
2004	
February	2,925
May	3,750
August	6,500
November	2,550
2005	
March	300
May	4,340
September	14,500

The total number of Director's Special Bonus awards for this period was 162, representing around 5 per cent. of staff working in the TCO. The average payment was around £300.

The largest single payment made during this period was £1,000.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average unit cost of processing new claims for tax credits including capital costs was in *(a)* 2003–04 and *(b)* 2004–05; and what it has been in 2005–06. [31544]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* The information requested is not available.

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is his policy that money owed to members of the public through the tax credit system may be paid as a lump sum. [33592]

Dawn Primarolo: Yes.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer on what dates HM Revenue and Customs *(a)* requested and *(b)* received a written agreement from Electronic Data Systems to proceed with the compression of testing time for the new tax credit system; and if he will place this correspondence in the Library. [36219]

Dawn Primarolo: Electronic Data Systems (EDS) carried out a range of testing in the run-up to the introduction of the tax credits system on 7 April 2003, with the testing arrangements reviewed regularly. EDS provided a certificate on 4 April 2003 to confirm that the release of software was fit for purpose to deliver new tax credits.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will establish an independent inquiry into the introduction of the new tax credits following the settlement between HM Revenue and Customs and Electronic Data Systems. [36220]

Dawn Primarolo: There are no plans to set up an inquiry into the introduction of new tax credits.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the expected annual cost is of the measures announced by the Paymaster General for the reform of tax credits on 5 December. [36812]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is available in the Pre-Budget report 2005, Table 1.2, "Estimated costs of pre-Budget report policy decisions and others announced since Budget 2005".

Taxation (EU Accession Workers)

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of how much workers from the EU accession countries paid in tax in the financial year 2004–05. [36848]

Dawn Primarolo: Information on the amount of income tax, VAT and other taxes paid by workers from the EU accession countries is not available from HM Revenue and Customs' records except at a disproportionate cost.

However, in November 2004 the Home Office initially estimated that, for the period May to September 2004, migrants from the accession countries under the Worker Registration Scheme made a fiscal contribution of £20 million in tax and national insurance contributions. The Home Office's research document is available on their website: http://www.ind.homeoffice.gov.uk/ind/en/home_news/press_releases/new_figures_show_accession.

Unemployment Rate

Edward Miliband: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the unemployment rate in *(a)* Doncaster North and *(b)* each ward of the constituency was in each year for which figures are available. [35678]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 12 December 2005:

As National Statistician. I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about unemployment. (35678)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) compiles statistics of unemployment from the Labour Force Survey following International Labour Organisation definitions. Table 1. attached, shows unemployment rates for persons aged 16 and over resident

in the Doncaster North constituency. The table covers the 12 month periods ending in February each year from 1997 to 2004 and the 12 month period ending in March 2005.

These estimates, as with any from sample surveys, are subject to sampling variability. Changes in the estimates from year to year should be treated with particular caution.

Estimates of unemployment are not available for wards as the survey sample size for such areas is too small.

However, ONS also compiles statistics for local areas of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (ISA). Table 2 shows statistics for the number of ISA claimants expressed as a percentage of the resident working age population for the Doncaster North constituency from 1996.

Comparable percentages for constituency wards of Doncaster North are only available from February 2004. Table 3 shows these statistics for the months available to date.

Table 1: Unemployment rates for persons aged 16 and over resident in the Doncaster North constituency

Percentage

12 months ending	Unemployment rate
February	
1997	11.5
1998	16.9
1999	9.1
2000	8.1
2001	10.5
2002	10.2
2003	6.4
2004	5.3

Table 1: Unemployment rates for persons aged 16 and over resident in the Doncaster North constituency

Percentage

12 months ending	Unemployment rate
March	
2005	6.0

Source:
Annual local area Labour Force Survey;
Annual Population Survey.

Table 2: Jobseeker's allowance claimants as a percentage of the resident working age population for Doncaster North parliamentary constituency

Percentage

	Annual average
1996	8.4
1997	6.6
1998	5.7
1998	4.8
2000	4.0
2001	3.5
2002	3.1
2003	2.8
2004	2.7
2005[1]	3.1

[1] Average for period January 2005 to October 2005.

Note:
Denominators are based on 2001 census data adjusted to be consistent with 2001 mid-year population estimates.

Source:
Jobcentre Plus administrative systems.

Jobseeker's allowance claimants as a percentage of the resident working age population in wards of the Doncaster North parliamentary constituency

Percentage

	Wards[1]					
Month	Adwick	Askern	Bentley Central	Bentley North Road	Stainforth	Thorne
2004						
February	3.5	2.9	3.6	2.3	3.0	3.4
March	3.2	2.6	3.7	2.4	3.0	3.2
April	3.1	2.4	3.4	2.1	2.8	3.0
May	2.9	2.2	3.2	2.0	2.5	2.6
June	2.8	2.3	3.0	2.0	2.5	2.6
July	2.7	2.0	3.4	2.0	2.3	2.4
August	2.7	2.3	3.5	2.2	2.4	2.6
September	2.8	2.2	3.5	2.2	2.4	2.5
October	3.1	2.1	3.5	2.1	2.6	2.7
November	2.8	2.4	3.6	2.4	2.3	2.7
December	2.9	2.7	3.9	2.2	2.4	2.9
2005						
January	3.2	2.9	4.2	2.6	2.5	3.3
February	3.4	3.1	4.2	2.6	2.7	3.2
March	3.4	3.2	4.0	2.2	2.8	3.0
April	3.2	3.1	4.0	2.0	2.6	2.8
May	3.1	2.8	4.2	2.1	2.6	2.6
June	3.4	2.7	4.4	2.2	2.6	2.8
July	3.4	2.5	4.5	2.5	2.6	2.8
August	3.4	2.5	4.5	2.6	2.9	3.0
September	3.6	2.6	4.3	2.8	2.9	3.0
October	3.5	2.8	4.4	2.6	2.9	3.1

[1] The figures relate to census area statistics wards.

Note:
Denominators are mid-2001 census area statistics ward population estimates (experimental statistics).

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HEALTH

Acute Beds

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many acute beds have been closed in 2005–06 in each hospital trust in each strategic health authority. [30789]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not centrally collected. However, data on the average daily number of occupied and available beds up to 2004–05 are available on the Department's website at www.performance.doh.gov.uk/hospitalactivity.

Ambulance Service

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations she has received from regional ambulance services regarding the impact of the Ambulance Service reconfiguration. [30316]

Mr. Byrne: Ministers and the Permanent Secretary have received correspondence from Cumbria Ambulance Service National Health Service Trust, and Coventry and Warwickshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust.

Officials held a meeting on 13 September 2005 to discuss the proposed reconfiguration of ambulance trusts in England, to which all ambulance trust chairs and chief executives were invited.

The Secretary of State met with the chair and chief executive of Staffordshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust on 28 November 2005.

Officials have also been in contact with ambulance trusts on an adhoc basis.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information she intends to make publicly available to assist the relevant authorities in responding to the consultation on Ambulance Service reconfiguration. [30318]

Mr. Byrne: A national consultation document is due to be issued shortly. Strategic health authorities (SHAs) will co-ordinate consultation locally and ensure that relevant authorities and interested parties are able to express their views. SHAs may choose to produce additional local information to assist them in doing this.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the process and methodology used for the Ambulance Service reconfiguration in the Yorkshire region consultation will be the same in each of the four strategic health authorities concerned. [30319]

Mr. Byrne: A national consultation document will be published at the start of the consultation period. Local consultation will be led by strategic health authorities (SHAs). Guidance will be issued to SHAs to support them in this task.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the four ambulance services affected by the reconfiguration in the Yorkshire region will have an opportunity to respond to the strategic health authority response to the consultation before its submission. [30320]

Mr. Byrne: Strategic health authorities (SHAs) will lead local consultation on the Department's proposals for the configuration of ambulance trusts in England. SHAs will be expected to consult with local stakeholders, and feed back their views to the Department. The Department would expect this feedback to include the views of ambulance trusts.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average response time to an emergency call to the Ambulance Service was in *(a)* England, *(b)* the Tees Valley and *(c)* Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency in 2004–05. [31604]

Mr. Byrne: Average ambulance response times to emergency calls are not collected centrally. The data which the Department does collect on ambulance response times is published in the statistical bulletin, "Ambulance services, England: 2004–05". This is available in the Library and on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/11/36/79/04113679.pdf

Anti-cancer Drugs

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what estimate she has made of *(a)* the cost per patient treated with and *(b)* the effectiveness of clofaribine in achieving remission of acute myeloid leukaemia; [32609]

(2) if she will list the options available to patients recommended for treatment with *(a)* clofaribine and *(b)* other expensive new anti-cancer drugs whose local hospital trusts lack the funds to purchase them. [32610]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 30 November 2005]:* No estimate has yet been made of the cost per patient treated with, and the effectiveness in achieving remission of, acute myeloid leukaemia (AML) of clofaribine.

Clofarabine is not yet licensed in the United Kingdom and is currently being tested in patients with AML who are older and not able to withstand the usual intensive chemotherapy.

As with other unlicensed treatments, it will be for the clinicians and funding authorities concerned, in discussion with patients, to decide whether to prescribe clofarabine for AML in individual cases.

Where a decision is made not to prescribe clofarabine or any other new cancer treatment, it will be for the clinicians concerned to advise patients on the alternative options for treatment.

We are already putting record amounts of new investment into the national health service—between 2003 and 2008 NHS expenditure in England will increase on average by 7.5 per cent. each year. It is for primary care trusts (PCTs) to decide how best to spend these resources taking into account local circumstances.

PCTs have many competing priorities but cancer is a national and local priority. Every PCT will have a sizeable number of people in their area who will be diagnosed with the disease, live with the disease and who die from the disease each year. PCTs will need to ensure they allocate sufficient resource to meet their local contribution to tackling cancer care or other areas.

Birmingham Children's Hospital

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reasons the closure of 10 beds in Ward 3 for children under 12 years with severe mental health problems at the Birmingham Children's Hospital is planned. [31476]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* As part of an on-going review of child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) in Birmingham, some changes in the CAMHS service based at the Birmingham Children's Hospital are being considered in the light of best practice and the needs of the children and young people involved.

Any changes that are proposed will be the subject of formal consultation by the Birmingham Children's Hospital National Health Service Trust under Section 11 of the Health and Social Care Act 2001.

Care Homes

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether a person who has been assessed as having above the capital limits for a care home can request *(a)* regular reviews of their care by social services and *(b)* social services to arrange the care. [31639]

Mr. Byrne: Local authorities (LAs) have a duty under section 47 of the National Health Service and Community Care Act 1990 to assess the needs of a person who appears to them to require community care services. Having decided in the light of that assessment to provide services, they should develop a care plan for that individual. As an individual's need for community care services will vary over time, LAs are required to provide a review date in the care plan. Where a LA decides to provide community care services, it may provide the services itself, or make arrangements for those services to be provided. If a LA decides not to provide services following an assessment, because a person's needs are not eligible for support, the LA should inform individuals that, if their circumstances change, they can apply for re-assessment. Individuals can request a review or re-assessment at any time regardless of the funding position.

An individual's financial circumstances should have no bearing on whether a LA carries out a community care assessment or not. Once an individual's care needs have been assessed and a decision made about the care to be provided, an assessment of his/her ability to pay charges should be carried out promptly. Written information about any charges payable, and how they have been calculated, should be communicated to the individual. The individual is entitled to request the LA to arrange his/her care, regardless of whether he/she or the LA is paying for it.

Chase Farm NHS Hospital Trust

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what meetings took place in her Department in the 2004–05 financial year at which the future funding of *(a)* Chase Farm NHS Hospital Trust and *(b)* its accident and emergency department were discussed; and if she will make a statement. [26193]

Mr. Byrne: There were no meetings during the 2004–05 financial year regarding funding of Barnet and Chase Farm National Health Service Hospital Trust and its accident and emergency department.

Dacorum Primary Care Trust

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of *(a)* syphilis, *(b)* HIV, *(c)* lymphoedema and *(d)* tuberculosis have been diagnosed in the area covered by Dacorum Primary Care Trust in each month since January. [22844]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The number of cases of lymphoedema and tuberculosis are not held centrally. Data for 2004 on diagnoses of syphilis made within Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic Health Authority (SHA) (and not by the patients' area of residence) are shown in table 1. The diagnoses of syphilis were made at genitourinary medicine (GUM) clinics (and excludes primary care).

Table 1: Number of diagnoses of primary and secondary syphilis by quarter—Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic Health Authority 2004

Quarter of diagnosis	*Number of diagnoses*
1	6
2	7
3	7
4	8

Source:
KC60 returns, Health Protection Agency.

Data on diagnoses of HIV made within Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic Health Authority (SHA) (and not by the patients' area of residence) are shown in table 2. The diagnoses of HIV were made mostly in GUM clinics (but also primary care, inpatient wards, antenatal clinics). For confidentiality reasons, data on new sexually transmitted infections (STI) and HIV diagnoses are routinely published only at SHA level.

Table 2: Number of HIV diagnoses by month of diagnosis—Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic Health Authority 2004

Month of diagnosis	*Number of diagnoses*
January	27
February	15
March	20
April	17
May	28
June	24
July	14
August	9
September	24
October	37
November	19
December	13
Total	247

Source:
Health Protection Agency

Damages Payments

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the 10 largest amounts of damages paid out by her Department in the last year for which figures are available, indicating in each case the nature of the claim. [27729]

Mr. Byrne: The Department has made no payments that can be constructed as damages during 2004–05.

Dentistry

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how bad debt to dentists from patients will be dealt with under the new National Health Service (General Dental Services Contracts) regulations; and if she will make a statement. [26808]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Under the new contractual arrangements, dentists will—as now—be responsible for collecting national health service patient charges. The new general dental service and personal dental service contract regulations give primary care trusts new powers of assistance, including financial support to help dentists who are unable to recover the necessary patient charge as a result of a patient's failure to pay the advertised patient charge for NHS services.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the new rules for patient charging for NHS dental services, with particular reference to the bodies responsible for collecting bad debts. [28072]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Under the proposed new arrangements for patient charges, dentists will—as now—be responsible for collecting national health service patient charges. The new general dental service and personal dental service contract regulations give primary care trusts new powers of assistance, including financial support, to help dentists who are unable to recover the necessary patient charges as a result of a patient's failure to pay the advertised patient charge for NHS services.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the proposed system of units of dental activity was piloted. [32485]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The pilot personal dental services arrangements now cover over 30 per cent. of dentists. These pilots have shown how dentists' behaviour and treatment patterns alter when the item of service payment system is removed and instead dentists receive a fixed income over a 12 month period. We have taken account of these changes in designing the new system of units of dental activity and the proposed system of banded patient charges.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists are foreign nationals, broken down by nationality. [29463]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* Data on the nationality of dentists are not centrally available. However, the table shows the numbers of dentists in England who qualified outside the United Kingdom, as at 30 September 2005. Dentists have been counted only once, even if they have contracts in both the general dental service (GDS) and personal dental service (PDS).

General dental services and personal dental services
Numbers of dentists in England, who qualified outside the United Kingdom, by country of qualification, as at 30 September 2005

	Number
Total dentists qualified outside the UK	3,751
South Africa	1,039
Sweden	812
Ireland	400
Poland	341
Greece	203
Germany	155
Australia	153
New Zealand	115
Denmark	108
Spain	97
Portugal	65
Malaysia	57
Italy	46
Finland	32
Belgium	30
Norway	27
Netherlands	26
France	20
Czech Republic	7
Latvia	6
Malta	6
Hong Kong	5
Iceland	1

Public Involvement

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to publish the results of her Department's strategic review of patient and public involvement in health. [26854]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* The Department's review of patient and public involvement (PPI) in health is part of the wider White Paper consultation, "Your health, your care, your say". The results of the review are being fed into the development of the White Paper proposals. The results of the PPI review activities will be made available in the new year and will appear on the Department's website on the policy page for patient and public involvement. Hard copies of the results will also be available on request.

Primary Care Trust Assets

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how she expects *(a)* hospitals and *(b)* other assets providing clinical services owned by primary care trusts to be treated under her plans for commissioning a patient-led NHS. [28481]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave the hon. Member for Pendle (Mr. Prentice) today.

Hospital Facilities

Mr. Grogan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which primary care trusts (PCTs) run *(a)* community and *(b)* other hospital facilities; and if she will list each such facility, broken down by PCT. [21918]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not centrally available.

Health Services (West Lancashire)

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what process will be used to transfer the services provided by primary care trusts to alternative providers in West Lancashire. [27703]

Mr. Byrne: In our proposals sent out on 28 July, we indicated that we were minded to require primary care trusts (PCTs) to reduce their service-provision functions by the end of 2008. Since that document, we have listened to stakeholders. The policy moving forward, in relation to service-provision, is that this will be a matter for PCTs to determine locally, so any move away from direct provision of services will be a decision for the local national health service within the framework set out in the forthcoming White Paper and after local consultation, including professions allied to medicine.

We will support PCTs who want to do that, but we will not instruct PCTs to do it nor will we impose any timetable. What matters is getting the best services for each community—and that is what the White Paper will focus on.

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients in *(a)* the Uxbridge constituency and *(b)* England received (i) laser eye surgery, (ii) cataract removal, (iii) bladder keyhole surgery, (iv) coronary artery bypass graft, (v) knee replacement, (vi) hip replacement, (vii) ingrown toenail operations and (viii) varicose vein treatment in the last year for which figures are available; and what the average cost was of each type of operation to the national health service. [29771]

Operations

Mr. Byrne: Data on the costs of national health service hospital services are gathered at healthcare resource group (HRG) level, and not at the level of individual procedures. These data are collected as part of the annual reference cost collection.

The following table shows the relevant HRG category aligned with the information requested for the following procedures:

cataract removal
bladder keyhole surgery
coronary artery bypass graft
knee replacement
hip replacement
varicose vein treatment

All data come from the 2003–04 reference cost collection.

Information on laser eye surgery and ingrown toenail operations is not shown as these costs are not separately identified within the reference cost collection.

			Hillingdon hospital NHS trust	*Royal Brompton and Harefield NHS trust*	*England*	
HRG	*HRG description*	*Description*	*FCEs*[1]	*FCEs*[1]	*FCEs*[1]	*National average (£)*
B13	Phakoemulsification Cataract Extraction and Insertion of Lens	Cataract removal	796	—	276,004	717
B14	Non Phakoemulsification Cataract Surgery	Cataract removal	12	—	5,567	793
E04	Coronary Bypass	Coronary artery bypass graft	—	994	19,215	7,131
G13	Cholecystectomy >69 or with complications or comorbidities	Bladder keyhole surgery	39	—	11,109	2,449
G14	Cholecystectomy <70 without complications or comorbidities	Bladder keyhole surgery	102	—	36,442	1,723
H04	Primary Knee Replacement	Knee replacement	207	—	46,585	5,306
H80	Primary Hip Replacement Cemented	Hip replacement	135	—	36,467	4,750
H81	Primary Hip Replacement Uncemented	Hip replacement	25	—	6,852	4,603
Q11	Varicose Vein Procedures	Varicose vein treatment	269	—	43,386	967

[1] Finished Consultant Episodes (FCEs) as reported in 2003–04 Reference Cost Collection.
Source:
Reference Costs 2003–04. Own data.

Hospital Readmissions

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospital re-admissions within 28 days have taken place in each of the last 10 years; and how many were of patients aged over 65 years. [28447]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is available only at a disproportionate cost. Similar information on annual trends in re-admission rates including rates for patients aged over 75 years for the six years from 1998–99 to 2003–04, is available on the National Centre for Health Outcomes Development website at www.nchod.nhs.uk.

Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals Trust

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many operations have been performed by the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals Trust on behalf of other NHS trusts in each year since 1997; [32948]

(2) how many patients have received treatment in private sector hospitals on referrals from the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust in each of the last five years; [32958]

(3) how many operations were carried out by other trusts on behalf of the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals Trust in each year since 1997, broken down by hospital. [32978]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the end of year financial deficit or surplus for the Hull and East Yorkshire NHS Trust was in each year since 1997. [32949]

Mr. Byrne: Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals National Health Service Trust was established in 1999. The table shows the information requested since 1999.

Financial deficit/surplus—Hull and East Yorkshire NHS Trust 1999–2000 to 2004–05

£000

Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust	*Surplus/(Deficit)*
1999–2000	85
2000–01	28
2001–02	4
2002–03	18
2003–04	17
2004–05	(5,461)

Source:
NHS Trust Audited Summarisation Schedules 1999–2000 to 2004–05

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the financial management targets missed by the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospital Trust in the latest star rating appraisal. [32957]

Mr. Byrne: In the 2005 performance ratings, the Healthcare Commission awarded the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals National Health Service Trust as 'significantly underachieved' against the key target of financial management.

Source:
Healthcare Commission

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many beds were available in the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust in the last period for which figures are available; and what the occupancy rate was in that period. [32959]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

The average daily number of available beds and occupancy rate for the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals National Health Service Trust for 2004–05.

Percentage

	Available	*Occupancy rate*
Beds open overnight	1,465	76.4
Wards open day only	106	81.4

Source:
Department of Health form KH03

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals Trust has made in integrating services for stroke patients with community health providers and social services. [32963]

Mr. Byrne: The Hull and East Riding stroke service set up its organised stroke care in December 2000. This includes comprehensive facilities for stroke patients in community settings, including three inner city rehabilitation units working in partnership with private nursing home providers and a social services residential home. These are three, eight bedded units one at Rossmore Nursing Home, one at St. Marys Nursing Home and one at Alderson Resource (Social Services). The service has well established neurotherapists working in the community across the rehabilitation facilities.

Work is also underway in the East Riding to develop partnership working further with Social Services to provide day rehabilitation facilities utilising the skills of therapy and health care professionals working together with Social Services.

A service re-design is currently underway to strengthen community health provision for stroke patients further. Community stroke nurse specialists will work together with a team of stroke support workers to support the nurse consultant in stroke with the continuing physical and clinical requirements of stroke patients in community rehabilitation settings and also to develop more support in nursing and residential homes by providing training and expertise to support staff working in those settings.

Source:
The Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust

Hull Royal Infirmary

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many outpatients have been waiting more than 13 weeks for an appointment at the Hull Royal Infirmary following GP referral. [32953]

Mr. Byrne: Information is only available for the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals National Health Service Trust. As at September 2005, 513 people were waiting more than 13 weeks for a first outpatient appointment. There were no patients waiting more than 17 weeks.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures Hull Royal Infirmary has in place to prevent the spread of MRSA; and whether these meet national best practice. [32960]

Mr. Byrne: The Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals National Health Service Trust has signed-up to the "Saving Lives" delivery programme which is a key element in reducing methicillin resistant Staphylococcus aureus and avoidable health care associated infections at a local level. It comprises a number of mutually reinforcing activities which will help the trust implement best practice to reduce infection rates. More detail about local action should be set out in the director of infection prevention and control's report.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many patients have been admitted to Hull Royal Infirmary Stroke Unit in each year since 1997; [32964]

(2) how many beds there were in the Stroke Unit at the Hull Royal Infirmary in each year since 1997. [32965]

Mr. Byrne: The Stroke Unit at the Hull Royal Infirmary was established in December 2000 and has 24 beds. The number of patients who have accessed the Acute Stroke Unit are as follows:

	Number
2001	668
2002	638
2003	566
2004	559

Source:
The Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals National Health Service Trust.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of Hull Royal Infirmary post-heart treatment rehabilitation services; and how many patients have *(a)* attended rehabilitation appointments, *(b)* stopped smoking and *(c)* made appropriate dietary and exercise changes since the services commenced. [32967]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally. Responsibility for local health services lies with the local national health service. It is for primary care trusts (PCTs) in conjunction with strategic health authorities and other local stakeholders to plan, develop and improve services according to the needs of the local people.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether patients have access to specialist heart failure nurses at the Hull Royal Infirmary. [32969]

Mr. Byrne: The Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals National Health Service Trust does provide a heart failure service at the Hull Royal Infirmary, which has benefited from further expansion this year.

Source:
The Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust.

Independent Treatment Centres

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average cost of *(a)* orthopaedic procedures and *(b)* cataract surgery has been in each independent sector treatment centre carrying out such operations under contract with the NHS. [21495]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The average cost of orthopaedic procedures and cataract surgery cannot be disclosed as the information is commercially confidential.

Influenza Pandemic

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the capacity of NHS isolation facilities and single rooms to isolate cases where necessary in the event of an influenza pandemic reaching alert level 2 in the UK; and if she will make a statement. [22126]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Full information on the availability of isolation facilities is not available but departmental guidance states that new buildings should ideally contain at least 50 per cent. of their beds in single rooms. NHS Estates published guidance in February 2005 to assist local planning for isolation facilities and the Department is considering the need for guidance on ventilated isolation facilities. During a pandemic it is likely that patients would be cohorted rather than kept in isolation.

Frank Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the proposed changes to primary care trusts on the capacity of the NHS to respond to an influenza pandemic. [30095]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The Department has formed a national influenza pandemic committee (UKNIPC) to provide specialist advice supported by a scientific advisory group to provide detailed scientific advice on the response to an influenza pandemic. Strategic health authorities, in England, are responsible for overseeing health planning and coordinating the local response. This remains the case irrespective of proposals for service reconfiguration.

Medical Staff

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what was the *(a)* three-month staff vacancy rate as a percentage, *(b)* three-month staff vacancy rate as a number of posts, *(c)* number of staff in post as a full-time equivalent and *(d)* number of consultants in post in each (i) strategic health authority, (ii) NHS trust and (iii) NHS mental health trust in London on 31 March (A) 2003, (B) 2004 and (C) 2005, broken down by speciality. [18648]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not hold information in the format requested.

However, information is collected on staff vacancy rates and the number of staff in post which has been placed in the Library. This shows that the number of consultants in England has increased by nearly 3,200 (full-time equivalent) between March 2003 and March 2005 or 12 per cent. The three-month vacancy rate reduced from 4.7 per cent. to 3.1 per cent. in the same period for England as a whole for hospital doctors, excluding those in training and equivalents.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 21 March 2005, *Official Report,* column 622W, on medical staff Salaries, what the average salary of a *(a)* consultant, *(b)* junior doctor and *(c)* nurse was in 2004. [29855]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the following table.

£

	Average annual earnings	*Average annual basic salary*
Consultants	94,700	74,600
Doctors in training and their equivalents (junior doctors)	47,900	28,800
Nursing and midwifery (qualified)	26,400	22,700
All NHS staff	26,300	22,300

Source:
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre, Earnings Survey 2004.

Midwives

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people *(a)* were employed as midwives in the NHS for the first time and *(b)* left NHS midwife posts in each year since 1980. [30481]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not collected centrally.

However, the following table shows the number of midwives employed in the national health service in each year since 1980.

NHS Hospital and Community Health Services (HCHS): Registered midwives in England as at 30 September each year

	Full-time equivalent	*Headcount*
2004	18,854	24,844
2003	18,444	23,941
2002	18,119	23,249
2001	18,048	23,075
2000	17,662	22,572
1999	17,876	22,799
1998	18,168	22,841
1997	18,053	22,385
1996	18,262	22,595
1995[1]	18,034	22,022
1994	19,291	23,050
1993	19,554	23,353
1992	20,283	24,020
1991	19,685	23,368
1990	19,897	23,143
1989	19,213	22,391
1988	19,290	22,319
1987	19,312	22,117
1986	18,850	21,549
1985	18,431	21,067
1984	17,820	20,438
1983	17,309	19,814
1982[2]	16,268	18,439
1981	12,743	14,763
1980	13,056	15,209

[1] A new system of occupation coding for NHS non-medical staff was introduced in 1995. The new codes classify staff according to what they do rather than the terms and conditions under which they are employed i.e. national pay scales. Figures based on new occupation codes are not directly comparable with those based on the old pay scale classification. Therefore figures since 1995 are not comparable with earlier years.

[2] From 1982 onwards data is taken from the Department of Health Non-Medical Workforce Census. Prior to 1982 data is taken from the Health and Personal Social Services Statistics for England (HPSSS). Data from HPSSS contains hospital-based staff only and is therefore not directly comparable with later years.

Notes:
Figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.
All figures exclude learners and agency staff.

Sources:
Department of Health Non-Medical Workforce Census
Health and Personal Social Services Statistics for England (HPSSS)

Modernising Medical Careers

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made of the impact of the modernising medical careers training structure on *(a)* junior and *(b)* middle-ranking doctors; [30312]

(2) how many positions for junior and middle-ranking doctors were available *(a)* immediately before and *(b)* immediately after modernising medical careers was introduced. [30313]

Mr. Byrne: The launch of the foundation programme as the first phase of modernising medical careers (MMC) in August this year saw some senior house officer (SHO) posts converted to SHO equivalent foundation year two posts but this conversion did not affect the overall number of posts available for doctors working at the SHO level.

The MMC proposals for specialist training have yet to be agreed in detail. The proposals would see the gradual phasing out of the SHO grade to be replaced by structured programmes of training leading to the award of a certificate of completion of training.

Current SHOs will not be disadvantaged in the new training system and MMC will be working closely with the Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board and Medical Royal Colleges to ensure that all are treated fairly.

We have consulted widely on these proposals and will continue to engage with stakeholders, including the British Medical Association, to manage transition.

In the September 2004 census, the number of medically qualified SHOs and equivalents was 20,094 in England. This was an increase of 1,882 (10 per cent.) from the previous year and an increase of 5,514 (38 per cent.) since 1997. The census is a count of doctors on particular salary scales or their equivalents, not a count of doctors with a particular job description. These figures therefore include trust doctors, clinical fellows and other such posts.

NHS Bursaries

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many eligible students who applied for NHS bursaries for their courses had not received their bursary by *(a)* the first week and *(b)* the first month of their course in 2005–06. [24546]

Mr. Byrne: I am informed by the NHS Pensions Agency who are responsible for the NHS student grants unit that it is not possible to pay bursaries within one week of the start of their course. The other information requested is not available but I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Northavon (Steve Webb) today.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how long on average an individual waited when claiming an NHS bursary from the point of application to the point of receiving the allowance in 2004–05. [26559]

Mr. Byrne: I am informed by the NHS Pensions Agency that for new students in the academic year 2004–05, the average waiting time from claiming a national health service bursary to payment was 53 days.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures are being taken to reduce the time taken for an individual to receive the NHS bursary. [26560]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Billericay (Mr. Baron) on 6 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1233W.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff are employed to deal with applications for NHS bursaries. [26561]

Mr. Byrne: The NHS student grants unit is part of the NHS Pensions Agency. The NHS Pensions Agency employs 67 staff (65.71 whole-time equivalent) to deal with applications from national health service bursaries.

NHS Capital Expenditure

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total NHS capital expenditure has been in each year since 1990. [25283]

Mr. Byrne: The table shows public capital expenditure from 1990–91 to 2004–05.

In addition, private sector investment through the private finance initiative in national health service facilities is estimated to have reached £4 billion to date. Of the 139 hospital schemes authorised to go-ahead, 56 are complete with 32 under construction. The estimated total value of schemes authorised to proceed is over £19 billion.

41 NHS local improvement finance trust schemes totalling around £700 million have reached financial close.

NHS public capital expenditure: England—1990–91 to 2004–05

		Capital net NHS expenditure (£ billions)	*Percentage increase*	*Percentage real terms increase*[1]
Cash[2]				
1990–91	Outturn	1.426	16.7	8.2
1991–92	Outturn	1.524	6.9	0.8
1992–93	Outturn	1.752	15.0	11.4
1993–94	Outturn	1.594	-9.0	-11.3
1994–95	Outturn	1.865	17.0	15.2
1995–96	Outturn	1.736	-6.9	-9.5
1996–97	Outturn	1.341	-22.7	-25.4
1997–98	Outturn	1.089	-18.8	-21.1
1998–99	Outturn	0.808	-25.9	-27.7
Resource budgeting stage 1[3]				
1999–2000	Outturn	0.908	—	—
2000–01	Outturn	1.246	37.2	35.4
2001–02	Outturn	1.732	39.0	35.7
2002–03	Outturn	2.107	21.7	17.9
Resource budgeting stage 2[4,5]				
2003–04	Outturn	2.451	—	—
2004–05	Estimated Outturn	3.396	38.5	35.6

[1] Based on the gross domestic product deflator series as at 29 September 2005.
[2] Expenditure pre 1999–2000 is on a cash basis.
[3] Expenditure figures from 1999–2000 to 2002–03 are on a stage one resource budgeting basis. Cash figures in 1999–2000 were £0.963 billion, a real terms increase of 16.9 per cent. on the previous year.
[4] Expenditure figures from 2003–04 to 2007–08 are on a stage two resource budgeting basis.
[5] The resource budgeting stage 2 expenditure figures shown for 2003–04 and 2004–05 are consistent with table 3.4 in the 2005 departmental report.

NHS Executives

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS executives will be paid more than £200,000 in 2005–06. [30672]

Mr. Byrne: This information is not held centrally.

Information on salaries of executives of national health service organisations are published in their annual reports and accounts.

NHS Finance

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what spending on the NHS in England has been in *(a)* real terms and *(b)* nominal terms in each year since 1990; and what estimate she has made of expenditure on the NHS in England in each year until 2007–08. [18378]

Mr. Byrne: The information in the table shows the growth in total net national health service expenditure in nominal and real terms (2004–05 prices).

Net NHS total expenditure: England, 1990–91 to 2007–08

£ billion

		A. Net NHS expenditure real in 2004–05 Prices[1]	*B. Net NHS expenditure nominal*[1]
Cash[2]			
1990–91	Outturn	32.74	22.33
1991–92	Outturn	35.06	25.35
1992–93	Outturn	37.49	27.97
1993–94	Outturn	37.83	28.94
1994–95	Outturn	39.38	30.59
1995–96	Outturn	40.05	31.99
1996–97	Outturn	39.91	33.00
1997–98	Outturn	40.72	34.66
1998–99	Outturn	41.91	36.61
1999–2000	Outturn	44.78	39.88
Resource Budgeting Stage 1[3]			
1999–2000	Outturn	45.14	40.20
2000–01	Outturn	48.69	43.93
2001–02	Outturn	53.02	49.02
2002–03	Outturn	56.65	54.04
Resource Budgeting Stage 2[4,5]			
2003–04	Outturn	64.34	63.00
2004–05	Outturn	69.71	69.71
2005–06	Plan	74.52	76.39
2006–07	Plan	80.10	84.32
2007–08	Plan	85.69	92.64

[1] Figures are not consistent over the period (1990–91 to 2007–08), hence no comparisons should be made across different periods.
[2] Expenditure pre 1999–2000 is on a cash basis.
[3] Expenditure figures from 1999–2000 to 2002–03 are on a Stage 1 Resource Budgeting basis.
[4] Expenditure figures from 2003–04 to 2007–08 are on a Stage 2 Resource Budgeting basis.
[5] The Resource Budgeting Stage 2 expenditure figures shown for 2004–05 to 2007–08 are consistent with the 2005 Departmental Report and Chief Executive's Report.
Note:
Based on the GDP Deflator series as at 28 September 2005.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what criteria she uses to determine when she intervenes in individual funding decisions taken by *(a)* primary care trusts and *(b)* other NHS bodies; and what steps she is taking to ensure NHS organisations are informed of these criteria. [28712]

Mr. Byrne: Revenue allocations are made directly to primary care trusts (PCTs) and it is for PCTs to determine how to use the funding allocated to them to commission services to meet the health care needs of their local populations.

The Secretary of State would only intervene in funding decisions made at a local level in very exceptional circumstances. There are no pre-determined

criteria for intervention; rather it is a matter of judgment and full consideration of the issues in any given situation.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will place in the Library the most recent month's forecast of financial position for each NHS organisation submitted to the Department by each strategic health authority. [29826]

Mr. Byrne: The 2005–06 forecast financial position at month six for all national health service organisations was announced on 1 December and copies placed in the Library. This information is also available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/FreedomOfInformation/ClassesOfInformation/fs/en

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 266W, on NHS finance, whether it is her intention that control totals for each strategic health authority are set so that the net sum of control totals nationally is œ0; and from which budgets deficits are met when all the control totals set across England add up to a sum of less than œ0. [31118]

Mr. Byrne: Decisions on the individual control totals for all strategic health authorities or their net sum have not been finalised.

NHS Pension Scheme

Laura Moffatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether pensionable service of women doctors in the NHS scheme between 1972 and 1988 is taken into account when calculating the eventual widowers' pensions. [21255]

Mr. Byrne: In line with the 1986 Social Security Act, the pensionable service of female scheme members between 1972 and 1988 is not taken into account in calculating a widower's pension unless an option was made to purchase pre 1988 service.

NHS Postholders

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* chairmen and *(b)* chief executives of (i) strategic health authorities, (ii) special health authorities, (iii) primary care trusts and (iv) NHS (provider) trusts have been in post for (A) less than one year, (B) one to three years, (C) four to six years, (D) seven to nine years and (E) 10 or more years. [29957]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The information requested is not collected centrally.

NHS Professionals

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average cost to the NHS is for a week's work from *(a)* a nurse and *(b)* a doctor employed through (i) an agency and (ii) NHS professionals. [25825]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

NHS Reorganisation

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many requests she has received to refer NHS reorganisation to the Independent Reconfiguration Panel; how many she has agreed; and if she will make a statement. [20404]

Mr. Byrne: As at 30 November 2005 there have been eight referrals to the Secretary of State. The overview and scrutiny committee right of referral is to the Secretary of State who may choose to seek advice from the Independent Reconfiguration Panel (IRP). Since its establishment, the IRP has provided formal advice to the Secretary of State on one case-in East Kent.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the redundancy costs of the latest proposals for the reorganisation of the NHS. [25726]

Mr. Byrne: Local consultation on proposals for reconfiguration of strategic health authorities and primary care trusts is due to start on 14 December 2005 and will last for 14 weeks. Until this process has been completed and decisions taken, it is not possible to calculate reliable redundancy costs.

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* ambulance trusts, *(b)* primary care trusts and *(c)* strategic health authorities she expects to complete reconfiguration by the end of this financial year; and how many in each category will be reconfigured during the course of the next financial year. [31203]

Mr. Byrne: Changes to strategic health authorities will precede changes to primary care trusts, and any changes to the latter will not commence before April 2006.

We expect that most ambulance trusts will begin to be established from 1 July 2006.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the proposed re-configuration of primary care trusts is still expected to deliver a 15 per cent. reduction in costs as set out in the letters of 28 July from Sir Nigel Crisp to primary care trusts. [30777]

Mr. Byrne: Each strategic health authority has confirmed that reconfiguration proposals will achieve their share of the national management cost savings of £250 million or 15 per cent.

NHS Staff Training

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health in what ways the private medical sector participates in the training of NHS *(a)* doctors, *(b)* nurses and *(c)* other medical staff; and if she will make a statement. [29773]

Mr. Byrne: The private and independent sectors have traditionally taken an active part in training doctors, for example, by offering training placements, in palliative care, plastic surgery, occupational health medicine and latterly in pharmaceutical medicine. The national health service takes advantage of training opportunities in all these specialties.

We have told independent sector treatment centres providing a service to the NHS that they will be expected to provide appropriate training for doctors and for other staff whether employed directly by them or on secondment from the NHS.

NHS Student Grant Unit

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many applications have been *(a)* received and *(b)* processed by the NHS student grant unit for students starting their courses in September 2005; and how many grants have been awarded to date. [25539]

Mr. Byrne: I am informed by the NHS Pensions Agency who are responsible for the NHS student grants unit that the unit received over 25,000 applications for new students starting their courses in September 2005. All of these applications have been processed.

As at 5 December 2005, over 77,000 grants in total have been awarded by the NHS student grants unit.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the performance of the NHS Student Grant Unit in processing application forms for grants for the 2005–06 academic year. [25540]

Mr. Byrne: The NHS student grants unit is part of the NHS Pensions Agency. As a special health authority, the NHS Pensions Agency is independent of the Department, and the chief executive and board are responsible for the operational affairs and the day to day management of the authority.

I am aware that there have been some delays in processing applications for students starting their studies in the academic year 2005–06. As at Friday 25 November 2005, the NHS student grants unit was back within the target of processing 95 per cent. of bursary applications within 20 working days of receipt, providing they receive a correctly completed application form.

Nurses

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the effect of hospital trusts' deficits on nurse recruitment. [23705]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1175–76W.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many applicants' fees the Nursing and Midwifery Council accepted from overseas nurses in each of the last five years, broken down by country of origin. [21223]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 24 October 2005]:* The Department does not hold the information requested. The Nursing and Midwifery Council is an independent body. The hon. Member may wish to approach the Council for this information.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many decision letters have been issued by the Nursing and Midwifery Council to prospective candidates for the Overseas Nursing Programme in each of the last two years, broken down by *(a)* positive and *(b)* negative decisions. [29318]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 17 November 2005]:* The overseas nurses programme was introduced by the Nursing and Midwifery Council on 1 September 2005.

Data on registrations is not collected by the Department.

PCT Mergers

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the possible effects on funding for local charities and health advisory organisations of the proposed merger of primary care trusts; and if she will make a statement. [31374]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not collect any information on grant funding of the voluntary and community sector by primary care trusts (PCTs), therefore I am unable to comment on possible effects on funding for local charities and health advisory organisations of the proposed reconfiguration of PCTs.

For those strategic health authorities, who propose change to the boundaries of PCTs, we have asked for evidence to demonstrate how existing successful partnerships with local partners and local responsiveness can be maintained and improved.

PCT Professional Executive Committees

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which staff groups are represented on the professional executive committees of primary care trusts; whether she expects this composition to change following the reorganisation of primary care trusts; and if she will make a statement. [31012]

Mr. Byrne: The membership of the professional executive committees (PECs) of primary care trusts (PCTs) is as follows:

the chief executive and director of finance of the PCT

two persons who are employed by a relevant local social services authority

at least one public health member

at least one, but no more than seven of each of:

medical practitioners

nurses

such other professional members as, in the opinion of the PCT, reflect the functions carried out by the trust

There are currently no plans to change the composition of PECs. No decisions on the reorganisation of PCTs will be taken until a full three month consultation has been completed.

Premature Babies

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether an assessment of the impact of post traumatic stress and time off work for parents whose premature babies have contracted bronchiolitis or chronic lung disease has been made; and if she will make a statement. [30156]

Mr. Byrne: No assessment has been made by the Department into the impact of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and work absence on the parents of premature babies who have contracted bronchiolitis or any of the respiratory illnesses associated with the respiratory syncytial virus.

National health service organisations were given guidance on the management of PTSD in adults and children in primary and secondary care by the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) in March 2005. Local NHS organisations should review

their existing clinical guidelines, care pathways and protocols in the treatment and management of PTSD in the light of this guidance, and revise them accordingly.

The NICE guidance is available on its website at www.nice.org.uk/CG026NICEguideline. This guideline should be used in conjunction with the national service framework for mental health, which is available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/07/72/09/04077209.pdf.

Primary Care Trusts

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether it remains her policy to require primary care trusts to divest themselves of their provider status by 2008; and if she will make a statement. [24824]

Mr. Byrne: Any move away from direct provision of service will be a decision for the national health service locally, within the framework to be set out in the forthcoming White Paper and after local consultation with a range of stakeholders including staff. We will support primary care trust (PCTs) who want to make such a change, but we will not instruct PCTs to do it, nor will we impose any timetable. What matters is securing the best services for patients locally, which is what the White Paper will focus on.

Frank Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether her Department has withdrawn the July advice to primary care trusts to divest themselves of the staff who provide services to patients. [25614]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 7 November 2005]:* I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave my hon. Friend, the Member for Pendle (Mr. Prentice), today.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on her policy on the *(a)* commissioning and *(b)* provider roles of primary care trusts. [26296]

Mr. Byrne: Any move away from direct provision of services by primary care trusts (PCTs) will be a decision for the local national health service within the framework set out in the forthcoming White Paper and after local consultation, including staff.

We will support PCTs who want to do that, but we will not instruct PCTs to do it, nor will we impose any timetable. What matters is getting the best services for each community—and that is what the White Paper will focus on.

Private Patients

Chris Huhne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the total revenue derived from private patients in the NHS was in each of the last 10 years; [31347]

(2) what the total cost of providing private patients with care in NHS hospitals has been in each of the last 10 years. [31348]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not collect information on the cost of providing private patients with care in national health service hospitals. Income from private patients treated in NHS hospitals are shown in the following table:

£000

	Total income from private patients treated in the national health service
1995–96	207,448
1996–97	235,733
1997–98	273,232
1998–99	290,840
1999–2000	304,826
2000–01	316,660
2001–02	341,763
2002–03	369,073
2003–04	386,481
2004–05	316,081

Sources:
Audited NHS trust summarisation schedules 1995–96 to 2004–05
Audited primary care trust summarisation schedules 2000–01 to 2004–05
2004–05 figures do not include income for NHS Foundation Trusts

Public Engagement Contracts

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 12 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 991W, on public engagement contracts, what the value is of the contract tendered to run the consultation exercise "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say"; how many and which companies bid for the contract; and on what date it was decided to award the contract to Opinion Leader Research. [18127]

Mr. Byrne: The current value of contract with Opinion Leader Research (OLR) for the "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" consultation is £952,104. Three companies responded to the tender, ICM Research, Market and Opinion Research International (MORI) and OLR. The contract was awarded 25 July 2005.

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how she has defined a personalised care plan for the purposes of measuring the achievement of 2004 public service agreement target number 4. [29806]

Mr. Byrne: A key aim of public service agreement target number 4 is to improve health outcomes for people with long term conditions by offering a personalised care plan for those people with the most complex conditions. The initial focus for achievement of the target has been on the recruitment and training of the case managers who will be responsible for drawing up and agreeing care plans with patients. Further work on defining the care plan and how this should be measured is in progress and the outcome will be shared with the national health service early in 2006.

Quality and Outcomes Framework

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment her Department has made of the impact that the quality and outcomes framework has had on the treatment of conditions which are not covered by quality and outcomes framework clinical indicators, with particular reference to osteoporosis. [29387]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 17 November 2005]:* The Department has commissioned the National Primary Care Research and Development Centre at the University of Manchester to undertake an evaluation of

the impact of the quality and outcomes framework (QOF) on quality of patient care. The study covers three clinical conditions: asthma, angina and type two diabetes, which are all covered by the QOF. However, the range of indicators against which quality of care will be assessed includes some that are outside the QOF; it does not include osteoporosis. This study will be able to assess the extent to which QOF and non-QOF elements of clinical management of these conditions are provided in general practice.

Student Nurses

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to speed up the distribution of NHS bursaries for student nurses. [25440]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Billericay (Mr. Baron) on 6 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1233W.

Temporary Medical Staff (Costs)

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost to the NHS of *(a)* agency nurses, *(b)* agency doctors and *(c)* total agency staff in (i) England, (ii) each strategic health authority and (iii) each NHS trust have been in each year since 1997. [22118]

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the NHS spent on temporary *(a)* nurses and *(b)* doctors in each of the past five years. [25823]

Mr. Byrne: The Department collects expenditure information on non-national health service staff for primary care trusts (PCTs), NHS trusts and strategic health authorities (SHAs). Non-NHS staff expenditure figures include all agency staff and any other staff not directly employed by these bodies.

Expenditure on agency staff in the NHS in 2004–05 dropped to four per cent. of the NHS pay bill. This information with explanatory notes has been placed in the Library. The rise in agency staff spend over the years covered in the tables has tracked the rise in established posts over the period.

Reducing agency spend is part of the Department's contribution to the 6.5 billion Gershon Efficiency target and the 10 human resource high impact changes as highlighted in "A workforce response to local delivery plans; a challenge for NHS Boards".

Waiting Lists/Times

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time in hospitals in *(a)* Staffordshire, *(b)* the West Midlands and *(c)* England has been in each year since 1997. [22155]

Mr. Byrne: The median waiting times for inpatient admission at hospitals in Shropshire and Staffordshire Strategic Health Authority, the West Midlands and England in each year since 1997 are shown in the table.

Estimated average time patients have been waiting for elective admission, March 1997 to June 2005—Provider based

Weeks

	Median waiting time		
	Shropshire and Staffordshire SHA[1]	*West Midlands*[2]	*England*
March 1997	11.2	11.1	13.2
March 1998	14.1	12.6	14.8
March 1999	13.0	11.8	12.8
March 2000	13.8	11.8	12.9
March 2001	12.9	11.6	12.6
March 2002	12.4	11.4	12.7
March 2003	14.1	10.8	11.9
March 2004	11.1	9.8	10.2
March 2005	9.4	8.1	8.4
June 2005	9.0	7.8	8.0

[1] Shropshire HA, South Staffordshire HA and North Staffordshire HA merged to form Shropshire and Staffordshire Health Authority.

[2] Data for NHS providers within Shropshire and Staffordshire SHA, Birmingham and the Black Country SHA and West Midlands South SHA have been used to represent West Midlands.

Source:

Department of Health form KH07.

Strategic health authorities and corresponding health authorities

Code	*Name*
Q26	Shropshire and Staffordshire SHA
QEF	Shropshire HA
QEH	North Staffordshire HA
QEJ	South Staffordshire HA
Q27	Birmingham and The Black Country SHA
QD9	Birmingham HA
QEC	Dudley HA
QEE	Sandwell HA
QEG	Solihull HA
QEK	Walsall HA
QEM	Wolverhampton HA
Q28	West Midlands South SHA
QEA	Coventry HA
QED	Herefordshire HA
QEL	Warwickshire HA
QEN	Worcestershire HA

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1160W, on waiting lists/times, whether the statement on page 57 of the NHS Improvement Plan that there would be 100 per cent. e-booking by December ever had the status of a Government target. [29871]

Mr. Byrne: No, the statement never had the status of a Government target.

School Nurses

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many additional school nurses have been employed since the publication of the Public Health White Paper. [30785]

Mr. Byrne: School nurses were counted fully for the first time in the September 2004 national health service workforce census, two months before the 'Choosing Health' White Paper was published in November 2004.

The census showed that there were 2,409 qualified nurses working in school nursing, the next count will be available from the September 2005 census which will be published in March 2006.

Western General Hospital

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to bring payment by results for emergency procedures at Western General hospital into force as soon as possible. [30935]

Mr. Byrne: Final decisions on the scope and structure of the tariff in 2006–07 have not yet been made. These will be made once Ministers have considered the recommendations of departmental advisory groups.

Providers will only be operating at full tariff by 2008–09. In the meantime, the introduction of the tariff will be gradual, with transitional adjustments to provider's tariff income.

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 13 December 2005

TREASURY

British Film Industry

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what financial assistance the UK Government have provided to the British film industry in each of the last 10 years; and if he will make a statement. [36463]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Member to the written answer I gave on 7 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1323W to the hon. Member for Southend, West (Mr. Amess).

Cancer

Mr. Harper: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the *(a)* diagnosis and *(b)* mortality rate was for cancer in each of the last five years in Forest of Dean constituency. [36247]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 13 December 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning what the *(a)* diagnosis and *(b)* mortality rate was for cancer in each of the last five years in the Forest of Dean constituency. I am replying in her absence. (36247)

The most recent available information on registration of newly diagnosed cases (incidence) and mortality are for the years 2003 and 2004, respectively. As population estimates by age and sex are not available for parliamentary constituencies, age-standardised incidence and mortality rates (directly standardised to the European standard population) are given in the table below for all malignant cancers in the Forest of Dean local authority between 1999 and 2004.

Directly age-standardised incidence and mortality rates per 100,000 population[1] for all malignant cancers[2] in the Forest of Dean[3] local authority, 1999–2004

	Incidence	*Mortality*
1999	398.7	194.6
2000	341.3	160.1
2001	320.8	183.5
2002	323.1	185.4
2003	375.7	186.2
2004	—	175.5

[1] Rates are directly standardised to the European standard population. In detailed analyses of trends in incidence and mortality over time for a particular cancer, ONS use age-standardised rates. These control for differences in the size and age structure of the population and allow unbiased comparison of rates over time.
[2] Figures for malignant cancer incidence are based on the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10), codes C00-C97, excluding non-melanoma skin cancer code C44. Cancer mortality figures are based on the Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes 140–208 for the years 1999–2000, and ICD-10 codes C00-C97 for the years 2001–2004. Deaths were selected using the original underlying cause.
[3] Usual residents in the area at time of death.
[4] Deaths registered in each calendar year.
Source:
Office for National Statistics

Child Poverty

John Battle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps the Government are taking to increase the financial support available to large families as recommended in the Treasury's 2004 child poverty review. [36778]

Dawn Primarolo: Between 1998–99 and 2003–04, the risk of poverty for children in families with three or more children has fallen more quickly than the average risk. However, the Child Poverty Review highlighted the fact that these families remain at greater risk of poverty than other families, and that nearly half of children in poverty live in large families.

Since the review, the Government have increased the child element of the child tax credit (CTC), which is paid in respect of each and every child in a family and so of particular benefit to large families. The child element rose by £65 a year in April 2005 and will rise by a further £75 a year in April 2006, to £1,765. As a result of these and other Government reforms to the personal tax and benefit system since 1997, by April 2006 families with three or more children with an income of between £10,000 and £20,000 per year, for example, will be on average £100 per week better off in real terms.

The Government have committed to increasing the child element at least in line with earnings in 2007–08. The Government have also commissioned research into poverty in large families to inform future policy, which is expected to report in 2006.

Child Tax Credit

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the savings from freezing the family element of child tax credit over the next three years. [36739]

Dawn Primarolo: Government forecast for spending on tax credits assume the family element remains at the same nominal rate. There are therefore no such savings.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the additional costs arising from changes to the childcare tax credit over the next three years. [36740]

Dawn Primarolo: The Government want families to be able to afford flexible, high quality child care that is appropriate for their needs. Therefore, the 2004 pre-Budget report announced that:

> the limits of the child care element of the working tax credit would be increased to £300 a week (£175 for one child) from April 2005; and
>
> the maximum proportion of costs that can be claimed would increase from 70 per cent. to 80 per cent. from April 2006.

The costs of these measures were published in table B4, p201, in the 2004 pre-Budget report.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many applications for child tax credit awards have been made by families with *(a)* one disabled child,

(b) two disabled children, *(c)* three or more disabled children, *(d)* one severely disabled child, *(e)* two severely disabled children and *(f)* three or more severely disabled children in each month since April 2003. [36806]

Dawn Primarolo: Information on applications for child tax credit awards made by families with disabled and severely disabled children, on a monthly basis, is not available.

Information on awards to in-work families with disabled children are detailed in Tables 5.2 and 5.4 of the HMRC publication 'Child and Working Tax Credits Provisional awards at April 2005'. This details the number of in-work families benefiting from the disabled child element and the number of in-work families benefiting from the severely disabled child element. This publication can be found on the HMRC website at: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/cwtc-quarterly-stats.htm

Children's Deaths

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many children died in hospital of an infection in each of the last 10 years; and what proportion of children's deaths such deaths comprised in each year. [37332]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 13 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking how many children died in hospital of an infection in each of the last 10 years; and what proportion of children's deaths such deaths comprised in each year. (37332)

The most recent year for which information on deaths is available is 2004. Figures are given in the table below for all infectious and parasitic diseases in each year from 1995 to 2004.

Number of deaths from infectious or parasitic diseases[1] which occurred in hospital[2] in children aged under 16, England and Wales, 1995 to 2004[3]

Calendar year	Number of deaths	Percentage of all deaths in children
1995	223	3.8
1996	217	3.7
1997	218	3.9
1998	226	4.2
1999	227	4.3
2000	188	3.8
2001	178	3.7
2002	130	2.8
2003	149	3.1
2004	140	3.0

[1] Cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Ninth Revision (ICD-9) codes 001–139 for the years 1995 and 2000, and Tenth Revision (ICD-10) codes A00-B99 from 2001 onwards.
[2] NHS and non-NHS general hospitals.
[3] Figures are for deaths occurring in each calendar year.

City Academies (VAT)

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the cost of extending the provisions of section 33 of the Value Added Tax Act 1994 to city academies. [37330]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: No estimate has been made.

Citygate Public Affairs Ltd.

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what meetings the Department has held with Citygate Public Affairs Ltd. since July. [36752]

John Healey: The Department does not maintain a central list of such contacts. Ministers and civil servants, including special advisers meet many people as part of the process of policy development and business delivery. All such contacts are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Ministerial Code, Civil Service Code, Code of Conduct for Special Advisers and Guidance for civil servants on contacts with lobbyists and people outside Government.

Company Regulations

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the meetings held between his Department and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister at which the decision to remove the obligation on businesses to publish operating and financial reviews was discussed. [36722]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: In line with the Government's commitment to simplifying company law and reducing the regulatory burden on business, the Government have decided to replace the requirement for quoted companies to produce a statutory Operating and Financial Review with a requirement to produce an enhanced Business Review. This aligns the reporting requirements of quoted companies with the requirements of the European Accounts Modernisation Directive and demonstrates the Government's ongoing commitment to strategic forward-looking narrative reporting.

The Chancellor consulted with ministerial colleagues prior to making this decision. There were no meetings between the Treasury and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on this issue.

Consumer Debt

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average level of consumer debt was in *(a)* Essex, *(b)* England and *(c)* Wales in the last period for which figures are available; what assessment he has made of the level of debt in other parts of the UK; and if he will make a statement. [37555]

John Healey: Figures from the Bank of England showed that the level of unsecured consumer debt in the UK in October 2005 was £191,406 million, of which £56,334 million is credit card debt and £135,072 million other. Official regional and average data are not available. The growth in unsecured lending is now at its lowest in over 10 years.

Death Rate (Lancashire)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the death rate was for *(a)* cancer and *(b)* heart disease in (i) Lancashire, (ii) the North West and (iii) Chorley in the last period for which figures are available. [36772]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 13 December 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning what the death rate was for *(a)* cancer and *(b)* heart disease in (i) Lancashire, (ii) the North West and (iii) Chorley in the last period for which figures are available. I am replying in her absence. (36772)

The latest year for which the figures requested are available is 2004. These are given in the attached table.

Death rates[1] from cancer and coronary heart disease[2] in the county of Lancashire,[3,4] North West government office region and the local authority of Chorley,[4] 2004

Age standardised death rates per 100,000 population[1]

	Cancer	*Coronary heart disease*
Lancashire	195	123
North West	195	131
Chorley	199	124

[1] Rates per 100,000 population standardised to the European Standard Population.

[2] The cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10). The codes used are listed as follows:

Cancer (malignant neoplasms)—ICD-10 C00-C97;

Coronary Heart Disease—ICD-10 120–125.

Deaths were selected from those registered in 2004 using the original underlying cause.

[3] The figures provided relate to the current county of Lancashire. This excludes the unitary authorities of Blackburn and Darwen, and Blackpool, created in 1998, which were part of the former county.

[4] Usual residents of these areas.

Defined Benefit Schemes

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the factors affecting a change in tax relief on pension contributions going into defined benefit schemes; and if he will make a statement. [37147]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Following extensive consultation the Government are introducing a single regime for the taxation of pensions with a single set of rules for all pensions schemes, including defined benefit schemes, from 6 April 2006 There will be two key controls within the new system—a lifetime allowance—initially set at £1.5 million and an annual allowance, initially set at £215,000.

The impact of any further change for defined benefit schemes would depend on a number of factors such as the specific funding, demographic and accruals of any individual scheme.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much *(a)* higher rate tax relief and *(b)* basic rate tax relief was applied to (i) defined benefit private sector schemes, (ii) defined benefit public sector schemes and (iii) approved pension schemes in the last year for which figures are available. [37148]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave to the hon. Member for Eastleigh (Chris Huhne) on 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 52W.

It is not possible to provide such a breakdown for defined benefit private sector schemes or defined benefit public sector schemes.

Departmental Guidance (Evidence/Documentary Access)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his policy is with regard to *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in his Department giving evidence to the (i) Scottish Parliament, (ii) National Assembly for Wales and (iii) Northern Ireland Assembly committees; and to what categories of document he gives (A) full access, (B) restricted access and (C) no access to the (1) Scottish Parliament, (2) National Assembly for Wales, (3) Northern Ireland Assembly and (4) House of Commons select committees. [37402]

John Healey: Requests for Treasury Ministers or officials to give oral or written evidence to the devolved legislatures are considered on a case by case basis. Account is taken of the principles set out in the Cabinet Office guidance "Departmental Evidence and Response to Select Committees" (July 2005), the policy outlined in the Department for Constitutional Affairs' Devolution Guidance Note No.12 "Attendance of UK Ministers and Officials at Committees of the Devolved Legislatures" and the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act. The principles governing the provision of information to select committees of the House of Commons are contained in "Departmental Evidence and Response to Select Committees", particularly sections 4B and 4C.

Departmental Relocation

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many departmental civil service jobs have been relocated to Scotland in each year since 2001. [32262]

Mr. Des Browne: Details of the number of departmental civil service jobs relocated to Scotland by HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) prior to April 2004 are not available.

In delivering against its commitment to relocate jobs following the report by Sir Michael Lyons, HMRC have moved 44 posts from London and the South East to Scotland since April 2004.

HM Treasury has not relocated any posts to Scotland in the years in question.

Departmental Skills Development Plan

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place in the Library a copy of his Department's Skills Development Plan. [23859]

John Healey: A copy of the Department's Skills Development Plan has been deposited in the House of Commons Library.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps are taken by the Department to support staff with mental ill-health. [36277]

John Healey: The Treasury has taken the following steps to provide support to staff with mental ill-health: advice and practical support from the Department's

welfare officer providing access, where necessary, to accredited counsellors, psychotherapists and referrals to mental ill health units via the NHS; alternative working patterns as part of the department's work-life balance policy; phased and monitored return to work after sick-absence; and adjustments to workloads and objectives.

All employees benefit from the Department's work-life balance policy and have access to the welfare officer and to the Treasury's Supporters Network—a group of staff, independent of management, trained to support and offer advice to colleagues. Additional support is available from the Department's Disability Advisory Group, and other staff representative groups as well as from a confidential helpline administered by an external company.

The Treasury has an effective disability strategy in place to support all employees with disabilities and to provide for reasonable adjustments as required under the Disability Discrimination Act. The next Department-wide disability awareness-raising seminar in January 2006 is on stress awareness and mental health.

Domestic Fuel Bills

Chris Huhne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate *(a)* the yield of an extension of the climate change levy to domestic household fuel bills in the 2005–06 financial year and *(b)* the average increase in such bills which would result. [37056]

John Healey: Extending climate change levy, at full current rates, to all taxable fuel use by the domestic sector in 2005–06 would have yielded approximately £1 billion. The average increase in fuel bills would have been around £40 per household.

Early Retirement

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many of his Department's employees have taken early retirement in each year since 1997. [34043]

John Healey: The number of HM Treasury's employees who have taken early retirement in each year since 1997 is as follows:

	Number
1997	4
1998	7
1999	6
2000	9
2001	6
2002	7
2003	8
2004	8
2005	8

These figures include those who have retired early on compulsory, flexible, ill-health or approved grounds.

e-Government

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps HM Revenue and Customs has taken in the last 12 months in conjunction with the US Administration to advance electronic government. [36280]

Dawn Primarolo: HMRC is a member of the OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) and an active participant in the Forum on Tax Administration's Taxpayer Services group. Through this forum, we share information and best practice with other fiscal authorities including the U.S. Internal Revenue Service.

In addition, in July 2005 I asked Lord Carter of Coles to advise Ministers on measures to further increase the use of HMRC's key online services, building on his previous review of payroll services.

During the course of the review, Lord Carter and his team met a wide range of customers and agents, and spoke to those overseas tax authorities where there are high levels of online filing and some interesting and innovative approaches. This included discussions with the US Internal Revenue Service.

Lord Carter has completed his review but wishes to assess the progress of HMRC's online services over the next few months, before finalising his conclusions by early spring 2006.

Employment (Forest of Dean)

Mr. Harper: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the level of employment was in Forest of Dean constituency in each of the last five years; and how many people in the constituency were not in education, employment or training in each year. [36871]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 13 December 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about employment. I am replying in her absence. (36871)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) compiles statistics of employment from the Labour Force Survey following International Labour Organisation definitions. Table 1 shows the estimated number of people aged 16 and over in employment resident in the Forest of Dean constituency.

Table 2 shows the number of people of working age resident on the Forest of Dean constituency who are not in full-time education, employment or training.

Both tables cover the 12 month periods ending in February each year from 2001 to 2004 and the 12 month period ending in March 2005.

These estimates, as with any from sample surveys, are subject to a margin of uncertainty. Changes in the estimates from year to year should be treated with particular caution.

Table 1: Number of persons aged 16 and over in employment resident in the Forest of Dean constituency

12 months ending	*Thousand In employment*
February	
2001	41
2002	41
2003	41
2004	42
March	
2005	40

Source:
Annual local area Labour Force Survey;
Annual Population Survey

Table 2: Number of persons of working age resident in the Forest of Dean constituency who are not in education, employment or training

12 months ending	*Thousand* Not in education, employment or training
February	
2001	10
2002	10
2003	9
2004	9
March	
2005	10

Source:
Annual local area Labour Force Survey;
Annual Population Survey

Equitable Life

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what discussions he has had with the parliamentary ombudsman on the time scale for the completion of his investigation into the prudential regulation of Equitable Life. [37452]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The parliamentary ombudsman's investigation into the prudential regulation of Equitable Life is, like all such investigations, being conducted in private. The Treasury is co-operating fully with the investigation.

The timetable for the completion of the parliamentary ombudsman's investigation is a matter for her.

EU Budget (UK Rebate)

Mr. Bone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the future of the UK rebate within the EU Budget. [36698]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the statement given by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary to the House on 5 December.

Game Rearing Farms

Mark Lazarowicz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 10 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 292W to the hon. Member for Portsmouth, South, (Mr. Hancock) on game rearing farms, what estimate he has made of the amount of revenue which has been lost due to game farms in Scotland not being accurately registered for non-domestic rates. [36801]

Dawn Primarolo: This is a matter for the Scottish Executive.

Gershon Review

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what progress has been made in reassigning 13,500 civil service posts to frontline services as identified by the Gershon Review. [36622]

Mr. Des Browne: The PBR 2005 announced that over 5,700 reallocations to the frontline had been made by the end of September 2005. The Department for Work and Pensions made 4,211 reallocations and Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs made 1,560 reallocations.

Government Borrowing Requirements

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent assessment he has made of the Government's borrowing requirements for the next three years; and if he will make a statement. [36694]

John Healey: Tables B9 and B10 in annex B of the pre-Budget report 2005 set out the Government's latest projections for public sector net borrowing up to 2010–11.

Insurance Premium Tax

Gregory Barker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the level of fraud cases relating to the insurance premium tax since 1997. [37153]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Treasury is not aware of any continuing or growing level of fraud in relation to insurance premium tax. However, as with all taxes, the situation is kept under close scrutiny.

Nuclear Power

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his policy is on the use of public funds *(a)* to support existing nuclear power generation capacity, *(b)* to deal with (i) past and (ii) future nuclear waste arising from power generation and *(c)* to support the construction of new nuclear plant generation capacity. [17136]

John Healey: The Secretary of State for Trade and Industry made a statement to the House of Commons on 7 March 2003 setting out the basis on which Government was prepared to provide support to British Energy. The documents setting out the relationship between British Energy and the Government are available on the Department for Trade and Industry website and on 23 November 2005 the Secretary of State was questioned by the Environmental Audit Committee about Government's relationship with British Energy.

The liabilities from past and present nuclear generation will be managed by the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority. The Energy Act 2004 allowed for the creation of this body and it began operating in April 2005.

The future of nuclear power will be considered by the Energy Review led by the Energy Minister, Malcolm Wicks. The Review will be taken forward in the context of the Government's commitment to sound public finances and will take account of all short-term medium-term and long-term costs and liabilities to both the taxpayer and energy user.

Oil Tax

Mr. Blizzard: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his Department's share in tax was of the average value of a barrel of North sea oil in *(a)* May 2002 and *(b)* November 2005. [37122]

Dawn Primarolo: All North sea oil taxes are profit related. Direct tax is estimated to have accounted for 27 per cent. of the average value of a barrel of oil produced in May 2002 compared with 33 per cent. in November 2005 which reflects the increased share per barrel of oil accounted for by producers' profits between the two periods.

Mr. Blizzard: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the net financial impact on the UK oil and gas industry of the proposed changes to the North sea tax regime. [37125]

Dawn Primarolo: The changes in tax liabilities for the UK oil and gas industry resulting from the reform of the North sea fiscal regime announced in the 2005 pre-Budget report are shown in table 1.2 of the 2005 pre-Budget report.

Mr. Blizzard: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what he expects to be the value to the oil and gas industry of the new ring fenced expenditure supplement contained in the pre-Budget report. [37126]

Dawn Primarolo: The ring fenced expenditure supplement is targeted at North sea oil companies that do not have sufficient profits to take immediate advantage of the 100 per cent. capital allowances for investment in the North sea. These are likely to be new entrant companies or others who invest heavily in the North sea and are an important sector for the continued vitality of oil and gas production in the UK. The value of the supplement will build up over time and is forecast to reduce tax liabilities by around £25 million by 2011–12.

Mr. Blizzard: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the increase in corporation tax supplementary charge on oil company future investment in the North Sea. [37160]

Dawn Primarolo: The changes announced in the pre-Budget report were subject to detailed analysis to ensure that the North Sea tax regime delivers the Government's objectives of striking the right balance between oil producers and consumers by promoting investment and ensuring fairness for taxpayers.

Personal Debt

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* men, *(b)* women and *(c)* households in (i) England and Wales, (ii) Northamptonshire and (iii) Kettering constituency are estimated to have personal debts excluding housing mortgages of over £10,000; and what the equivalent figures were (A) 10 years ago and (B) in 1997. [36139]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 13 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question on the number of *(a)* men, *(b)* women and *(c)* households in England and Wales, (ii) Northamptonshire and (iii) Kettering Constituency that were estimated to haye personal debts excluding housing mortgages of over £10,000. (36139)

The information requested is not available.

The only information available is national data on household debt. The household debt (excluding mortgage debt) was £319.8 billion at the end of 2004 compared with £156.8 billion at the end of 1997 and £132.4 billion at the end of 1994. On a per head basis, the household debt (excluding mortgage debt) was £6,727 at the end of 2004 compared with £3,439 at the end of 1997, and £2,935 at the end of 1994.

Public Appointments

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the former hon. Members who left Parliament in 2005 who have since been appointed to public bodies by his Department, broken down by party; and who was responsible for making each appointment. [36692]

John Healey: The Treasury has not made any such appointments.

Science Cities

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to increase the number of science cities. [37128]

John Healey: In the 2004 pre-Budget report and in Budget 2005, the Government supported plans by the Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) to develop six "science cities" in Manchester, Newcastle, York, Birmingham, Nottingham, and Bristol. These science cities are developing plans that respond to their particular strengths in terms of research and economic development. It is for RDAs to take the lead role in identifying science cities and detailed implementation plans, in line with their wider strategies for regional economic development, science and innovation.

Self-invested Personal Pensions

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps the Government is taking to encourage investment in self-invested personal pension schemes; and if he will make a statement. [36810]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Pensions tax simplification replaces eight different sets of rules with a single unified regime. It removes unnecessary obstacles to retirement planning and saving across the whole spectrum of pension saving. Lifetime allowances give much more flexibility about when a person can save, so if a person can only afford to start saving for a pension late in life, there is plenty of headroom to boost those savings when it is affordable for a person to do so.

All pension savers, including the lower income groups, will benefit from the lower administration costs of simplifying the numerous existing regimes into one, so the cost savings can be passed on via increased pension benefits.

Legislation (Sunset Clauses)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his policy is in respect of the use of sunset clauses in legislation. [37405]

John Healey: The appropriateness of a sunset clause for the whole or part of any proposed legislation is considered on a case by case basis. It is also addressed when a regulatory impact assessment relating to legislation is being prepared.

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the false use of Department for Work and Pensions staff identities in fraudulent tax credit claims. [35727]

Dawn Primarolo: I am aware that a number of DWP staff appear to have had their details used by others to claim tax credits. This matter is now the subject of a criminal investigation involving HMRC and DWP therefore it would not be appropriate to comment further at this stage.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people have been employed by his Department in dealing with complaints about tax credits in each month since April 2003. [20014]

Dawn Primarolo: The information is not available.

It is not possible to isolate the total number of people employed by HM Revenue and Customs to deal with complaints about tax credits. Staff in various parts of the Department may handle complaints about tax credits, but for most this would be in addition to other work.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what assessment he has made of the reasons why people have been overpaid tax credits; [23213]

(2) what assessment he has made of the reasons why people have been overpaid tax credits in Northern Ireland. [25780]

Dawn Primarolo: Analysis of overpayments suggests that they result from a number of factors: income rises from one year to the next; families overestimating the extent to which their income has fallen when they seek extra support during the year; provisional payments made at the start of the tax year, which are based on out-of-date information that is subsequently updated when the award is renewed; and delays in reporting changes in families' personal circumstances to HMRC.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will make a statement on the recent performance of the tax credits system. [36087]

Dawn Primarolo: I would refer the hon. Member to my statement to the Treasury sub-committee of 26 October 2005, HC 524-ii and my written statement of 5 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 55WS.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place in the Library copies of the minutes of meetings *(a)* held between HM Revenue and Customs and the former Inland Revenue and the HMRC Tax Credits Consultation Group and *(b)* of the related working parties since 2003. [36225]

Dawn Primarolo: The work of the Consultation Group is covered by a confidentiality agreement. HMRC values the skills and expertise of the group and does not wish to lose the ability to discuss policy matters in confidence.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many notifications of a change of address by recipients of tax credit awards have been received in each month since April 2003. [36794]

Dawn Primarolo: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the likely cost of paying tax credits from April 2006 to claimants when their income rises by less than £25,000, as announced by the Paymaster General on 5 December. [36826]

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what estimate he has made of the cost of increasing the income disregard for tax credits to £25,000 in each of the next three years; [36839]

(2) what estimate he has made of the savings arising from requiring families to return their tax credit renewal forms by the end of August in each of the next three years; [36840]

(3) what estimate he has made of the effect on public funds over the next three years of assuming a family's income rises in line with average earnings while waiting for income information relating to the renewal of a tax credit award. [37143]

Dawn Primarolo: The cost of the measures announced on 5 December, including the rises in the disregard to £25,000 and shortening the renewal date to the end of August, are set down in table 1.2 of the 2005 pre-Budget report (Cm6701). It is not possible to produce robust estimates of the impact of individual elements of the package of measures as there are significant interactions between the different components.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many and what proportion of families receiving tax credits he expects HM Revenue and Customs to contact over the next three years to check if there have been any changes in income or circumstances. [36841]

Dawn Primarolo: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the reply I gave to him on 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 83W regarding HM Revenue and Customs' (HMRC) pro-active pilot. HMRC will consider the findings of the pilot carefully to determine the benefits of introducing pro-active customer contact as part of its day-to-day business, how many families to contact and when.

As I stated in my written statement to the House on 5 December 2005, from 2007 HMRC plan to contact key groups of claimants near to the renewals window to obtain more up-to-date information on which to base the next year's payments while the finalisation process is completed. Information on the numbers that HMRC will contact is not yet available.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the National Audit Office has informed him that it intends to begin an investigation into the introduction of the new tax credits. [37144]

Dawn Primarolo: I have not been informed of any plans to conduct such an investigation. The content of the National Audit Office's work programme is a matter for the Comptroller and Auditor General.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many complaints have been received by the hon. Members' tax credit hotline in the last 12 months. [37238]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) does not keep separate records of the number of calls to its MP Hotline facility that involve a complaint.

Tax Returns

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many tax returns were filed incorrectly by individuals in *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003 and *(c)* 2004; and what measures were undertaken by HM Customs and Revenue to ensure that those individuals who filed incorrect statements and subsequently paid too much tax were reimbursed promptly and efficiently. [36279]

Dawn Primarolo: HMRC assess the accuracy of filed self assessment tax returns using its automated risk assessment system and through an annual random inquiry programme. Figures are not yet available for the years requested because all inquiries must be completed before analysis. If, upon capture of the information on the return, a repayment of tax is found to be due, the repayment is made automatically from the computer system.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average *(a)* direct and *(b)* indirect cost per Pay as you Earn return was in the last period for which figures are available; and what the average cost per self-assessment online return was in that period. [36284]

Dawn Primarolo: The current averaged direct cost (paybill) of processing a paper self assessment return is £5.46. Indirect costs (overheads excluding IT) are a further £4.42. (HMRC are unable to differentiate costs between those self assessment tax returns relating to PAYE taxpayers and those returns relating to others).

The current averaged cost of processing an online self assessment return are direct costs £0.97 and indirect costs a further £0.62.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent estimate he has made of the loss of tax revenue in a year consequent on errors in tax returns; and what guidance he *(a)* has issued and *(b)* plans to issue to reduce the number of such errors. [36297]

Dawn Primarolo: HMRC assesses the accuracy of filed returns using its automated risk assessment system and through an annual random inquiry programme. This was reported in the NAO report "Filing of Income Tax Self- Assessment Returns" that was published on 22 June 2005 and can be found on the NAO's website at http://www.nao.org.uk/.

HMRC helps taxpayers file accurate returns through the information and support available on its website, telephone call centres and helplines, inquiry centres, written guidance, and through its tax offices. HMRC's enabling programme seeks to improve the accuracy of future tax returns through targeted intervention and guidance.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will make available guidance to those who make a mistake when completing on-line self-assessment tax returns; [36298]

(2) what steps his Department takes to offer guidance to an individual who makes a mistake when completing an on-line self-assessment tax return. [36299]

Dawn Primarolo: Guidance for completing self-assessment returns is available online at: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/individuals/tmaself-assessment.shtml.

Customers completing a self-assessment return online are guided through the return and are only asked questions that are relevant to their return. Help is available through help buttons on questions and context sensitive help for technical terms and phrases.

There are on screen validation checks as the user moves between pages and the whole return is validated before submission to ensure that the data provided is arithmetically correct and that all relevant questions have been completed.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) why HM Revenue and Customs reduced the target e-filing tax returns by 2005 to 25 per cent.; and what recent assessment he has made of whether that target will be reached; [36302]

(2) what recent assessment he has made of progress towards the national target of 35 per cent. of electronic filing of tax returns by 2007–08. [36303]

Dawn Primarolo: The Modernising Government White Paper initially set a target that 100 per cent. of all Government services were to be available online by 2005, and a 50 per cent. take-up of those services should be achieved. This was reflected in the Inland Revenue Public Service Agreement 2001–04.

The Inland Revenue revised this overarching target based on their understanding of the market and set specific targets for each of the services it provides. These were agreed with the Treasury.

The departmental Public Service Agreements for 2003–06 and 2005–08 are posted on the HMRC Internet site. HMRC has a target of 25 per cent. of SA returns filed electronically 2005–06 and 35 per cent. by 2007–08.

HM Revenue and Customs expects to achieve its target of 35 per cent. of Self Assessment tax returns received online by March 2008.

Tender Specification Documents

Tim Farron: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what research his Department has conducted into the quality of tender specification documents issued by public bodies to private organisations bidding for public contracts; and if he will *(a)* conduct a sampled investigation into (i) the quality of these documents and (ii) what additional costs and inefficiencies are created in the bidding process due to poorly written documents and *(b)* produce guidance to assist public bodies in drafting clearly comprehensible tender specification documents. [37579]

John Healey: No such research has been conducted by the Departments and agencies responsible to Treasury Ministers, neither is any planned. Guidance on best practice in procurement, and project and programme management (including model terms and conditions for the purchase of goods and services) is available for public authorities on the Office of Government Commerce's website www.ogc.gov.uk.

Trust Schools (VAT Status)

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the value added tax status will be of the trust schools proposed in the White Paper, Higher Standards, Better Standards for All. [37331]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Trust schools, as with any other school, will be subject to the VAT rules set out in the VAT Act 1994.

Unclaimed Assets

Mark Lazarowicz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what his estimate is of the funds that will be recovered in unclaimed assets from bank accounts held by *(a)* account holders whose last known residence was in Scotland and *(b)* banks in Scotland. [36710]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: As announced in the pre-Budget report 2005, based on the definition that unclaimed assets should generally cover accounts where there has been no customer activity for a period of 15 years, initial record searches by the industry suggest that several hundred million pounds may currently lie unclaimed.

This figure is for the UK as a whole.

Mark Lazarowicz: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how unclaimed assets from dormant bank accounts of account holders last known to be resident in Scotland will be used. [36711]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: As announced in the pre-Budget report 2005, the Government believes that where owners and their assets cannot be reunited, the money should be reinvested in the community, particularly in deprived communities, in a sustainable way, through a co-ordinated delivery mechanism, with a focus on youth services that are responsive to the needs of young people, and also on financial education and exclusion. There would be an option for small locally-based financial institutions to focus on these needs in their local communities.

The Government and the industry will continue to work together, to develop the best structure to deliver this approach, and will consult with stakeholders such as organisations representing the interests of young people and the Commission on Unclaimed Assets.

VAT (Charities)

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Government will implement the European Sixth VAT Directive Article 13A(1)*(f)* to enable charities to claim tax relief when they work collaboratively. [37290]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) have considered a number of cases where it was claimed that Article 13A(1)*(f)* of the Sixth VAT Directive applied. In each case VAT exemption was already available under UK law, or the transactions in question did not meet all the conditions of Article 13A(1)*(f)*.

However, the Government keep all taxes under review and HMRC are in discussion with the charitable sector about a range of VAT issues.

Working Tax Credits

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people *(a)* are eligible for and *(b)* have received the working tax credits in the Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland constituency. [36987]

Dawn Primarolo: Estimates of the numbers of those entitled to working families' tax credit are not available at constituency level.

Estimates of the number of recipient families of working families' tax credit from 2001–02 broken down by constituency appear in the quarterly WFTC and DPTC geographical analyses. These publications can be found on the HMRC website at: http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/menu.htm.

Figures for the child and working tax credits can also be found at this address.

SCOTLAND

Air Passengers (Financial Protection)

8. Mr. Marshall: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the Department for Transport about the financial protection of air passengers on flights to and from Scotland. [35564]

Mr. Darling: Financial protection for air passengers is dealt with through UK and EU legislation.

Reserved Matters

9. David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent discussions he has had with chief constables in Scotland on reserved matters. [35565]

David Cairns: My right hon. Friend has had no such discussions other than in June this year when he met the chief constables of two Scottish police forces to receive oral briefings on security preparations for the G8 summit at Gleneagles.

Energy Needs

10. Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what discussions he has had with the First Minister on Scotland's energy needs for winter 2005–06. [35566]

Mr. Darling: I have regular discussions with the First Minister on a range of issues.

Shipbuilding

11. Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent steps the Government have taken to help the shipbuilding industry in Scotland. [35567]

David Cairns: Scottish shipbuilders compete on a commercial basis and I congratulate the two yards who won orders for civilian ships in recent weeks. The Government itself is a significant customer for Scottish shipyards engaged in military shipbuilding. The Ministry of Defence and members of the shipbuilding industry are working closely together to develop a comprehensive maritime industrial strategy to sustain maritime capability in the long-term.

Asylum and Immigration

13. **Jo Swinson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what recent discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues and the First Minister on asylum and immigration issues in Scotland. [35569]

David Cairns: My right hon. Friend meets Cabinet colleagues and the First Minister regularly to discuss a wide range of issues.

Electoral Arrangements

14. **John Robertson:** To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland when the report from the Arbuthnott Commission on electoral arrangements in Scotland will be published; and if he will make a statement. [35570]

Mr. Darling: I expect to receive the Arbuthnott Commission report in the course of January.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Parliamentary Questions

34. **Ben Chapman:** To ask the Leader of the House what recent representations he has received from hon. Members regarding tabling of parliamentary questions during the summer recess. [36661]

Nigel Griffiths: This issue has been raised in business questions and my right hon. Friend the Leader of the House remains open to other representations.

Ministers remain accountable for the work of their Department in recesses, and Members can and do correspond with them during recesses.

Constituency Office Staff

Sarah Teather: To ask the Leader of the House how many cases of violence towards hon. Members' staff in constituency offices have been made known to House authorities in each year since 1997. [35579]

Nigel Griffiths: This information is not recorded centrally. Members should report cases of violence towards them, to the House authorities.

A central House of Commons budget may contribute to the costs of security measures taken in the constituency to safeguard Members' staff, their equipment and themselves.

Ex Members of Parliament (Service Provision)

Barbara Follett: To ask the Leader of the House what recent assessment he has made of the level of services available to hon. Members who lose their seats. [36663]

Nigel Griffiths: Members who lose their seats are eligible for assistance through the Resettlement Grant and through the Winding Up Allowance.

The Administration Select Committee has been conducting an inquiry on this subject. Its report will be presented to the House in due course.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Cleaners (Pay Dispute)

35. **David Taylor:** To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission what recent discussions the Commission has had with contractors and trade union representatives on the dispute with cleaners in the House. [36664]

Nick Harvey: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave earlier to the hon. Member for Cardiff North (Julie Morgan).

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Victims of Crime

19. **Mr. Simon:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what measures her Department has introduced to improve support for victims of crime. [36646]

Ms Harman: We have invested over £3 million this year to improve the safety and comfort of victims of crime.

We will give bereaved relatives of victims of homicide a right to speak to the court after conviction but before sentence. At present, though they are the people most affected by the crime, they are the only ones who have to remain silent throughout the court proceedings.

I met last month with the Deputy Lord Chief Justice and have today written to him to tell him that we are considering piloting allowing victims relatives to speak in courts in about five courts from April next year.

Under consideration are

London

Nottingham/ Sheffield/ Leeds.

Birmingham

Cardiff

Exeter and Winchester

Liverpool/Manchester

Compensation Culture

20. **Stephen Hammond:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps she is taking to tackle the potential growth of a compensation culture. [36647]

Bridget Prentice: The Government are taking forward a wide programme of work to prevent a compensation culture from developing; to tackle perceptions that can lead to a disproportionate fear of litigation and risk averse behaviour; to discourage and resist bad claims;

and to improve the system for those with a valid claim for compensation. The Compensation Bill is an important part of that work.

Community Law Centres

22. **Ms Diana R. Johnson:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on the role of community law centres. [36649]

Bridget Prentice: Community law centres play a key role in helping some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people in society. Their benefit to local communities is made possible by committed and dedicated staff.

Freedom of Information Act

23. **Sir Peter Soulsby:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the response of local authorities to applications under the Freedom of Information Act 2000; and if she will make a statement. [36650]

Ms Harman: My Department does not formally monitor local authorities' performance in responding to applications under the Freedom of Information Act, to avoid imposing an administrative burden.

However, the impression from independent surveys is that under the Freedom of Information Act the public are accessing a huge amount of new information.

Data Protection Act

24. **Norman Baker:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on the operation of the Data Protection Act 1998. [36651]

Ms Harman: The Data Protection Act provides a robust framework of protection for individuals' data which properly balances that right with the legitimate interests of other individuals and organisations.

Union of Democratic Mineworkers (Industrial Injury Claims)

25. **John Mann:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what plans she has to regulate the activities of the Union of Democratic Mineworkers as a claims handler for industrial injuries. [36652]

Bridget Prentice: The Compensation Bill will provide the legislative framework to introduce the statutory regulation of claims management activities. We intend to use the secondary legislation to exempt trade unions regulated by the Certification Officer from the new provisions, probably subject to conditions such as having regard to the regulators code of practice. Any claims management company established, owned or run by a trade union would not be included in any exemption.

Domestic Violence

26. **Mr. Flello:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on specialist domestic violence courts. [36653]

Ms Harman: This is a joint initiative. My Department wrote to all magistrates courts committees on 15 December 2004 asking for expressions of interest in setting up a specialist DV court (SDVC). The responses were analysed, and a selection process established the first 25 specialist domestic violence court systems across England and Wales.

Legal Professions (Diversity)

27. **Barbara Keeley:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps she is taking to increase diversity in the legal professions. [36654]

Bridget Prentice: On 23 November I published a report setting out the actions that the Government will take to ensure that talent in the legal profession is drawn from all sections of society, regardless of background.

Voting Systems

28. **Andrew Miller:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of voting systems used in the United Kingdom. [36655]

Ms Harman: An internal review of the experiences of the new UK voting systems introduced for the devolved Administrations, the European Parliament and London Assembly elections is being conducted by officials within my Department. It is at an early stage, and any decisions regarding the next steps for the review will be taken in due course.

Coroners

29. **Jon Trickett:** To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on her review of the role of coroners. [36656]

Ms Harman: Our review of the coroner service is due to conclude soon and I will be in a position to make a full statement on our proposals for reforming the service next year.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Avian Influenza

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the sentinel birds at the quarantine centre in Essex were treated for avian influenza virus after the death of other birds was reported. [31472]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 24 November 2005]*: The sentinel birds at the quarantine centre in Essex were not treated for the avian influenza virus. However, they were culled and tested for the disease, as is required by the quarantine rules. All were found to be negative.

Beef Imports (Brazil)

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact of imported Brazilian beef on *(a)* British farmers and *(b)* the UK beef industry. [33575]

Jim Knight: The United Kingdom is not self-sufficient in beef and requires supplies from third countries such as Brazil to meet consumer demand. Each year, around half of the beef imported into the UK from outside the European Union comes from Brazil. Such imports are a valuable source of raw material for our processing industry.

Our beef industry currently faces a number of challenges, including those arising from the ending of production based CAP subsidies and also in relation to the ending of the Over Thirty Month Scheme for cattle. My noble Friend, the Minister for Food and Farming (Lord Bach) recently hosted a high level meeting to bring the supply chain together to discuss the future, at which he also announced a package of measures worth around £8 million to help the beef sector move forward.

Cockle Beds (Pilling Sands)

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if the Minister for Nature Conservation and Fisheries will make an official visit to Pilling Sands before a decision is taken by the North Western and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee to re-open cockle beds there. [34871]

Mr. Bradshaw: The decision to re-open cockle beds at Pilling Sands rests with the North Western and North Wales Sea Fisheries Committee. I have no plans to make an official visit to Pilling Sands.

Countryside Stewardship Scheme

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Lewes (Norman Baker) of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 505–06W, on the Countryside Stewardship Scheme, if she will list the additional green spaces that have become accessible in Worcestershire as a result of the Access Management Grant Scheme. [36244]

Jim Knight: A new right of public access on foot to open country and registered common land was created by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, and was commenced in Worcestershire on 31 October 2005. The Access Management Grant Scheme is intended to facilitate public access to this land, by helping to pay for local management planning/consultation, and for on-site infrastructure such as gates, stiles and signage. Public access to the following areas of access land in Worcestershire has been facilitated through the provision of on-site infrastructure under the Scheme:

Area	
Upper Ham, Kempsey	Signage
Pursall Green, Elmbridge	Signage, gate
Uckinghall Meadow, Ripple	Signage
Lower Ham, Kempsey	Signage
Ankerdine Common, Doddenham	Signage
Pipers Hill Common, Dodderhill	Signage, gate, fencing
Pound Green Common, Upper Arley	Signage
Hartlebury Common, Hartlebury	Signage, path
Powick Hams, Powick	Signage
Waseley Hills, Romsley	Signage, gates, linear route
Asharn Meadow, Birlingham	Signage

Dairy Herds

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average size is of a dairy herd in England. [35225]

Jim Knight: The average size of a dairy herd in England is 88 cows.

Notes:

1. The figure is the total number of dairy cows divided by the number of holdings with dairy cows.
2. Dairy herd classified as all dairy cows and heifers that have calved.

Source:

June 2004 Agricultural Survey

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of changes in the size of dairy herds since 1970. [35228]

Jim Knight: The number of dairy cows in England from 1970 to 2005 are shown in the following table.

	Dairy cows (number)
1970	2,063,905
1971	2,079,156
1972	2,150,591
1973	2,223,876
1974	2,198,324
1975	2,114,625
1976	2,113,020
1977	2,130,081
1978	2,137,785
1979	2,150,703
1980	2,116,273
1981	2,083,140
1982	2,132,320
1983	2,176,756
1984	2,101,584
1985	2,027,753
1986	2,017,327
1987	1,939,944
1988	1,853,394
1989	1,801,844
1990	1,999,000
1991	1,937,700
1992	1,872,700
1993	1,862,800
1994	1,898,400
1995	1,810,700
1996	1,784,700
1997	1,701,700
1998	1,642,636
1999	1,659,210
2000	1,574,779
2001	1,490,226
2002	1,462,155
2003	1,434,727
2004	1,374,455
2005[1]	1,315,000

[1] 2005 figure is provisional.

Notes:

1. Data prior to 2000 excludes minor holdings, data after 2000 includes all holdings.
2. Dairy herd classified as all dairy cows and heifers that have calved.

Source:

June Agricultural Survey.

Since 1984 UK production has been constrained by milk quota where penalties are incurred if total production goes over pre set limits. During this period

cow numbers have declined while average milk yield per cow has increased allowing total production to remain relatively stable at the level of quota.

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many UK dairy farmers have cattle herds of over 1,000. [35231]

Jim Knight: There a very few (under five) holdings with more than 1,000 dairy cows. To protect confidentiality of individual holding information as required by the Agricultural Statistics Act (1979), we are not able to release the precise number given the small numbers involved.

Figures for the other UK countries fall under the jurisdiction of the devolved authorities.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many of her Department's employees have taken early retirement in each year since 1997. [34045]

Jim Knight: Defra was created in June 2001 and the following table shows the number of employees who have taken early retirement since then.

	Defra	*Executive Agencies*
2001[1]	22	5
2002	57	7
2003	72	9
2004	64	14
2005[2]	53	19
Total	268	54

[1] 9 June to 31 December.
[2] 1 January to 30 November.

The above figures include those who have retired voluntarily with an actuarially reduced pension, those who have retired with benefits under the civil service compensation scheme and those who have retired on ill-health grounds.

Fishing Jurisdiction (Isle of Man)

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent *(a)* discussions, *(b)* meetings and *(c)* correspondence she has had with the Isle of Man Government in relation to the extent of its fishing jurisdiction; and if she will make a statement. [35318]

Mr. Bradshaw: There have been no discussions, or meetings between the Isle of Man Government and DEFRA Ministers in relation to its recent proposals to extend the Isle of Man's fishing jurisdiction from 3 to 12 miles. I have had correspondence from the Isle of Man Government regarding the proposals and DEFRA, along with the devolved Administrations in Scotland and Northern Ireland, consulted stakeholders on them in the summer. A decision on the outcome of the consultation will be communicated to the Isle of Man Government in due course.

Milk Price

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average retail price is of a litre of milk in the *(a)* UK and *(b)* each EU member state; and if she will make a statement. [35226]

Jim Knight: Average retail prices per litre of milk from 1975 to 1993 are shown in the following table. More recent prices of milk are only available from the statistical offices in the member states and would take disproportionate cost to collate.

Average retail price per litre of milk in the UK, and selected EU member states

	UK[1] *Pence*	*Germany*[2] *Dm*	*France (Paris)*[2] *FF*	*Italy (Rome)*[2] *Lit*	*Netherlands*[2] *Fl*	*Currency Belgium*[2] *BF*
1975	12.0	1.0	1.4	235	0.9	12.8
1976	15.0	1.0	1.6	256	1.0	13.2
1977	19.3	1.1	1.8	337	1.0	15.5
1978	22.4	1.1	1.9	390	1.1	16.5
1979	26.0	1.1	2.1	410	1.1	16.8
1980	30.0	1.1	2.4	480	1.2	17.3
1981	33.0	1.2	2.6	644	1.3	16.3
1982	35.2	1.2	3.0	788	1.4	18.1
1983	37.0	1.3	3.5	894	1.4	20.2
1984	38.7	1.2	3.8	964	1.4	21.3
1985	40.5	1.2	4.1	1040	1.4	22.9
1986	42.0	1.2	4.4	1103	1.4	23.6
1987	44.0	1.2	4.6	1120	1.3	24.4
1988	46.0	1.2	4.6	1142	1.3	24.2
1989	49.0	1.2	4.9	1250	1.4	25.4
1990	55.0	1.3	5.2	1397	1.4	26.0
1991	56.0	1.3	5.4	1529	1.4	25.9
1992	60.0	1.3	5.7	1631	1.4	24.9
1993	60.0	1.3	5.4	1631	1.4	25.7
1994	63.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1995	63.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1996	63.0		n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1997	62.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1998	60.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1999	60.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

Average retail price per litre of milk in the UK, and selected EU member states

	UK[1] Pence	Germany[2] Dm	France (Paris)[2] FF	Italy (Rome)[2] Lit	Netherlands[2] Fl	Currency Belgium[2] BF
2000	60.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2001	65.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2002	63.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2003	65.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2004	62.0	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

	Luxembourg[2] LF	Irish Republic[2] Pence	Denmark[2] Dkr	Greece[2] Dr	Currency Portugal[2] Esc
1975	15.5	7.5	2.2	n/a	n/a
1976	17.3	7.0	2.3	n/a	n/a
1977	18.0	8.0	2.7	n/a	n/a
1978	18.0	8.0	2.8	n/a	n/a
1979	18.0	11.5	3.0	n/a	n/a
1980	18.0	13.0	3.2	n/a	n/a
1981	19.3	15.0	3.6	32.9	n/a
1982	20.8	15.0	4.2	37.1	n/a
1983	24.0	15.0	4.6	42.8	24.6
1984	26.0	19.0	4.4	49.0	37.1
1985	26.0	22.5	5.8	62.5	48.0
1986	27.0	24.0	5.7	79.4	54.4
1987	28.5	27.0	5.6	84.4	59.2
1988	28.5	28.0	5.7	87.9	60.0
1989	30.5	31.0	6.1	106.0	60.0
1990	30.5	32.0	6.3	125.9	86.4
1991	32.0	54.0	6.2	145.8	93.3
1992	33.0	55.6	6.1	187.6	99.2
1993	33.0	58.0	5.5	n/a	n/a
1994	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1995	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1996	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1997	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1998	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
1999	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2000	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2001	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2002	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2003	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
2004	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

n/a = price not available.
[1] Annual average price for one litre of shop bought milk and one litre of delivered milk.
[2] Price as at January.
Sources:
[3] Office for National Statistics—Average consumer prices
[4] Milk Marketing Board EEC Dairy Facts and Figures. 1979, 1982, 1986 and 1993

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment she has made of the average real terms price per litre of milk in *(a)* the UK and *(b)* each EU member state in each year since 1975. [35227]

Jim Knight: EUROSTAT publish selected indices of consumer prices in member states. There is no index available for milk, but there is a combined index for prices of milk, cheese and eggs. The index (based on 1996 = 100) in real terms is shown in the following table. Information is only readily available from 1995.

Index (1996 = 100) of UK and EU prices of milk, cheese and eggs in real terms

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Belgium	101	100	99	99	98	96	96	96	96	95
Czech Republic	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	82	80	79	77	78
Denmark	99	100	102	102	102	101	102	103	103	99
Germany	101	100	99	98	96	93	96	97	95	93
Estonia	95	100	95	90	85	87	91	86	83	88
Greece	108	100	97	98	98	99	101	101	101	101
Spain	101	100	98	97	94	92	95	96	95	95
France	n/a	100	100	100	100	100	103	104	104	102
Ireland	99	100	99	97	97	93	93	92	91	90

Index (1996 = 100) of UK and EU prices of milk, cheese and eggs in real terms

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
Italy	99	100	99	97	95	94	95	95	95	94
Cyprus	n/a	100	105	110	111	108	108	115	118	123
Latvia	n/a	100	94	88	84	83	84	83	84	91
Lithuania	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	86	84	96	95
Luxembourg	101	100	98	99	100	98	100	102	101	99
Hungary	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	61	61	60	57
Malta	n/a	100	104	103	100	98	97	96	94	93
Netherlands	101	100	98	98	96	94	96	97	98	93
Austria	101	100	99	99	99	96	98	98	97	98
Poland	n/a	100	95	92	86	88	86	83	83	84
Portugal	101	100	98	97	95	94	93	91	90	87
Slovenia	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	78	75	75	72	69
Slovakia	n/a	100	104	102	96	95	92	92	90	89
Finland	102	100	100	98	97	96	98	99	101	103
Sweden	104	100	100	99	100	100	99	102	103	102
United Kingdom	n/a	100	98	95	93	91	93	93	94	95

n/a = Not available.

Source:

EUROSTAT, harmonised index of consumer prices.

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the average wholesale price per litre of milk paid to UK dairy farmers was in the latest period for which figures are available. [35229]

Jim Knight: The following table is taken from the latest DEFRA statistics notice and shows the most recent UK farm-gate prices up to September 2005.

Farm-gate prices

	Excluding any retrospective bonus payments made by purchasers	Pence per litre Including retrospective bonus payments made by purchasers
2001	19.13	19.26
2002	17.05	17.10
2003	18.01	18.03
2004[1]	18.45	18.47
2004[1]		
September	19.48	19.49
October	19.51	19.53
November	19.48	19.50
December	18.92	18.94
2005		
January	18.52	18.54
February	18.31	18.34
March	18.32	18.33
April	17.58	17.60
May	17.11	17.12
June	17.30	17.31
July	18.05	18.07
August	18.63	18.65
September	19.18	19.19

[1] Data from this point are provisional.

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment she has made of the relationship between supermarkets and dairy farmers; and if she will make a statement. [35230]

Jim Knight: Supermarkets and dairy farmers have an indirect commercial relationship largely through intermediary companies such as milk buyers and processors. We are encouraging dialogue between all parts of the supply chain through the Dairy Supply Chain Forum, chaired by my noble Friend, the Lord Bach, as we believe the challenges facing the sector can be solved only by collaborative action.

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the average real terms retail price per litre of milk in the UK in each year since 1975. [35232]

Jim Knight: An index (based on 1975 = 100) of milk prices in real terms is shown in the following table. In real terms the retail price of milk has been broadly stable over the last few years.

Index of UK milk prices in real terms

	Index (1975 = 100)
1975	100.0
1976	116.5
1977	126.5
1978	132.7
1979	132.3
1980	128.6
1981	129.2
1982	129.5
1983	128.9
1984	126.1
1985	125.3
1986	127.2
1987	128.8
1988	128.3
1989	128.4
1990	126.7
1991	128.7
1992	129.1
1993	129.8
1994	130.3
1995	131.1
1996	130.4
1997	126.2
1998	122.1
1999	119.2
2000	114.9
2001	119.6
2002	121.0
2003	121.7
2004	120.5

Source:

Office of National Statistics, Retail Price Index

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the wholesale price per litre of milk paid to UK farmers in each year since 1975. [35233]

Jim Knight: The following table provides the weighted average farmgate price for the UK from 1970 to 2004.

United Kingdom milk prices—Calendar year Farmgate milk prices[1]
Classification: public domain

	Units: Pence per litre	
	Excluding bonus payments[2]	*Including bonus payments*[3]
1970	—	3.83
1971	—	4.16
1972	—	4.38
1973	—	4.81
1974	—	5.96
1975	—	7.64
1976	—	9.02
1977	—	9.90
1978	—	10.32
1979	—	11.15
1980	—	12.52
1981	—	13.26
1982	—	14.54
1983	—	14.64
1984	—	14.61
1985	—	14.99
1986	—	15.53
1987	—	16.11
1988	—	17.28
1989	—	18.39
1990	—	18.47
1991	—	19.93
1992	—	20.95
1993	—	21.97
1994	—	22.43
1995	24.47	24.94
1996	24.87	25.02
1997	21.95	22.12
1998	19.26	19.37
1999	18.30	18.35
2000	16.91	16.93
2001	19.13	19.26
2002	17.05	17.10
2003	18.01	18.03
2004	18.45	18.47

[1] Average prices have been calculated from separate monthly surveys of milk purchasers conducted in England and Wales by Defra, in Scotland by SEERAD and in Northern Ireland by DARD. The surveys were introduced following changes to the milk marketing arrangements in 1994–95. The farm gate price is the average price received by producers, net of delivery charges. No deduction has been made for the superlevy.

[2] Prices exclude any retrospective bonuses made by purchasers. Provisional from 2004 onwards.

[3] Prices include any retrospective bonuses made by purchasers. Provisional from 2004 onwards.

Sources: Eurostat (1970 to 1994), from Milk Marketing Board statistics Defra, SEERAD and DARD (1995 onwards).including bonus pay.

Poultry Farming

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what guidance her Department has issued to poultry farmers about making preparations to comply with any future instruction to contain their poultry under cover; what financial assistance her Department is making available to assist poultry farmers to comply with such an instruction; and if she will make a statement. [37283]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department has issued guidance, agreed with industry representatives, to keepers on how they might comply with a requirement to keep their birds separate from wild birds, where practicable.

The guidance can be found on the Defra website at: http://defraweb/animalh/diseases/notifiable/disease/ai/pdf/separating.pdf

There are no plans to provide financial assistance to poultry farmers or others who might be required to separate their birds from wild birds as a result of a threat or the event of an outbreak of avian influenza.

Racehorses (Whipping)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research she has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the effect of whipping on racehorses; and if she will make a statement. [36157]

Mr. Bradshaw: My Department has not evaluated or commissioned any research on the effect of whipping racehorses.

Rights of Way

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many *(a)* byways and *(b)* bridleways have been added to the definitive map in England and Wales since the enactment of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 as a result of (i) a statement of action in a Rights of Way Improvement Plan and (ii) a Definitive Map Modification Order under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. [36827]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* It is unlikely that any byways or bridleways have been added to the definitive map in England and Wales as a result of a statement of action in a Rights of Way Improvement Plan. These plans do not need to be completed until November 2007.

The majority of authorities have begun work on a plan, but only three have completed their plan—Cambridgeshire county council, Devon county council and the City of York. These plans have only recently been adopted and have not, as yet, resulted in any new byways or bridleways being added to the definitive map.

Information about the total number of Definitive Map Modification Orders under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is not collected by DEFRA. This information is held by local highway authorities and could be gathered only at a disproportionate cost.

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what total area of land has been dedicated for equestrian access under section 16 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. [36828]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* No landowners in England have yet dedicated land for horse riding under section 16 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. However, I have recently approved a £1.2 million Countryside Agency research project which will explore and demonstrate how the dedication mechanism can be used to improve public access to the

countryside. The project will raise awareness of dedication as well as deliver a number of actual dedications. Most dedications are likely to be for access on foot, but the agency will encourage landowners to consider dedicating suitable land for access by horse riders.

Access for horse riders features strongly in the Strategy for the Horse Industry in England and Wales, which I launched last week, and I am keen to explore with the horse industry a wide range of ways in which opportunities for safe, off-road riding can be increased.

Waterways (Moorings/Marina Berths)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions British Waterways has had with the British Marine Federation on disputes over the provision of moorings and marina berths alongside waterways; and if she will set up a protocol to deal with such disputes.[36931]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* This is an operational matter for British Waterways. However, I recently met its Chairman who confirmed that both he and his executives have had a number of discussions with the President of the British Marine Federation and its executives to explore their differing views on the interpretation of competition law in respect of British Waterways' marina operations. British Waterways has developed a protocol and put in place a wide range of processes and procedures to demonstrate that its marina subsidiary is operating within the law. There still remain differences of opinion which both sides are working to resolve.

Winter Snowfall (Worcester)

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the predicted total winter snowfall in Worcester is for *(a)* 2010, *(b)* 2020, *(c)* 2030 and *(d)* 2050. [32983]

Mr. Touhig: I have been asked to reply.

During the 21st century, snowfall is expected to decrease over the United Kingdom as a whole. This is a consequence of further warming of climate expected as a result of past and future emissions of greenhouse gases and aerosols into the atmosphere. However, the predicted changes vary with location, and are subject to considerable uncertainties arising from the natural variability of climate, errors in the representation of physical processes in climate models, and uncertainties in future emissions. Therefore, it is possible that some parts of the UK could experience periods of increased snowfall during the next few decades. During the second half of the century, however, snowfall is very likely to be lower than at present, in all parts of the country.

For Worcester, the latest climate model predictions are expressed as percentage changes relative to the climate of the past 30 years. The predictions show a wide range of possible values, due to the uncertainties previously noted. For a typical year around 2010, snowfall could range from about 15 per cent. above the recent recorded levels to about 30 per cent. below. For 2020, values range from a 10 per cent. increase to a 35 per cent. reduction. For 2030, values range from a five per cent increase to a 40 per cent. reduction. For 2050, values range from a five per cent reduction to a 60 per cent. reduction. Within these ranges, the best estimates are for reductions of about five per cent, 10 per cent, 20 per cent. and 30 per cent. at 2010, 2020, 2030 and 2050 respectively.

TRANSPORT

Airspace (Extraordinary Rendition)

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what powers he has to deny access to UK airspace. [34631]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* UK law on civil air operations is governed by the UK's obligations under the Chicago Convention on Civil Aviation 1944. These obligations are translated into UK law principally through the Civil Aviation Act 1982 and the Air Navigation Order 2005 (S.I. 2005/1970).

Under the Convention, contracting States may for reason of emergency, military necessity or public safety, restrict or prohibit uniformly the aircraft of other States from flying over the whole or part of its territory (Article 9).

The Convention also provides that scheduled international air services and State aircraft of another contracting State may only fly over or land in UK territory with the permission or authorisation of the UK (Articles 3 and 6),and this can be denied. The UK also requires non-scheduled services where payment is made for carriage, and passengers and cargo are embarked or disembarked, to seek prior permission.

All other aircraft have the right to land in or to fly across UK territory without the need to obtain prior permission from the UK (Article 5). However, the commander of each aircraft operating in controlled airspace in Europe is required to file a flight plan with Eurocontrol, the European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation. The flight plan is passed to each air navigation service provider along the route.

Crossrail Project

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the recent progress of the Crossrail Project. [34158]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* The motion to appoint the Crossrail Bill Select Committee was passed on 5 December, opening the way for the Committee to start its scrutiny of the Bill shortly.

In preparation for the Committee detailed work is currently under way to consider and, where possible, resolve issues raised by petitioners.

The Secretary of State has recently published an Access Option Policy Paper which has been sent out for consultation with the rail industry. This sets out the principles by which Crossrail will share the capacity with other traffic on the existing rail network.

In parallel, a cross-industry timetabling working group is examining the timetable developed for the introduction of Crossrail services.

Driving Test

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the average waiting time for a driving test was in the last period for which figures are available. [36792]

Dr. Ladyman: The national average waiting time for a practical car driving test was six weeks on 5 December 2005.

EU Rail Regulation

Mr. Redwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what additional powers will be granted to the European railway industry as a result of the review of Regulation 881/2004 and Directives *(a)* 2004/49/EC, *(b)* 2001/14/EC and *(c)* 95/18/EC. [32895]

Derek Twigg: The Commission has not published any plans to review any of these measures. However, there are a number of proposals under discussion or planned by the EC institutions that involve minor amendments to Regulation 881/2004 and Directives 2004/49/EC and 2001/14/EC. None of these proposals would grant additional powers to the European rail industry. There are no proposals to amend Directive 95/18/EC.

First Great Western

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the *(a)* reliability and *(b)* punctuality of First Great Western services between London and Worcestershire in (i) the most recent period for which figures are available and (ii) the equivalent period in the previous year. [35667]

Derek Twigg: The Department for Transport does not keep records on the reliability and punctuality of First Great Western services between London and Worcestershire. However, in the year to 30 June 2005, the Public Performance Measure for FGW passenger train services overall was 77.8 per cent.

Highways Agency

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the national targets are for the Highways Agency; and what the performance of its offices in South Devon has been in relation to those targets. [36888]

Dr. Ladyman: The national targets for the Highways Agency are as published in its annual business plan and reported to the House on 24 March 2005, *Official Report*, column 94WS. The Highways Agency is a national organisation and work is divided between its offices in different ways for different functions, to match staff resources and changing work loads. Performance of individual offices is not therefore separately monitored.

Ladbroke Grove Crash

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the implementation of Lord Cullen's recommendations after the Ladbroke Grove crash. [35438]

Derek Twigg: On 24 November, the Health and Safety Commission (HSC) published its tenth and final progress report on the recommendations made following recent rail public inquiries, including Lord Cullen's inquiry into the Ladbroke Grove collision. Of the total of 295 recommendations arising form the four public inquiry reports only four recommendations remain to be completed. Work continues on implementing the remaining recommendations.

HSC's report is available in the House Library and on the Health and Safety Executive's website at: www.hse.gov.uk/railways/railpublic4.pdf.

Leeds Supertram

Mr. Truswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his statement of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 60–62WS, on Leeds supertram, what funding his Department plans to provide for a Leeds rapid bus scheme. [35473]

Derek Twigg: We expect to put significant investment into transport in West Yorkshire in the coming years. We are talking to West Yorkshire passenger transport executive about working up proposals for a Leeds rapid bus scheme, and we expect advice on regional priorities in January, so it is too early to say what the funding will be.

Light Rail Systems

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the study into the wider benefits of light rail systems is expected to be completed; and if he will make a statement. [34707]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* The Department does not currently have a study into the wider benefits of light rail systems or any other single mode.

The Department published guidance in July 2005 on wider benefits, including agglomeration and increases in employment and productivity, and how they can be appraised (http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_econappr/documents/page/dft_econappr_038893.pdf). The Government intend to test this new approach by asking bids for the Transport Innovation Fund to estimate these wider benefits as part of the appraisal.

In addition, the benefits arising from additional jobs in regeneration areas can be captured in Economic Impact Reports. These have been submitted alongside appraisals for a number of schemes, including light rail schemes.

Low-carbon Vehicles

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps have been taken under the UK's EU Presidency to encourage vehicle manufacturers to speed up the development of low carbon vehicles. [36618]

Dr. Ladyman: The UK Government have made climate change one of the main priorities of its EU and G8 presidencies this year, and has sought wherever possible to highlight the importance of improving the fuel efficiency of vehicles as a way of reducing emissions of carbon dioxide from the transport sector. The communique that was agreed at the G8 Gleneagles summit on 8 July, for example, included a climate change, clean energy and sustainable development

action plan. This contained a commitment to a package of measures to encourage the development and uptake of clean, low carbon vehicles. A copy of the full communique text is available at http://www.g8.gov.uk.

The UK also hosted an international Environmentally Friendly Vehicles (EFV) conference on 10–11 November 2005, providing a forum for global dialogue on the promotion and uptake of cleaner, more fuel efficient vehicles. Over 250 delegates from more than 30 countries attended, and the chairman's conclusions, together with copies of the presentations and other supporting material, are available at http://www.livegroup.co.uk/efvc.

The UK has also been actively involved in the European CARS 21 initiative this year. This has considered ways to encourage further development of low carbon vehicles as part of an integrated approach towards reducing CO_2 emissions in the transport sector.

Within the UK, we have continued to incentivise the development and uptake of clean, fuel efficient vehicles as set out in our 2002 Powering Future Vehicles Strategy, which is available via the Department for Transport's website. We also launched during 2005 a new system of colour-coded fuel efficiency labels for cars to raise consumer awareness and help boost demand for fuel efficient vehicles. The labels are now in the majority of new car showrooms in the UK.

M6

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the average daily volume of traffic was on the M6 motorway in the last period for which figures are available. [36791]

Dr. Ladyman: Average daily traffic flows during the 12 months to the end of October 2005 are available at several locations on the M6.

Flows on the M6 vary according to the location along the motorway. On the first section west of the M1 there are 78,000 vehicles per day (vpd) rising to 129,000 vpd on section 4a-5 in Birmingham and 145,000 vpd on junction 30–31 north of Manchester. The lowest levels are in Cumbria, on junction 38–39, at 39,000 vpd.

The two highest flows on the M6 in the Bolton area are 140,500 vpd between junctions 21 and 21 a and 145,000 vpd between junctions 31 and 31a. The lowest is 78,000 vpd between junctions 29 and 30.

Ports (Security)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the Department's review of ports policy will include a comprehensive assessment of security. [36619]

Dr. Ladyman: The ports policy review will take account of the security regime at UK ports but will not include a comprehensive assessment of it.

Railways

Kelvin Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions he has had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on funding arrangements for the rail network. [35540]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 8 December 2005]:* There have been frequent discussions with our counterparts in the Treasury. The result is that an unprecedented £87 million a week of public money is being invested in the rail network. A similar sum is being attracted from the private sector.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much additional funding has been paid to South West Trains for operating the direct services between Bristol and London Waterloo since they took over the service; and if he will make a statement. [31195]

Derek Twigg: No additional sums have been paid to South West Trains (SWT) in respect of this service. However, the arrangements under which SWT pay back a proportion of revenue and profit to the Department have been adjusted to take account of their operation of Bristol to Waterloo trains. The effect has been to reduce the payment to the Department by £1,068,084 in 2005–06.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on capacity on the rail freight network. [34692]

Derek Twigg: The Office of Rail Regulation is responsible for ensuring that track capacity is allocated fairly and efficiently, taking into account the needs of both passenger and freight operators. For the longer term, Network Rail's Utilisation Strategies will establish the capacity available for freight and how it might be developed.

The amount of freight moved by rail has increased by nearly 60 per cent. since privatisation in 1995. In 2004–05, 20.7 billion net tonne kilometres of freight was moved on the railway.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions South Eastern trains have had with Govia since the award of the Integrated Kent franchise; and what representations he has received on the award since the bidding process began. [36595]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* The first meeting to discuss the transition between South Eastern Trains and the new franchisee was held on 1 December 2005. These meetings are continuing.

Around 100 letters about proposed service patterns and other aspects of the Department's franchise specification have been received from MPs, local organisations or councils since January 2004. I have met Kent MPs to discuss these issues. Over the same period, around 1280 letters on the subject of the Integrated Kent Franchise were dealt with by the Strategic Rail Authority, principally from members of the public.

The Department have also received around 150 letters from MPs, local organisations or councils supported by a postcard campaign, on the related issue of South Eastern Trains being retained in the public sector.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when the competitive procurement process for the replacement of high speed trains will begin. [37042]

Derek Twigg: The Department is committed to developing proposals for new high speed trains. The proposed date for invitations to tender is March 2007.

Speed Cameras

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 328W, on speed cameras, for what reasons the number of safety camera partnerships increased between 2000–01 and 2003–04; what assessment he has made of whether they have been effective in reducing the number of road traffic injuries; and how the revenue of fines from safety cameras that was not spent on safety measures was spent in each year from 2000–01 to 2004–05. [36907]

Dr. Ladyman: The increase in the number of safety camera partnerships between 2000–01 and 2003–04 was due to the safety camera programme rolling out nationally to all but two police force areas.

The following independent evaluations have been undertaken for the Department into the effectiveness of the programme and are available in the Library of the House, and on the Department's website:

"A cost recovery system for speed and red-light cameras—two year pilot evaluation" 11 February 2003), and

"The national safety camera programme—Three year evaluation report" (15 June 2004).

A fourth-year evaluation report will be published shortly.

The rules governing the national safety camera programme require surplus revenue to be passed to the Consolidated Fund.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 328W, on speed cameras, which independent academics are looking at regression to the mean effect on the statistics relating to the number of accidents on roads with speed cameras; and when he expects their report to be *(a)* completed and *(b)* published. [36909]

Dr. Ladyman: The fourth year evaluation of the National Safety Camera Programme is being undertaken by the PA Consulting Group and University College London. As part of the evaluation they commissioned Linda Mountain, University of Liverpool, and Mike Maher, Napier University, to assess the effect of regression to the mean. The fourth year report is now complete and will be published shortly.

Traffic Accidents

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people were involved in traffic accidents in each of the last five years in *(a)* England and *(b)* Forest of Dean constituency; and what the mortality rate was in each year. [36870]

Dr. Ladyman: Information on the number of people that were involved in traffic accidents is not available. However, the number of casualties that resulted from personal injury road accidents and the fatality rate per 100,000 population in accidents are given in the table.

	(a) Number of casualties[1]				*(b) Fatalities in personal road injury accidents per 100,000 population*		
	England		*Parliamentary constituency*[2] *Forest of Dean*		*England*	*Parliamentary constituency*[2,3] *Forest of Dean*	
	Fatal	*All*	*Fatal*	*All*	*Rate*		*Rate*
2000	2,915	285,721	10	425	5.9		11.9
2001	2,916	279,678	11	474	5.9		13.1
2002	2,980	269,020	9	453	6.0		10.7
2003	3,004	257,899	10	445	6.0		11.9
2004	2,714	248,762	11	477	5.4		13.1

[1] Killed, serious and slightly injured casualties in personal injury road accidents.
[2] The casualties are those which resulted from personal injury road accidents with the 2004 boundary of the Forest of Dean constituency.
[3] Mid year 2002 population estimates for the constituency of Forest of Dean has been used to calculate the fatality rate.

Travel (Disability Rights)

Mr. MacDougall: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will take steps to extend the coverage of disability discrimination legislation to cover *(a)* air and *(b)* sea travel; and if he will make a statement; [36781]

(2) if the Department will support the proposed EU regulation on the rights of persons with reduced mobility when travelling by air; [36782]

(3) what plans the Department has to commence talks with international counterparts on the accessibility of aircraft and airports for disabled people. [36783]

Ms Buck: We have said that we will legislate for those modes if the voluntary codes which are currently in place prove ineffective. The provision we made in the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 allowing the exemption in part 3 of the DDA to be lifted for transport services provides us with the legal base.

With our statutory advisers, the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, we have commissioned research to monitor compliance with the codes. We will have all the results of that work early next year and those will inform our decision on whether to legislate.

In the meantime during our presidency of the EU we have given priority to the EC proposal on air passenger rights for disabled people and people with reduced mobility. We have made good progress and a draft of the proposal agreed by the Transport Council is due to be considered by the European Parliament in Plenary this week.

We are also at the heart of discussions on access to air travel for disabled people. The UK chairs the European Conference of Civil Aviation's Facilitation Sub-Group on air travel for people with reduced mobility which promotes good practice in this field.

Trunk Roads/Motorways

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many miles of *(a)* trunk roads and *(b)* motorway there are in each local authority; and what estimate he has made of the number of miles of (i) other A roads and (ii) other roads in England. [36342]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list departmental projects conducted by consultants in each year since 2000; what the cost was in each case; and what the total cost of employing consultants was in each year. [29068]

Mr. Hanson: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Credit Card Fraud

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland have been convicted of credit card fraud in each of the last 10 years. [36554]

Mr. Hanson: Data for credit card fraud is not available. There are no specific offences relating to fraud using credit cards and it is not possible to determine if a credit card was involved in any fraud and forgery or theft offences.

Crime

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of whether there was paramilitary involvement in the *(a)* manufacturing and *(b)* distribution of the viagra-type drugs seized in North Belfast in July. [36498]

Mr. Woodward: One individual has been charged with illegal importation of medicinal products and possession with intent to supply in connection with the seizure of a significant quantity of Viagra-type drugs in July. As the matter is sub-judice it would be inappropriate to comment further.

Departmental Building

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what *(a)* building and *(b)* refurbishment projects are planned by his Department in (i) 2005–06 and (ii) 2006–07; and what the costs will be of each project. [34758]

Mr. Hain: The Northern Ireland Office and its Agencies currently have 12 building and refurbishments projects underway in the 2005–06 fiscal year, and 12 planned for 2006–07. The associated costs can be found in tables 1 and 2 respectively.

The Northern Ireland Prison Service is currently conducting a review of its longer term estate strategy as part of its strategic development programme. It is likely that decisions on projects for 2006–07 will be taken both in that context and as a result of maintenance requirements.

Table 1: 2005–06

Department/agency	*Type of work*	*Building name*	*Description*	*Cost (£000)*
YJA	Building	Youth Justice Services Omagh	New Office take in Omagh for Community Services and Youth Conferencing	450
YJA	Building	Embassy Buildings	New Office take in Londonderry for Community Services	250
YJA	Building	Youth Justice Services Larne	New Office take in Larne for Community Services	210
YJA	Building	Youth Justice Services Coleraine	Replacement premises in Coleraine for Community Services	150
Compensation Agency	Renovation	Royston House	Refurbishment of 2nd floor into open plan offices	98
NIPS	Renovation	Hydebank Young Offender Centre and Prison	Provision of in-cell sanitation and safer cell furniture	1,300
NIO	Building	Knockview	Cabling Infrastructure for IT and restructuring of rooms.	125
NIO	Building	Stormont House annexe	Restructuring of office space	20
NIO	Renovation	Stormont House Bungalow	Repair of Storm damage	22
NIO	Renovation	Massey House	New ceiling tiles, repaint and new carpet in corridors	104
NIO	New Build	Not Known	Juvenile Justice Centre	6,800
NIO	Renovation	Hillsborough Castle	Major Refurbishment of Minor wing	105

Note:
Type of work 'Building' above refers to leasing of building.

Table 2: 2006–07

Dept/agency	*Type of work*	*Building name*	*Description*	*Cost (£000)*
YJA	Building	Not yet known	Replacement premises in Ballymena for Community Services and Youth Conf	[1]450
YJA	Building	Not yet known	New Office take in Limavady for Community Services	[1]200
YJA	Building	Not yet known	New Office take in Strabane for Community Services	[1]250
YJA	Building	Merchants Quay	Replacement premises in Newry for Community Services and Youth Conf	[1]200
YJA	Building	Embassy Buildings	New Office take in Londonderry for Youth Conferencing	[1]250
YJA	Building	Not yet known	Replacement premises in Newtownards for Community services	[1]90
YJA	Building	Not yet known	New office in Lisburn for Community services	[1]100
YJA	Building	Not yet known	Replacement premises in Belfast for Community Services (Westside project)	[1]100
NIO	New Build	Not Known	New Mortuary	[1]3,500
NIO	New Build	Not Known	New Forensic Laboratory and Offices	[1]25,000
NIO	New Build	Not Known	Juvenile Justice Centre	1,000
NIO	Building	Stormont House	Refurbishment of Stormont House. Planning still at concept no estimate of cost.	n/k

n/k = not known.
[1] Estimated Costs Only.
Note:
Type of work 'Building' above refers to leasing of building.

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Departmental Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many staff in his Department have been relocated into London and the South East in each of the last five years for which records are available. [31732]

Mr. Woodward: There has been no relocation of Northern Ireland Office staff into London and the South East in the last five years.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to relocate staff in his Department and related agencies into London and the South East. [31733]

Mr. Woodward: The Northern Ireland Office has no plans to relocate any staff into London and the South East.

Integrated Schools

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of development proposals for new integrated schools in relation to their impact on established *(a)* controlled and *(b)* maintained schools within the same catchment areas. [35864]

Angela E. Smith: In reaching decisions on proposals for new integrated schools the Department of Education must consider a number of factors including the projected enrolments for the proposed schools and the potential impact on neighbouring schools. The development proposal process provides the opportunity for all schools in the surrounding area to comment on the proposal and the comments are considered by the Department before decisions on new schools are made.

Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations have been made by the Human Rights Commission to the Government on issues that would fall under its remit in connection with the Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill. [36609]

Mr. Hanson: I discussed the proposals in the Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill at a meeting with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission. The Commission offered to write to me following their consideration of the Bill.

Police Officers (Sickness)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many police officers in Northern Ireland on average were off work as a result of sickness at any one time in each of the last five years. [36486]

Mr. Woodward: A chart showing the number of police officers off work as a result of sickness since April 2000 to December has been placed in the Library.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Police Service of Northern Ireland officers are on long-term sick leave. [36539]

Mr. Woodward: The PSNI defines long-term sick absence as 28 days.

The number of Police Service of Northern Ireland officers on long-term sick absence as at 7 December 2005 was 276.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many police officers in Northern Ireland have completed a period of sick leave of more than 30 days in each of the last 10 years. [36540]

Mr. Woodward: Due to the way this information was recorded, figures prior to 2001–02 could only be retrieved disproportionate to cost. The number of police officers in Northern Ireland who were on sick leave for a period of more than 30 days since the financial year 2001–02 is as follows:

Financial year	*Number of absence over 30 days*
2001–02	2,096
2002–03	1,417
2003–04	1,006
2004–05	1,123
2005–06 (to date)	863

Postal Voting

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to reform the postal voting system in Northern Ireland. [2192]

Mr. Hanson: The Electoral Administration Bill, currently before Parliament, includes measures that relate to applications for postal and proxy voting. In particular the Bill will make it a criminal offence to apply for a postal or proxy vote with the intention of stealing another person's vote or gaining a vote to which the applicant is not entitled. These measures will extend to Northern Ireland.

Schools (Weapon Confiscation)

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* knives, *(b)* guns and *(c)* other weapons were confiscated in schools in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [36312]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Education does not collect the information requested. The Department collects statistics on the reasons why pupils are suspended from school but the current categorisation does not enable specific identification of those pupils who were suspended for carrying an offensive weapon.

Prosecutions

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland were prosecuted for shoplifting in each of the last five years. [36253]

Mr. Hanson: Table 1 provides figures for the number prosecuted for shoplifting between 1999 and 2003. Data beyond 2003 will become available in early 2006.

Table 1: Prosecutions for shoplifting 1999–2003

	Number of prosecutions
1999	709
2000	858
2001	730
2002	669
2003	674

Note:

Figures are based on the principal rule, thus only the most serious offence for which an offender is charged is recorded.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in how many cases of shoplifting files were sent to the Northern Ireland Public Prosecution Service and were subsequently returned recommending no prosecution in each of the last five years. [36254]

The Solicitor-General: I have been asked to reply.

The information sort is not available in the form requested. The Public Prosecution Service (PPS) does not differentiate cases of shoplifting from other offences of theft. Further, until the commencement of the PPS in June of this year, virtually all minor offences dealt with in the magistrates court were prosecuted by the police. That continues to be the case in those areas of Northern Ireland which are not yet covered by the new service.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in how many cases of indecent exposure files were sent to the Northern Ireland Public Prosecution Service and were returned recommending no prosecution in each of the last 10 years. [36255]

The Solicitor-General: I have been asked to reply. The information is not available in the form requested. Indecent exposure may only be tried in the magistrates court. Until the commencement of the Public Prosecution Service (PPS) in June of this year, virtually all minor offences dealt with in the magistrates court were prosecuted by the police and files for this offence would not normally have been sent to the DPP. That continues to be the case in those areas of Northern Ireland which are not yet covered by the new service.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland have been fined for non-wearing of seat belts in the last 10 years. [36524]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is provided in the following table. The earliest figures available are from 1 October 1997.

	Number of fines
1997 (from 1 October)	973
1998	6,381
1999	8,626
2000	8,255
2001	10,522
2002	9,804
2003	18,189
2004	21,092
2005 (to date)	15,715

Republican Violence Arrests

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many arrests were made in relation to Republican violence in *(a)* Ardoyne and *(b)* Dunloy on 12 July. [36537]

Mr. Woodward: The information is as follows:

To date:

Ardoyne

23 charged with riotous assembly and four with Obstructive sitting.

Dunloy

No arrests, but DCU Commander advises he anticipates reporting up to 26 people to the PPS for various public order offences.

Road Traffic Accidents

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* road traffic accidents and *(b)* fatal road traffic accidents there have been in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years where the major contributory factor has been (i) speed, (ii) excess alcohol and (iii) failure to maintain the vehicle. [36526]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is contained in the following tables:

Injury road traffic collisions due to excessive speed

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Number Total
Fatal collision	22	23	40	35	32	36	36	36	29	23	312
Serious collision	211	217	232	202	208	225	237	225	149	161	2,067
Slight collision	730	746	787	788	767	709	631	582	508	389	6,637
Total	963	986	1,059	1,025	1,007	970	904	843	686	573	9,016

Injury road traffic collisions due to alcohol or drugs[1]

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Number Total
Fatal collision	32	33	43	28	32	45	37	34	37	31	352
Serious collision	109	107	123	135	104	125	123	127	116	89	1,158
Slight collision	277	295	344	350	377	395	331	322	280	238	3,209
Total	418	435	510	513	513	565	491	483	433	358	4,719

[1] Figures include alcohol/drugs—driver/rider, alcohol/drugs—pedestrian and alcohol/drugs—passenger.

Injury road traffic collisions due to failure to maintain vehicle[1]

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Number Total
Fatal collision	2	1	2	1	1	—	2	1	1	1	12
Serious collision	5	7	12	2	7	5	4	4	2	1	49
Slight collision	18	31	18	26	19	26	22	22	13	17	212
Total	25	39	32	29	27	31	28	27	16	19	273

[1] Failure to maintain vehicle is comprised of the following factors: defective brakes, defective steering/suspension, defective front lights, defective rear lights and defective tyres.

Roads Service

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what penalty clauses are normally included as part of Roads Service contracts. [36339]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Malcolm McKibbin, dated 13 December 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding what penalty clauses are normally included as part of Roads Service contracts.

I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

Penalty clauses are not included in Roads Service contracts as a means of recovering damages, as they are not enforceable in law. Where a loss is incurred through the failure of a contractor to fulfil their obligations under a contract, redress is sought through a liquidated damages clause. The amount included in a liquidated damages clause is a genuine pre-estimate, at the time of the issue of tender documents, of the loss that will be incurred in the event of a breach of contract.

I hope this information is helpful.

Alcohol Sales (Under-age Children)

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* publicans and *(b)* off licence proprietors in Northern Ireland have been (i) prosecuted for and (ii) convicted of selling alcohol to underage children in each of the last five years. [36335]

Mr. Hanson: It is not possible to identify separately prosecutions brought against publicans and off licence proprietors. The prosecutions and convictions included in Table 1 are for the offences of 'selling intoxicating liquor to a minor' and 'licensee selling intoxicating liquor to a minor'.

Figures are provided for 1999 to 2003. Data beyond 2003 will become available in early 2006.

Table 1: Prosecutions and convictions for selling alcohol to a minor 1999–2003

	Number of prosecutions	Number of convictions
1999	0	0
2000	3	2
2001	1	0
2002	4	2
2003	5	3

Note:
Figures are based on the principal rule, thus only the most serious offence for which an offender is charged is recorded.

Speed Cameras

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much revenue has been generated in Northern Ireland by speed cameras in each of the last 10 years. [36525]

Mr. Woodward: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given to the hon. Member for South Antrim (Dr. McCrea) on 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1381W, which advised that figures were only available from 2001 and detailed the revenue raised by speed cameras in each year since then.

Teachers

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many teachers in Northern Ireland left the profession in the last five years after *(a)* less than 10 years and *(b)* between 10 and 15 years. [36552]

Angela E. Smith: The information is as follows.

Number of teachers in Northern Ireland who have left the profession in Northern Ireland after (a) less than 10 years and (b) between 10 and 15 years

	Number of teachers
Less than 10 years	932
Between 10 and 15 years	102
Total	1,034

Notes:
1. The figures supplied are based on permanent teachers employed in primary and secondary schools in Northern Ireland since April 1987 who left the profession after *(a)* less than 10 years and *(b)* between 10 and 15 years.
2. Excludes teachers who commenced service on or before 1 April 1987.
3. Excludes teachers with a retirement indicator against their record.
4. Excludes substitute/temporary and part-time teachers and those employed in voluntary grammar and FE colleges.
5. Service has been calculated from pay history, on the basis of permanent pay type only and excludes any periods that a teacher was on unpaid leave.

Arlene Arkinson

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will take steps to extend the remit of the forensic expert in Northern Ireland in relation to the recovery of the disappeared to include recovery of the remains of Arlene Arkinson. [35071]

Mr. Woodward: The Senior Investigating Officer (SIO) has in place a comprehensive search strategy as part of the overall investigation into the murder of Arlene Arkinson. The Chief Constable will ensure that the resources required to properly conduct the investigation

are in place. Should the PSNI believe that any expert or specialist could add value to the investigation they will, of course, be considered.

University Students (Science)

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many students attending university in Northern Ireland have studied a science subject in each of the last 10 years, broken down by subject. [36551]

Angela E. Smith: The following table provides enrolments on science courses at NI Higher Education institutions from 1994–95 to 2003–04.

	1994–95	*1995–96*	*1996–97*	*1997–98*	*1998–99*
Medicine and Dentistry	1,194	1,213	1,176	1,202	1,233
Subjects allied to Medicine	3,445	2,944	3,332	4,949	6,103
Biological Sciences					
Biology	626	742	701	749	646
Other Biological sciences	1,627	1,760	1,719	1,793	1,752
Veterinary Science, Agriculture and related subjects	384	364	394	438	541
Physical Sciences					
Chemistry	315	368	358	306	219
Physics	241	223	207	229	197
Other Physical Sciences	1,003	1,057	985	1,052	1,037
Mathematical Sciences	468	503	468	468	449
Computer Science	1,799	1,955	2,165	2,589	2,867
Engineering and Technology	2,828	2,613	2,723	2,605	2,404
Architecture, Building and Planning	1,079	1,357	1,314	1,306	1,327
Total	15,009	15,099	15,542	17,686	18,775

	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Medicine and Dentistry	1,261	1,315	1,323	1,324	1,337
Subjects allied to Medicine	6,205	6,329	6,701	7,824	8,693
Biological Sciences					
Biology	542	469	533	484	472
Other Biological sciences	1,795	1,736	1,689	2,240	2,222
Veterinary Science, Agriculture and related subjects	408	413	395	323	406
Physical Sciences					
Chemistry	203	183	160	179	197
Physics	176	151	184	190	208
Other Physical Sciences	1,023	1,067	1,069	1,035	1,106
Mathematical Sciences	456	415	363	386	377
Computer Science	3,205	3,511	3,685	4,139	3,789
Engineering and Technology	2,236	2,352	2,434	2,840	2,760
Architecture, Building and Planning	1,407	1,350	1,387	1,508	1,773
Total	18,917	19,291	19,923	22,473	23,340

A new subject coding system was introduced for the 2002–03 academic year in which single enrolments are split over one or more subject groups reflecting the programme of study. Comparisons between 2002–03, 2003–04 and previous years is therefore not recommended. For comparability over the 10 years, figures are based on a snapshot of enrolments at 1 December within the academic year.

Information on full-year enrolments on all higher education courses at NI institutions is available to view at: http://www.delni.gov.uk/index.cfm/area/information/page/SRHEEnrolments.

Vehicle Check Points

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many vehicle checks points the police set up in each month of 2005. [36536]

Mr. Woodward: The Police Service of Northern Ireland does not record the number of vehicle checkpoints conducted.

DEFENCE

Al-Jamiyat Prison

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the Royal Military Police are investigating alleged human rights abuses at the al-Jamiyat prison. [33914]

Mr. Ingram: The Royal Military Police are not investigating alleged human rights abuses at the al-Jamiyat prison. We have impressed upon the Iraqi authorities the importance of investigating prisoner abuse, wherever it is alleged to have occurred.

Anthrax Vaccines

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what research has been commissioned on the effects on British forces of anthrax vaccines. [35786]

Mr. Touhig: A research project published under the title "Adverse Medical Events in British Service Personnel Following the Anthrax Vaccination" (J. Enstone, M. Wale, J. Nguyen-Van-Tarn & J. Pearson—*Vaccine* 2003, 21:1348–1354) was funded by the Ministry of Defence and endorsed by the Advisory Group on Medical Countermeasures. The MOD had no editorial input into the conduct, methodology or findings of this study—the editorial rights to the study belong to the University of Nottingham Medical School. The study concluded that the anthrax vaccine is a safe vaccine with minimal side effects.

The anthrax vaccine is a MHRA (Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency) licensed medical product and therefore fully satisfies the responsible UK regulatory body in matters of vaccine safety and efficacy.

Armed Forces (Morale)

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent assessment he has made of morale in the armed forces; and if he will make a statement. [35349]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* The most recent Continuous Attitude Surveys, conducted by the Services in 2004 and 2005, show the following responses on morale:

Percentage

	Royal Navy Officers	*Royal Navy Ratings*	*Royal Marine Officers*	*Royal Marine Other Ranks*
Good and Very Good	58.3	43.8	78.2	63.9
Average	28.8	31.9	17.4	21.8
Poor and Very Poor	12.9	22.8	4.3	13.2
Unanswered	—	1.4	—	1.0

Percentage

	Army Officers	*Army Other Ranks*	*RAF Officers*	*RAF Air men/women*
High and Very High	69	57	49	41
Neither High nor Low	22	25	31	32
Low and Very Low	10	18	20	27

The latest Survey was published in October 2005 and is available on the MOD Freedom of Information website. Copies are also held in the Library of the House.

Ministers and Chiefs of Staff remain fully committed to maintaining and improving morale in all the Services.

Army Regiments

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress has been made on renaming Army regiments; and when he expects the process to be completed. [36770]

Mr. Ingram: I refer my hon. Friend to the written ministerial statement made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Defence on 24 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 129WS, which gives details of all the new infantry titles and formation arrangements.

Asian Earthquake

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether *(a)* agencies and *(b)* other Governments using helicopters provided by his Department for relief work in the wake of the recent earthquake in Pakistan and Kashmir have been charged for this use. [36326]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* No other Governments or agencies have been, or will be, charged for using the three RAF Chinook helicopters deployed to Pakistan to support the earthquake relief effort.

British Armed Forces (Fijians)

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Fijians serving in the British armed forces have been absent without leave in the last 12 months. [36936]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* There were approximately 10 trained Regular Army personnel whose nationality at birth is recorded as Fijian and who were reported as having gone long-term absent without leave during the period 1 October 2004 to 30 September 2005. In the same period none of the serving Fijians in the Royal Air Force were recorded as having gone long-term absent without leave. It is not possible to provide the equivalent figures for the Royal Navy as the figures are not held centrally.

The records for those who have been absent without leave for a short period of time (less than 21 days) are not held in such a way as to allow a nationality to be cross checked with those absent without leave without incurring disproportionate cost.

British Troop Deaths (Iraq)

Mr. MacDougall: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British troops have been *(a)* killed and *(b)* injured in the war with Iraq. [34122]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* As at 5 December 2005, a total of 98 British Service personnel have died while serving on Operation TELIC since the start of the campaign in March 2003.

Of these, 75 are known to have been killed as a result of hostile action, and 23 are either known to have died as a result of illness, accident or from other non-combat

injuries, or have not yet been officially assigned a cause of death pending the outcomes of ongoing coroners investigations into the circumstances pertaining to these deaths.

The total number of UK personnel admitted to Shaibah Field hospital and classified as wounded in action (WIA) is 189. A larger number have, however, sustained non battle injuries or succumbed to illness whilst serving in Iraq.

Building/Refurbishment Projects

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what *(a)* building and *(b)* refurbishment projects are planned by his Department in (i) 2005–06 and (ii) 2006–07; and what the expected costs are of each project. [37397]

Mr. Touhig: The information requested is currently being obtained from a number of separate sources and will take a little time to collate. I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

C17 Aircraft

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to lease more C17 aircraft. [29607]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence has no plans to lease additional C-17 aircraft.

Colchester Garrison

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what provision has been made for a permanent church building as part of the new Colchester Garrison. [36161]

Mr. Touhig: It is the Ministry of Defence's intention to maintain a church within Colchester Garrison, in the first instance by converting an existing building. The relevant plans have been lodged with Colchester borough council.

Commonwealth Second World War Veterans

Mr. Blunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what measures his Department plans to take to assist Commonwealth Second World War veterans; and if he will make a grant to the Royal Commonwealth Ex-Service League. [34199]

Mr. Touhig: The Government recognises the sacrifices of those from Commonwealth nations who supported the allied effort in World War II and has publicised this through the 'We Were There' exhibition and its schools programme. However, it has been the policy of successive Governments over many years that Departments do not contribute public funds to individual charities in this way.

Deepcut Barracks

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the cost was of the Media Facilitation Day at Deepcut Barracks on 26 October, broken down by main budget heading; if he will list the media organisations represented at the event; and how much press coverage resulted, broken down by *(a)* newspaper column inches and *(b)* broadcast minutes on (i) television and (ii) radio. [32942]

Mr. Ingram: The open day for the media event at Deepcut on 26 October incurred no additional costs to those that would have otherwise been incurred in the running of that part of the Defence College of Logistics.

Information detailing press coverage is not available in the format requested. The open day featured in news bulletins on BBC News, BBC News 24, BBC London News, Sky News and Radio Five; was reported on by *The Times* and *The Telegraph*; was covered by internal Garrison Radio broadcasts and the MOD's in-house FOCUS magazine; and was reported on by a range of regional media.

A list of the media organisations who registered to attend the event are presented in the following list.

BBC
European Pressphoto
The Irish World
MoD Focus Magazine
The Evening Standard
The Times
The Telegraph
The Independent
ITV (Wales)
Camberley News
London Tonight
Meridian
PA
BBC Radio 1 Newsbeat
Garrison Radio
News of the World
Sunday Mirror
Jane's Defence Weekly
ITN
Sky News
Southern News
Getty Images
INS Newsgroup

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the defined objectives for the Media Facilitation Day at Deepcut Barracks on 26 October. [32943]

Mr. Ingram: Media open days at a range of Defence training establishments, including at the Defence College of Logistics, Deepcut, aim to explain to the public how the Services train their recruits and to explain the duty of care and welfare support provided to trainees.

Defence Headquarters

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has to collocate RAF HQ Strike Command and HQ Personnel and Training Command; and how he intends to announce his plans. [35721]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 8 December 2005]:* I refer the hon. Member to my written statement of 16 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 22WS. Following completion of the Trade Union consultation, the staff affected and Members in the immediate localities, were informed that my decision remained unchanged.

Departmental Call Centres

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many call centres were run by his Department and its agencies in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 to date; and how many and what proportion of calls (i) were handled by an adviser, (ii) were received but abandoned and (iii) received an engaged tone in each year. [23306]

Mr. Touhig: There are a number of internal 'help desk' points within the Ministry of Defence but details are not held centrally and information could be collated only at disproportionate cost and effort. Inquiries indicate that the Department does not operate any public facing 'call centres' within the accepted definition.

Dr. Dafydd Alun Jones

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his colleagues in the Welsh Assembly Government regarding the funding of the work carried out by Doctor Dafydd Alun Jones. [26153]

Mr. Touhig: I have had no such discussions.

Helmand, Afghanistan

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the written statement of 14 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 41–42WS, on the international security assistance force, what his most recent assessment is of the security situation in the Province of Helmand, Afghanistan; and whether there have been *(a)* US and *(b)* allied casualties in that Province since the invasion in 2001. [35475]

Mr. Ingram: The security situation in the south of Afghanistan is more challenging than in the ISAF's current area of operation. The Taliban are still active in the area, as are drug traffickers.

While United States casualties are a matter for the US, we are aware of three US casualties (but no other allied casualties) in Helmand Province.

Inquests

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many inquests remain to be heard in relation to members of Her Majesty's armed forces who lost their lives as a result of military duties in Iraq *(a)* since 2003 in total, *(b)* in 2004 and *(c)* in 2005; and in how many cases an inquest has not been concluded a year after death. [35853]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 8 December 2005]:* Since 2003 a total of 98 British personnel have lost their lives in support of Operation Telic with 70 inquests still outstanding.

In 2004, 22 British Military personnel lost their lives with 15 inquests still outstanding

As at 7 December 2005, 23 British Military personnel have died during 2005; all inquests remain outstanding.

A total of 65 inquests have not been concluded a year after death.

The Coroner is under remit to conduct an independent inquest into reported deaths of a violent, natural or unknown cause, including those of military personnel. The Ministry of Defence continues to assist the Coroner as necessary.

Iraq

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Iraqis have been *(a)* detained by UK forces in each month since March 2003 and *(b)* convicted in Iraqi courts of offences connected to insurgent activity since March 2003; and if he will make a statement. [28804]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 15 November 2005]:* Iraqis detained by UK forces are either criminal detainees or security internees. Criminal detainees are transferred as soon as practically possible into Iraqi custody on their detention by UK forces, usually within eight hours. Security internees are detained and then held at the Divisional Temporary Detention Facility (DTDF) at Shaibah.

The table gives a monthly breakdown of the number of internees entering the DTDF from its opening in December 2003 to the present. Once security internees are no longer judged to be an imperative threat to security they are released. There are currently 35 internees in the DTDF.

Before the DTDF was opened, security internees detained by UK forces were transferred into US custody at Camp Bucca. In total, around 1,000 individuals detained by UK forces were interned at Camp Bucca. We do not hold a monthly breakdown for this period.

We do not have a record of the number of Iraqis convicted in Iraqi courts. This is a matter for the Iraqis.

The Ministry of Defence does not keep any record of the number of Iraqis convicted in Iraqi courts of offences connected to insurgent activity since March 2003. This is a matter for the Iraqi Ministry of Justice.

	Number
2004	
January	31
February	19
March	9
April	63
May	45
June	25
July	3
August	7
September	10
October	1
November	3
December	16
2005	
January	11
February	3
March	0
April	0
May	1

	Number
June	3
July	1
August	1
September	3
October	13
November	0
Total number interned	263

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when armed services personnel were first informed that members of the Royal Military Police had been taken hostage in Majar-al-Kabir; and what assessment was made at that time of the prospects of a successful rescue operation. [36935]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* I refer the hon. Member to the written statement made on 17 November 2004, *Official Report*, columns 90–91WS by my right hon. Friend the then Secretary of State for Defence (Mr. Geoffrey Hoon).

An Army Board of Inquiry examined the circumstances leading up to the deaths of the six Royal Military Policemen in Al Majarr Al Kabir. Details of what actions were taken when it first became known that there were members of the coalition force in the police station are contained within the Board's Opinion, Findings and Recommendations, a copy of which was placed in the Library of the House in November 2004.

Kenya (Military Training)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what progress is being made on securing the future of military training facilities in Kenya. [36136]

Mr. Ingram: Detailed negotiations about the continuation of British Army training in Kenya and the adjustment of restrictions placed on that training are being led by the British high commissioner in Nairobi. However, as a result of the recent referendum in Kenya we anticipate a delay in the proceedings while new members of the Cabinet are appointed. In the meantime, the current memorandum of understanding between the two Governments, which expired in December 2004, has been extended to allow the British Army to continue to conduct training in Kenya.

Military Establishments (Wales)

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* acreage and *(b)* purpose is of each military (i) establishment and (ii) site in Wales; and what plans he has to dispose of establishments and sites in Wales. [35781]

Mr. Touhig: The defence estate in Wales comprises approximately 23,077 hectares. Tables providing details of operational Ministry of Defence (MOD) sites in Wales with areas in hectares and indicative uses have been placed in the Library of the House.

Sites presently in disposal in Wales are Kinmel Park (5.91 hectares), Llanbedr (229.95 hectares), RAF Sealand (100 hectares), land adjacent to Hayston Farm at Castlemartin (1.21 hectares) and Poor Wood at Caerwent Training Area (11.13 hectares).

A snapshot of surplus defence land and property currently listed for disposal is available in the Library of the House. The need to retain land and property is continually reviewed. A revised list is currently being prepared and will be placed in the Library by the end of the year. This will include details of all disposals which have been confirmed.

Naval Pensions

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many individuals would currently qualify for a full naval pension if they had retired after 31 March 1975 but do not qualify because they retired before that date with fewer than 22 years of pensionable service. [27309]

Mr. Touhig: This information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Overseas Military Bases

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British armed forces personnel are stationed at British military bases abroad, broken down by country. [35330]

Mr. Ingram: The information requested is contained in Tri Service Publication 6, Global Location of UK Regular Forces (TSP 6).

TSP 6 is published quarterly; the most recent publication shows the numbers of Service personnel at 1 July 2005.

Copies of TSP 6 are available in the Library of the House and also available on www.dasa.mod.uk.

Parliamentary Question

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to answer Question reference 23306 tabled by the hon. Member for Yeovil. [33639]

Mr. Touhig: I replied to the hon. Member today.

Royal Irish Regiment

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reason members of the Royal Irish Regiment were refused permission to wear uniform for the annual laying of wreaths on the morning of Remembrance Sunday, 13 November, in the Castlederg area of west Tyrone; and if he will make a statement. [35863]

Mr. Touhig: As a result of a review of Regimental policy on Memorials, Rolls of Honour and Books of Remembrance it was decided that the Royal Irish Regiment should only be represented at and take part in acts of remembrance at national and principal sites of remembrance in Northern Ireland. Where this happened, including in Tyrone, the Royal Irish Regiment paraded in uniform.

Where individual members of the Regiment carried out an act of remembrance, for the most part in conjunction with members of the local Ulster Defence Regiment Associations, for security reasons it was deemed necessary that they should not wear uniform.

Stevens Express Leasing

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what dates aircraft registered in the US by Stevens Express Leasing have landed at military UK airfields in each of the last five years. [35998]

Mr. Ingram: The information requested could be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

Thermobaric Weapons

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his policy is on *(a)* the procurement and *(b)* the deployment of thermobaric weapons; and if he will make a statement. [31625]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* The UK does not possess, and has no plans to procure, so-called thermobaric weapons.

Underwater Storage

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the Checkmate underwater storage system devised by International Underwater Storage Ltd of Balcombe, West Sussex. [34036]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence has given the "Checkmate" system careful consideration. However, at present we have no requirement for it. The threat that might be posed by a system like "Checkmate" has also been assessed.

US Air Force

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the arrangements are under which the US Air Force operates in the United Kingdom; and whether there is a legal agreement covering those arrangements. [36363]

Mr. Ingram: The presence of the United States Visiting Force (USVF) in the United Kingdom is at the invitation of the UK Government. The legal basis for the USVF's UK presence is primarily the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO) Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA) of 1951 and the Visiting Forces Act of 1952. These establish the legal status of the USVF and its personnel in the UK and help to maintain the relationship that exists between the UK and the US for the purposes of our common defence.

US-registered Aircraft

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions since 1 January 2001 US-registered aircraft tail number *(a)* N44982, formerly N8068V and N379P, and *(b)* N313P operated in UK military airspace. [34632]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* Civil aircraft are not permitted to operate in the areas of reserved airspace allocated to the Ministry of Defence by the Civil Aviation Authority.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Broadcasting (Illegal Jamming)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether any aid and development provided by *(a)* the UK and *(b)* the European Union to Libya is (i) dependent and (ii) conditional on broadcasting access to the country unimpeded by official agencies in accordance with the UN's International Telecommunications Union Agency's agreements and treaty provisions; and if he will make a statement. [34917]

Mr. Thomas: None of the UK's or EC's development assistance to Libya is dependent or conditional on unimpeded broadcasting access to the country.

The UK provides funding to Libya under the Global Opportunities Fund and the Global Conflict Prevention Pool. Under the Global Opportunities Fund in 2005–06, the UK is providing £200,000 to fund projects related to the rule of law and good governance. Under the Global Conflict Prevention Pool, in the same period, £285,000 will fund projects aimed at building mutual confidence between the UK and Libya. This includes educational exchanges, the training of Libyan officers in the UK and closer military liaison.

The EC does not have a direct bilateral programme with Libya. However, it will provide €1 million for an HIV/AIDS package over the next-year.

CDC/Actis Capital

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list CDC/Actis Capital-funded *(a)* new investments and *(b)* disposals in (i) agribusiness, (ii) telecoms, (iii) infrastructure, (iv) minerals, oil and gas, (v) financial institutions, (vi) education and health sectors, (vii) retail and (viii) energy in each year since 1999, broken down by country. [35450]

Hilary Benn: I have arranged for the document entitled, "List of CDC's New Investments and Disposals 1999–2004", which gives the information requested, to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Central Asia

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much UK bilateral aid he expects will be allocated to *(a)* Kyrgyzstan, *(b)* Tajikistan, *(c)* Uzbekistan, *(d)* Armenia, *(e)* Georgia and *(f)* Moldova between 2005–06 and 2007–08. [31655]

Mr. Thomas: For the financial year 2005–06, UK bilateral aid allocations are as follows:

	£
(a) Kyrgyzstan:	5.6 million
(b) Tajikistan:	3 million
(c) Uzbekistan:	750,000
(d) Armenia:	3.2 million
(e) Georgia:	3 million
(f) Moldova:	2.5 million

We have also committed £50,000 to Azerbaijan to support the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative and £30,000 to Kazakhstan for residual activities, following the closure of our bilateral programme there earlier this year.

In addition to this, the UK is providing £4.52 million of bilateral aid through a regional programme in Central Asia to prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS.

DFID's total planning figures for these countries are £20 million for 2006–07 and £22.5 million for 2007–08. Specific country allocations for those years are currently being finalised.

Corporate Responsibility

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on his policies to promote corporate responsibility among UK companies operating abroad. [36706]

Mr. Thomas: The Government encourages the highest standards of business behaviour by UK companies wherever they operate, locally, regionally and internationally.

Our priority is to ensure that UK companies operating in developing countries should be accountable to the Government and citizens of those countries. At the local level, DFID recognises that, in many developing countries, the systems for monitoring and regulating business activity are weak. We provide support to countries' efforts to develop an appropriate legal framework, including protection of the environment and community rights, and to strengthen their capacity to enforce these laws. An example is the Pathways to Environmental Action in Kenya where DFID supports work with local regulatory authorities and the private sector to find the best means of meeting environmental standards.

At the international level, we encourage business participation in initiatives such as the UN Global Compact, the Organisation for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD) Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. DFID also encourages companies to participate in ethical trade schemes such as the Ethical Trading Initiative (ETI) which DFID has funded since it began in 1998. ETI members adopt a code of conduct that includes the core labour standards of the International Labour Organisation. They work with their suppliers, in collaboration with trade unions and non-governmental organisations, to improve working conditions in their supply chains and develop and disseminate best practice.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps are taken by the Department to support staff with mental ill-health. [36263]

Mr. Thomas: In DFID, when staff develop or are diagnosed with mental ill-health the department provides appropriate assistance to help them to remain at work or, where there has been absence due to illness, to return to work. This can include the support of the welfare and counselling service, reference to the occupational health service for assessment of longer term needs, and for those who have been on long term absence a phased return to their normal working pattern over a period of up to three months.

Any member of staff who is covered by the Disability Discrimination Act for mental illness is assessed for reasonable adjustments to be made to their work and working environment.

DFID recognises work-related stress as an occupational health and safety issue and is currently putting the Health and Safety Executive Management Standards for tackling work-related stress into practice.

DFID encourages staff to maintain a work-life balance and provides on-site fitness and wellbeing centres.

Developing Countries (Exploitation)

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what role his Department plays in tackling exploitation of workers in developing countries. [36202]

Mr. Thomas: DFID has current commitments of over £46 million to support activities to address the exploitation and improve the treatment of workers in developing countries.

DFID is supporting the implementation of labour standards in a number of ways. The main channel for our support is the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the leading international body in this field. Our current partnership agreement with the ILO, worth £15 million over the period 2001–06, helps fund their programme of technical assistance to developing countries. In addition our country and regional programmes are supporting a number of ILO projects that focus on the elimination of child labour and the prevention of trafficking of women and children for forced and exploitative labour. For example in the South East Asia we are providing nearly £9 million over 10 years to a project aimed at reducing trafficking in the Greater Mekong Sub-region.

DFID is also supporting efforts by businesses to set and uphold labour standards in their operations and supply chains through organisations such as the Ethical Trading Initiative. Further support is provided through the work of civil society organisations such as: a War on Want project in Asia that aims to improve the working conditions of women garment workers; and, the UNISON Global Network project that seeks to support the participation of working men and women in debates on international development.

HIV/AIDS

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent discussions he has had with his counterpart in the United States on *(a)* the promotion of abstinence as a means of tackling HIV/AIDS in developing countries and *(b)* the effectiveness of this approach in assisting developing countries to slow the spread of the disease. [35739]

Mr. Thomas: I am in regular contact with the US Global AIDS Co-ordinator, Ambassador Randall Tobias, and there is established dialogue at both international and country level between UK and US colleagues. The UK and the US are the two largest bilateral donors on AIDS

and have shared views on a range of key issues. For example, together we have emphasised the importance of county ownership for more effective national responses, by securing the 'Three Ones' harmonisation principles and developing the recommendations of the Global Task Team on Improving AIDS Co-ordination among Multilateral Institutions and International Donors. The UK maintained close dialogue with the US to secure the agreements made at Gleneagles and the World summit on getting as close as possible to Universal Access to AIDS Treatment by 2010.

The US does have different policies from the UK in a number of areas related to international development, including on some HIV prevention issues. We have different policy positions on issues including promotion of abstinence, sexual and reproductive health and rights, as well as access to clean needles and syringes as harm reduction measures. We have made the US aware of our views, yet we do, as we always have, continue to work with them to tackle HIV and AIDS.

There has been discussion of these different views both bilaterally and in global meetings. The UK encouraged the US to adopt the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) policy position paper "Intensifying HIV prevention", agreed at the UNAIDS Programme Co-ordinating Board (PCB) in June 2005. This is an excellent basis for action, stressing the importance of countries implementing the most effective, comprehensive prevention programmes.

The UK remains committed to accelerating action on prevention. Globally, less than one person in five has access to basic HIV prevention services. This 'prevention gap' is fuelling the spread of HIV. Improving comprehensive HIV prevention services has never been more important, and this is what DFID supports—not abstinence-only programmes.

As EU President, we steered and secured agreement on the first EU-wide policy Statement on HIV Prevention. This Statement was launched by the Secretary of State on the eve of World AIDS Day 2005. It affirms the commitment of all European member states to comprehensive, evidence-based HIV prevention programming, including:

Universal access to sexual and reproductive health information and services;

Provision of harm reduction programmes and supplies to drug users to prevent transmission of HIV through dirty needles;

Challenging and combating HIV-related stigma and discrimination through legislation, awareness campaigns and education;

Providing universal access to prevention services, including voluntary counselling and testing for HIV;

Reliable access to essential Sexual and Reproductive Health commodities including condoms (male and female) and kits for the diagnosis and treatment of sexually transmitted infections and to essential harm reduction commodities including clean needles and syringes; and

Continued support to the research and development of new prevention technologies including microbicides and vaccines.

The UK will continue to work closely with our US counterparts on tackling the global AIDS crisis.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent discussions he has had with the Government of Uganda on the impact of abstinence in tackling HIV/AIDS. [35740]

Mr. Thomas: The UK is working with other development partners to help the government implement a comprehensive approach to fight HIV/AIDS that includes the three elements of abstinence, being faithful and condom use. We believe in doing more to make all prevention efforts more effective. We are concerned about emphasis on a single component of this strategy and do not agree with abstinence-only programming. In our discussions with the Government and other development partners we promote comprehensive HIV programmes based on evidence.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of *(a)* reports that there is a grave shortage of condoms in Uganda and *(b)* the impact this might have upon efforts to control the spread of HIV/AIDS in that country. [35741]

Mr. Thomas: There was a chronic shortage of condoms earlier this year after a large shipment of poor quality condoms were withdrawn from the market in October 2004. The UK responded by providing an emergency supply of 20 million condoms at the beginning of 2005. Other development partners including the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the World Bank, the United Nations Population Fund, and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria are supplying condoms in large numbers. The latest information I have is that there is no immediate shortage of condoms in the country as a whole, but more work is required to ensure their effective distribution. DFID is helping to address this problem through support for the distribution of condoms and their use. DFID is also working with the Government and other development partners to maintain an updated picture of all condom supplies in Uganda.

The Government of Uganda's HIV/AIDS prevention policy includes the three elements of abstinence, being faithful and condom use. The long term supply and effective distribution of condoms are essential parts of a comprehensive strategy to fight HIV/AIDS.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps are being taken by his Department to tackle the spread of HIV/AIDS in southern Sudan following the end of the north-south conflict. [35742]

Mr. Thomas: The UK supported the Joint UN/World Bank Assessment Mission (JAM) to South Sudan that looked at the state of basic social services and assessed future needs across several sectors including HIV/AIDS. The JAM concluded that $62 million would be needed to help combat HIV/AIDS in the south over the next six years. DFID's initial contribution to meet the needs identified by the JAM is £23.5 million over the next three years. A proportion of this money will be spent on HIV/AIDS.

In addition, DFID contributes £3.6 million towards the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS which covers the Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Somalia and Sudan. This programme aims to improve knowledge, practice and behaviour of the general population, young people and those most vulnerable; develop and expand treatment, care and

support for HIV/AIDS victims; and build the capacity of the National AIDS Council and NGOs to manage and monitor the HIV/AIDS programme.

Sugar Regime

Derek Conway: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what discussions he has had with representatives of *(a)* Barbados, *(b)* Belize, *(c)* Guyana, *(d)* Jamaica, *(e)* St. Kitts and Nevis on the impact upon their economies of the EU proposals to reduce sugar prices over the next four years. [36340]

Mr. Thomas: My right hon. Friend, Hilary Benn met the Prime Ministers of the Caribbean at the recent Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Malta where their discussions focused largely on the changes to the EU sugar regime. As the DFID Minister with responsibility for the Caribbean, I have met a number of times with Government and sugar industry officials from Jamaica and Guyana to discuss the impact of the proposed reforms on their economies, their concerns about the timescale and the extent of the price reductions. During my visit to Jamaica a year ago, I also listened to the concerns of sugar workers in Clarendon.

Mt right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister, Mr. Tony Blair, has also recently met with the Prime Ministers from Belize, Guyana, Jamaica, Barbados, St. Kitts and Nevis and Jamaica in London and in Malta. In addition, other ministerial colleagues at the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) have met regularly with representatives from the countries in question to discuss these issues.

Derek Conway: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what steps he will take to ameliorate the impact of European Union reforms to the sugar sector on Caribbean sugar producing nations; [36493]

(2) what steps he will take to ensure the EU provides sufficient funds to meet the restructuring needs of *(a)* Jamaica, *(b)* Guyana and *(c)* Belize arising out of the reduction in sugar prices set for the next four years. [36570]

Mr. Thomas: We are working to ameliorate the impact of the EU reforms to the sugar industry by providing support for development of the national sugar action plans and by pressing for an appropriate amount of EU transitional assistance.

It is important that each country's sugar action plans sets a clear framework for donor support and private sector investment. DFID is supporting five of the six sugar protocol countries in the Caribbean (Belize, Jamaica, St, Kitts and Nevis, Guyana and Trinidad and Tobago) in the development of these plans and will shortly be providing technical assistance to Barbados as well. We will also ensure that, where possible, our ongoing bilateral support to Jamaica and Guyana, and our work with Caribbean regional organisations, respond to the needs created by the sugar reform.

DFID, as part of a wider UK Government effort, continues to do all it can to push for an adequate transitional assistance package for those countries affected by the EU reduction in sugar prices. We funded a study to estimate the impact of EU sugar reform on the sugar protocol countries, and through our support for the action plans are helping to identify the financing needs for each country. Lobbying of other member states is likely to secure an initial €40 million for 2006. DFID will continue to play an active role in the wider UK efforts to lobby both member states and the European Commission to ensure adequate levels of transitional assistance for the period 2007–13.

We will also be exploring, with other Government Departments, how we might help promote inward investment to the sugar producing countries.

Derek Conway: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what estimate he has made of the number of people who may become unemployed in *(a)* Jamaica, *(b)* Guyana and *(c)* Belize as a result of the EU's decision to reduce sugar prices over four years; and what assessment he has made of the social impact this may have. [36569]

Mr. Thomas: DFID commissioned consultants (LMC) estimated in June 2005 that the proposed 39 per cent. price cut for sugar would put 44,800 jobs at risk in these three countries—33,000 for Jamaica, 1,200 in Guyana and 10,600 in Belize (assuming that the current sugar quotas allowing duty free access for the African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries (ACP) producers are maintained). These figures are hotly contested in the region and the national Sugar Action Plans currently being developed by the Governments of these countries seek to identify both alternative employment opportunities and training programmes for those made redundant. The full social impact of the price changes, and mitigating measures, will be set out in the completed plans. DFID is funding an analysis of the social impact in Jamaica to contribute to the Jamaica Plan.

Trade Liberalisation

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what position he will take at the forthcoming World Trade Organisation talks on the extent to which developing countries should undergo greater market liberalisation and privatisation. [36930]

Mr. Thomas: The UK Government will continue to work hard to support the poorest and most vulnerable producers, be it through multilateral negotiations in the World Trade Organisations (WTO) or regional trade agreements such as the Economic Partnership Agreements. In the context of the WTO negotiations, we are firmly committed to ensuring that developing countries are given appropriate flexibility to adjust to trade reforms, i.e. special and differential treatment (SDT). These include proposals for special products in developing countries, which may require protection due to their importance for rural development and food and livelihoods security. They also include proposals for a special safeguard mechanism for developing countries to temporarily protect vulnerable sectors if affected by import surges.

In the negotiations poor countries are not being forced to open their market through any trade negotiations, multilateral, bilateral or otherwise. The UK Government believes that developing countries should be allowed to choose the best policies for the poor and the environment. New trade rules made in the WTO have to be agreed by consensus and thus all countries have the right to veto any agreement they do not consider to be in their best interest.

The UK Government believes that trade rules should take account of different countries' development needs. The answer, however, is not greater protectionism in the form of higher tariff barriers as these will limit the opportunities for poor countries to trade with each other, and with developed countries, and thus exclude them further from the benefits of international trade. Instead, we believe that existing and new trade rules should be made flexible enough so that they meet developing countries' needs. This is the policy the Government is pursuing in the WTO.

In services such as water, education and health, increasing access, coverage and quality is vital if countries are to reach the Millennium Development Goals. In March 2005, DFID published a policy paper entitled 'Partnerships for Poverty Reduction: changing aid conditionality', which shows that we are committed to helping Governments of developing countries make their own decisions about how to develop their economies and provide services to their people, based on evidence of what works best in reducing poverty. The policy makes it clear that DFID will not make aid conditional on specific policy decisions by partner Governments or attempt to impose policy choices on them, including in sensitive economic areas such as privatisation or trade liberalisation.

DFID also encourages developing countries to make their own decisions about service delivery, including whether or not to open their service sectors to foreign providers. However developing countries are not obliged to accept any request or to open up their services sectors. It all comes down to which option is the most effective in reducing poverty, a decision for Governments of developing countries to make through their own political process.

The WTO Ministerial Conference taking place in Hong Kong this week, represents an important opportunity to make a significant contribution to reducing global poverty. The UK Government is working to achieve an outcome that delivers real gains for developing countries, including the poorest.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Departmental Guidance (Evidence/Documentary Access)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her policy is with regard to *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in her Department giving evidence to the (i) Scottish Parliament, (ii) National Assembly for Wales and (iii) Northern Ireland Assembly committees; and to what categories of document she gives (A) full access, (B) restricted access and (C) no access to (1) the Scottish Parliament, (2) National Assembly for Wales, (3) Northern Ireland Assembly and (4) House of Commons select committees. [37399]

Mr. Lammy: Requests for the attendance of Ministers or officials to give evidence to the devolved legislatures, and for the provision of information to the assemblies, will be considered on a case by case basis. The consideration will reflect: the principles set out in the Cabinet Office guidance Departmental Evidence and response to Select Committees (July 2005); the policy outlined in the Department for Constitutional Affairs' Devolution Guidance Note #12 Attendance of UK Ministers and Officials of Information Act. The principles underlying the provision of at Committees of the devolved legislature; and the requirements of the Freedom information to House of Commons Select Committee are set out in Departmental Evidence and response to Select Committees, particularly sections 4B and 4C.

Legislation (Sunset Clauses)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her policy is on the use of sunset clauses in legislation. [34249]

Mr. Lammy: The appropriateness of a sunset clause for the whole or part of any proposed legislation is considered on a case by case basis. It is also addressed when a regulatory impact assessment relating to legislation is being prepared.

Maladministration

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many payments for maladministration have been made by *(a)* her Department, *(b)* its agencies, *(c)* its non-departmental public bodies and *(d)* other bodies for which her Department has responsibility in each of the last five years; and if she will make a statement. [32249]

Mr. Lammy: It is the policy of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport, its agency and non-departmental public bodies to make financial redress in accordance with the guidance set out in Chapter 18.7 and Annexes 18.1 and 18.2 of Government Accounting.

The information you requested is set out in the following table:

Department for Culture, Media and Sport

	2000–01	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Department	0	0	0	0	0
Executive NDPBs	0	0	1	0	0
Advisory NDPBs	0	0	0	0	0
Agency	0	0	0	0	0

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Departmental Contracts (Direct Mail)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many contracts for direct mail were signed by her Department in *(a)* 2005–06 to date and *(b)* 2004–05; and what the value was in each case. [27791]

Bill Rammell: The information requested is not held centrally and could only be provided at disproportionate cost.

Academy Schools

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many and what percentage of pupils at academy schools *(a)* received free school meals and *(b)* were special educational needs children (i) before and (ii) after academy status was gained; [35326]

(2) how many and what proportion of special educational needs pupils *(a)* were at academy schools at the point they were designated as academies, *(b)* have been admitted since designation and *(c)* were admitted in the present term; [36287]

(3) how many and what proportion of pupils were eligible for free school meals in academy schools *(a)* at the point of designation and *(b)* in admissions since designation; and how many are eligible in the present term. [36293]

Jacqui Smith: The following table gives this information.

Special educational needs

	Predecessor school—last year before closure	*Academy First year after opening*	*2005*
Average number on roll	740	935	1,031
Average number of pupils with special needs with statements	25	29	33
Average percentage of pupils with special needs with statements	4	3	3
Average number of pupils with special needs without statements	198	253	292
Average percentage of pupils with special needs without statements	27	26	27

Free school meals

	Predecessor school—last year before closure	*Academy First year after opening*	*2005*
Average number on roll	740	935	1,031
Average number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	315	374	409
Average percentage of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals	45	40	40

Note:
Unless stated, averages are for 14 open academies and their respective predecessor schools. 13 academies have been omitted; three as they were 'new schools' and 10 as they had only just opened in September 2005 and therefore data are not yet available.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills at what point in establishment of a sponsored academy school the sponsor's £2 million contribution has to be paid; if she will list the academy schools which have been established; and what *(a)* the total committed by each sponsor, *(b)* the total paid by that sponsor to date, *(c)* the total contributed by Government to date and *(d)* the total estimated public funding to come is in each case. [36283]

Jacqui Smith: Academies' sponsors make their financial contribution within the timescale agreed with the Secretary of State through the Funding Agreement for each project. The information requested is shown in the following table. The third column records where we have clear evidence from the Academy Trust that a sponsor's contribution has been spent—there will be additional funding from the sponsor which has been provided to the Trust but not yet spent by them, or where the Department has not yet received evidence of that expenditure.

£000

Academy	*Total committed by sponsor*	*Total evidence of use of sponsor contributions to end of November 2005*	*Total contributed by DfES to date*	*Total estimated public funding to come*
Bexley	2,410	947	28,770	4
Greig	2,000	1,375	14,479	0
Unity	2,000	1,680	18,689	-99
Capital City, Brent	2,000	1,993	24,928	66
City of London	2,000	1,097	31,065	620
Manchester	2,000	336	18,723	-937
Peckham	2,000	1,018	26,660	1,160
City Academy, Bristol	2,599	1,666	25,045	23
Kings	2,000	2,000	20,301	0
Walsall	2,500	2,062	15,707	14
West London, Ealing	2,000	1,700	26,410	2,753
Lambeth	2,000	1,000	24,319	-873
London, Barnet	1,500	1,191	16,536	10,263
Mossbourne	2,150	1,704	25,824	0
Northampton	2,000	624	25,212	147
Stockley	2,000	431	21,734	2,076
St Francis of Assisi	2,000	950	16,196	-1,000
Marlowe	2,462	1,462	11,510	13,558

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£000

Academy	Total committed by sponsor	Total evidence of use of sponsor contributions to end of November 2005	Total contributed by DfES to date	Total estimated public funding to come
Macmillan	1,250	0	835	10,949
St Paul's Greenwich	2,000	200	5,729	23,460
The Harefield	1,500	42	4,055	20,864
Dixons CTC	651	200	1,804	4,055
Djanogly	0	250	21,197	329
Trinity, Doncaster	2,000	1,734	20,698	2,071
Haberdashers Hatcham	705	0	2,320	4,021
Haberdashers Knights	296	0	11,634	28,451
Salford	1,600	0	5,108	8,345
Total	47,623	25,662	465,488	130,320

[1] Subject to separate agreements. The sponsor will complete their contribution at a later stage of the building project with recovery by DfES.

Note:
Academies listed in order of opening.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many academy schools are in the lowest 5 per cent. of Super Output areas according to deprivation indices. [36289]

Jacqui Smith: Decisions on where Academies open are based on criteria which include not only deprivation indices, but also educational need. We calculate deprivation statistics using the ODPM Multiple Indices of Deprivation, which are based on the 8,414 wards in England. Of the 27 Academies currently open, five are in the lowest 5 per cent. of Super Output areas in terms of deprivation indices.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many academy schools have been established and are operating; how many are in the course of being set up; how many applications are awaiting approval; and how many she expects to approve in the next two years. [36291]

Jacqui Smith: There are currently 27 open academies; a further 43 are in the course of being set up, either in feasibility or implementation; there are many more projects in pre-feasibility, and there will be at least 40 academies open by 2006 and further projects opening by 2007, but it is too early to give a precise number for these. We are committed to there being 200 academies open or in the pipeline by 2010.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many academy schools require pupils to wear school uniform; how many of these are in local education authority areas where grants are provided for uniforms; and how many of these schools provide grants themselves. [36294]

Jacqui Smith: Academies are independent state schools, and so they are free to adopt the school uniform policies they consider appropriate. The Department does not hold information centrally about which local authorities offer school uniform grants to schools, nor do we require schools to tell us how they allocate their own funding for items such as school uniform grants.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the expenditure by her Department was on centrally financed local initiatives in *(a)* Essex, *(b)* Hertfordshire and *(c)* Southend West constituency in each of the last six years for which figures are available. [34229]

Bill Rammell: The following table shows the expenditure incurred by the Department in Essex and Hertfordshire. The Department cannot give figures for Southend West constituency because it does not hold information on funding at constituency level; instead we have provided information for Southend-on-Sea.

In addition to centrally financed local initiatives, local authorities also receive formula funding from ODPM for schools and children's services. These figures are not included in the following table. In the schools sector there have been regular transfers between the grants paid by the Department and formula funding paid by ODPM.

Amount spent by DfES on centrally financed local initiatives[1,2]

£ million

	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Essex	43.53	113.63	104.55	143.48	140.35	159.56
Hertfordshire	31.19	77.93	83.14	111.46	105.11	139.33
Southend-on-Sea	4.96	15.79	18.74	21.79	24.48	29.32

[1] Centrally financed local initiatives are taken to be specific programmes funded directly by the Department and exclude funding for schools and children's social services paid through ODPM.
[2] Excludes payments made by NDPBs which could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Educational Attainment (Houghton and Washington, East)

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of working age people in *(a)* Houghton and Washington, East constituency and *(b)* England hold a qualification at degree level or equivalent or above. [36886]

Bill Rammell: From the 2004/05 Annual Local Labour Force Survey, the percentage of the working age population in *(a)* Houghton and Washington, East constituency and *(b)* England that hold a qualification at degree level or equivalent or above are *(a)* 14.2 per cent. (8,000 people) and *(b)* 26.1 per cent. (7,948,000 people).

Foundation Stage Profiles

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the foundation stage profile results were for *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003 and *(c)* 2004, broken down by (i) local education authority and (ii) socio-economic group. [34118]

Beverley Hughes *[holding answer 2 December]:* My Department has no plans to publish foundation stage profile (FSP) results prior to 2005 by local authority or by socio-economic group. National summary FSP data was first published in 2003 as 'Experimental Statistics' and since 2004 as 'National Statistics'

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000476/index.shtml

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000566/index.shtml

Data for 2003 and 2004 at local authority level are not reliable enough. There is evidence that ongoing improvements to the assessment process were less advanced for some local authorities and as a result the data may not properly reflect the precise outcomes of all children in these authorities.

Figures for socio-economic groups can only be derived using the 10 percent. pupil level sample dataset supplied by local authorities (LAs). However, the sample was not designed for compiling estimates at these levels. In February 2006, the final data for 2005 will be published in a statistical first release.

This will include a limited local authority version of the table recently published in the 2005 provisional SFR in October

http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000608/index.shtml.

The final 2005 dataset represents the most reliable set of information on the outcomes of children on the foundation stage profile for local authorities and reflects the fact that ongoing improvements to the assessment process are at their most advanced and have been applied more widely.

This SFR will also include broad figures on the proportion of children who are achieving a good level of development in England for some of the most disadvantaged areas in England. The figures will be derived from the pupil level sample and will form the baseline for the SR 2004 public service agreement 1 which aims to improve children's communication, personal, social and emotional development.

Learners (Accidents)

Ms Angela C. Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many accidents have been recorded to learners within the *(a)* Millennium Volunteers, *(b)* Children's Fund, *(c)* Positive Activities for Young Persons, *(d)* Neighbourhood Support Fund, *(e)* Sure Start and *(f)* Local Network Fund programme since each was established, broken down by (i) fatal, (ii) major and (iii) those requiring over three days' absence. [28900]

Beverley Hughes: Each programme has its own arrangements for reporting accidents. However, days absent are not recorded because the programmes are not compulsory and attendance is flexible and often irregular. For example a participant in PAYP might only attend one session during a holiday period.

The following table gives details of accidents reported to DfES since the programmes began.

	(i) Fatal	*(ii) Major*	*(iii) Those requiring over three days' absence*
(a) Millennium Volunteers	0	0	n/a
(b) Children's Fund	0	0	n/a
(c) Positive Activities For Young People	0	0	n/a
(d) Neighbourhood Support Fund	0	0	n/a
(e) Sure Start	0	0	n/a
(f) Local Network Fund	0	0	n/a

n/a = Not available.

Meetings (Refreshments)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance is issued by her Department to officials on ordering refreshments for meetings at which *(a)* officials only will be present and *(b)* non-civil servants will be in attendance; and if she will make a statement. [36190]

Bill Rammell: The following guidance is issued by my Department to staff when ordering refreshments for meetings.

There is a general principle that refreshments should not be provided at public expense when only civil servants are present.

Mid-morning and mid-afternoon refreshments (coffee or tea and biscuits) may be provided at public expense either with or without the presence of non-civil servants

for meetings to which some of those attending have travelled and when it is more efficient to continue the business of the meeting without a break; or

at training courses where it is more efficient to keep the delegates together and continue the course without a break.

Outreach Services

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what outreach services are available to young people in the *(a)* Normanton and Sharlston and *(b)* Ossett wards of Normanton constituency (i) within and (ii) outside the sure start plus scheme. [35415]

Beverley Hughes: The local sure start plus programme—branded locally as 'young families'—works across all wards in Wakefield MDC. Young families provides one-to-one support to young parents and pregnant teenagers and is developing a new teenage parents' support group in partnership with local health visitors. This group is based at Chesney's and is open to young parents from Featherstone and its surrounding districts, including Normanton and Sharlston.

Over and above the services provided by young families, the local authority 'young people's service' has outreach provision targeting hard-to-reach young people in Normanton and Sharlston, including:

street work in Normanton one afternoon a week; and

A Connexions personal adviser who provides outreach services on the outreach van.

A new outreach project is about to start in Normanton, run jointly by the young people's service and the local teenage pregnancy team.

The young people's service also delivers outreach services in Horbury and Ossett, again targeting hard-to-reach young people, including:

Detached youth work two nights a week; and

One health and information session per week run by a Connexions PA

Finally, the West Yorkshire Youth Association provides the following outreach services targeting hard-to-reach young people:

An outreach van working at the Freeston Business and Enterprise college one afternoon a week, which has been there since August and will remain until Christmas. If the college is closed, the van operates from Normanton park.

An outreach van that moves to different venues across the district on a rota basis. The van did operate in Sharlston earlier in the year, but it was moved to another part of the district as the service was not well accessed by young people.

Policy Framework

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress has been made towards implementing the initiative set out in Information, Advice and Guidance for Adults: The National Policy Framework and Action Plan. [36195]

Phil Hope: My Department has made good progress in implementing the National Policy Framework, working with the Learning and Skills Council and Ufi learndirect:

(i) Every adult in England can access a free, integrated information and advice service on learning and work through the national learndirect telephone and on-line advice service, and 47 local nextstep partnerships providing face-to-face information and advice;

(ii) The services which the integrated service provides to users, including the priority for advice services for those who do not have a full level 2 qualification, are clearly defined in a national customer entitlement leaflet;

(iii) All integrated service providers have achieved the national matrix quality standard, or are working towards achieving this. From January 2006, they will also be inspected by the Adult Learning Inspectorate; and

(iv) Availability of on-line labour market information has improved through Directgov, and a continuous professional development strategy is in place for service practitioners and managers.

School Nurses

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools within Normanton constituency have a school nurse providing practical advice on preventing and dealing with teenage pregnancy; and whether she plans to increase the number of schools with such nurses. [35416]

Beverley Hughes: All four mainstream high schools within Normanton constituency (Normanton Freeston high school, Ossett Technology college, Outwood Grange college of technology, and Horbury school), the hospital school (Pinderfields and Pontefract hospital school), and the special school for students of secondary school age (Highfield school), have access to a school nurse for approximately half a day a week.

The recent Public Health White Paper: "Choosing Health", recognises the important contribution that school nurses can play in improving young people's health and calls for a new and relevant role for school nurses on a wider scale than in recent years.

We are, therefore, providing new funding so that by 2010 every primary care trust (PCT)—working with children's trusts and local authorities—will be resourced to have at least one, full-time, year round, qualified school nurse working with each cluster of primary schools and their related secondary school, taking account of health needs and school populations.

Schools Finance

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average amount spent on *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school pupils was in each of the last 30 years at today's prices. [36912]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* The available information is contained within the following table. We do not have comparable information for earlier years:

School based expenditure[1, 2, 3] per pupil[2] in local authority maintained primary and secondary schools

	Primary[4]	*Pre-primary/primary*[4]	*£ per pupil Secondary*
2003–04	2,810	n/a	3,620
2002–03[3]	2,650	n/a	3,380
2001–02	2,690	2,780	3,410
2000–01	2,450	2,520	3,130
1999–2000[4,5]	2,250	2,300	2,930
1999–2000[4,5]	2,250	2,300	2,930
1998–99[6]	n/a	2,140	2,800
1997–98[6]	n/a	2,040	2,780
1996–97	n/a	2,100	2,840
1995–96	n/a	2,120	2,880
1994–95	n/a	2,140	2,930
1993–94	n/a	2,110	2,930
1992–93	n/a	2,090	3,030

n/a = Figures are not available.

[1] School based expenditure includes only expenditure incurred directly by local authority schools. This includes the pay of teachers and school-based support staff, school premises costs, books and equipment, and certain other supplies and services, less any capital items funded from recurrent spending and income from sales, fees and charges and rents and rates. This excludes the central cost of support services such as home to school transport, local authority administration and the financing of capital expenditure.

[2] The expenditure data to 1998–99 are drawn from the annual RO1 spending returns which local authorities submitted to the ODPM. Figures for 1999–2000 to 2001–02 are drawn from Section 52 (Table 3) Outturn statements which local authorities submitted to the DfES. Figures for 2002–03 onwards are taken from Section 52 (Table A) Outturn statements. The change in sources is shown by the blank row. The pupil data are drawn from the DfES Annual Schools Census adjusted to be on a financial year basis.

[3] From 2002–03 the calculation is broadly similar to the calculation in previous years. However, 2001–02 and earlier years includes all premature retirement compensation (PRC) and Crombie payments, mandatory PRC payments and other indirect employee expenses, while from 2002–03 only the schools element of these categories is included. In 2001–02 this accounted for approximately £70 per pupil of the England total, while the schools element of these categories accounted for approximately £50 per pupil of the England total in 2002–03. Also, for some LAs, expenditure that had previously been attributed to the school sectors was reported within the LA part of the form from 2002–03 and would therefore be excluded, though this is not quantifiable from existing sources.

[4] Expenditure was not distinguished between the pre-primary and primary sectors until the inception of Section 52 for financial year 1999–2000.

[5] The expenditure data for 1999–2000 onwards reflect the return of grant maintained schools to local authority maintenance.

[6] Spending in 1997–98 reflects the transfer of monies from local government to central Government for the nursery vouchers scheme. These were returned to local government from 1998–99.

Notes:

1. Cash figures are adjusted to 2004–05 prices using December 2005 Gross Domestic Product Deflators.
2. Figures are as reported by the LEA in real terms (2004–05 prices) and rounded to the nearest £10.

Secondary Schools (Storage)

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many secondary schools in England have failed to reach the minimum standards regarding the provision of storage facilities in each of the last five years. [36818]

Jacqui Smith: The Department for Education and Skills does not set minimum standards for storage facilities in secondary schools. It does, however, in "Building Bulletin 98: Briefing framework for Secondary School Projects" (BB98), offer guidance on storage areas for secondary schools.

No comparison has been made, within the last five years, between the existing amount of storage in secondary schools and that recommended in BB98.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what measures she is taking to improve the provision of storage facilities at secondary schools in England. [36819]

Jacqui Smith: The Department has produced guidance in the form of "Building Bulletin 98: Briefing Framework for Secondary School Projects" (BB98) that gives recommended standards for the provision of storage in secondary schools.

The Department's Asset Management Plan, Suitability Assessment Method, enables the reporting and prioritising of any shortfall of storage where it has a direct impact on education, health and safety or security.

The Department's Net Capacity Assessment Method records all spaces in schools including stores. With this data it is possible for schools and local authorities to compare existing storage areas with those recommended in BB98.

The unprecedented level of funding being made available for secondary schools through Building Schools for the Future, Targeted Capital and other funding programmes should ensure that any identified shortfall in the provision of storage facilities in secondary schools can be rectified.

Sector Skills Bodies

David Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the relationship is between Skills 4 Security and the Learning and Skills Council; and if she will make a statement. [36374]

Phil Hope: Skills for Security is a newly established standards setting body formed after two years of research and consultation within the security industry. The new body will be fully operational from 1 January 2006 and, as the Security Industry Association's successor organisation on skills, will work with the Learning and Skills Council on the industry skills remit including promoting the industry's priorities to the LSC to inform their planning and funding decisions.

David Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her Department's involvement was in the establishment of Skills 4 Security as a sector skills body for the security industry; and if she will make a statement. [36375]

Phil Hope: Skills for Security is an independently established organisation which will become fully operational on 1 January 2006. It will take over the skills remit for the security industry from the Security Industry Association (SIA). Skills for Security is not part of the Skills for Business Network which encompasses 25 employer led Sector Skills Councils and the Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA). It is anticipated that Skills for Security will work with the SSDA on skills matters in a similar way to its predecessor, the SIA. The SSDA and the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority, both non-departmental public bodies, were involved in the industry-wide consultation exercise which led to the formation of Skills for Security, although the Department for Education and Skills itself was not a contributor.

Student Debt

Jo Swinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Cambridge (David Howarth) of 22 June 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1175–1176W, on student debt, on what date the Student Income and Expenditure Survey for 2004–05 will be published. [36205]

Bill Rammell: It is intended that the Student Income and Expenditure Survey will be published in February 2006.

University Staff (Salaries)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average salary is of a senior university *(a)* professor and *(b)* lecturer in England. [35215]

Bill Rammell *[holding answer 8 December 2005]:* The latest available figures are shown in the table. Figures for 2004/05 will be available in January 2006.

Average salary[1] of full-time HE academic staff with teaching responsibilities HE institutions in England 2003/04

Grade	Average salary (£)
Professors	57,000
Senior lecturers and researchers	41,700
Lecturers	32,500

[1] Average salary is derived from the gross basic salary per annum, in pounds sterling as stated in the contract at the reference date of HESA's staff count (July 31) or at the end date of the contract if earlier. It does not include any regular payments for additional duties, responsibility allowances or honoraria, regardless of their source.

Note:
Figures have been rounded to the nearest 100.

Source:
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

Youth Opportunity Fund

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what her estimate is of the resources likely to be made available to Birmingham city council under her Youth Opportunity Fund initiative. [36155]

Beverley Hughes: Allocations for the resources are not currently available. We expect to make announcements early in the new year.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

A21 Upgrade

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what role the South East of England Regional Development Agency has in the proposed A21 upgrade; and what funding it has received in each year since 1997. [34337]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* SEEDA leads the Hastings and Bexhill Task Force, the partnership established in 2002 to take forward the regeneration of the Hastings area. The improvement of the A21 is one of the transport priorities identified in the Five Point Plan for the regeneration of Hastings and Bexhill. The role of SEEDA, and the Task Force, has therefore been to advocate the bringing forward of A21 improvement schemes. The Highways Agency is the responsible body for delivering these schemes, SEEDA has no direct role in them. Therefore SEEDA has received no funding for such schemes.

Bankruptcies

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many bankruptcies there have been in *(a)* Southend, *(b)* Essex, *(c)* Hertfordshire, *(d)* Greater London and *(e)* England and Wales in each of the last 10 years. [37557]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The regional breakdown available for the insolvency statistics is not directly comparable with standard administrative or electoral geographies. The insolvency "regions" are areas assigned to groups of Official Receivers and are based around the location of county courts where the cases are heard and of courts having jurisdiction over these. The county courts covered in Southend are Southend-on-Sea, Brentwood, Chelmsford, Maldon and Romford. The county courts covered in St. Albans are Amersham, Aylesbury, Harlow, High Wycombe, Hitchin, Luton, St. Albans and Watford. The county courts covered in London are Aldershot and Farnham, Barnet, Bloomsbury, Bloomsbury and Marylebone, Bow, Brentford, Bromley, Chingford, Clerkenwell, Croydon, Edmonton, Epsom, Guildford, Kingston-Upon-Thames, Lambeth, Marylebone, Mayor's and City of London, Reigate, Sevenoaks, Shoreditch, Staines, Wandsworth, West London, Westminster, Willesden and Woolwich. The county courts covered in Croydon are Aldershot and Farnham, Bromley, Croydon, Epsom, Guildford, Kingston-Upon-Thames, Reigate, Sevenoaks, Staines and Woolwich.

Figures for England and Wales are provided as follows, together with those for Official Receivers offices whose coverage is closest to the regions requested. The statistics below national level should not be considered to be a reliable measure of bankruptcies in those regions listed in the question and should, therefore, be interpreted with caution.

Numbers of individual bankruptcies recorded over the last 10 financial years, April 1995 to April 2005

Official receivers office	1995-96	1996-97	1997-98	1998-99	1999-2000	2000-01	2001-02	2002-03	2003-04	2004-05
Southend	822	744	637	624	591	614	574	510	847	1,091
St. Albans	818	744	678	653	660	622	676	737	845	1,224
London and Croydon	3,100	2,656	2,558	2,315	2,220	2,135	2,249	2,667	3,335	4,910
England and Wales	22,186	21,058	19,713	20,508	21,479	21,961	23,426	25,177	29,633	37,562

Company Audits

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department is taking to improve the auditing of British companies. [36204]

Alun Michael: As part of the Government's commitment to promoting high quality auditing. It has:

Established the Auditing Practices Board under the independent regulator, the Financial Reporting Council;

Set new ethical standards that include a requirement to rotate the lead audit partner every five years;

Enhanced powers for auditors to obtain documents and information from directors and employees of companies;

Introduced independent monitoring and oversight of the audit profession through the Public Oversight Board for Accountancy and its Audit Inspection Unit;

Required greater transparency by companies about services purchased from an auditor, including breakdown of types and value of non-audit services.

In addition, the Company Law Reform Bill, introduced in the other House in November, brings the law on company auditing together in one place and restates it more clearly. It also makes a number of changes designed to improve the audit process.

Exports (Developing Countries)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what measures have been taken to reduce the effects of *(a)* European tariffs and *(b)* farm subsidies on the export earnings of developing countries. [35606]

Ian Pearson: The long-term aims of the Government are to abolish all trade-distorting agricultural subsidies and all barriers to agricultural trade in the form of tariffs or quotas, providing increased opportunities for developing countries to trade their way out of poverty. In the context of the current World Trade Organisation trade round, the Doha Development Agenda, the current EU offer envisages a 38.9 per cent. average reduction in EU tariffs, a 70 per cent. reduction in EU AMS (aggregate measure of support) domestic subsidies and the elimination of export subsidies. The recent reform of the sugar sector will reduce substantially the EU's use of export subsidies and the Government are pressing for agreement of a 2010 end date for all export subsidies.

Non-agricultural Market Access

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions he has had with his Brazilian counterpart about non-agricultural market access; and if he will make a statement on progress on this issue in advance of the Hong Kong World Trade Organisation negotiations. [35603]

Ian Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry has had discussions with his Brazilian counterpart, Celso Amorim, on a number of occasions-both in person, and on the telephone.

The WTO General Council adopted on 2 December 2005 a draft Ministerial declaration for discussion at Hong Kong. The text on Non-Agricultural Market Access (NAMA) text notes that much work remains to be done to conclude the negotiations. It indicates that agreement should be reached by Ministers at Hong Kong on a date by which modalities should be agreed, and by which draft schedules will be agreed.

The Chair of the Negotiating Group also, on his own authority, produced a report, which is annexed to the draft ministerial declaration. This highlights the areas of convergence and divergence between WTO members on NAMA. It also provides guidance on further action at or after the Hong Kong ministerial conference.

Postal Services

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if his Department will ensure that the all post offices that want to provide vehicle licensing services are able to do so; and what plans his Department has to make rural post offices more economically viable. [34145]

Barry Gardiner *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* Decisions on the number of outlets able to issue motor vehicle licences are a matter for the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency (DVLA). Its current contract with Post Office Limited limits the number of post offices providing this facility to 4,500.

The Government are currently considering the future of the rural post office network. No decisions on this will be taken until Government have considered the findings of the Post Office Ltd. report of their pilot programme, trialling new and innovative ways of delivering postal services to rural communities. The Report is due to be presented to Government at the end of the year. This will be considered alongside analysis of the network currently being conducted.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the future of the rural Post Office network. [35527]

Barry Gardiner *[holding answer 7 December 2005]:* The Government have made it clear that they will make informed decisions about the longer-term future of the rural post office network in light of the Post Office Ltd. Report into their trials of new and innovative means of delivering postal services to rural communities. The Report is due to be delivered to Government by the end of this year. This will be considered alongside analysis of the network currently being conducted.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to ensure that the *(a)* implications and *(b)* costs of delivering the universal service obligation are shared with postal operators in addition to the Royal Mail. [35769]

Barry Gardiner: The Government's highest priority for the postal sector is to ensure the provision of a universal service. The costs of providing that service, and the appropriate price levels for its delivery, are a matter for Postcomm, taking into account the effects of market liberalisation.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will publish his Department's analysis of other EU states with regard to whether they have a *(a)* fully state-owned postal service, *(b)* partially liberalised postal service and *(c)* fully liberalised postal service. [35773]

Barry Gardiner: A comprehensive study on the development of competition, in the European postal sector was undertaken by Ecorys on behalf of the EU Commission in July 2005. It includes analyses of market share held by the Universal Service Provider in each member state, and of its ownership structure. The study is available on the Commission's web-site at:

http://europa.eu.int/comm/internal_market/post/studies_en.htm

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with Postcomm on whether the Royal Mail should end cross-subsidisation of services. [35774]

Barry Gardiner: The issue of cross subsidies within Royal Mail's services is a matter for Postcomm, acting in accordance with to the requirements of the EU Postal Services Directives. These permit cross-subsidies between the different service elements of the universal service, but not between universal services and non-universal services.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research his Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the social and economic value of the rural post office network. [35728]

Barry Gardiner: We are working closely with other Government Departments and key stakeholders to assess the social and economic value of the rural network.

As set out in Section 42 of the Postal Services Act 2000, Postcomm, the regulator for postal services, is tasked with providing Government with clear advice about developments in the post office network. Postcomm's annual report to Government on issues relating to the post office network includes consideration of the social and economic value of the rural post office network.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry by what date negotiations on Government funding for the rural post office network from 2008 onwards are planned to be completed; and if he will make a statement. [35729]

Barry Gardiner: Post Office Ltd will shortly report to Government the findings of pilot activity to test new and innovative ways of providing post office services. Government will consider the implications for future access and funding for the network beyond 2008 at that point.

Power Stations

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent assessment he has made of coal-powered power stations' emissions. [34797]

Mr. Bradshaw: I have been asked to reply.

Pollution controls on coal-fired power stations in England and Wales, are a matter for the Environment Agency. Theses controls are set in authorisations issued under the Integrated Pollution Control (IPC) system or in permits under the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) system, which is replacing IPC.

Under these systems, the operator has to routinely monitor and report on emissions. This information is placed on public registers at the local Environment Agency offices and the local authority public registers. No change is being contemplated in emission limits for coal-fired power stations. These stations routinely produce their highest output during winter peak demand and controls are set to protect the environment to accommodate this.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent *(a)* discussions he has had and *(b)* representations he has received about flue gas desulphurisation at existing power stations. [34800]

Mr. Bradshaw: I have been asked to reply.

Pollution controls on coal-fired power stations in England and Wales, are a matter for the Environment Agency. Theses controls are set in authorisations issued under the Integrated Pollution Control (IPC) system or in permits under the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control (IPPC) system, which is replacing IPC.

The Environment Agency is undertaking pre-application discussions with organisations considering flue gas desulphurisation, and applications are expected next year. Once received, the applications will be placed on public registers at the local Environment Agency offices and the local authority public registers. An advertisement will be placed in the local press to indicate that the applications have been received and invite comments from the public. The Environment Agency will also provide copies to statutory consultees.

Royal Mail

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much *(a)* share capital was received and *(b)* investment made by the Government in relation to the Royal Mail in each year for which figures are available since 1997. [35770]

Barry Gardiner: The Government have not received any share capital from Royal Mail since 1997.

There was no significant funding for the Post Office Corporation prior to 1999, but since then the Government have invested in the company.

Royal Mail

In December 2002, it was agreed to make available £1,044 million of securities to enable Royal Mail to deliver its renewal plan.

Post Office Ltd.

Government support of almost £2 billion in total has been made available to Post Office Ltd since 1999. Other than support for the rural network at £150 million per year for three years from 2003–04, this funding was not allocated on a yearly basis.

	£ million
Horizon IT project	480
Contribution to "Your Guide" project	25
Support for the rural network to 2006	450
Community post office support	2
Support for urban network reinvention	210
Deprived urban schemes in England	15
Repayment of historic debt (to April 2003)	[1]726

[1] To Royal Mail

The Government have also decided to extend support to the rural network for two further years to 2008, worth another £300 million. This is subject to state aid clearance.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when Sir George Bain is expected to publish his findings following his discussions with those stakeholders involved in the future of the Royal Mail. [35772]

Barry Gardiner: Sir George Bain has been appointed to provide advice to the Secretary of State on Royal Mail issues. There are no plans to publish Sir George's advice.

Security and Homeland Defence Technology

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to fund research into technologies in the field of security and homeland defence. [34406]

Barry Gardiner: In addition to the Department's funding of the science base and the university research, the Department operates our Technology Strategy, the last round of which was launched on Thursday 24 November.

With regard to security and homeland defence, officials work closely with colleagues in the appropriate other Government Departments to align this support for Collaborative Research and Development with their own research needs and programmes. This close working relationship also extends to our support for Knowledge Transfer Networks and Innovation Platforms in security, respectively to optimise the UK exploitation of research and tackle public policy challenges.

A number of the case studies cited at the 24 November launch were for grants to support research on security issues.

Small Business Research Initiative

Kitty Ussher: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many research and development opportunities were disseminated to *(a)* small and medium-sized enterprises, *(b)* universities and *(c)* other organisations through the Small Business Research Initiative in each of the last five years; what the total value of such opportunities was in each case in each year; how many contracts were awarded as a result in each case in each year; and what the value of such contracts was in each case in each year. [35494]

Alun Michael: Not all Government Departments have maintained detailed records in respect of their Small Business Research Initiative opportunities since the initiative's introduction in 2000. Therefore the breakdown requested is not available for the Initiative's voluntary phase.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer, has mandated Departments to participate under the initiative in the Budget on 16 March this year and the DTI's Small Business Service will shortly be publishing the overall performance figures and what these represent as a percentage of baseline R and D budgets, where known, for 2003–04 and 2004–05.

South East of England Development Agency

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what funding the South East of England Development Agency has received from Government in each year since 1997 to spend on transport infrastructure schemes in East Sussex. [36592]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* The South East England Development Agency, like all Regional Development Agencies, receives 'single pot' funding from Government in support of its statutory duties under the RDA Act 1998. Elements in this funding are not ring-fenced, so RDAs have discretion to spend it in line with their statutory duties which are: to promote economic development and regeneration; to promote business efficiency, investment and competitiveness; to promote employment; to enhance the development and application of skills; to contribute to the UK's sustainable development.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what role the South East of England development agency has in Government funding decisions about transport infrastructure projects in East Sussex. [36594]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* The statutory role of the regional development agency is: to promote economic development and regeneration; to promote business efficiency, investment and competitiveness; to promote employment; to enhance the development and application of skills; to contribute to the UK's sustainable development.

Through the development of its Regional Economic Strategy and through its membership of the Regional Transport Board, SEEDA has highlighted the need for adequate investment in transport infrastructure in East Sussex and the rest of the region.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Air Weapons

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many offences involving air weapons there were in *(a)* England, *(b)* London and *(c)* each London borough in each of the last five years. [35420]

Hazel Blears: The available data for England and London are given in the tables.

Table 1: Offences involving air weapons in (a) England and (b) London, 1999–2000 to 2001–02

	Number of offences	
	England	*London*
1999–2000	9,485	1,178
2000–01	9,723	1,228
2001–02[1]	11,828	1,483

[1] Figures for some crime categories may have been inflated by some police forces implementing the principles of the National Crime Recording Standard in advance of national implementation.

Table 2: Offences involving air weapons in (a) England and (b) London, 2002–03 and 2003–04

	Number of offences	
	England	*London*
2002–03[1]	13,045	1,333
2003–04	13,005	1,244

[1] The National Crime Recording Standard was introduced on 1 April 2002. Figures before and after this date are not directly comparable.

Data for the London boroughs are not collected centrally.

Antisocial Behaviour

Edward Miliband: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people in Doncaster North constituency are subject to antisocial behaviour orders; and how many are aged under 21 years. [35681]

Hazel Blears: Antisocial behaviour orders (ASBOs) have been available to the courts since 1 April 1999. From commencement up to 31 May 2000 data were collected, on aggregate numbers only, by police force

area. From copies of the orders received, since 1 June 2000, we are able to determine the local government authority areas in which restrictions are imposed. The number of ASBOs issued, as notified to the Home Office, in the local government authority area of Doncaster metropolitan borough council, in which Doncaster North constituency is situated, from 1 June 2000 to 31 March 2005 (latest available) is 43 of which 20 are in respect of people under 21 years old.

Breastfeeding

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance is given to police officers on their response to public complaints against women breastfeeding in public. [35256]

Hazel Blears: This is an operational matter for chief officers to determine.

Building Safer Communities Fund

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of the Building Safer Communities Fund funding stream from the Government Office for London was made available to the London borough of Croydon in 2004–05. [34981]

Hazel Blears: The Government Office for London was allocated a total of £12,705,385 from the Building Safer Communities Fund in 2004–05, £474,652 of which was made available to the London borough of Croydon. This included a £25,000 grant towards the cost of an antisocial behaviour co-ordinator.

Cannabis Possession

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the average cost of arresting and charging people for cannabis possession in the last 12 months. [33644]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is not held centrally.

Commission for Integration

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 430W, on the Commission for Integration, which faith leaders and key stakeholders were contacted by him on 21 September 2005; and what assessment he has made of the responses he has received. [37009]

Paul Goggins: My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary wrote to the following faith leaders and key stakeholders on 21 September 2005:

Bishop of Stepney,
Cardinal Cormac Murphy O'Connor,
Iqbal Sacranie-Muslim Council of Britain,
Dr Zaki Badawi-Muslim College, London,
Jasdev Singh Rai-British Sikh Consultative Forum,
Anil Bhanot-Hindu Council,
Joel Edwards-Evangelical Alliance,
Ramesh Kallidai-Hindu Forum,
Indarjit Singh-Network of Sikh Organisations,
Henry Grunwald-Board of Deputies of British Jews,
Om Parkesh Sharma-National Organisation of Sikh Temples,
Trevor Phillips-Commission for Racial Equality.

The Home Secretary is giving careful consideration to all the views he has received and to nominations for membership of the Commission.

The Home Secretary considers it very important that he gets the shape of the Commission right from the outset and is thinking very carefully about its direction. He hopes to be in a position to make an announcement on the way ahead soon.

Crime Statistics

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the most recent crime figures are for England and Wales according to *(a)* the British Crime Survey and *(b)* recorded crime statistics, broken down by (i) constabulary, (ii) region and (iii) basic command unit. [35454]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 7 December 2005]:* The most recent crime figures broken down by police force area and region were published in Home Office Statistical Bulletin number 11/05, 'Crime in England and Wales 2004/2005'. This can be found on the website http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/index.htm. Online, the Bulletin has accompanying tables which give recorded crime by basic command unit (BCD). The British Crime Survey does not provide data at BCU level.

Criminal Records Bureau Checks

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of criminal record checks were completed within *(a)* one month, *(b)* two months, *(c)* three months, *(d)* six months and *(e)* one year in (i) 2005–06 and (ii) 2004. [34639]

Andy Burnham: Information is not available to answer the question in the format requested. The Criminal Records Bureau (CRB) reports its performance separately against Standard and Enhanced Disclosures on a monthly and rolling 12 month basis. The Published Service Standard (PSS) for Standard Disclosures is to complete 93 per cent. within two weeks and 90 per cent. of Enhanced Disclosures within four weeks measured from when the CRB receives a fully completed application to the date of issue of the Disclosure.

Over the last period for which information is available, from 1 November to 30 November 2005, the performance against PSS for Standard Disclosures is 99.4 per cent. and 85.1 per cent. for Enhanced Disclosures. For the equivalent period last year, the figures are 93.5 per cent. for Standard Disclosures and 89.1 per cent. for Enhanced. The PSS for Standard Disclosures was revised in April 2005 from 90 per cent. within two weeks to 93 per cent. within two weeks.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how priorities are determined in making criminal records checks; what priority schools have; and whether a distinction is made between different types of school. [34640]

Andy Burnham: Disclosure applications are processed with equal priority. No school or other type of education establishment or organisation receives priority over another.

James Brokenshire: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how long on average the Metropolitan police took to process Criminal Records Bureau checks in the last period for which figures are available. [34576]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* The Metropolitan Police Service is currently taking on average 26.16 days to process Disclosures. This figure may be compared against the average time taken by the Metropolitan Police Service to process a Disclosure application during the last year, which was over 33 days.

The Metropolitan police have made a number of changes to their IT systems recently which has led to significant and ongoing improvements in the time they are taking to deal with Disclosures referred to them by the Criminal Records Bureau.

Crystal Meth

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment has been made of the *(a)* use of and *(b)* supply of and the risks for recreational drug users from crystal meth. [37014]

Paul Goggins: The use and supply of methylamphetamine in the United Kingdom is estimated to be very low based on the number and size of seizures. The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) published a report on methylamphetamine on 17 November 2005; they recognised the potentially serious harms of taking methylamphetamine to the individual but the overall risk to users remained low given the very limited prevalence. The ACMD also recommended the development of an early warning system centred on ensuring those agencies collecting data on illicit drugs make the distinction between amphetamine and methylamphetamine when recording data. The ACMD recommended the closer monitoring of certain sub groups such as clubbers who are more likely to use methylamphetamine and agreed the subject of methylamphetamine should be a standing agenda item at the ACMD Technical Committee. It was also recommended action should be taken to impose tighter controls on methylamphetamine's precursors to prevent the spread of its misuse. The Government have accepted all the ACMD's recommendations. The ACMD undertook to provide an update to its advice in 12 month's time.

Drugs (Recreational Use)

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures his Department is taking to monitor the prevalence of recreational use of drugs, with particular reference to methamphetamine; and if he will make a statement. [32866]

Paul Goggins: The British Crime Survey (BCS) is the chief monitoring tool used by the Home Office to measure the prevalence of controlled drugs. The BCS does not currently differentiate between methylamphetamine use and amphetamines in general. The prevalence of methylamphetamine in the United Kingdom is estimated to be very low based on the number and size of seizures.

The Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) published a report on methylamphetamine on 17 November 2005 which included recommendations regarding the development of an early warning system centred on ensuring those agencies that collect data on illicit drugs to make the distinction between amphetamine and methylamphetamine when recording data. The ACMD recommended the closer monitoring of certain sub groups such as clubbers, who are more likely to use methylamphetamine, and that the subject of methylamphetamine should be a standing agenda item at the ACMD technical committee meetings.

The Government have accepted all the ACMD's recommendations, including taking preventative action to impose tight controls on methylamphetamine precursor chemicals. The ACMD undertook to provide an update to its advice in 12 months' time.

Drunk and Disorderly

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many arrests were made in *(a)* London, *(b)* Havering and *(c)* Romford as a consequence of an individual being drunk and disorderly in the last five years. [33917]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is not available centrally.

European Anti-crime Measures

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the European Commission's proposal that the Border Management Agency should provide intelligence and play a role in investigations relating to the involvement of organised crime in illegal immigration. [35644]

Andy Burnham: The Border Management Agency (Frontex) is a new EU Agency responsible for improving management of the external borders of the member states of the European Union, contributing to a high and uniform level of control on persons and surveillance of the external borders of the member states. Its primary function in terms of combating organised crime will be to ensure effective exchange of information with Europol and other appropriate organisations. Frontex and Europol should also work closely on operational activities where appropriate.

Therefore the Government broadly supports the European

Commission's proposal that Frontex should provide intelligence and play a role in co-ordinating operations on illegal immigration related organised crime in co-operation with member states and Europol, but it should not have an investigative role. There also needs to be assurance that Frontex's main focus will remain on strengthening management of the EU external border.

Fireworks (Penalty Notices)

Steve McCabe: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many penalty notices have been issued by each police force area in England in relation to the illegal use of fireworks during the last 12 months. [32848]

Hazel Blears: Offences under the Fireworks Regulations 2004 (made under section 11 of the Fireworks Act 2003) for breach of the national fireworks curfew, the illegal possession of category four fireworks and the possession by a person under 18 of an adult firework attract penalty notices for disorder, as well as the offence of throwing fireworks. The offence of throwing fireworks has been included in the penalty notice for disorder scheme since it was introduced nationally during 2004. The offences under the Fireworks Regulations 2004 were brought into the scheme with effect from 11 October 2004. The numbers of penalty notices issued by police force area are provided in the table.

Number of PNDs issued for offences related to the illegal use of fireworks, by police force area, England August 2004 to July 2005[1]

Police force area	*Throwing fireworks*	*Breach of fireworks curfew*	*Possession of a category four firework*	*Possession of adult firework by under 18s*
Avon and Somerset	1	1	0	0
Bedfordshire	2	0	0	0
Cambridgeshire	2	0	0	0
Cheshire	6	0	0	0
City of London	0	0	0	0
Cleveland	5	0	0	0
Cumbria	0	0	0	1
Derbyshire	3	1	0	1
Dorset and Cornwall	4	3	0	0
Dorset	3	0	0	0
Durham	0	0	0	0
Essex	5	1	1	2
Gloucestershire	0	2	0	0
Greater Manchester	19	0	4	4
Hampshire	10	1	1	1
Hertfordshire	0	0	0	0
Humberside	7	1	0	0
Kent	8	0	1	1
Lancashire	23	3	1	1
Leicestershire	2	1	0	0
Lincolnshire	18	2	0	0
Merseyside	57	0	2	2
Metropolitan Police	48	0	1	0
Norfolk	2	0	0	0
North Yorkshire	3	0	0	0
Northamptonshire	5	0	0	0
Northumbria	3	0	0	0
Nottinghamshire	1	0	0	2
South Yorkshire	11	1	1	4
Staffordshire	9	0	0	1
Suffolk	2	0	0	0
Surrey	1	0	0	0
Sussex	28	0	0	1
Thames Valley	16	0	0	0
Warwickshire	3	0	0	0
West Mercia	2	0	1	0
West Midlands	15	1	1	0
West Yorkshire	35	1	1	2
Wiltshire	2	0	0	0
England	361	19	15	23

[1] Data for 2005 is provisional

Source:
RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform

Injury on Duty Awards

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on his proposals to alter the terms relating to payments of Injury on Duty Awards, with particular reference to former police officers over the age of 65 years. [36829]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* We are reviewing the policy on injury awards for the police. In particular we are looking at the procedures for assessing claims and the criteria for receiving awards. We will conduct a public consultation exercise next year before making final decisions. It is not intended that any changes to regulations should apply to officers who have already left the service.

Independent Police Complaints Commission

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he plans to allow the Independent Police Complaints Commission to conduct full investigations on fatalities caused by police vehicles. [32761]

Hazel Blears: Under the provisions of the Police Reform Act 2002, all complaints and conduct matters which involve death or serious injury must be referred to the Independent Police Complaints Commission. Also, the Serious Organised Crime and Police Act 2005 introduced a new category of cases called Death and Serious Injury matters; that is, cases which are not conduct matters and are not the subject of complaints. All such cases must be referred to the Independent Police Complaints Commission. It is a matter for the Commission to determine how a case is investigated,

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including conducting its own investigation. The Secretary of State has no powers to intervene in that process.

Football Hooliganism

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many arrests have been made at football grounds of *(a)* premiership, *(b)* championship, *(c)* league one, *(d)* league two and *(e)* conference clubs in each of the last five years. [35577]

Paul Goggins: Details of football-related arrests for the seasons 2000–01 to 2004–05, presented by the division in which the club the arrested individual supports competed in, is provided in the following table:

	2004–05	*2003–04*	*2002–03*	*2001–02*	*2000–01*
Premier League	1,339	1,627	1,694	1,355	1,623
Championship	1,217	1,094	1,110	1,159	816
League One	611	758	784	672	601
League Two	252	511	361	281	351
Conference	82	[1]n/a	[1]n/a	[1]n/a	[1]n/a
Cup Competitions	—	—	—	—	[2]771

[1] Arrest data for the football conference (National Division) was not collated before 2004–05 season.
[2] A The Home Office has published football related arrest statistics since the 2001–02 season. Previously the data was published by the National Criminal Intelligence Service. Their 2000–01 season data only breaks down arrests by club in League competitions. Arrests in cup competitions (771) are presented as totals for each competition, not by club.

Identity Cards

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what studies his Department has conducted on the lifespan of radio frequency identification tags in documents that may be subjected to intense use in the identity card scheme. [32082]

Andy Burnham: There are no plans to use radio frequency identification tags in ID cards. We have conducted a wide-ranging market sounding study to obtain the market view of the feasibility of an identity card with a ten year life. The survey was distributed to a cross section of suppliers in the smartcard value chain and completed responses were obtained from twelve suppliers. Amongst other questions, suppliers were asked for their views on the durability and costs of contact, contact-less, dual interface and hybrid cards. This survey concluded that a ten year life for a contact-less card incorporating a secure smartcard chip with a radio frequency contactless interface was feasible.

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether he plans to publish the Concept Viability report on the Identity Cards Project when he receives it. [33032]

Andy Burnham: The Concept Viability report will be published at the commencement of the procurement process.

Knives

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been found to be carrying knives in public without a good reason or lawful authority in *(a)* Southend, West constituency, *(b)* Essex, *(c)* the Metropolitan police area of London and *(d)* Hertfordshire since the coming into force of the Knives Act 1997; how many of these received a prison sentence; and what the sentence was in each case in which proceedings are complete. [35976]

Hazel Blears: Information from the court proceedings database held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform is provided in the following table. It shows the number of offenders convicted under section 139 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 of 'having a knife or bladed article in a public place' in South East Essex petty sessional area and in Essex , Metropolitan and Hertfordshire police force areas, 1997–2004. The table also shows the numbers sentenced to immediate custody and the length of sentence.

Data for 2005 will be available in autumn 2006.

Defendants found guilty of carrying knives in public, and the number given sentences of immediate custody, 1997—2004

Number of defendants

			Custodial sentence length			
	Guilty	*Immediate custody*	*1 month and under*	*Over 1 month and up to 2 months*	*Over 2 months and up to 3 months*	*Over 3 months and up to 4 months*
Essex police force area						
1997	85	19	6	7	2	1
1998	97	27	5	11	4	3
1999	96	36	9	8	10	5
2000	99	24	7	8	3	4
2001	99	27	9	8	6	3
2002	103	43	11	12	11	9
2003	141	36	4	14	7	6
2004	200	54	12	13	9	11
Hertfordshire police force area						
1997	31	3	1	2	0	0
1998	29	4	1	0	1	0
1999	28	7	2	2	1	1
2000	27	3	1	0	1	0

Defendants found guilty of carrying knives in public, and the number given sentences of immediate custody, 1997—2004

Number of defendants

			Custodial sentence length			
	Guilty	*Immediate custody*	*1 month and under*	*Over 1 month and up to 2 months*	*Over 2 months and up to 3 months*	*Over 3 months and up to 4 months*
2001	24	2	0	0	0	1
2002	53	10	0	1	3	2
2003	83	13	1	6	3	1
2004	84	9	3	3	2	0
Metropolitan police force area						
1997	1,256	190	102	41	26	13
1998	1,326	225	99	48	35	18
1999	1,081	181	63	47	38	18
2000	1,162	195	67	44	46	23
2001	1,501	262	95	63	39	43
2002	1,866	319	104	85	53	37
2003	1,681	289	95	68	56	35
2004	1,606	286	70	64	65	45
South East Essex petty sessional area						
1997	19	8	2	5	0	1
1998	28	10	2	3	1	2
1999	24	14	2	3	4	2
2000	26	8	2	2	1	2
2001	13	6	2	1	2	0
2002	30	15	3	2	4	6
2003	37	8	0	3	2	3
2004	43	12	1	3	2	4

	Custodial sentence length				
	Over 4 months and up to 6 months	*Over 6 months and up to 1 year*	*1 year*	*Over 1 year up to 18 months*	*Over 18 months up to 2 years*
Essex police force area					
1997	2	0	0	1	0
1998	3	0	1	0	0
1999	4	0	0	0	0
2000	1	1	0	0	0
2001	0	0	0	1	0
2002	0	0	0	0	0
2003	3	0	1	1	0
2004	6	3	0	0	0
Hertfordshire police force area					
1997	0	0	0	0	0
1998	2	0	0	0	0
1999	0	0	0	1	0
2000	1	0	0	0	0
2001	0	1	0	0	0
2002	3	1	0	0	0
2003	0	1	1	0	0
2004	1	0	0	0	0
Metropolitan police force area					
1997	7	0	0	1	0
1998	14	6	3	1	1
1999	9	5	1	0	0
2000	12	1	2	0	0
2001	17	2	0	3	0
2002	26	10	2	2	0
2003	19	7	5	2	2
2004	30	10	0	2	0
South East Essex					
1997	0	0	0	0	0
1998	1	0	1	0	0
1999	3	0	0	0	0
2000	1	0	0	0	0
2001	0	0	0	1	0
2002	0	0	0	0	0
2003	0	0	0	0	0
2004	2	0	0	0	0

KPMG Review

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 45W, on the KPMG review, for what reasons the whole KPMG report is not being published. [35271]

Andy Burnham: The extract from the KPMG review was published in November 2005. To publish the full report would prejudice the commercial interests of the Identity Cards Scheme as it contains figures from the business case which if published would result in the Department being unable to obtain value for money from prospective suppliers during the procurement process.

London Bombings

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers have been seconded from each individual constabulary in England and Wales to the Metropolitan police to assist with their investigations into the bombings and attempted bombings in London in July. [16349]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is not held centrally. However, the Commissioner of police of the metropolis has provided the following response. 352 officers from county forces were seconded to the Metropolitan police to assist with investigations into the London bombings. As at 30 November 2005,151 officers were still attached to the MPS. 201 county officers have since returned to their original force. Figures by individual force are provided in the following table.

Figures for the number of officers seconded to the Metropolitan police service to assist with their investigations into the London bombings (Figures provided by the metropolitan police)

County	*Total number of secondments into the MPS to assist with London bombing investigations*	*Secondments currently serving with metropolitan police service as at 30 November 2005*	*Secondments who have since returned to own constabulary*
Avon and Somerset	8	3	5
Bedfordshire	4	0	4
British Transport Police	15	6	9
Cambridgeshire	3	0	3
Cheshire	8	6	2
City of London	6	4	2
Cleveland	3	3	0
Cumbria	4	4	0
Derbyshire	9	5	4
Devon and Cornwall	4	4	0
Dorset	5	0	5
Durham	6	3	3
Dyfed Powys	8	7	1
Essex	16	6	10
Gloucestershire	5	1	4
Greater Manchester police	3	3	0
Hampshire	21	6	15
Hertfordshire	6	2	4
Humberside	17	5	12
Kent	22	5	17
Lancashire	10	4	6
Leicestershire	10	4	6
Lincolnshire	5	1	4
Manchester	2	1	1
Merseyside	11	1	10
Norfolk	5	4	1
North Wales	8	4	4
North Yorkshire	7	0	7
Northamptonshire	4	3	1
Northumbria	8	7	1
South Wales	16	7	9
South Yorkshire	12	5	7
Staffordshire	10	5	5
Straithclyde	1	0	1
Suffolk	4	4	0
Surrey	4	2	2
Sussex	13	6	7
Thames Valley	16	4	12
Warwickshire	4	3	1
West Mercia	11	7	4
West Midlands	9	4	5
West Yorkshire	5	0	5
Wiltshire	4	4	2
Total secondments	352	151	201

Mobile Phone Theft

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many incidents of mobile telephone theft there were in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* England and Wales in each of the last three years; and if he will make a statement. [35503]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent discussions he has had with mobile telephone companies about measures to combat the theft of mobile telephones. [35504]

Hazel Blears: The Home Office, mobile phone industry and police have developed a strong and close working partnership in order to tackle mobile phone theft effectively.

The principal forum through which the Home Office engages with the mobile phone industry at a working level is the Mobile Industry Crime Action Forum (MICAF). MICAF is an industry-based forum of mobile phone network operators, retailers and handset manufacturers, set up specifically to tackle the issue of mobile phone crime. It has worked closely with the Home Office and the National Mobile Phone Crime Unit on a number of measures to tackle mobile phone theft, such as the database of lost and stolen phones, legislation to tackle re-programming and the National Mobile Phone Register.

At a ministerial level, several meetings have been held with network operators, retailers and handset manufacturers—these have all proved to be productive. The mobile phone industry are committed to helping the Government and law enforcement agencies tackle mobile phone theft and have worked very positively in partnership with us over the past three years.

Murder Statistics

Mrs. May: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* children under 16 years and *(b)* young people between 16 and 18 years have been murdered in each of the last 20 years. [35277]

Hazel Blears: The available information is given in the following table.

The latest homicide statistics were published in Home Office Statistical Bulletin number 02/05, 'Crime in England and Wales 2003/2004: Supplementary Volume 1: Homicide and Gun Crime'. This can be found on the website http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/index.htm

Homicide victims[1] under 16 years of age and between 16 and 18 years of age

	Victims under 16 years	*Victims 16 years and under 18 years*
1983	73	17
1984	81	19
1985	100	18
1986	59	18
1987	76	13
1988	96	21
1989	62	10
1990	67	18
1991	93	17
1992	68	14
1993	69	14
1994	76	17
1995	80	8
1996	80	21
1997	82	12
1997–98	71	13
1998–99	85	26
1999–2000	65	19
2000–01	99	26
2001–02	64	25
2002–03	92	18
2003–04	70	16

[1] Figures as at 22 October 2004 and are subject to revision as cases are dealt with by the police and the courts or as further information becomes available.

Offences against the Person

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* section 18 and *(b)* section 20 offences were committed in Essex in each year since 2000; and how many convictions were secured in each year. [34504]

Hazel Blears: The number of offences recorded for 'more serious wounding or other act endangering life' and 'less serious wounding' on the requested basis, are given in the table. Offences specifically relating to sections 18 and 20 cannot be separately identified in the recorded crime series.

Table 1: Number of offences recorded by Essex police, between 1999–2000 and 2001–02

Offence	*Number of offences*		
	1999–2000	*2000–01*	*2001–02*
More serious wounding or other act endangering life	91	233	247
Less serious wounding	3,171	3,362	3,331

Note:
The data in this table is prior to the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard. These figures are not directly comparable with those for later years.

Table 2: Number of offences recorded by Essex police, between 2002–03 and 2004–05

Offence	*Number of offences*		
	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
More serious wounding or other act endangering life	301	341	350
Less serious wounding[1] (including any minor injury)	12,070	13,457	13,024

[1] The change in definition relating to resultant injury in common assaults and less serious woundings, which applies from 1 April 2002, is described in the 'Common Assault' text box in Chapter 5 of Home Office Statistical Bulletin 'Crime in England and Wales 2004–05'.

Note:
The data in this table takes account of the introduction of the National Crime Recording Standard in April 2002. These figures are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Data from the court proceedings database held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform on the number of offenders found guilty for offences under sections 18 and 20 of the Offences against the Person Act 1861, for Essex Police Force Area 2000 to 2004 are provided in the table.

Table 3: Number of offenders found guilty for selected offences related to 'wounding', Essex police force area, 2000–04[1]

Offence description/principal statute	*Found guilty*
Wounding with intent to do grievous bodily harm/ Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.18	
2000	18
2001	26
2002	24
2003	25
2004	31
Malicious wounding—wounding or inflicting grievous bodily harm/Offences against the Person Act 1861 S.20	
2000	59
2001	54
2002	65
2003	63
2004	60

[1] These data are provided on the principal offence basis.

Source:
RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform.
Our ref IOS: 451–05

Overseas Confiscation Orders

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much money has been realised on behalf of other jurisdictions following enforcement of an overseas confiscation order; on behalf of which jurisdiction the order was made in each case; how much was *(a)* realised and *(b)* shared with the requesting country once the recovery costs had been deducted in each case; and whether the assets recovered were (i) the proceeds of corruption and (ii) the theft of a foreign state's assets in each case. [35401]

Andy Burnham: The Home Office does not record such information. Information available from the Crown Prosecution Service is as follows.

The Crown Prosecution Service is currently enforcing a total of three confiscation orders, one from the Republic of Ireland and two from the United States of America. The total amount realised to date is £686,000 (plus accrued interest). This comprises £21,000 (plus accrued interest) in respect of the Republic of Ireland order and £665,000 in respect of one of the US cases. These monies have not been shared with the requesting country to date.

In addition the Crown Prosecution Service enforced last year a US order with a value of £4.2 million. This sum was shared equally between the US and the UK.

None of the orders relates to the proceeds of corruption or theft of a foreign State's assets. Data for previous years is not available.

Passports

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether one of the proposed passport centres will be located in the City of Newcastle upon Tyne. [32424]

Andy Burnham *[holding answer 28 November 2005]* A network of office locations has been designed to provide the optimum balance between convenience and costs. The design took into account customer opinion surveys, modelling of population and consultations with county and regional authorities. It was externally verified. It has resulted in a network of 69 potential locations in which the average two way journey from home to interview office and back will be just under 25 miles and take just under 40 minutes. However, the exact locations cannot be finally confirmed until the availability of premises has been ascertained, which will take several months.

The interview offices will generally be small and most will be able to meet the demand in their area without being open every day. On present plans, 59 offices will have three interview positions or less and 51 will be open for less than five days per week, but all will be open on Saturdays.

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what basis passport fees are calculated. [33879]

Andy Burnham: Passport fees are set in order to recover the full cost of providing the service including an element for non-fee bearing consular services abroad. Fee levels are reviewed annually with Her Majesty's Treasury. The latest fee levels have been calculated as part of a two-year arrangement whereby all costs will be recovered by 31 March 2007.

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what arrangements will be made for personal interviews for passport applications in the areas of *(a)* Berwick-upon-Tweed, *(b)* Alnwick and *(c)* Rothbury. [32520]

Andy Burnham: A network of offices locations has been designed to provide the optimum balance between convenience and costs. The design took into account customer opinion surveys, modelling of population and consultations with county and regional authorities. It was externally verified. It has resulted in a network of 69 potential locations in which the average two way journey from home to interview office and back will be just under 25 miles and take just under 40 minutes. However, the exact locations cannot be finally confirmed until the availability of premises has been ascertained, which will take several months.

The interview offices will generally be small and most will be able to meet the demand in their area without being open every day. On present plans, 59 offices will have three interview positions or less and 51 will be open for less than five days per week, but all will be open on Saturdays.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the cost of interviewing all first time adult passport applicants. [35380]

Andy Burnham: The UK Passport Service has not yet completed the procurement process for the introduction of the high street network of offices for conducting interviews for all first-time adult applicants for passports. It is therefore unable to release details on costs at this time as it could prejudice the contract negotiations.

As stated in the corporate and business plans, the average unit cost for the production of passports will rise from £42.36 in 2005–06 to £57.93 in 2006–07 to cater for a range of improvement initiatives, among which is the introduction of biometrics and the interview for all first time adult passport applications.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to introduce the e-passport with a chip containing the image of the holder's face; and if he will make a statement. [35385]

Andy Burnham: The new biometric passport is planned to be introduced through a phased incremental approach from February 2006. During the early stages of transition, some customers will receive a biometric passport but most will continue to receive a digital passport. UK Passport Service will only switch over completely to biometric passports once it establishes it is safe to do so without compromising customer service. Both the current digital and new biometric passports will be valid international travel documents.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were prosecuted for passport *(a)* fraud and *(b)* forgery in each of the last five years. [35386]

Andy Burnham: The figures recorded by the UK Passport Service (UKPS) for the number of prosecutions made against individuals who have fraudulently applied for passports are given in the following table.

	Number
2001	16
2002	5
2003	16
2004	54
2005[1]	25

[1] until October.

It should be noted that UKPS does not routinely receive feedback from the police or prosecution authorities on cases of passport fraud which are referred to them. The figures given above are therefore likely to be a significant under representation of the number of prosecutions brought. UKPS is working with the police to develop a more effective feedback mechanism. The figures collated by UKPS do not distinguish between successful and unsuccessful prosecutions. Figures relating to prosecutions for passport forgery are not available.

Police

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress he has made in implementing detailed rules of engagement across the police force. [34407]

Hazel Blears: Operational tactics when using firearms are a matter for the police. The Association of Chief Police Officers have produced a manual of guidance on the police use of firearms. The policy section of this guidance is available at www.acpo.police.uk.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff were on establishment in the Essex police force in each of the last five years. [34497]

Hazel Blears: The published data relates to the actual strength of the police force not establishment which are set by police authorities and chief constables. The data for Essex police is set out in the following table.

Essex police—Police service personnel strength 2001–05

Number

As at 31 March	*Police Officer*	*Police (Support) Staff*	*Community Support Officer*[1]	*Designated Officers (S38)*[2]	*Special Constables*
2001	2,887	1,447	[3]n/a	[3]n/a	445
2002	2,946	1,571	[3]n/a	[3]n/a	381
2003	2,989	1,671	10	[4]n/a	371
2004	3,098	1,876	86	[4]n/a	349
2005	3,190	1,955	179	65	363

[1] Community Support Officers were introduced in 2002–03.
[2] Designated officers are persons employed to exercise specific powers which would otherwise be available only to police officers (such as Investigation Officers, Detention Officers and Escort Officers). Introduced under s38 of the Police Reform Act 2002.
[3] Not applicable.
[4] Not available.

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 457W, what is the evidential base for his statement that police restructuring should be implemented as quickly as possible. [34581]

Hazel Blears: Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary clearly demonstrated in its report, "Closing the Gap" that the vast majority of forces in England and Wales were not providing adequate levels of protective services. In light of such findings it would be irresponsible for the Government not to act and ensure such gaps in services were filled in an effective way and as soon as possible.

Furthermore, we do not want to subject the service to a prolonged period of uncertainty which could lead to loss of morale and distraction from their core task of protecting the public. We cannot allow that to happen to the police service so we need to press ahead as quickly as it is sensible to do so.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from *(a)* the Police Federation, *(b)* the Association of Chief Police Officers, *(c)* Taser International and *(d)* other interested parties regarding possible changes governing the deployment of tasers. [34662]

Hazel Blears: The Association of Chief Police Officers and the Police Federation have suggested that the Taser should be available for use in a wider range of operational situations and by specialist officers. We will be discussing this issue with them shortly. No decisions have yet been taken. Representations have also been received from Amnesty International. No representations have been received from Taser International or other interested parties.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers there were in England and Wales on the latest date for which figures are available, *(a)* in total and *(b)* broken down by (i) region, (ii) constabulary and (iii) basic command unit. [35455]

Hazel Blears: The available information is provided in the following table. The figures provided are based on police officer strength as at 31 March 2005.

Police officer strength by English Government Office Regions and Wales, and police force area (full-time) equivalent

English Government Office Regions and Wales	
North East	7,515
Cleveland	1,689
Durham	1,738
Northumbria	4,088
North West	19,510
Cheshire	2,207
Cumbria	1,260
Greater Manchester	8,119
Lancashire	3,586
Merseyside	4,339
Yorkshire and the Humber	12,790
Humberside	2,252
North Yorkshire	1,560
South Yorkshire	3,307
West Yorkshire	5,671
East Midlands	9,437
Derbyshire	2,082
Leicestershire	2,311
Lincolnshire	1,234
Northamptonshire	1,289
Nottinghamshire	2,522
West Midlands	13,854
Staffordshire	2,309
Warwickshire	1,012
West Mercia	2,380
West Midlands	8,154
Eastern	10,902
Bedfordshire	1,232
Cambridgeshire	1,418
Essex	3,230
Hertfordshire	2,145
Norfolk	1,554
Suffolk	1,323
London	31,954
London, City of	881
Metropolitan Police	31,073
South East	16,676
Hampshire	3,803
Kent	3,630
Surrey	1,959
Sussex	3,094
Thames Valley	4,189
South West	10,808
Avon and Somerset	3,398
Devon and Cornwall	3,399
Dorset	1,475
Gloucestershire	1,308
Wiltshire	1,228
Wales	7,613
Dyfed Powys	1,183
Gwent	1,438
North Wales	1,676
South Wales	3,316
Total of all 43 forces	141,060
National Crime Squad (NCS)	1,059
National Crime Intelligence Squad (NCIS)	121
Central Service Secondments	555
Total police officer strength	142,795

Note:
This table contain full-time equivalent figures that have been rounded to the nearest whole number. Because of rounding, there may be an apparent discrepancy between totals and the sums of the constituent items.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what mechanisms he plans to establish to deal with the personnel issues arising from his proposals to restructure police forces in England and Wales. [35456]

Hazel Blears: The Home Office has established a stakeholder group which includes representatives of the staff associations and trade unions as a forum for discussing the development of personnel issues arising from the restructuring proposals, and officials have held a number of bilateral meetings with the staff associations and unions. I expect that any changes in police officer or staff terms and conditions of service necessitated by restructuring would be handled by the Police Negotiating Board, the Police Advisory Board of England and Wales and the Police Staff Council as appropriate.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the timetable is for the restructuring of police forces in England and Wales. [35458]

Hazel Blears: Forces and authorities will submit their final reports which will include their preferred option for change to my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary by 23 December. Detailed assessment of these options will be made before a decision is reached as to the options that are most viable for implementation. No further announcements will be made until next year.

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what financial arrangements he will make to fund the new regional police force for the West Midlands; and what discussions he has had with the Deputy Prime Minister on the resultant changes in council tax bills for band D properties in the area affected. [35660]

Hazel Blears: No decisions have been taken yet about the future structure of policing in the West Midlands area.

The Government will be considering grant arrangements for police authorities in the light of changes to police authority boundaries and in the way the new larger authorities might operate.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Welsh Assembly Government, Her Majesty's Treasury and police representative bodies have been invited to participate in examining the financial aspects of reorganisation, including the impact of restructuring on budgets, grant and council tax.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police communication systems are interoperable with the *(a)* local fire service and *(b)* ambulance service; and what plans he has to ensure that interoperability continues after the proposed amalgamation of police forces. [35687]

Hazel Blears: Airwave is the new radio communications system for the police service in England, Wales and Scotland. Officers across the country using the network are able to communicate directly with each other,

regardless of location. The other emergency services are currently updating their radio communication networks on a national basis and have agreed to join the Airwave service. When their new systems are fully operational their communications systems will interoperate seamlessly with the police network. Existing interoperability arrangements on the old radios used by the services will be maintained until the new systems are fully operational. The proposed amalgamation of police forces will have no effect on these arrangements.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers are allocated to each London borough; and how many crimes were committed in each of those boroughs in 2004. [36471]

Hazel Blears: The data for the number of police officers by basic command unit within the Metropolitan police area as at 31 March 2005 are provided in the following table. Data are also provided for the number of offences recorded within these basic command units for 2004–05.

Number of police officers and total recorded crime in the Metropolitan police area by BCU

Basic command unit	*Number of police officers*[1]	*Number of offences*[2]
Barking and Dagenham	419.1	21,442
Barnet	561.0	37,887
Bexley	382.7	18,859
Brent	679.4	35,582
Bromley	489.2	30,761
Camden	850.4	45,432
City of Westminster	1,617.1	79,338
Croydon	692.0	35,004
Ealing	686.2	36,418
Enfield	574.7	28,131
Greenwich	605.2	31,186
Hackney	788.5	36,492
Hammersmith and Fulham	526.1	27,139
Haringey	683.2	35,553
Harrow	342.2	18,107
Havering	383.4	21,431
Heath row	437.5	6,168
Hillingdon	497.8	27,800
Hounslow	509.7	27,908
Islington	683.4	37,956
Kensington and Chelsea	561.6	26,812
Kingston upon Thames	298.2	15,690
Lambeth	984.5	45,784
Lewisham	645.9	34,833
Merton	351.7	17,281
Newham	781.9	36,460
Redbridge	458.7	26,173
Richmond upon Thames	286.8	15,320
Southwark	891.4	43,771
Sutton	291.0	16,942
Tower Hamlets	761.0	36,329
Waltham Forest	545.8	29,491
Wandsworth	582.3	31,641

[1] As at 31 March 2005
[2] For period 2004–05

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent estimate he has made of the number of crimes per police officer for each constabulary in England and Wales. [35295]

Hazel Blears: The number of crimes per police officer for the year 2004–05 is given in the following table.

Recorded crime figures can be found in Home Office Statistical Bulletin (HOSB) number 11/05 and police strength figures in HOSB 12/05.

These are available from

website:http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/index.htm

Number of crimes per police officer 2004–05

Police force area	*Time recorded crime*	*Total police officer strength*	*Number of crimes per police officer*
Avon and Somerset	161,210	3,398	47
Bedfordshire	57,973	1,232	47
Cambridgeshire	73,659	1,418	52
Cheshire	89,300	2,207	40
Cleveland	68,967	1,689	41
Cumbria	43,300	1,260	34
Derbyshire	84,712	2,082	41
Devon and Cornwall	133,282	3,399	39
Dorset	57,722	1,475	39
Durham	47,115	1,738	27
Dyfed-Powys	32,409	1,183	27
Essex	134,789	3,230	42
Gloucestershire	53,333	1,308	41
Greater Manchester	324,616	8,119	40
Gwent	57,206	1,438	40
Hampshire	173,072	3,803	46
Hertfordshire	97,065	2,145	45
Humberside	124,105	2,252	55
Kent	136,440	3,630	38
Lancashire	152,043	3,586	42
Leicestershire	96,347	2,311	42
Lincolnshire	58,349	1,234	47
London, City of	8,685	881	10
Merseyside	170,846	4,339	39
Metropolitan Police	1,015,121	31,073	33
Norfolk	66,376	1,554	43
North Wales	53,865	1,676	32
North Yorkshire	61,864	1,560	40
Northamptonshire	73,903	1,289	57
Northumbria	142,122	4,088	35
Nottinghamshire	143,108	2,522	57
South Wales	124,162	3,316	37
South Yorkshire	140,371	3,307	42
Staffordshire	101,084	2,309	44
Suffolk	52,101	1,323	39
Surrey	70,851	1,959	36
Sussex	140,177	3,094	45
Thames Valley	205,273	4,189	49
Warwickshire	43,131	1,012	43
WestMercia	95,056	2,380	40
West Midlands	293,972	8,154	36
West Yorkshire	263,534	5,671	46
Wiltshire	40,075	1,228	33
England and Wales	5,562,691	141,060	39

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the burden of paperwork faced by the police. [34162]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* The Frontline Policing Measure for 2004–05 was published on 27 October and indicated that officers in England and Wales spent 64.1 per cent. of their time on frontline duties. Police authorities have set local improvement targets which should deliver the equivalent gain in time of more than 12,000 officers to front line tasks by 2008.

We have made good progress in reducing the bureaucratic burdens on police officers by cutting nearly 9,000 unnecessary forms; civilianising posts; rolling out the penalty notice for disorder scheme; and ensuring that forces have the best scientific and technological support like video identity parades and electronic fingerprinting so that officers spend more time in communities tackling crime and antisocial behaviour and reassuring the public.

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who will decide the location of the headquarters of merged police forces. [30420]

Hazel Blears: This will be a matter for forces and authorities to consider in due course.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of *(a)* Level 2 Capability and *(b)* forensic management in (i) Gloucestershire constabulary and (ii) other police forces in the South West region. [35293]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* During the summer of this year Gloucestershire constabulary, like every other Home Office police force in England and Wales, were assessed in relation to their capability and capacity to provide seven 'protective' services. These services are:

Counter terrorism and Domestic Extremism,

Serious and Organised Crime,

Major Crime (Murder) Critical Incidents,

Public Order,

Civil Contingencies and Emergency procedures

Strategic Roads Policing.

The assessment was conducted by officers working for HMIC Denis O'Connor, who reported his findings to the Home Secretary in the report 'Closing the Gap'. While the report identified general issues arising from the assessment, more specific local feedback was given to each chief constable. The 'Closing the Gap' report is available on the Home Office website.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who would bear financial responsibility for the *(a)* private finance initiative (PFI) payments and *(b)* compensation payable to PFI contractors for the new headquarters of Gloucestershire constabulary at Quedgeley if it becomes redundant. [36774]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* Financial responsibility for the payment to the contractor falls to the police authority. They receive PFI grant support from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), who makes the payment through the Revenue Support Grant. In the event that the new headquarters of Gloucestershire constabulary became redundant the financial responsibility for compensation would pass to the successor authority.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the amount of compensation which would have to be paid to private companies if the new headquarters of Gloucestershire constabulary at Quedgeley is no longer needed as a result of the police restructuring proposals. [36775]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* The amount of compensation which would have to be paid to private companies if the new headquarters of Gloucestershire constabulary is no longer needed would be agreed through negotiation at the time of the event. Procedures for this are set out in the Standardisation of PFI Contracts version three (SoPC3), which is published by the Treasury on their website.

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what the annual cost of maintaining and leasing the new headquarters of Gloucestershire Constabulary at Quedgeley will be under the private finance initiative; [36777]

(2) what the cost was of the new headquarters of Gloucestershire Constabulary at Quedgeley. [36776]

Hazel Blears *[holding answers 12 December 2005]:* The chief constable of Gloucestershire constabulary is responsible for the operational management of the force. I will ensure that he receives a copy of the questions and replies to you directly.

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers have been employed in *(a)* Southend and *(b)* Essex in each year since 1997. [33743]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is set out in the table. Information on strength at basic command unit (BCD) level has only been collected since 2002.

Police officer strength in Essex police and Southend basic command unit (BCU)

As at 31 March:	*Essex police*	*Number Southend BCU*
1997	2,961	n/a
1998	2,928	n/a
1999	2,891	n/a
2000	2,806	n/a
2001	2,887	n/a
2002	2,946	267
2003	2,989	273
2004	3,098	278
2005	3,190	288

n/a = Not available.

Note:

All figures are full-time equivalents.

Source:

Source for 1997 to March 2005 is the Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate (RDS).

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the proposals for the amalgamation of police forces entail changes to the *(a)* number and *(b)* boundaries of basic command units. [32863]

Hazel Blears: We anticipate that there will be minimal impact upon basic command units (BCD) as a result of restructuring. We will be in a better position to know what these are once final options for change have been agreed.

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much the proposed reorganisation of police forces in Wales is expected to cost; and who will pay for the costs of reorganisation. [33180]

Hazel Blears: The consultation process for police force restructuring is currently under way and forces and authorities are working up their business cases proposing their options for change. I have requested authorities to submit their final preferred option including detailed cost/benefit analysis by 23 December 2005. Any proposals for change including from Welsh police forces and authorities, will be carefully assessed

after 23 December 2005. I am determined that costs of restructuring will be minimised and benefits arising from mergers should be realised in future years.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether the savings accrued from the restructuring of police forces in England and Wales will be retained by the new forces created by the restructuring; [32175]

(2) whether any savings from police force restructuring will be in addition to planned expenditure on the police in England and Wales by his Department as set out in the Spending Review. [32178]

Hazel Blears: We will expect savings made as a result of police force reorganisation to be reinvested by the police service in order to strengthen protective services and support neighbourhood policing.

Religious Cults

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent representations he has received about the activities of religious cults, with particular reference to the School of Economic Science; how he plans to respond; and if he will make a statement. [19349]

Paul Goggins: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for the Home Department considers the matter of cults operating in this country seriously and recently met with the Head of INFORM (Information Network Focusing on Religious Movements) to discuss a range of issues related to cults in the UK.

He has not had any recent representations from the School of Economic Science, but does share the concerns many people have on the activity of cults. He is keen to keep the situation under review.

Schedule 1 Offenders

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his most recent estimate is of the number of Schedule 1 offenders who are at liberty.[32781]

Hazel Blears: A conviction or caution for an offence listed in Schedule 1 to the Children and Young Persons Act 1933 triggers further assessments of risk, by agencies such as the police, probation and prison services and local authority social services, and is used to identify individuals who may pose a risk to children. Practitioners exercise their professional judgement in such assessments and appreciate that not all convicted or cautioned individuals will necessarily pose a continued risk to children and that there are cases where a person without a conviction or caution may pose such a risk.

The offences listed in Schedule 1 range from murder to "any . . . offence involving bodily injury to a child or young person". To calculate the number of people who have committed an offence involving bodily injury to a child or young person and who are currently living in the community could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Speed Cameras

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police forces use the LTI 20.20 mobile speed camera. [33682]

Paul Goggins: The LTI 20.20 speed enforcement device has been purchased by 50 forces in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research has been carried out on the impact of atmospheric conditions on the accuracy of speed cameras. [33683]

Paul Goggins: The laboratory and field testing undertaken prior to the type approval of speed enforcement equipment includes an assessment of performance across a wide range of relevant atmospheric conditions. The full range of tests are published in the various Speed meter Handbooks available from Home Office Scientific Development Branch website.

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of prosecutions for motor speeding offences were discontinued for technicalities relating to the *(a)* placement and *(b)* operation of speed limit (i) signs and (ii) cameras in (A) 2003, (B) 2004 and (C) 2005. [33684]

Paul Goggins: This information is not collected centrally.

Stonehenge

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost was to Wiltshire constabulary of policing the summer solstice celebrations at Stonehenge in each of the past five years. [34056]

Hazel Blears: The chief constable of Wiltshire constabulary is responsible for the operational management of the force. I will ensure that he receives a copy of the question and replies to you directly.

Strategic Police Forces

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how the proposed strategic police forces will be made democratically accountable. [34616]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* We continue to see a vital role for police authorities in setting policing priorities for the force and holding the chief officer to account for the delivery of an efficient, effective and responsive policing service. To maintain democratic legitimacy, we envisage that the majority of police authority members will be local councillors, as now. We are considering options for strengthening the accountability arrangements at BCD level to ensure that local communities have a stronger voice in setting local policing priorities. A number of authorities are already piloting various models at this level. One model that seems promising is that of a local policing board. We will be exploring with the association of police authorities how such boards might operate and their relationship with crime and disorder reduction partnerships and local authority scrutiny committees. The establishment of such boards would not affect the current lines of managerial accountability within forces

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how the council tax contributions to the proposed strategic police forces will be calculated.[34618]

Hazel Blears *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* The Government will be considering grant arrangements for police authorities in the light of changes to police authority boundaries and in the way the new larger authorities might operate.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, the Welsh Assembly Government, Her Majesty's Treasury and police representative bodies have been invited to participate in working up the financial aspects of reorganisation, including the impact of restructuring on budgets, grant and council tax.

Substance Abuse Offences

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 26 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 405W, on substance abuse offences, if he will provide *(a)* tables two and three to which he refers and *(b)* the relevant figures for 2004 for tables one to four. [33529]

Hazel Blears: The tables are now provided with the 2004 information incorporated.

Number of offenders found guilty for dangerous driving while under the influence of drink or drugs, by London borough, region and England, 1997–2003[1]

Inner London magistrates courts	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
City of London Police								
Guildhall Justice Rooms	411	281	225	156	147	208	207	148
Metropolitan Police								
Bow Street	327	194	111	135	150	209	237	211
Camberwell Green/Tower Bridge	1,063	1,092	941	865	819	947	997	1,025
Greenwich and Woolwich	898	741	631	751	835	826	868	798
Highbury Corner	1,287	1,132	632	569	529	574	548	616
Horseferry Road	549	439	379	334	348	361	299	310
Marylebone	429	373	377	64	14	25	24	35
South Western	683	507	422	317	349	421	405	337
Thames	417	160	547	573	541	638	592	576
West London	384	361	289	517	569	619	590	569
Inner London Juvenile Courts	4	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Outer London boroughs								
Metropolitan Police								
Barking and Dagenham	187	236	243	252	253	358	368	302
Barnet	457	398	380	359	353	343	329	361
Bexley	273	234	241	217	290	325	249	261
Brent	569	518	434	449	445	484	516	447
Bromley	430	396	324	339	303	344	368	399
Croydon	618	507	463	462	427	470	423	437
Ealing	654	485	335	538	496	723	544	581
Enfield	410	403	406	341	362	339	293	329
Haringey	395	382	307	292	367	419	397	475
Harrow	287	228	236	238	226	227	245	299
Havering	296	230	245	273	226	285	271	345
Hillingdon	400	417	403	371	340	430	435	500
Hounslow	483	451	375	349	273	345	283	352
Kingston-upon-Thames	264	297	266	293	261	263	233	299
Merton	348	235	259	266	241	251	263	314
Newham	556	426	371	356	347	438	476	514
Redbridge	421	343	330	297	307	298	323	366
Richmond upon Thames	271	224	235	283	204	312	283	270
Sutton	257	232	225	254	242	246	208	255
Waltham Forest	366	281	255	281	259	335	339	302
Total Metropolitan Police	13,983	11,922	10,662	10,635	10,376	11,855	11,406	11,885
Total Greater London	14,394	12,203	10,887	10,791	10,523	12,063	11,613	12,033
Regions								
North East	3,985	3,740	3,821	3,976	3,913	4,032	4,177	4,366
North West	12,051	11,244	10,720	10,455	10,137	10,923	11,327	11,822
Yorkshire and Humberside	7,756	7,228	7,083	7,010	6,757	7,157	7,555	7,862
East Midlands	6,660	6,061	6,047	5,571	5,141	5,005	6,138	6,621
West Midlands	9,871	8,939	8,030	7,858	7,974	8,276	8,566	8,886
East of England	8,043	7,646	7,343	6,729	7,201	7,800	8,178	8,605
London[2]	15,205	12,937	11,525	10,959	10,521	12,066	11,613	12,040
South East	12,661	12,462	12,594	12,094	12,262	13,726	13,040	13,122

Number of offenders found guilty for dangerous driving while under the influence of drink or drugs, by London borough, region and England, 1997–2003[1]

Inner London magistrates courts	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
South West	7,563	7,321	7,250	6,819	6,948	7,206	7,697	7,662
Wales	5,464	5,496	5,092	5,275	5,255	5,242	5,491	5,611
England	83,795	77,578	74,413	71,471	70,854	76,191	78,291	80,986
England and Wales	89,259	83,074	79,505	76,746	76,109	81,433	83,782	86,597

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] Includes a small number of defendants convicted in courts outside London.
Source:
RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform

Number of offenders found guilty for drunkenness by London borough, region and England 1997–2003[1]

Inner London magistrates courts	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
City of London Police								
Guildhall Justice Rooms	1	—	1	5	—	—	—	2
Metropolitan Police								
Bow Street	15	15	21	8	69	24	10	26
Camberwell Green/Tower Bridge	14	14	1	5	3	3	1	2
Greenwich and Woolwich	3	12	8	7	6	20	28	21
Highbury Corner	14	18	25	2	1	4	10	7
Horseferry Road	39	28	26	14	79	35	14	14
Marylebone	9	7	12	1	—	—	—	1
South-Western	7	8	7	1	—	2	1	6
Thames	4	1	7	1	1	7	2	—
West London	187	120	66	66	29	45	38	24
Inner London Juvenile Courts	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Outer London boroughs								
Metropolitan Police								
Barking and Dagenham	—	—	—	—	3	2	2	—
Barnet	1	5	1	4	9	12	4	6
Bexley	2	—	—	2	2	—	5	2
Brent	36	45	37	19	3	10	12	4
Bromley	2	1	4	—	8	4	1	1
Croydon	7	33	14	7	11	10	3	3
Ealing	7	14	3	4	5	5	7	1
Enfield	4	—	2	1	1	1	2	—
Haringey	—	7	6	6	9	7	19	10
Harrow	1	4	7	2	5	1	6	3
Havering	—	—	—	—	5	10	1	1
Hillingdon	7	19	1	8	7	8	2	2
Hounslow	5	19	16	13	9	4	11	5
Kingston-upon-Thames	3	6	3	1	1	1	—	—
Merton	4	3	17	2	4	2	12	4
Newham	3	8	5	8	11	2	4	2
Redbridge	—	1	1	1	1	1	1	2
Richmond upon Thames	8	13	8	5	6	1	4	3
Sutton	2	—	2	1	5	7	10	10
Waltham Forest	3	2	4	1	1	—	—	—
Total Metropolitan Police	387	403	304	190	294	228	210	160
Total Greater London	388	403	305	195	294	228	210	162
Regions								
North East	135	118	107	67	122	106	88	94
North West	387	393	314	344	264	262	149	106
Yorkshire and Humberside	191	232	214	262	221	202	222	166
East Midlands	108	135	116	119	89	107	78	64
West Midlands	240	208	162	67	92	109	123	132
East of England	496	583	507	399	332	264	293	242
London[2]	393	405	310	197	296	228	210	162
South East	938	1,106	866	684	629	541	486	418
South West	445	530	538	440	379	382	350	290
Wales	209	388	377	390	317	309	300	274
England	3,333	3,710	3,134	2,579	2,424	2,201	1,999	1,674
England and Wales	3,542	4,098	3,511	2,969	2,741	2,510	2,299	1,948

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] Includes a small number of defendants convicted in courts outside London.
Source:
RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform

Number of offenders found guilty of causing death by careless driving while under the influence of drink or drugs, by London borough, region and England, 1997–2003[1]

Inner London magistrates courts	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
City of London Police								
Guildhall Justice Rooms	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Metropolitan Police								
Bow Street	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Camberwell Green/Tower Bridge	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Greenwich and Woolwich	—	—	1	—	—	1	—	—
Highbury Corner	2	1	—	1	—	—	—	1
Horseferry Road	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Marylebone	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
South Western	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Thames	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
West London	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Inner London Juvenile Courts	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Outer London boroughs								
Metropolitan Police								
Barking and Dagenham	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Barnet	—	2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bexley	—	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Brent	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Bromley	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	
Croydon	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Ealing	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Enfield	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Haringey	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Harrow	—	1	—	—	1	—	—	—
Havering	—	1	—	1	—	1	—	1
Hillingdon	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	1
Hounslow	—	1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Kingston-upon-Thames	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Merton	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Newham	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Redbridge	—	—	—	1	2	—	—	—
Richmond upon Thames	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Sutton	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Waltham Forest	—	1	—	—	—	—	1	—
Total Metropolitan Police	4	7	1	4	3	2	4	7
Total Greater London	4	7	1	4	3	2	4	7
Regions								
North East	5	2	2	4	1	2	2	2
North West	5	13	6	7	4	10	5	6
Yorkshire and Humberside	5	3	5	8	4	6	5	7
East Midlands	6	7	6	5	7	4	9	12
West Midlands	9	7	6	4	7	5	6	6
East of England London[2]	34	68	23	15	74	113	74	78
South East	11	10	8	8	8	14	9	7
South West	8	4	6	8	6	7	7	6
Wales	6	3	2	3	3	4	6	1
England	56	60	44	50	48	62	54	61
England and Wales	62	63	46	53	51	66	60	62

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] Includes a small number of defendants convicted in courts outside London.
Source:
RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform

Number of offenders found guilty for drunkenness, with aggravation, by London borough, region and England, 1997–2003[1]

Inner London magistrates courts	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
City of London Police								
Guildhall Justice Rooms	13	21	29	25	28	40	49	45
Metropolitan Police								
Bow Street	98	118	127	99	238	628	573	160
Camberwell Green/Tower Bridge	21	44	41	42	24	46	73	32
Greenwich and Woolwich	42	36	44	33	37	125	86	37
Highbury Corner	78	72	91	46	23	38	113	67
Horseferry Road	85	119	119	100	144	265	255	176

Number of offenders found guilty for drunkenness, with aggravation, by London borough, region and England, 1997–2003[1]

Inner London magistrates courts	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Marylebone	27	22	52	3	2	3	2	1
South Western	28	23	28	22	22	24	30	13
Thames	22	14	24	38	25	34	41	23
West London	94	93	78	107	76	128	132	71
Inner London Juvenile Courts	—	1	—	1	—	—	—	—
Outer London boroughs								
Metropolitan Police								
Barking and Dagenham	11	8	11	12	10	17	30	9
Barnet	16	8	8	18	13	20	32	10
Bexley	18	17	24	18	11	27	77	34
Brent	52	80	34	35	18	23	35	22
Bromley	22	10	12	40	65	79	79	21
Croydon	32	38	23	44	92	79	34	30
Ealing	35	41	44	28	25	71	35	39
Enfield	7	14	5	7	18	6	9	9
Haringey	11	25	11	13	10	19	22	14
Harrow	14	13	11	9	15	20	15	13
Havering	12	24	27	19	60	78	65	36
Hillingdon	18	76	33	46	67	78	73	33
Hounslow	41	54	60	52	32	42	30	29
Kingston-upon-Thames	92	51	32	12	27	22	30	18
Merton	158	49	81	47	45	36	56	36
Newham	10	32	41	21	20	25	25	20
Redbridge	22	17	13	15	8	32	24	8
Richmond upon Thames	12	70	65	33	41	35	26	15
Sutton	63	43	30	60	58	58	80	25
Waltham Forest	9	17	9	6	1	5	10	8
Total Metropolitan Police	1,150	1,229	1,178	1,026	1,227	2,063	2,092	1,009
Total Greater London	1,163	1,250	1,207	1,051	1,255	2,103	2,141	1,054
Regions								
North East	3,580	4,080	4,071	4,376	3,989	4,022	4,553	4,437
North West	5,821	6,006	5,422	5,215	5,110	5,249	5,174	3,130
Yorkshire and Humberside	2,771	2,709	2,884	2,683	2,318	2,240	2,670	1,625
East Midlands	1,122	1,279	1,179	1,050	1,077	1,141	1,233	960
West Midlands	1,820	1,737	1,373	1,246	1,116	1,061	1,029	1,128
East of England	1,274	1,302	1,447	1,448	1,477	1,539	1,434	1,138
London[2]	1,224	1,310	1,271	1,066	1,260	2,103	2,141	1,055
South East	3,116	3,564	3,468	3,304	3,253	3,369	3,661	2,791
South West	1,746	1,877	1,649	1,690	1,868	2,017	1,998	1,286
Wales	2,779	2,872	2,405	2,135	2,037	1,647	1,505	1,635
England	22,474	23,864	22,764	22,078	21,468	22,741	23,893	17,550
England and Wales	25,253	26,736	25,169	24,213	23,505	24,388	25,398	19,185

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis.
[2] Includes a small number of defendants convicted in courts outside London.
Source:
RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform

Tasers

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effects of taser use on individuals that have been fired at in England and Wales since 2003. [34661]

Hazel Blears: The Defence Scientific Advisory Council's sub-committee on the Medical Implications of Less Lethal Weapons (DOMILL) has produced three statements on the medical implications of the use of the Taser. Copies have been placed in the Library. DOMILL's view is that the risk of life-threatening or other serious injuries from Taser appears to be very low and certainly very much lower than that from conventional firearms.

A Taser deployment form is completed on each occasion that Taser is used and passed to DOMILL. DOMILL has examined these forms and the available medical reports and is content that the medical issues attributable directly or indirectly to Taser use were not unexpected and are addressed by their statements.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will develop a consultation process involving a wide range of stakeholders to consider proposed changes governing the deployment of Tasers by the police. [35004]

Hazel Blears: No decisions have yet been taken on any possible changes governing the deployment of Tasers by the police service. The Association of Chief Police Officers and the Police Federation have suggested extending the use of the Taser, and discussions are due to take place shortly. We will of course consider consultation with any relevant stakeholders as appropriate.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Consultants

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the *(a)* title and *(b)* value of consultancy contracts commissioned (i) by and (ii) in respect of Tamworth borough council in each of the last five years, broken down by consultancy. [32026]

Mr. Woolas: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Council Tax

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether a permanent *(a)* shed, *(b)* kennel, *(c)* outside lavatory and *(d)* rabbit hutch may be classed as an outbuilding for the purpose of the assessment of (i) dwelling house code 14 (Outbuildings) and (ii) value significant codes during a council tax valuation by the Valuation Office Agency. [30833]

Mr. Woolas: The structures referred to would not be reflected in the codes.

Departmental Mobile Phones

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many mobile phones are *(a)* rented and *(b)* owned by his Department; and at what total cost in 2004–05. [35591]

Jim Fitzpatrick: During the period 19 November 2004 to 17 November 2005 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister purchased 211 phones at a total cost of £17,231.20. ODPM does not rent mobile phones.

Departmental Staff (Chronic Back Pain)

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what initiatives are being taken in his Department to help civil servants with chronic back pain. [34980]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) supports staff with chronic back pain while they are at work, while they are absent because of their illness and during their return to work. The ODPM has a programme of work place assessments for all staff and an Occupational Health Adviser which offers support and advice. Additionally line managers and Human Resources offer support and advice to staff with chronic back pain.

Government Office for London

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of the *(a)* housing action trust, *(b)* European Structural Fund Objective 3, *(c)* Connexions grant, *(d)* Neighbourhood Renewal, *(e)* Housing Investment Programme and *(f)* London Development Agency grant funding stream from the Government office for London was made available to each London borough in each year for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [36467]

Mr. Woolas: The information requested has been made available in the Library of the House.

Local Government Finance

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what changes have been made since May 1997 to *(a)* dwelling house codes and *(b)* value significant codes used by the Valuation Office Agency for council tax liability purposes. [31804]

Mr. Woolas: Valuations for the purposes of council tax banding are based on 1991 estimated values. Dwelling house codes are used as guidance to help this process. Dwelling house codes have been used by the Valuation Office Agency to summarise property attributes since the 1970s. On initial computerisation in the 1980s the system provided for the input of three codes. Codes capable of capture electronically were expanded from three to 10 in April 2002 and from 10 to 17 in March 2003. Value significant codes (VSCs) are part of the 17 dwelling house codes. The number of alternative VSCs available for capture electronically was increased to its present level in January 2005.

Maladministration

Mr. Laws: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many payments for maladministration have been made by *(a)* his Department, *(b)* its agencies, *(c)* its non-departmental public bodies and *(d)* other bodies for which his Department has responsibility in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [32245]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) was established following the Machinery of Government changes on 29 May 2002. It is the policy of the ODPM, its agencies, non-departmental public bodies and, where appropriate, its sponsored organisations to make financial redress in accordance with the guidance set out in chapter 18.7 and annexes 18.1 and 18.2 of Government Accounting.

The information requested for the period since the establishment of the ODPM is set out in the following table:

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Department (including GOs)	0	0	0
Agencies	7	6	12
NDPBs	1	0	0
Bodies sponsored by Department	0	0	0

Non-Christian Religious Festivals

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps his Department took to celebrate and promote non-Christian religious festivals in 2005. [35590]

Jim Fitzpatrick: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Monmouth (David T.C. Davies) on 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 201–02W.

Smoke Alarms

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps his Department is taking to support the provision of smoke alarms in the homes of elderly people. [36790]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The £25 million Home Fire Risk Check Initiative, launched in October 2004, will provide free smoke alarms and fire safety advice to 1.25 million vulnerable households in England by spring 2008. Older people have been identified as the most important target group in guidance and in the Fire and Rescue Service National Framework. The funding is sufficient to provide a free smoke alarm for every pensioner household which does not have one. Many fire and rescue services are also taking up the challenge to work proactively with older people groups through partnership with local authority services and the voluntary sector.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister hosted a national conference on the theme of working with older people for the fire and rescue service and partners on 22 November 2005.

Street Wardens

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many street wardens are employed in each London borough. [35584]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister through the Government office for London, is funding warden schemes across 13 London boroughs over the 2005–06 financial year. The total number of wardens funded across London through this programme is 136. Brent employs seven wardens and two supervisors through their allocation.

Local boroughs also support wardens schemes through mainstream budgets and other Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's funded programmes. Based upon the information currently available, the table below provides the total number of wardens employed within each borough. This information is currently being updated as part of an ongoing national review:

Boroughs	*Number of wardens*
Barking and Dagenham	[1]—
Barnet	[1]—
Bexley	4
Brent	29
Bromley	[1]—
Camden	20
City of London	[1]—
City of Westminster	53
Croydon	40
Ealing	16
Enfield	[1]—
Greenwich	10
Hackney	33
Hammersmith and Fulham	[1]—
Haringey	32
Harrow	[1]—
Havering	[1]—
Hillingdon	[1]—
Hounslow	[1]—
Islington	[1]—
Kensington and Chelsea	[1]—
Kingston upon Thames	4
Lambeth	12
Lewis ham	62
Merton	11
Newham	50
Redbridge	5
Richmond upon Thames	[1]—
Southwark	107
Sutton	11
Tower Hamlets	14
Waltham Forest	41
Wandsworth	15
Total	526

[1] No wardens employed

Urban Taskforce Reports

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps his Department is taking to implement the recommendations of Lord Rogers' Urban Task Force reports of 1998 and 2005. [33119]

Yvette Cooper: In 1998 Government asked Lord Rogers of Riverside to set up the Urban Task Force to examine causes of urban decline and recommend practical solutions to identified problems. The task force's report "Towards an Urban Renaissance" was published in June 1999. The Government endorsed the principles behind all of the 105 recommendations, which were fed in to the development of the Government's Urban White Paper. This White Paper, "Our Towns and Cities: the future—Delivering an Urban Renaissance", was published in November 2000 and incorporated the majority of the task force's recommendations. An annex to the White Papers lists specific responses to each Urban Task Force's recommendation.

Significant progress has been made in implementing all of the measures in the White Paper. An implementation plan reporting on progress made between 2000 and 2003 is available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website.

These achievements have since been built on by the Government's Sustainable Communities Plan, launched in February 2003. This plan sets out a clear set of objectives and actions for the long term development of sustainable communities. It takes forward ideas developed in the Urban Task Force's report and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's subsequent White Paper, creating a robust framework and action plan for delivery.

More recently, Lord Rogers reconvened the task force and prepared an independent follow-up report, "Towards a Strong Urban Renaissance", published on 22 November 2005. As he acknowledges in his foreword to this report,

> "for the first time in 50 years there has been a measurable change of culture in favour of towns and cities, reflecting a nationwide commitment to the Urban Renaissance."

Lord Rogers highlighted how this Government's urban policies have resulted in English cities becoming the "powerhouses" of the UK economy and have become centres for cultural innovation that stand confidently on the international stage.

Government welcome the contribution that "Towards a Strong Urban Renaissance" makes to the continuing and evolving debate on how best to sustain this success. We are currently considering the report and its 53 recommendations, and are exploring how these can best inform our existing and substantive agenda of work already under way to develop world-class, well-designed and sustainable towns and cities that satisfy the demands of residents, workers and visitors alike. The vitality of our

towns and cities is an important priority for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, and the work under way includes the State of the Cities Report. This is a report to Government from a group of city experts led by Professor Michael Parkinson, due to be published in January 2006 alongside other research and analysis undertaken by the Department such as the findings of the first eight City Summits and research findings from the Framework for City Regions study.

Valuation Office Agency

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the presence of an *(a)* orchard, *(b)* vegetable patch, *(c)* fish pond and *(d)* attractive flower arrangement influence the Valuation Office Agency's assessment of value significant codes GG, GN, NA, PS and PL when conducting a council tax valuation. [30837]

Mr. Woolas: The valuation of a domestic property is based on the valuer's estimate of what the capital value of the property is.

Water Supplies (Northamptonshire)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made as part of the growth area agenda of the need for new reservoir capacity to supply Northamptonshire with water to 2031. [29181]

Yvette Cooper: There is a statutory duty on water companies to provide sufficient water for domestic purposes and the Water Act 2003 made it mandatory for water companies to produce water resource plans for the next 25 years to meet water demand.

Water companies submit their plans as part of the periodic review of prices regulated by Ofwat. In December 2004, the Director General of Water Services determined water and sewerage charges for 2005 to 2010. These allowed for substantial new investment to increase capacity for water supplies to meet predicted need and work to help assess likely need over the full 25 years of water resource plans. The Environment Agency has been engaged with all the local supply companies in producing their water resources plans. These were completed in April 2004, and are subject to regular review.

Anglian Water Services have stated that proposed levels of development over this period will require advancing plans to import water into the Anglian region from the west of the UK by a major increase in the transfer of water from the River Trent and the construction of one or more raw water storage reservoirs.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

African Peace Facility

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the African Peace Facility will continue beyond 2007; and how it is proposed to be funded. [35747]

Ian Pearson: The African Peace Facility (APF) has been an effective mechanism for delivering peace support in Africa, and critical to providing support for the African Union mission in Sudan. EU member states agree that the APF should continue beyond 2007. EU member states are now working to ensure a long-term, sustainable and flexible funding arrangement for the APF. Discussions are ongoing on the options for funding the APF.

African Union

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what proposals the Government are putting forward within the EU to support the African Union and Regional Economic Communities in strengthening their capacity to *(a)* prevent conflict and *(b)* respond to violent conflict. [35754]

Ian Pearson: As presidency, we are proposing an EU Strategy for Africa including proposals to increase the EU's commitment to help the African Union (AU) and Regional Economic Communities (RECs) predict, prevent, mediate and manage conflict, which we hope partners will agree at the European Council later this month. We are seeking to safeguard a significant capacity building element for the AU and the RECs within the EU Africa Peace Facility, and to boost efforts under the European Security and Defence Policy, including support for the African Standby Force, the provision of technical advice and enhanced co-ordination of EU member states assistance to the AU and RECs.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he has taken to promote non-conditional annual joint funding to the African Union's Peace Fund during the UK presidency of the EU. [35748]

Ian Pearson: As presidency of the European Union, we are proposing an EU Strategy for Africa including the important principle of providing flexible funding to support African Union (AU) peace support operations and build capacity within the organisation. We hope that partners will agree to the Strategy at the European Council later this month. One of our main priorities is to secure continuing substantial EU assistance to the AU, which is currently given through the Africa Peace Facility.

In addition, the AU have proposed establishing a complementary peace fund to allow contributions from a wider donor pool. They have invited the UK and others to take part in consultations on the modalities of such a fund. We will be able to assess possible contributions following these discussions.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government have taken to assist the African Union to have greater control over the disbursal of the African peace facility's funds. [35751]

Ian Pearson: The EU's current contribution agreement with the African Union (AU) already provides for the swift transfer of funds and gives the AU significant responsibility in determining how peace facility money is utilised. The procedures for the African peace facility (APF) also require a request by the AU for APF support before any proposal for expenditure is made. By way of further improving AU control, the APF includes an allocation for capacity building

assistance, which is being used to enhance the AU's management of peace support operations. EU member states are also working to ensure a long term funding arrangement for the APF, that safeguards AU control over the disbursal of funds.

Assets (Corruption)

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on how many occasions since 1997 the United Kingdom has *(a)* deployed forfeiture-related mutual legal assistance experts to states whose assets have been secreted abroad to advise them on the form and substance of their legal assistance requests and *(b)* contributed to case-specific coordination task forces set up to work through responses to mutual legal assistance and forfeiture requests made by foreign states which are victim to large-scale corruption. [35399]

Ian Pearson: The Home Office is the UK's central authority for processing mutual legal assistance requests. The response to such requests can involve direct contact between asset recovery experts in the UK (from the Serious Fraud Office) and those overseas on an ad hoc basis. It would be inappropriate to reveal details of specific cases as this may prejudice the outcome of legal proceedings.

The UK has used its G8 presidency to encourage more strategic contact between asset recovery experts in the G8 and Africa. The Home Office has organised an asset recovery seminar, to be held in Abuja on 14 and 15 December 2005, which will bring together experts from ten African countries to discuss with G8 experts options for improving co-operation in this field.

The UK is also planning to pilot 'accelerated response teams' to assist the victim countries in making necessary mutual legal assistance requests and provide support, where required, on other matters connected to corruption investigations.

Commonwealth Summit

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the 2007 Commonwealth Summit will be held in Kampala if political unrest in Uganda continues. [35765]

Ian Pearson: The Commonwealth Secretariat will continue to monitor the situation in Uganda over the coming months. It will be for the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Don McKinnon, in consultation with member states, to make a decision on whether the 2007 Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting should be held in Kampala.

Convergence Fund

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the new flexibilities on timing of expenditure and the required level of match funding for the Structural Funds set out in his EU budgetary proposals on Monday 5 December would apply to Convergence Fund regions in the EU-15 in the same way as they apply to the EU-10. [37176]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Under the UK Presidency's proposals of 5 December, a number of changes were introduced to enhance the ability of the new member states to make more effective use of their allocations under the Structural and Cohesion Funds. Under these proposals, the changes would not apply to EU15 member states.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the *(a)* salary bill was and *(b)* administrative costs were for his Department in (i) each (A) nation and (B) region of the UK and (ii) London in 2004–05. [35866]

Ian Pearson: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does not identify its expenditure on salaries or administrative costs in the United Kingdom by nation or region.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much was paid by his Department in rent for properties in *(a)* total, *(b)* each (i) region and (ii) nation of the UK and *(c)* London in 2004–05. [35935]

Ian Pearson: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) paid a total of £1,117,396 in rent for properties in the UK in the financial year 2004–05. All of these properties are in England. £94,000 was paid in rent for Wiston House, Steyning, Sussex and £1,023,396 for properties in London.

In addition, the FCO occupies part of a Home Office building in Croydon where the annual service charge in the financial year 2004–05 includes a rental element of £422,978, not included in the figure given above.

Departmental Policy

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the recently reported statements of Mockbul Ali, departmental Islamic issues adviser, on the Muslim Brotherhood and Jamaal-e-Islami as pragmatic reformist liberal movements reflect his Department's policy; and if he will make a statement. [36078]

Dr. Howells: I understand my hon. Friend is referring to an article in the 5 December 2005 issue of the *New Statesman* that draws on leaked documents. My hon. Friend will be aware that the Government do not comment on such documents.

Departmental Staff

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) how many staff are employed by his Department in each *(a)* region and *(b)* nation of the UK; and if he will make a statement; [35899]

(2) how many and what proportion of each civil service grade in his Department is located in each *(a)* region and *(b)* nation of the UK; what the average salary is for each grade; and if he will make a statement; [35900]

(3) what the value is of *(a)* pay supplements, *(b)* bonuses and *(c)* other incentive packages that are payable in his Department on the basis of geographic location; how many people are in receipt of each payment; and what the total cost to his Department of each payment was in 2004–05. [35901]

Ian Pearson: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) employs approximately 6,000 UK based staff. At any one time, approximately 2,000 staff work in the FCO's buildings in London and about 1,200 at Hanslope Park, near Milton Keynes. Until 31 March 2005 there were separate sets of pay scales for UK based staff working in London and overseas and for those in other parts of the UK. There were, however, no incentive payments as such. Since 1 April 2005 all staff have been on the same pay scale but there is a location allowance of £3,000 for staff working in London.

The average salary for each grade in the FCO for 2004–05, the latest figures available, are in the following table.

£

Grade	*Average salary*
A1 London	14,281
A2 London	17,761
B3 London	21,686
C4 London	26,356
C5 London	32,274
D6 London	41,275
D7 London	50,307
A1 National	12,388
A2 National	14,751
B3 National	18,629
C4 National	24,659
C5 National	31,712
D6 National	38,857
D7 National	44,955
SMS1	63,062
SMS2	81,694
SMS3	101,631
SMS4	134,732

Eritrea/Ethiopia

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Eritrean Government to reconsider their decision to expel UN peacekeepers; if he will initiate urgent peace talks between the Eritrean and Ethiopian Governments; and if he will make a statement. [36932]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* We remain concerned about the continuing tensions between Ethiopia and Eritrea over their disputed border. Most recently, my noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa (Lord Triesman of Tottenham) raised the border issue with the Ethiopian ambassador on 6 December, and with the Eritrean ambassador on 9 December. He will be visiting Addis Ababa on 17 December for further discussions with Prime Minister Meles on various issues including the border dispute. Lord Triesman also made clear, in a statement on 7 December, our condemnation of Eritrea's request to withdraw certain members of the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE).

In our frequent contacts, at ministerial and senior official level, with representatives of Ethiopia and Eritrea, we regularly underline that there should be no return to war; that the decision of the Boundary Commission is final and binding, and must be implemented; and that they should engage in dialogue on all issues that divide them. We have also called on both parties to respond promptly and positively to the demands contained in UN Security Council Resolution 1640, which the UK supports fully.

Francophone Africa

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on UK diplomatic representation in francophone Africa. [35370]

Ian Pearson: The UK is represented as follows in those African countries where French is an official language.

We have resident embassies or high commissions in Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Guinea, Rwanda and Senegal. Cote d'Ivoire is currently covered by our high commission in Ghana due to the security situation.

We have honorary consuls in Chad, Congo, Djibouti, Gabon, Madagascar and Niger, a community liaison officer in Benin, and Liaison offices in Burundi and Mali. Our honorary consul slots in Burkina Faso and Equatorial Guinea are temporarily vacant. We have no resident representation in the Central African Republic, Comoros and Togo.

Haiti

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the recent elections in Haiti. [35575]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The elections in Haiti have been postponed due to security fears and technical difficulties. The first round of presidential and legislative elections is now scheduled for 8 January 2006, with a second round planned for 15 February. The European Union has agreed to send an election observation mission.

Indonesia

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has had made of reports that Indonesian authorities have used British-made arms against civilians. [35764]

Ian Pearson: We have sought information from the Indonesian authorities concerning reports that Tactica water cannon vehicles have been used in Papua. We understand at this stage that the water cannon were used in Jayapura to break up a violent demonstration aimed at an office of the Indonesian Electoral Commission. Two local non-governmental organisations have indicated to British embassy Jakarta staff that they considered this a reasonable level of force for the police to use, and a more appropriate response to public disorder than some of the methods employed by the police in the past.

We consider that the use by a Government within their own borders of proportionate force to maintain law and order, subject to appropriate controls, is legitimate and does not constitute internal repression or a human rights abuse.

Iraq

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the Prime Minister's Evidence to the Liaison Committee on 22 November, what steps have been taken by the Government to find out how many Iraqi civilians have been killed as a result of action by coalition forces since the invasion in March 2003. [35783]

Dr. Howells: As the Government have said previously, no definitive measure of civilian casualties exists. There are several estimates available, produced by non-governmental organisations, such as the Iraq Body Count report. However, we believe the Iraqi Government are best placed to monitor the number of civilian casualties and continue to do so through the Iraqi Ministry of Health. It is important to note that acts of terrorism are by far the largest cause of civilian deaths in Iraq.

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made since June 2004 to the Iraqi Government on investigating allegations that detainees have been tortured by official agencies or agents of the Iraqi Government. [35785]

Dr. Howells: When we have had reason to suspect that detainees have been ill-treated by the Iraqi authorities we have raised our concerns immediately with the Iraqi Government at senior levels. The Iraqis have told us they do not condone abuse and have taken action to investigate.

Most recently my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, issued a statement on 15 November condemning what appears to have been illegal detention and abuse at a building used by the Ministry of Interior. He welcomed the immediate announcement by the Iraqi Prime Minister of an investigation into this incident and more widely to ensure that abuse was not occurring elsewhere.

Ministerial Travel

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on how many occasions since 7 July he has used the London underground in connection with his official duties. [35029]

Mr. Straw: Once.

Nigeria

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the situation in the Bayelsa state of Nigeria. [35574]

Ian Pearson: The British High Commission in Abuja is in close touch with the Nigerian Federal authorities, following the return of the State Governor to the state capital, Yenagoa, on 21 November, after skipping bail in the UK where he has been charged with money laundering offences. The local security situation remains tense. There have been pro and anti Governor protests but no serious disorder. The Nigerian police and army are strengthening their presence as a precaution. We have amended our travel advice to recommend against all but essential travel to Bayelsa state until tensions dissipate.

Non-departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which of the advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by his Department *(a)* have a statutory base, *(b)* publish their advice to Government, *(c)* publish an annual report and *(d)* lay an annual report before Parliament; and if he will indicate in each instance whether this is under a statutory requirement. [34682]

Dr. Howells: None of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's three advisory non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) has a statutory base.

The Wilton Park Academic Council publishes minutes of its meetings on the Wilton Park Website at:

http://www.wiltonpark.org/wpac/index.aspx. The Government Hospitality Advisory Committee for the purchase of wine has a publication scheme under the Freedom of Information legislation, which acts as guidance for information that is made available. The Diplomatic Service Appeals Board does not publish its advice to Government.

The Wilton Park Academic Council and the Diplomatic Service Appeals Board do not publish annual reports. The Government Hospitality Advisory Committee for the Purchase of Wine does publish an annual report.

None of the NDPBs lay an annual report before Parliament.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs which of the advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by his Department *(a)* hold public meetings, *(b)* conduct public consultation exercises, *(c)* conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests, *(d)* publish a register of its members' interests, *(e)* publish agendas for meetings and *(f)* publish the minutes of meetings; and whether in each case this is under a statutory requirement. [34683]

Ian Pearson: None of our advisory non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) hold public meetings or conduct public consultation exercises.

Neither the Wilton Park Academic Council nor the Diplomatic Service Advisory Board conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests. The Government Hospitality Advisory Committee for the purchase of wine does not conduct formal consultations exercises with outside commercial interests but, as it exists to advise on the purchasing of wine, it has no option but to consult with commercial companies.

We do not publish a register of hon. Members' interests or agendas for meetings.

Whilst there is no statutory requirement for them to do so, Wilton Park Academic Council publishes minutes of meetings. These are available at:

http://www.wiltonpark.org/wpac/index.aspx. The Government Hospitality Advisory Committee for the purchase of wine publishes a summary of minutes of meetings on the Foreign and Commonwealth Office web site at:

http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket%2FXcelerate%2FShowPage&c=Page&cid=1007029390518&action=search&sf=mini&referrer=FCO+Main&stq=0&pubId=1006886514545&q=Government+Hospitality. The Diplomatic Service Appeals Board does not publish the minutes of meetings.

Public Relations

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the value was of *(a)* public opinion research and *(b)* public relations contracts awarded by his Department in (i) each (A) nation and (B) region of the UK and (ii) London in 2004–05. [35936]

Ian Pearson: In the financial year 2004–05, the value of UK public opinion research conducted by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) including informal qualitative consultations as well as survey research, was £123,350 + VAT. The total mostly comprises studies covering the whole UK, centrally commissioned from London. Within the total, £22,850 was spent on England-only studies (£5,713 in the north east, £5,713 in the north west and £11,424 in London).

The total value of public relations contracts commissioned by the FCO during this period was £534,000 + VAT. These were centrally-commissioned contracts covering the whole UK. A regional breakdown is not therefore available.

Rates

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much was paid by his Department in rates to each local authority in the UK in 2004–05; and how much was paid in *(a)* each region of the UK and *(b)* London in that year. [35985]

Ian Pearson: Rates were paid on Foreign and Commonwealth Office buildings to local authorities in the UK in 2004–05 as follows:

Local authority	*Site*	£ *Amount paid*
City of Westminster	Old Admiralty Building	718,980.14
City of Westminster	King Charles Street	2,120,400.00
City of Westminster	1 Carlton Gardens	[1]1,089.00
City of Westminster	1 Carlton Gardens	[2]446.40
London borough of Lambeth	89 Albert Embankment	67,233.55
Milton Keynes council	Hanslope Park	567,720.00

[1] Non-domestic rates for apartment.
[2] Council tax on house.

Somaliland

Kerry McCarthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with representatives of *(a)* European Union governments, *(b)* South Africa and *(c)* Somaliland on recognition for Somaliland. [35315]

Ian Pearson: We have had frequent discussions with representatives of Somaliland on the question of recognition, most recently when my noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, met the Foreign Minister of Somaliland on 20 May. We have not had substantive discussions of this matter with European Union partners, South Africa or any other government.

The international community does not recognise Somaliland as an independent state. We have urged the Somaliland authorities to agree a mutually acceptable solution on their future status with any eventual government in Somalia. We believe that African countries should take a lead in any eventual recognition process.

Torture (Third Party Countries)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions his Department has had with its counterpart in the US regarding the torture of detainees in third party countries. [36405]

Mr. Straw: My Department discusses counter terrorism and human rights issues with its United States counterpart frequently.

Uganda

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will raise the matter of the conflict in northern Uganda at the UN Security Council during the British presidency. [35759]

Ian Pearson: The UK has supported previous efforts to raise northern Uganda in the United Nations (UN) Security Council. As presidency the UK has invited Jan Egeland, the UN Under Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Co-ordinator to provide a briefing on humanitarian issues in Africa on 19 December.

A number of non governmental organisations have written to my right hon. Friend, the Foreign Secretary, advocating a UN Security Council Resolution during the UK's presidency of the Security Council. We are currently considering their ideas and how we can most effectively continue to address the situation in northern Uganda.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact of the decision by the Government of Uganda to imprison an opposition politician on progress towards democracy, good governance and respect for human rights in Uganda. [35761]

Ian Pearson: My noble Friend, the Lord Triesman of Tottenham, Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, expressed our serious concerns

regarding the arrest of Dr. Kiiza Besigye on charges including treason, to the Ugandan Foreign Minister Kutesa, on 17 November. The UK, on behalf of the EU, also issued a statement on 21 November. We are pressing for a fair and transparent civilian trial. My right hon. Friend the Prime Minister made this clear to President Museveni at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Valetta.

The move to a pluralist democratic system in advance of the next elections in February or March 2006 is a crucial step in the political development of Uganda. We have consistently encouraged the Ugandan Government to ensure that all parties are able, and are seen to be able, to compete on a level playing field.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken by his Department to help resolve the conflict in northern Uganda. [35762]

Ian Pearson: Resolving the long-running conflict in Northern Uganda and addressing its humanitarian impact are priorities for the UK. In our discussions with the Uganda Government, we emphasise the need to bring peace to northern Uganda, provide adequate protection for the people of the North and to continue to encourage those Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) members not indicted by the International Criminal Court to seek amnesty and re-integration into their communities. We are also encouraging the governments of the region to work together to ensure that those LRA members who have been indicted are brought to justice.

The UK has provided support for a number of specific peace initiatives, including the recent mediation effort led by Betty Bigombe, a former Ugandan Minister. We are providing practical help to the Amnesty Commission, which is helping to re-integrate former combatants into the community. We have also helped establish a local radio station, MEGA FM, which, through its programming, helps to promote peace. To date we have provided over £2 million and will be doing more.

UN Peacebuilding Commission

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether it is the policy of the Government to support the expansion of the mandate of the UN Peacebuilding Commission to allow for a conflict prevention role. [35731]

Ian Pearson: The Government support a role for the UN Peacebuilding Commission in preventing violent conflict. By tracking peacebuilding efforts and offering advice to UN member states, donors, including the International Finance Institutions, and the wider international community, the Commission should help to reduce the risk of post-conflict countries falling back into conflict. The Government also support the proposal that the Peacebuilding Commission should consider countries on the verge of lapsing into conflict at the request of the country concerned.

United Arab Emirates

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Government of the United Arab Emirates regarding the fair and equal treatment of homosexuals. [35734]

Dr. Howells: We have had no recent discussions regarding the fair and equal treatment of homosexuals with the United Arab Emirates Government.

Zimbabwe

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations his Department has made to the South African Government in respect of *(a)* its policy towards, *(b)* financial links with and *(c)* trade links with Zimbabwe. [15372]

Ian Pearson: South Africa is in no doubt about the Government's views on Zimbabwe, including that all concerned states should be encouraging Zimbabwe to pursue policies which help rather than harm its economy. Ministers and officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office regularly make these views clear to the South African Government, most recently when my right hon. Friend, the Foreign Secretary and South African Foreign Minister Dlamini-Zuma co-chaired the EU/South Africa Co-operation Council in Brussels on 7 November.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Solicitor-General what mechanisms are in place to assess the effectiveness of consultant-led projects in the Law Officers' Departments; what sanctions are available to penalise consultants who run unsuccessful projects; how many projects conducted by consultants were assessed as unsuccessful in each year since 2000; and what sanctions were imposed in each case. [29081]

The Solicitor-General: The Law Officers' Departments have either had no consultant-led projects or none has been assessed as unsuccessful.

The Crown Prosecution Service has adopted the Office of Government Commerce's Gateway review process to provide assurance at critical stages of a programme's or project's lifecycle, whether led by departmental staff or consultants. Best practice project techniques and governance procedures are followed to ensure the consultant(s) meet their terms of reference and deliverables for the project and guidance has been issued to departmental managers on the monitoring and reviewing of consultants performance. Where appropriate, payments are linked to the achievement of milestones. Failure to deliver milestones could result in payment being withheld. No project has been assessed as unsuccessful in the time cited.

HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate rarely uses external consultants for analysis, advice, the investigation of problems or assistance in developing new systems, structures or capabilities within HMCPSI.

In the event of a consultant-led project which was completed unsatisfactorily, a reduction or cancellation of fees would be sought. No instance has occurred in the time cited.

The Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Service was created on 18 April 2005 and has not run any projects assessed as unsuccessful. It has arrangements in place, which would evaluate progress during and after project completion.

The Serious Fraud Office has had no consultant-led projects.

During the time cited, the Treasury Solicitor's Office, including the Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers, has had no consultant-led projects assessed as unsuccessful. The officer commissioning the project has reviewed output. Consultant-led projects in TSol have been relatively small and subject to contractual obligations, with appropriate controls. These included defined deliverables and time scales, options for withholding payment until output is delivered to an acceptable standard or terminating contracts at given stages without penalty. There was also an agreed escalation process for dealing with any contractual issues.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Solicitor-General what steps the Department takes to ensure that consultancies do not claim excessive expenses while working for his Department and its agencies. [29085]

The Solicitor-General: All the Law Officers' Departments scrutinise expenses claimed by the consultants they employ.

Expenses by consultants working on behalf of the Crown Prosecution Service must be approved in advance by the Project Manager. Expenses are reimbursed on the basis of the costs actually incurred and must be supported by original receipts. Costs must be within the ceilings determined by the Departments' travel and subsistence policy. CPS includes these requirements in its letters of appointment.

HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate consultancies are agreed on a fee for the work or daily rate with necessary travelling expenses. HMCPSI's prior authority would be required for any further disbursements. Claims for travelling expenses or disbursements which were insufficiently justified would be queried before payment

The Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Service employs consultants via the Office of Government Commerce's S-CAT service ensuring that procurement of consultancy services accord with the terms and conditions agreed by OGC, Expenses are included in monthly reports, scrutinised by RCPO staff.

In the Serious Fraud Office, authorisation of consultancy fees and any associated expenses are subject to internal SFO governance and authorisation controls applicable to all expenditure, ensuring that invoices are for agreed rates, for services delivered correctly and to standards agreed in the contract. All projects are led by a Senior Responsible Officer and internal project boards regularly monitor performance against planned activity and budget.

The Treasury Solicitor's Office, including the Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers, applies to appointing the services of consultants and management of their contracts, including charges and cost monitoring, the same government accounting principles on procurement as they do on the engagement of external service providers generally: to achieve value for money, with due regard to propriety and regularity.

Human Rights (Iraq)

Mr. Robathan: To ask the Solicitor-General pursuant to his answer of 5 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 964W, on human rights (Iraq), whether Mr. Phil Shiner has provided evidence of potential criminal offences to the prosecuting authorities; and if he will place in the Library the correspondence between Mr. Phil Shiner and the Attorney-General's office. [36997]

The Solicitor-General: Mr. Phil Shiner has provided some information to the prosecuting authorities. Investigations are ongoing into these allegations. I will not place correspondence between Mr. Phil Shiner and my office in the Library because it would be inappropriate to do so while these issues are being considered.

Statutory Instruments

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General what training is given to *(a)* policy officials and *(b)* lawyers in the Law Officers' Department responsible for drafting statutory instruments; and if he will make a statement. [34536]

The Solicitor-General: Statutory Instruments are drafted by departmental lawyers based on instructions from policy divisions. Where SIs amend primary legislation, Parliamentary Counsel are consulted.

As members of the Government Legal Service (GLS), departmental lawyers receive extensive training on the preparation and drafting of statutory instruments. This consists of a combination of lectures and practical exercises run by experienced practitioners in the GLS, coupled with training given by legal advisers who advise the Parliamentary Scrutiny Committees. In addition, senior managers in the GLS take a close interest in the quality of SIs and provide frequent feedback and on the job training to those with lead responsibility for drafting. This is an ongoing process and part of the continuing education of government legal advisers.

Written Answers to Questions

Wednesday 14 December 2005

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Concessionary Bus Fares

9. **Mr. Harper:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much funding the Government will provide for the concessionary bus fares scheme to Forest of Dean district council and Tewkesbury borough council. [37202]

Mr. Woolas: It is not possible to say since Revenue Support Grant is an unhypothecated block grant. My right hon. Friend the Chancellor announced in his Budget statement that an extra £350 million would be added for the additional costs of moving to a free-fare scheme.

County Councils

10. **Mr. Hoyle:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the future of county councils. [37203]

Mr. Woolas: The Government are currently engaged in a wide-ranging debate about the role, functions and form of local authorities including county councils. We plan to publish a White Paper on the future of local government in the middle of next year.

House Building

11. **Mr. Jeremy Browne:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the additional public amenities required to support new house building in the south west. [37204]

Yvette Cooper: The need for services and facilities—such as transport—to support the development of sustainable communities is currently being considered as part of the review of the Regional Spatial Strategy being undertaken by the South West regional assembly.

14. **Bob Spink:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on new house building in the south-east and the infrastructure to support it. [37207]

Yvette Cooper: The South East England regional assembly is completing its draft South East Plan, which includes policies on house building and infrastructure. The Government believe that providing infrastructure is an important part of supporting housing growth and sustainable communities. That is why we have proposed for consultation a Planning Gain Supplement to support infrastructure investment.

Local Government Finance

12. **Mr. Amess:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent representations he has received regarding the local government finance settlement. [37205]

Mr. Woolas: There were 369 representations made to the consultation on options of the grant distribution system held over the summer. We have also received a variety of correspondence on the options between the end of this consultation and the announcement of the settlement on 5 December. Since the announcement we have received around 20 representations.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will itemise the costs which comprise the sum *(a)* spent to date on the council tax revaluation in England; and *(b)* which of these costs cannot be recouped. [31785]

Mr. Woolas: The Valuation Office Agency incurred approximately £60 million in costs and contractual liabilities in relation to the revaluation in England prior to its postponement. Some £45 million will be of potential use in the future.

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assurances his Department has given to the chair of the Local Government Association regarding extra financial assistance for local authorities relating to *(a)* licensing, *(b)* asylum seekers, *(c)* pensions and *(d)* disposal of electrical equipment. [35448]

Mr. Woolas: The Government have been working with the Local Government Association (LGA) to consider the pressures which authorities face over the next two years and the ways that those pressures can be managed. We have been moving forward jointly with local government in a number of areas. These include the recent changes to the local government pensions scheme where my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister made clear that the revocation of the 85-year rule would not create extra pressures on local authority spending. The Government have also recently announced that the 2004–05 asylum support costs, as notified through the special circumstances arrangements, will be met in full. The same amount has been set aside to settle any 2005–06 special circumstances bids that are made by local authorities.

The Government have confirmed with the LGA its commitment to the New Burdens procedure. My hon. Friend, the Minister for Creative Industries and Licensing re-affirmed this week that costs incurred by local authorities in meeting their requirements under the new Licensing Act will (provided they have been incurred legitimately and efficiently) be fully met by fees within the national fee regime.

The Government are continuing to work with local authorities to establish the reasonable costs on local government resulting from the waste electrical and electronic equipment (WEEE) directive.

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations he has received regarding the Local Government Finance Settlement. [37284]

Mr. Woolas: Consultation on the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2006–07 opened on the 5 December and closes on 11 January 2006. Representations received so far have mainly been about the data used in the formulae.

Barker Report

13. **Tony Baldry:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with local authority leaders in the south-east on the Government's response to Barker. [37206]

Yvette Cooper: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister maintains periodic contact with the chair of the Local Government Association in order to discuss issues of concern to local authorities. My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister met the Local Government Association (LGA) on 25 November. The meeting included a discussion of aspects of the Government's response to the Barker Review. Representatives from south-east local authorities were in attendance.

Deprivation Indices

15. **Ben Chapman:** To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether his Department compiles indices of deprivation at sub-local authority level. [37208]

Mr. Woolas: The Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004 (IMD 2004) has been compiled at sub-local authority district level. It is based on Super Output Area (SOA) level data. SOAs are aggregates of Census Output Areas, with each SOA comprising an average of 1,500 people. There are a total of 32,482 SOAs in England.

Access to Services

Michael Jabez Foster: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what information his Department collects on the *(a)* closure of (i) post offices, (ii) bank branches and (iii) independent retail shops and *(b)* effects on number of miles travelled to access services. [24773]

Mr. Woolas: The information requested is not collected by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.

Cigarette Fires (Deaths)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many people died in the United Kingdom in fires caused by cigarettes in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [37391]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The following table shows the number of people that died in the UK in a fire caused by smokers' materials (i.e. cigarettes, cigars, pipe tobacco) in each of the last 10 years.

	Fatal casualties
1995	168
1996	179
1997	167
1998	160
1999	130
2000	143
2001	146
2002[1]	123
2003[1]	123
2004[2]	116

[1] Excluding incidents not recorded during periods of industrial action in 2002 and 2003.
[2] Provisional data.
Source:
Fire and Rescue Service FDR1 returns to ODPM.

Colchester Borough Council

Bob Russell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 2 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 796W, to the hon. Member for North Essex (Mr. Jenkin) on Colchester borough council, if he will ask the chief executive of the Audit Commission to provide the hon. Member for Colchester with a copy of the letter which the chief executive will be writing to the hon. Member for North Essex, in respect of an objection to Colchester borough council's accounts for year ended 31 March 2004. [37253]

Mr. Woolas: A copy of the chief executive of the Audit Commission's reply to the hon. Member for North Essex dated 6 December has been placed in the Library of the House.

Council Tax

Martin Horwood: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of each local authority's spending was represented by council tax income from householders in each council tax band in the last year for which figures are available. [36341]

Mr. Woolas: A table providing estimates, for each local authority, of the proportion of budgeted revenue expenditure for 2004–05 that was financed from council taxes payable in respect of each council tax band, has been made available in the Library of the House.

Mr. Bone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what representations from pensioner groups he has received regarding council tax in the last 12 months. [37336]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has identified eight written representations from groups exclusively representing pensioners on council tax in the last 12 months. Issues raised include the effect of council tax bills on pensioners on low and fixed incomes; council tax benefit; and reform of the local government finance system.

We recognise the concerns expressed in these representations and many other letters from individual pensioners. Sir Michael Lyons is considering such issues in his Inquiry into the funding of local government within the context of its wider functions and future role. We look forward to receiving Sir Michael Lyons' recommendations at the end of 2006.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what advice and guidance the Valuation Office Agency has given to local authority IT *(a)* departments and *(b)* suppliers in relation to the council tax revaluation in (i) England and (ii) Wales. [29709]

Mr. Woolas: The information is as follows:

(i) The Valuation Office Agency has provided no advice and guidance to local authority IT departments and suppliers in the relation to the council tax revaluation in England.

(ii) Council tax revaluation in Wales is a matter for the Welsh Assembly Government.

Councillors (Pensions/Income)

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what changes his Department and its predecessors have made to the *(a)* allowances, *(b)* salaries and *(c)* pensions for councillors since May 1997. [33486]

Mr. Woolas: Since May 1997 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has made a number of changes to the rules relating to allowances and pensions for councillors. There is no provision for the payment of salaries to councillors.

The principal effects of these changes are as follows:

To give responsibility for the setting of allowances to local authorities.

To allow local authorities to pay allowances for the care of children and other dependants.

To allow councillors access to the local government pension scheme.

Damages

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1276W, on damages, if he will list the cases where the potential liabilities and damages were of such significance that the cases were brought to ministerial attention. [34395]

Jim Fitzpatrick: No cases fell into this category in the last year.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps are taken by the Department to support staff with mental ill-health. [36266]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) supports staff with mental ill-health while they are at work, while they are absent because of their illness and during their return to work. ODPM has an in-house Counselling and Support Service and a contracted out Occupational Health Adviser both of which offer support and advice. Additionally line managers and Human Resources offer support and advice to staff with mental ill-health.

Fire Services

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the Government's plans for regional fire control centres will require London to have a new fire control centre. [31789]

Jim Fitzpatrick: London already has a regional fire control room, which would be capable of being linked into the national network of regional centres. However, the London regional control centre was planned and set up before the events of 9/11 and before the current resilience criteria were drawn up. Consequently, it does not meet the resilience standards that the new control centres in the other regions will meet. Decisions on whether to move the existing regional control centre will be made in discussion with the London Fire and Emergency Planning Authority.

LFEPA recently affirmed their support of the Fire Control project.

Firelink Procurement Process

David Taylor: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the outcome of the Firelink procurement process will be announced. [37334]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The announcement of the Firelink preferred bidder was made on 11 November 2005. Subject to satisfactory resolution of some outstanding matters it is anticipated that the contract will be signed after the new year.

Identity Cards

Lynne Jones: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the *(a)* total and *(b)* net cost of (i) integrating the proposed identity card scheme into his Department's IT systems and (ii) the ongoing operation of the scheme within his Department. [31121]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The overwhelming majority of the services which the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) oversees are administered by local authorities, and ODPM is working with them to develop a business case for authentication and verification management, which could include use of the identity card. ODPM is represented on the ministerial committee on identity cards which oversees the work on benefits planning and realisation.

Land Charge Searches

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will give local councils the power to increase the price of personal land charge searches. [36583]

Bridget Prentice: I have been asked to reply.

Fees payable for personal searches of the local land charges register are set by the Lord Chancellor, with the consent of HM Treasury, under the Local Land Charges Act 1975. Keith Hill announced the Government's intention to review this arrangement on 10 February 2004, [*Standing Committee E Report*] column 574. We are now re-considering the form and content of the review in the light of the report by the Office of Fair Trading of their study into the market for property searches. The OFT report was published on 21 September.

The Lord Chancellor's fees-setting power for all local land charges services in Wales, including personal search fees, was devolved to the National Assembly for Wales on 31 December 2004.

Media Monitoring

Philip Davies: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much his Office and its predecessor Departments spent on media monitoring activities in each of the last eight financial years. [35630]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created on 29 May 2002. Information in relation to its predecessor Departments is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Costs (£000—exclusive of VAT) are as follows:

	National press cuttings	Regional press cuttings	Media monitoring unit (subscription to Cabinet Office)
2002–03 (1 June-31 March)	151.4	54.1	30.1
2003–04	164.1	73.9	41.2
2004–05	204.9	74.6	49.0
2005–06 (1 April-30 September)	110.1	39.4	26.5

Neighbourhood Renewal Fund

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the performance rating is of each local strategic partnership in receipt of neighbourhood renewal fund resources. [37172]

Mr. Woolas: Local strategic partnerships are not awarded performance ratings, rather each LSP carries out a self assessment of performance against national PSA floor targets and local targets in addition to a review of their partnership management arrangements. This self assessment then helps inform the key areas for improvement. Each LSP awards itself an overall "traffic light' assessment which reflects both progress made and challenges faced by each LSP. LSPs are encouraged to share these assessments at a local level—however at a national level we can say that 36 percent. have self assessed as 'green', 46 percent. as 'amber green' and 18 percent. as 'amber red'. The neighbourhood renewal unit plan to produce a full list of all assessments early in the New Year.

Private Sector Investments

Chris Ruane: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* location, *(b)* cost and *(c)* completion date if of each private finance initiative project within his responsibility, broken down by local authorities and grouped by region in England. [36892]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister currently has responsibility for the following private finance initiative projects and the details are as follows.

Region/authority	Location	Completion date	Cost (capital value) £ million
London			
Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre	Westminster, London	January 2012	3
London Fire, Emergency and Planning Authority	London	January 2021	145.5
LB Croydon	Croydon Central, North and South	May 2010	27
LB Hackney	Hackney South and Shoreditch	March 2032	25
LB Tower Hamlets	Bethnal Green and Bow	March 2029	19.3
LB Harrow	Harrow East and West	March 2006	0.9
LB Barking and Dagenham	Barking	September 2030	35
LB Lambeth	Lambeth	March 2007	9.6
LB Islington	Islington- vehicles depot	March 2013	21.6
LB Islington	Islington-street properties	February 2033	89
LB Hammersmith and Fulham	Hammersmith-housing	February 2034	2.3
LB Newham	Canning Town-housing	May 2035	41
South East			
Brighton and Hove	Brighton	April 2028	0.5
Kent CC	Kent	March 2009	7.4
Reading BC	North Whitley- housing	February 2034	60
East of England			
Norfolk CC	Norfolk-salt barns	April 2020	1.3
Essex CC	Clacton	November 2035	4.2
Norwich CC	Norwich North	January 2017	12.6
Cambridgeshire	Cambridge	March 2012	11.9
Wiltshire CC	North Wiltshire	March 2027	8
Avon Somerset and Gloucestershire Fire Authorities	Avonmouth	March 2029	8
Cornwall CC	St. Ives, Falmouth, Camborne, Truro, St. Aaustell, North Cornwall and South East Cornwall	March 2031	12.26
East Midlands			
Derby CC	Derby	August 2006	1
Derby CC	Derby-housing	July 2030	9.9
North East Derbyshire	Matlock-housing	July 2013	1.7
West Midlands			
Stoke-on-Trent CC	Bentilee District Centre	October 2030	8.35
North East			
Redcar and Cleveland	Redcar	May 2027	13.72
Sunderland CC	Sunderland North and South	September 2027	5.7
Tyne and Wear Fire and Civil Defence Authority	Tyne and Wear	August 2030	23
North West			
Bolton MBC	Bolton North East, South East and West	September 2028	6.03
Cheshire CC	Ellesmere Port and Neston	August 2033	1.1

Region/authority	Location	Completion date	Cost (capital value) £ million
Copeland BC	Copeland	September 2029	8.12
Liverpool CC	Garston	August 2027	20.4
Trafford MBC	Altrincham and sale West	October 2028	16.9
Manchester CC	A6 Plymouth Grove-housing	February 2033	61.6
Greater Manchester Fire Service	Streford-Greater Manchester	October 2026	4.79
Warrington BC	Anson and Blenhiem Close	August 2034	20
Lancashire Fire Authority	Accrington and Morecambe		3.49
Yorkshire and Humber			
Leeds	Swarecliffe-housing	February 2035	113
Sheffield	Sheffield central	February 2031	30.5
SelbyDC	Sherburn and Tadcaster	February 2034	17
North Yorkshire Fire Authority	York and Easingwold	March 2028	6.36

Regeneration (Thetford)

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on funding for and the impact of regeneration schemes in Thetford. [37201]

Yvette Cooper: Since 2000, the Breckland Community Economic Regeneration Scheme has provided some £12.7 million to fund projects in Thetford which are helping to renew the town centre and build on its cultural and heritage attractions. The skills and job prospects of local people are being supported through a range of vocational training schemes.

Rent Restructuring

Mr. Drew: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he has instructed local authorities to introduce rent restructuring in this year's settlement; and if he will make a statement. [36793]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* Rent restructuring was introduced in April 2002. It is a non-statutory scheme, and local authorities are not required to implement it, though they are strongly encouraged to do so by the way the housing revenue account subsidy system operates.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister carried out a three-year review of the policy during 2004 and the decision on the recommendations was announced on 7 November. The draft housing revenue account subsidy determination, which was issued for consultation at the same time, was prepared on that basis. The consultation closes at 10 am on Monday 12 December.

Our intention is to issue the final housing revenue account subsidy determination before Christmas.

Statutory Instruments

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many statutory instruments introduced by his Department were *(a)* withdrawn, *(b)* amended by a further statutory instrument and *(c)* reprinted because of defective drafting in each session since 1997; and what steps he is taking and (ii) plans to take to prevent further such instances. [34313]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The number of statutory instruments introduced since May 2002 (when the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister came into being) which, by reason of defective drafting, were

(a) withdrawn, is two,

(b) amended by further statutory instruments, is seven, and

(c) reprinted, is seven.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is (i) providing additional training for all those involved in drafting SIs. Increased checking is being undertaken by policy officials and the drafting lawyer, (ii) Lawyers in the ODPM are currently considering a further examination of the statutory instrument project planning process. They will also encourage all officials involved in the production of secondary legislation to be especially aware of the need to build in additional time for checking, particularly where there are peaks of activity, such as in February/March, in the run- up to the start of the financial year.

Support Services

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what assessment he has made of the extent of the duplication of *(a)* information collected and *(b)* needs assessment required for (i) supporting people funding and (ii) the single assessment process for care; [37292]

(2) what discussions his Department has had with the Department of Health about integrating the service provision arising from supporting people assessments and the single assessment process into a single users plan. [37303]

Mr. Woolas: There is currently no standardised approach to information collection and needs assessment for the receipt of housing-related support through the supporting people programme. Nor are there currently standardised arrangements which cover supporting people and care assessments together. Arrangements are instead set by, and vary between, local authorities and between providers. There may be some duplication between the information collected for supporting people services and that collected through the Single Assessment Process, but in some cases this is already being handled in an integrated way.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's initial supporting people strategy—"Creating Sustainable Communities: Supporting Independence"—makes clear our commitment to continue to move towards a streamlined and integrated assessment process which

includes supporting people, care and other relevant services. This also takes forward the intention set out in "Independence, Well-being and Choice" to build upon the Single Assessment Process and streamline assessments across agencies, and we will continue to work with Department of Health and other Departments as we take this work forward.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what discussions his Department has had with the Department of Health about training of health and social care assessment staff in housing-related support services; [37293]

(2) what plans he has to promote the development and delivery of joint training on supporting people to health, care and housing staff. [37301]

Mr. Woolas: With support and sponsorship from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, a pilot project has been carried out to test the desirability and practicability of establishing a professional qualification for those working in housing, care and support sector. This pilot concluded in March 2005, and we are considering as part of our work to develop a strategy for supporting people how to build on its success. We will continue to discuss this, and other aspects of the strategy work, with Department of Health.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has to revise supporting people guidance to give greater coverage of health and care related needs. [37305]

Mr. Woolas: Supporting people is a grant programme for the provision of housing-related support services (or, in excellent authorities, welfare services). It does not fund health or care services. The power of the Secretary of State to issue guidance relates to the administration and application of supporting people grants and, as such, guidance on the use of supporting people funding does not directly discuss meeting health or care related needs.

Guidance is, however, clear on the need to ensure that supporting people services are properly aligned and linked with other relevant services, including health and care services. The work of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to develop a strategy for supporting people will allow us to consider whether and how guidance may be strengthened in this regard.

Vacant Property

Chris Huhne: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the annual value of the exemption from council tax of vacant property. [36033]

Mr. Woolas: Properties may be exempt from council tax for a limited or indefinite period for a number of reasons, for example because the owner has recently died or because they are occupied only by students. Both vacant and occupied properties may be exempt. The information that the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister collects from local authorities does not enable us to identify the number of properties in each band by type of exemption. We are not able therefore to calculate the value of exemptions granted in respect of those classes that relate only to vacant properties.

Valuation Office Agency

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidance the Valuation Office Agency has given its staff on respecting religious and cultural traditions of householders and shopkeepers when conducting an internal inspection for council tax or business rate valuation purposes. [30835]

Mr. Woolas: Valuation Office Agency staff are aware of the Race Relations legislation.

TREASURY

Cash Machines

Ben Chapman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent discussions he has had with banks and building societies on encouraging the use of cash machines on which fees for use are not charged; and if he will make a statement. [37138]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Treasury Ministers hold regular meetings with UK banks and building societies. These meetings have covered a range of issues, including free cash machines.

There are over 32,000 free ATMs in the UK and 96 per cent. of cash withdrawals are free. Virtually all banks and building societies do not charge LINK cardholders for use of their ATMs.

Devolution

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what adjustments were made to the Scottish budget as a result of the agreement with the Scottish Executive referred to in Funding the Scottish Parliament, National Assembly for Wales and the Northern Ireland Assembly in each year of its operation; and what policy decisions resulted in each adjustment. [37532]

Mr. Des Browne: The funding arrangements for the Scottish Parliament are set out in the Statement of Funding Policy. Details of changes in the Scotland DEL are set out in figure 10 of the 2005 Scotland Office Annual Report.

Barnett Formula

Adam Price: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many civil servants in his Department have worked on policy matters related to the Barnett formula in each of the last five years, broken down by grade. [36939]

Mr. Des Browne: The funding arrangements for the devolved administrations, including policy work related to the Barnett formula, are managed by the devolution

branch of the Devolved Countries and Regions team in the Treasury. In the last five years the staffing of the branch has varied slightly and is currently 1 range E, 2 range D, 1 range C and 1 range B.

Asbestos

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people have died of an asbestos-related illness in *(a)* Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* the UK in each year since 1997. [31197]

Mrs. McGuire: I have been asked to reply.

The number of mesothelioma deaths in South Tyneside, the North East, and the United Kingdom each year from 1997 is given in the following table.

Death from mesothelioma, 1997 to 2003

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002[1]	Number 2003[1]
South Tyneside	15	12	8	15	18	9	8
North East	126	100	119	123	154	127	112
United Kingdom	1,406	1,582	1,661	1,671	1,919	1,908	1,922

[1] provisional.

Source:
HSE GB mesothelioma register, Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland (HSENI).

Lung cancer deaths caused by asbestos are clinically indistinguishable from those caused by other agents such as tobacco smoke. It is estimated that about the same number of lung cancer deaths due to asbestos occur each year as mesothelioma deaths.

The number of deaths where asbestosis was specified as the underlying cause of death in South Tyneside, the North East, and the United Kingdom each year from 1997 is given in the following table.

Death with asbestosis specified as underlying cause, 1997 to 2003

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002[1]	Number 2003[1]
South Tyneside	3	0	0	0	1	2	5
North East	11	8	10	13	14	20	19
United Kingdom	70	70	68	80	94	126	122

[1] provisional.

Source:
HSE GB asbestosis register, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency (NISRA).

Death statistics for mesothelioma and asbestosis are not held in a form which allows data for individual UK constituencies to be readily available.

Contracted-out Rebate

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost of the contracted-out rebate was in the last year for which figures are available; what proportion of UK gross domestic product that figure represents; and what the projected figures are in each case for *(a)* 2010, *(b)* 2020, *(c)* 2030, *(d)* 2040 and *(e)* 2050. [34866]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

The information is not available in the format required. Such information as is available is in the table.

Tax year	Cost of contracted-out rebate (£ billion)	Cost expressed as percentage of GDP
2003–04	11.5	1.1
2010–11	11.2	0.9
2020–21	11.0	0.7
2030–31	10.3	0.5
2040–41	10.4	0.5
2050–51	11.3	0.4

Notes:

1. More up-to-date figures on the cost of the contracted-out rebate are available but the most recent for the GDP are those published in the Quinquennial Review of the National Insurance Fund. For comparison purposes it has been necessary, therefore, to use the same source for the cost of the rebate.
2. Costs are for GB receipts and are in 2003–04 prices terms—the basis for projections in the Quinquennial Review of the National Insurance Fund.
3. The Quinquennial Review does not extend to the Northern Ireland Insurance Fund so the figures provided are for GB rather than the UK.

Source:
Government Actuary's Quinquennial Review of the National Insurance Fund.

Departmental Staff (Coventry)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many staff are employed by his Department in Coventry. [37040]

John Healey: The Treasury employs no staff in Coventry.

EU Budget (UK Contribution)

Gregory Barker: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much the United Kingdom has contributed to European Union funds as a percentage of its gross domestic product in each year since 1975. [37528]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Government does not as a matter of course produce figures for the United Kingdom's net contributions to the EC Budget as a percentage of its Gross Domestic Product. The following table has been produced by taking outturn figures for the UK's net contribution to the EC Budget in each of the years 1975–76 to 2004–05 and dividing these by the latest available GDP data for the year in question.

	UK net contribution as percentage of GDP
1975–76	0.02
1976–77	0.18
1977–78	0.38
1978–79	0.46
1979–80	0.45
1980–81	0.10
1981–82	0.09
1982–83	0.27
1983–84	0.32
1984–85	0.35
1985–86	0.28
1986–87	0.32
1987–88	0.43
1988–89	0.25
1989–90	0.48
1990–91	0.39
1991–92	0.16
1992–93	0.36
1993–94	0.34
1994–95	0.24
1995–96	0.54
1996–97	0.30
1997–98	0.32
1998–99	0.48
1999–2000	0.37
2000–01	0.45
2001–02	0.15
2002–03	0.29
2003–04	0.30
2004–05	0.34

Income Tax

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many persons paid income tax at the higher rate in each financial year since January 1995; and how much was raised by the higher rate in current prices in each year. [34588]

Dawn Primarolo: Information on the estimated number of individuals who paid income tax at the higher rate in each financial year since 1990–91 is shown in table 2.1 'Number of individual income taxpayers' on the HM Revenue and Customs internet website, http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/income_tax/table2-1.xls.

Information on the estimated amount of income tax liabilities in constant (20[illegible]6) prices, before deducting tax credits, is in the tab[illegible]

Income tax l[illegible] higher rate taxpayers[1]

	£ billion
	[illegible]nts in constant (2005–06) prices
1997–98	42.5
1998–99	48.6
1999–2000	52.6
2000–01	61.2
2001–02	61.9
2002–03[2]	61.6
2003–04[3]	65.5
2004–05[3]	69.2
2005–06[3]	73.2

[1] Estimates after personal allowances but before tax credits are deducted.

[2] 2002–03 is the latest year for which data are available.

[3] Estimates for 2003–04 to 2005–06 are based on the 2002–03 SPI projected forward in line with Budget 2005 HM Treasury assumptions.

Similar information for the years 1995–96 and 1996–97 is not available.

The income tax information is based upon the Survey of Personal Incomes (SPI).

Inland Revenue Staff (Computer Misuse)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many Inland Revenue staff in Northern Ireland have been dismissed as a result of misuse of computer systems in each of the last five years. [37600]

Dawn Primarolo: The former Inland Revenue started recording computer misuse information on a central database in 2003. It does not hold figures for earlier years. The periods shown are calendar years.

	Number
2003	4
2004	0
2005	0

The statistic for 2005 is the information held as at 12 December 2005. It is possible there may be more cases for 2005.

Iraq

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much money the British Government have spent on military operations in Iraq since 20 March 2003; and if he will make a statement. [30101]

Mr. Des Browne: The net additional costs of military operations in Iraq are captured on an annual basis and published by the Ministry of Defence in their annual report and accounts. The costs in fiscal years 2002–03 through to 2004–05 were:

Net additional costs of military operations

	£ million
2002–03	847
2003–04	1,311
2004–05	910

Chris Huhne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the *(a)* original estimated and *(b)* actual cost of the war in Iraq and ancillary operations has been in each year since the beginning of operations; what the reasons were for the difference in each year; whether the costs were met from (i) the Ministry of Defence budget and (ii) elsewhere in each year; from which budget lines costs were met in each year; and what economies have been made to offset those costs. [37043]

John Reid: I have been asked to reply.

The costs of operations are calculated on a net additional basis and audited figures are published each year in the Ministry of Defence's Annual Report and Accounts. Costs for financial years 2002–03, 2003–04 and 2004–05 for operations in Iraq were:

	£ million
2002–03	847
2003–04	1,311
2004–05	910
Total	3,068

The respective estimates requested for operations in Iraq in the spring supplementary estimates and voted by Parliament for the above years were:

	£ million
2002–03	1,000
2003–04	1,539
2004–05	975
Total	3,514

The differences between estimates and final outturn figures are due to changing operational requirements and associated troop numbers as outlined in the MOD's Annual Report and Accounts.

The net additional costs of military operations in Iraq are funded from the Treasury reserve and not through re-prioritisation of the defence budget.

Lyons Review

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will provide a break down by *(a)* Department and *(b)* location of the 6,300 relocations as a result of the Lyons Review announced in the pre-Budget report. [37149]

Mr. Des Browne: The information requested is as follows:

Department	*Relocations completed as at 30 September 2005*
Cabinet Office	0
Crown Prosecution Service	20
Department for Constitutional Affairs	0
Department for Culture, Media and Sport	0
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	131
Department for Education and Skills	94
Department for International Development	74
Department for Transport	47
Department of Health	343
Department of Trade and Industry	194
Department for Work and Pensions	3,069
Foreign and Commonwealth Office	61
HM Revenue and Customs	480
HM Treasury	6
Home Office	434
Ministry of Defence	1,229
Northern Ireland Office	7
Office of the Deputy Prime Minister	93
Office for National Statistics	65
Total	6,347

Receiving location	*Relocations completed as at 30 September 2005*
Catterick	1,229
Wrexham	551
Liverpool	503
Blackpool	435
Pembroke	370
Newcastle	352
Cwmbran	304
Sheffield	223
Makerfield	198
Manchester	191
Leeds	155
Cardiff	140
Bradford	129
Rugby	103
Bournemouth	102
Glasgow	102
Bristol	75
Billingham	70
Milton Keynes	61
Birmingham	60
Truro	51
Workington	50
Calder Bridge	50
Newport	49
Bridgend	40
Dundee	40
Halifax	31
Worcester	29
York	25
Others[1]	629
Total	6,347

[1] Departments have confirmed 6,347 relocations completed by 30 September 2005. The location breakdown of a small number of these moves is presently being confirmed by Departments.

Self-invested Personal Pensions

Chris Huhne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) if he will publish the information on which he based his decision announced in the pre-Budget report to rescind the widening of self-invested personal pension plans eligible assets legislated for in the Finance Act 2004; [37057]

(2) on what dates meetings were held with representatives of the financial services industry at which his Department gathered information to assess the impact of the change in the rules concerning self-invested personal pension plans eligible assets announced in the pre-Budget report; and which *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials were present at each; [37058]

(3) if he will estimate the cost to providers of self-invested pension plans (SIPPs) of his change in the rules concerning eligible investments set out in the Finance Act 2004; and if he will publish the regulatory assessment made for *(a)* the initial change to SIPPS rules and *(b)* the decision announced in the pre-Budget report. [37325]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: In order to prevent the potential abuse of the pension tax simplification rules, where people could claim tax relief in relation to pension contributions into self-invested personal pensions (SIPPs) for the purpose of funding purchases of holiday and second homes for their or their family's personal use, the Government announced in the pre-Budget report that, from 6 April 2006, SIPPs and all other forms of self-directed pension schemes will be prohibited from obtaining tax advantages when investing in residential property, and certain other assets such as fine wines.

The legislation to bring the PBR announcement into effect will be included in Finance Bill 2006. The regulatory impact assessment assessing the impact of the whole of pension simplification was published in April 2004.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Asbestos

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has received from the Health and Safety Commission of the effects of different asbestos stripping techniques on worker mortality. [31610]

Mrs. McGuire: Proposals for asbestos regulations made by the Health and Safety Commission to the Minister are supported by regulatory impact assessments and risk assessments. The risk assessment in the current HSC consultation document Proposals for Revised Asbestos Regulations and an approved code of practice (CD 205) includes estimates of asbestos-related worker deaths and takes account of a range of factors, including different types of work with asbestos.

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what advice he has received from the Health and Safety Commission on the most effective dust suppression techniques available for removing asbestos; and if he will list the acceptable methods of asbestos removal in order of effectiveness as a dust suppressing technique; [31611]

(2) what advice he has received from the Health and Safety Commission on the circumstances in which dry stripping of asbestos-containing materials is permissible. [31612]

Mrs. McGuire: The Secretary of State has not received specific advice on dust suppression techniques, and circumstances in which dry stripping of asbestos containing materials is permissible. However, the current Approved Codes of Practice (ACOP) under the Control of Asbestos at Work Regulations 2002-Work with asbestos insulation, asbestos coating and asbestos insulating board (L28), and Work with asbestos which does not normally require a licence (L27) were approved by the Health and Safety Commission in 2002, with the consent of the then Secretary of State for Work and Pensions.

Under the regulations and ACOPs, employers are required to prevent exposure to asbestos and where this is not reasonably practicable, to reduce exposure to as low a level as reasonably practicable. When exposure can not be prevented, employers must chose a working method or combination of methods which reduce exposure to the lowest levels reasonably practicable and document these in the written risk assessment and plan of work.

Acceptable methods of asbestos removal and the effectiveness of dust suppression techniques will depend on a range of factors to be considered as part of the risk assessment for the job in hand. They include the type of asbestos material, its condition, and the amount to be removed. Often a combination of methods will be needed. Paragraphs 67–74 of L28 (for work with licensed materials) and paragraphs 74–76 of L27 (for work with non-licensed materials) set out methods for work with different types asbestos containing materials.

These paragraphs, and paragraph 29*(f)* of L28 also include references to dry stripping. Although they state that there may be some exceptional circumstances where dry stripping of licensable materials may be justifiable, the Health and Safety Executive has not encountered such circumstances.

Further guidance on reduced dust methods of working can be found in the Health and Safety Executive publication Controlled asbestos stripping techniques for work requiring a licence (HSG 189/1), and for work with non-licensable materials in Introduction to asbestos essentials: Comprehensive guidance on working with asbestos in the building maintenance and allied trades (HSG 213); Asbestos essentials task manual: task guidance sheets for the building maintenance and allied trades (HSG 210); and Working with asbestos cement (HSG189/2).

Mr. Nicholas Brown: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions which elements of the licensing requirements for contractors involved with the wet stripping of asbestos using equipment conforming to BSI PAS 61–1:2004 are mandatory. [31613]

Mrs. McGuire: The standard conditions attached to licences issued by the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) under the Asbestos (Licensing) Regulations 1983 to asbestos removal companies for work with asbestos insulation, asbestos coating or asbestos insulating board include *(a)* fourteen days notice in writing to the appropriate enforcing authority of work to be undertaken; *(b)* that notice to include details of the work, including a suitable and sufficient written statement of the method of work to be used, and a suitable and sufficient written specification for the equipment for the protection and decontamination of those engaged in asbestos work.

Where new wet injection equipment is purchased, HSE has advised contractors that it should comply with BSI publicly available specification (PAS) 60 equipment used in the controlled removal of asbestos containing materials, Part 1 controlled wetting of asbestos containing materials-specification. However, the PAS is not a mandatory standard.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have died of an asbestos-related illness in *(a)* Tamworth constituency, *(b)* Staffordshire and *(c)* the West Midlands in each year since 1997. [32041]

Mrs. McGuire: Death statistics for mesothelioma and asbestosis are not held in a form which allows data for individual parliamentary constituencies to be readily available. However, in the tables that follow figures for the small area of Tamworth local authority are provided.

Deaths from mesothelioma, 1997–2003

The number of mesothelioma deaths in Tamworth local authority, Staffordshire, and West Midlands each year from 1997 is given in the following table.

	Tamworth local authority	Staffordshire	West Midlands
1997	0	17	100
1998	1	18	112
1999	1	14	99
2000	4	22	132
2001	3	28	110
2002[1]	2	24	130
2003[1]	1	25	133

[1] Provisional.

Source:
HSE mesothelioma register

Deaths from lung cancer due to asbestos

Lung cancer deaths caused by asbestos are clinically indistinguishable from those caused by other agents such as tobacco smoke. It is estimated that about the same number of lung cancer deaths due to asbestos occur each year as mesothelioma deaths.

Deaths with asbestosis specified as underlying cause, 1997–2003

The number of deaths where asbestosis was specified as the underlying cause of death in Tamworth local authority, Staffordshire, and West Midlands each year from 1997 is given in the following table.

	Tamworth local authority	Staffordshire	West Midlands
1997	0	1	1
1998	0	2	2
1999	0	2	4
2000	0	1	6
2001	0	2	4
2002[1]	0	2	4
2003[1]	0	0	3

[1] Provisional.

Source:
HSE asbestosis register

Asperger's Syndrome

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he is taking to help people with Asperger's syndrome in Swindon into employment. [31642]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive, Lesley Strathie. I have asked her to reply to the hon. member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 14 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning what steps the Department is taking to help people with Asperger's syndrome in Swindon into employment. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

There are no arrangements that are specific to Swindon to help customers with Asperger's syndrome into employment. However, all customers with Asperger's syndrome are dealt with on an individual basis. If required, in addition to the range of support offered to all our customers, they can access further support from specialist advisers such as Disability Employment Advisers or Specialist Incapacity Benefit Advisers. These specialist advisers meet with the customer and work alongside other support workers or their GP to agree a plan of action tailored to their individual needs to progress them towards employment.

If deemed necessary the customer can also be referred to specialist partner organisations who deliver a variety of provision including Work Preparation, WORKSTEP and New Deal for Disabled People, for additional support. This could include personal development, work placements, work experience and help with applying for work, including interview support.

I hope this is helpful.

Benefit Exit Rates

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 17 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1365–66W, what the quarterly average exit rate for *(a)* incapacity benefit and *(b)* severe disability allowance was in each quarter since May 1997 in (i) Pathways to Work pilot jobcentre plus districts, (ii) the UK excluding Pathways to Work pilot jobcentre plus districts and (iii) the UK. [31520]

Mrs. McGuire: The available information is in the tables.

IB/SDA working age terminations as a proportion of working age (WA)

	GB WA Caseload at start of quarter	GB WA Terminations in the quarter	Terminations as a percentage of GB caseload at start of quarter
November 2003	2,788.9	184.0	7
February 2004	2,790.5	168.6	6
May 2004	2,788.0	170.9	6
August 2004	2,782.5	173.6	6
November 2004	2,783.3	173.4	6
February 2005	2,779.1	174.9	6
May 2005	2,763.7	129.4	5

IB/SDA working age terminations as a proportion of Pathways to Work area

	Pathways WA Caseload at start of quarter	Pathways WA Terminations in the quarter	Pathways Terminations as a percentage of Pathways caseload at start of quarter
November 2003	244.1	15.9	6
February 2004	243.5	16.0	7
May 2004	242.7	17.5	7
August 2004	240.8	17.5	7
November 2004	239.5	16.3	7
February 2005	238.1	16.5	7
May 2005	236.3	12.3	5

IB/SDA working age terminations as a proportion of non-Pathways to Work area

	Non-Pathways WA Caseload at start of quarter	*Non-Pathways WA Terminations in the quarter*	*Non-Pathways Terminations as a percentage of Non-Pathways caseload at start of quarter*
November 2003	2,544.8	168.2	7
February 2004	2,547.0	152.5	6
May 2004	2,545.3	153.4	6
August 2004	2,541.7	156.1	6
November 2004	2,543.8	157.1	6
February 2005	2,541.0	158.5	6
May 2005	2,527.4	117.1	5

Notes:
1. Numbers are rounded to the nearest 100 and are expressed in thousands.
2. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
3. Numbers are based on a 5 per cent. sample, and are therefore subject to a degree of sampling variation.
4. These figures should be used as a guide to the current situation only.
5. Local authorities and Government office regions are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant postcode directory.
6. Pathways to work pilot areas were introduced in October 2003.

Sources:
Caseloads—DWP Information Directorate, Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study 100 per cent. data.
Terminations—DWP Information Directorate 5 per cent. samples.

Benefit Fraud

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many staff have been employed on benefit fraud enforcement in each of the last eight years, broken down by type of benefit; and if he will make a statement. [28772]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available in the format requested.

Every person employed in the DWP has a role in enforcing the requirements of the benefits system. Our preventive structures are intended to make our systems robust against fraud. All claims are subject to verification and all statements made by our customers are open to challenge where it appears that they may be incorrect.

Benefit Payments

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of the total number of job entries by claimants of incapacity benefit and severe disability allowance in the UK *(a)* returned to incapacity benefits and *(b)* claimed jobseeker's allowance within (i) one month, (ii) two months, (iii) six months and (iv) 12 months, in the latest period for which data is available. [30676]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is not available.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many recipients of inactive benefits in Tamworth constituency moved back to work in 2004–05. [35676]

Margaret Hodge: The information is not available in the format requested.

The Department for Work and Pensions Research Report Number 244—Destination of benefit leavers 2004—showed that nationally, 62 per cent. of claimants leaving income support, incapacity benefit or jobseeker's allowance entered employment of 16 hours or more a week. Copies of the report are available in the Library.

Benefits Office Closures

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make funding available to the voluntary sector benefits advice organisations that have witnessed an increase in their workload since the benefits office closure programme. [34624]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* The Department does not, and has not previously, provided funding for voluntary sector benefits advice organisations. We have no plans to change this position.

Child Maintenance

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many families received child maintenance payments in *(a)* Brent and *(b)* London in each of the last five years. [35668]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information cannot be broken down to the geographical level requested.

Child Poverty

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what representations he has received from Save the Children about the number of children living in severe and long-term poverty. [36131]

Margaret Hodge: I have not received any representations from Save the Children. However, my officials are in regular contact with them, and were consulted by Save the Children on their recently published report "Britain's Poorest Children Revisited".

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his latest estimate is of the number of children who will be living in poverty in winter 2005–06. [36132]

Margaret Hodge: The seventh annual "Opportunity for all" report (Cm 6673) sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and reports progress against a range of indicators.

Information regarding the number of children living in low-income households is published in Department for Work and Pension's publication "Households Below Average Income (HBAI)", copies of which are available in the Library.

Figures for 2005–06 are not yet available and are planned for publication in 2007.

Child Support Agency

Jo Swinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many uncleared Child Support Agency cases are awaiting processing in East Dunbartonshire. [21104]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is not available at the geographical level requested.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the performance of the Child Support Agency. [22944]

Mr. Plaskitt: While there have been some improvements in the Child Support Agency's performance we are not satisfied with its overall level.

A copy of the most recent Child Support Agency Quarterly Statistical Summary, which gives information on the agency's performance, has been placed in the Library and is available on line at www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/csa.asp.

The Child Support Agency's chief executive, Stephen Geraghty, is currently undertaking a root and branch review of the agency. He will report to Ministers and we will make announcements shortly.

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent estimate he has made of the cost to the benefits system of the unresolved Child Support Agency cases. [26101]

Mr. Plaskitt: We do not have sufficient information on these cases to make a robust estimate. Not all of the unresolved cases will reach a calculation, and for those cases where the Agency will make a calculation we have no information about the amount of maintenance that will be charged and paid.

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Child Support Agency cases were in arrears in each year from 1997 to 2005 in *(a)* England, *(b)* Northamptonshire and *(c)* Wellingborough. [26798]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information requested is not available at the geographical level requested.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many complaints were registered with the Child Support Agency in *(a)* England, *(b)* the Tees Valley and *(c)* Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland constituency in each year since 1997. [29916]

Mr. Plaskitt: This information requested is not available at the geographical level requested.

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the performance of the Child Support Agency. [32085]

Mr. Plaskitt: While there have been some improvements in the Child Support Agency's performance we are still not satisfied with the overall level.

A copy of the most recent Child Support Agency Quarterly Statistical Summary, which gives information on the Agency's performance, has been placed in the Library and is available on line at "www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/csa.asp"

The Child Support Agency's chief executive, Stephen Geraghty, is currently undertaking a root and branch review of the Agency. He will report to the Ministers and we will make announcements shortly.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when *(a)* he and *(b)* his officials last met officials from HM Revenue and Customs to discuss the future of the Child Support Agency. [35393]

Mr. Plaskitt: Since the Secretary of State's appointment on 2 November 2005 he has not discussed Child Support with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) officials. However, departmental officials meet regularly with HMRC to look at a range of issues.

Children's Rights (Disabilities Convention)

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what action the Government are taking to ensure children's rights are fully and appropriately addressed in the final text of the forthcoming UN convention on the rights of people with disabilities. [29958]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* The UK, with our EU partners, is committed to ensuring that the rights of disabled children are effectively addressed in the UN convention, taking into account the fact that there is an existing convention on the rights of children. At the most recent meeting of the UN Committee tasked with drafting the convention, the UK acting as EU President proposed text regarding the general obligations of states in respect of disabled children. We believe that the proposed text will ensure that the rights of disabled children are recognised across the convention in relation to all the obligations on states. The UK is working to ensure that this wording is included in the final text.

Civil Service

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many departmental civil service jobs are located in Coventry. [33511]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* As at 30 October 2005 a total of 483 departmental staff (full-time equivalent, including temporary staff) were located in Coventry.

Corporate Pension Liabilities

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment his Department has made of whether corporate pension liabilities are overstated under FRS17. [32457]

Mr. Timms: No such assessment has now been made

There are a number of ways of estimating pension fund deficits. Estimates of deficits calculated using FRS17 are considered (although there is no consensus) to represent approximately 80 per cent. of the estimated costs of securing a pension scheme's accrued liabilities through the purchase of annuities and deferred annuities from an insurance company (often referred to as the "full buy-out" cost).

Data Control

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what part of his Department has overall responsibility for data control. [36327]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* The Department's chief information officer has overall responsibility for any risk to the Department's data.

Data Protection Act

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many complaints concerning his Department have been made to the Information Commissioner with regard to the Data Protection Act 1998 since it came into force. [36329]

Mrs. McGuire: Since the Data Protection Act came into force on 1 March 2000, 220 letters have been received from the Information Commissioner following complaints.

Departmental Expenditure

Sir Malcolm Rifkind: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the Department's expenditure on research activities was in each year since 2000. [30849]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Department's expenditure on research is given in the following table. The Department for Work and Pensions was formed in June 2001, therefore figures have been provided from the financial year 2001–02 onwards.

£ million

Financial year	*Expenditure*
2001–02	11.8
2002–03	10.2
2003–04	12.5
2004–05	14.2

Departmental Targets

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether he expects to be able to draw the data required to measure 2004 public service agreement target 5 from consistent data sources. [30288]

Mrs. McGuire: Yes, the data will come from sources which provide a basis for consistent comparisons. For health and safety outcomes, these will include reports from employers and others under the Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations (RIDDOR), estimates from the Labour Force Survey (LFS) and other sources, supported by data on risk control from workplace surveys and assessments by inspectors.

For the major hazard industries, they will be based on reports of precursor incidents (occurrences which do not in general result in death or injury but have the potential to be far more serious) in the nuclear industry, offshore oil and gas sectors and onshore hazardous installations.

Further details are given in a technical note published on the HSE website, http://www.hse.gov.uk/aboutus/plans/sr2004.htm.

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether he uses *(a)* income before housing costs and *(b)* income after housing costs when measuring the number of children in relative low income households for the purposes of measuring performance against 2004 public service agreement target 1. [30289]

Margaret Hodge: To ease international comparisons, the 2004 PSA child poverty target will be measured on a before housing costs basis. However, figures after housing costs will continue to be given equal prominence in the households below average income series.

Disability Handbook

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether medical representatives from patient organisations will be included in the panel re-writing the draft entry on chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalomyelitis for the Disability Handbook. [23820]

Mrs. McGuire: As with the other new medical guidance for the Disability Handbook the draft chronic fatigue syndrome/myalgic encephalitis (CFS/ME) guidance was prepared in conjunction with medical experts. The guidance is evidence-based and represents our current understanding of this condition. Officials have met with groups representing people with CFS/ME on two occasions and sought their views. Many of their helpful comments have already been incorporated in the guidance and we are still considering comments made at the second meeting.

Economically Inactive People

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Beverley and Holderness are economically inactive. [37436]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

The information requested falls within the responsibility of the national statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 14 December 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question concerning economic inactivity. I am replying in her absence. (37436)

Annual Population Survey data, for the 12 months ending March 2005, shows that the number of people of working age resident in the Beverley and Holderness constituency who were economically inactive was estimated to be 14,000. This corresponds to 23 per cent. of the resident working age population.

These estimates, as with any from sample surveys, are subject to a margin of uncertainty.

Education and Training

Sarah McCarthy-Fry: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what training is provided to Jobcentre Plus advisers to assist them in working with young people living independently who wish to pursue further education. [33441]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to my hon. Friend.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 14 December 2005:

The Secretary of State for Work and Pensions has asked me to reply to your question concerning what training is provided to Jobcentre Plus advisers to assist them in working with young people living independently who wish to pursue further education. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Jobcentre Plus has in place a comprehensive programme of blended learning solutions to build adviser capability. The learning materials have been designed in such a way as to equip the adviser with the full range of knowledge and skills required to support the customer's jobsearch activity and successful movement into employment, or further education.

Advisers assist young people to receive training via the New Deal for Young People learning package. The primary focus of this learning is to help staff establish customers' eligibility to claim Jobseekers Allowance. However, as part of the learning process, Personal Advisers are instructed on the appropriate procedure when a young person is interested in undertaking further education.

This is usually instigated by referral to the "Connexions" service in England, or the relevant careers service elsewhere in the UK (for example Careers Scotland). These organisations are the typical gateway into learning for young people.

The Jobcentre Plus Adviser training focuses on supporting and allowing the relevant careers service to support the training needs and aspirations of this specific customer group.

I hope this is helpful.

EU Work at Heights Directive

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the legislative progress of the implementation of the EU Work at Heights Directive; and if he will publish a regulatory impact assessment for its implementation in the United Kingdom. [33491]

Mrs. McGuire: The EU Directive 2001/45/EC on the selection and use of work equipment for working at height was implemented in Great Britain by the Work at Height Regulations 2005. These regulations were laid in Parliament on 16 March 2005 and came into force on 6 April 2005. It was implemented in Northern Ireland by the Work at Height Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2005, which came into operation 11 July. Gibraltar is well advanced in producing implementing legislation.

A regulatory impact assessment on the implementation of the Regulations in Great Britain was lodged in the House of Commons and House of Lords Libraries on 16 March 2005. A supplement on the impact of the Directive in Northern Ireland is available on request from the Health and Safety Executive for Northern Ireland at 83 Ladas Drive, Belfast BT6 9FR.

Both sets of regulations do not apply to instructing or leading others in climbing, caving or similar activities. Arrangements for the application of the directive to workers in these activities are still under discussion with representatives from the sector.

Final Salary Pension Schemes

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps the Government is taking to minimise employers' usage of pension fund holidays in final salary pension schemes. [36441]

Mr. Timms: New scheme funding requirements will replace the minimum funding requirement for private sector defined benefit occupational pension schemes from 30 December 2005. This flexible framework will give trustees greater leverage in framing the scheme's funding strategy and determining the contributions paid by the employer. In addition, from 6 April 2006 current HM Revenue and Customs requirements for pension scheme to reduce an actuarial surplus will be abolished. This will remove a factor which may have played a part in some decisions to allow pension fund contribution holidays in the past. We do not believe, however, that it would be appropriate to prevent a contribution holiday where the scheme is sufficiently well-funded, and the trustees and the sponsoring employer consider that it is appropriate in the circumstances.

Health and Safety

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what action he is promoting in conjunction with other Government Departments to ensure that suitably qualified health and safety advisers in the public service are encouraged to achieve the status of chartered health and safety practitioners; and how many of them have this status. [28183]

Mrs. McGuire: The Government are fully supportive of the introduction of a chartered qualification for professional health and safety advisors and would recommend all advisors, where appropriate, to work towards achieving this qualification. There are currently about 6,000 chartered practioners in the UK. The Government hold no figures for the number working in the public sector.

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what discussions the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has held with trade unions about industrial relations issues concerning the HSE. [32440]

Mrs. McGuire: The HSE is in frequent discussion with those trade unions representing members of its staff, over the full range of employee relations. Discussions include those held through the departmental Whitley structure; negotiations, such as the annual pay negotiations which are currently ongoing; and more informal working groups on specific topics.

Incapacity Benefit

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost was of medical examinations for incapacity benefit claimants in each year since 1997; and how often on average existing claimants have been re-examined. [29339]

Mrs. McGuire: Information about the cost of medical examinations for incapacity benefit is confidential and cannot be disclosed as to do so may prejudice the commercial interests of the Department and/or its suppliers.

Information about the frequency of re-examinations is not available and could o be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

People are re-referred at varying intervals from three months to five years on the basis of medical advice about the severity of a person's condition and the likelihood of an improvement in their condition in the future.

Sir Malcolm Rifkind: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people claimed incapacity benefit on the grounds of poor mental health in each year since 1997. [30846]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is in the following table.

Incapacity benefit and severe disability allowance claimants with a diagnosis in the "mental and behavioural disorders" category: Great Britain.

May	*Number*
1997	735,000
1998	790,600
1999	833,700
2000	873,300
2001	938,800
2002	987,000
2003	1,032,000
2004	1,070,200
2005	1,086,100

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. 'Claimant' figures include all incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disability allowance (SDA), including IB credits-only cases.
3. Figures for the years 1997 to 1999 have been produced using the 5 per cent. data and have been rated up proportionally using the Great Britain WPLS 100 per cent. IB/SDA totals.
4. Diagnoses are taken from the International Classification of Diseases (ICD10).

Source:

DWP Information Directorate, 5 per cent. Samples from 1997 to 1999 and Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS)100 per cent. data thereafter.

Sir Malcolm Rifkind: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent estimate he has made of the number of people claiming incapacity benefit who were claiming jobseeker's allowance immediately prior to claiming incapacity benefit. [30847]

Mrs. McGuire: The most recent available information is in the following table.

Incapacity benefit (IB) commencements previously claiming jobseeker's allowance (JSA) for the period 1 March 2004 to 28 February 2005.

Total IB commencements	*Claimed JSA within previous 30 days*	*Percentage of IB commencements that claimed JSA within previous 30 days.*
659,000	131,000	19.9

Notes:

1. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred.
2. Figures include JSA claims that have terminated in the 30 days prior to the IB claim commencing.
3. Due to note 2, it does not exclusively include those who were claiming JSA immediately prior to IB. It is possible for a claimant to have flowed from JSA to another benefit/work and then to IB within the 30 day period allowed for the computer systems to be updated.
4. The number of incapacity benefit commencements that flowed from JSA has been given. This figure may include some individuals who have flowed from JSA to IB more than once over this period.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate, 5 per cent. samples.

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many people have been receiving incapacity benefit in *(a)* Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* the United Kingdom in each year since 1997; [31707]

(2) how many people have claimed the long-term rate of incapacity benefit in *(a)* Jarrow constituency, *(b)* South Tyneside, *(c)* the North East and *(d)* the United Kingdom in each year since 1997. [31708]

Mrs. McGuire: The available information is in the table.

Incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disablement allowance (SDA) claimants in the Jarrow parliamentary constituency, South Tyneside council area, the North East Government office region (GOR) and Great Britain; each May since 1997

	Great Britain	*North East GOR*	*South Tyneside*	*Jarrow*
May 1997				
IB/SDA all rates	2,849,200	198,600	11,900	5,700
IB long-term rate	1,527,900	119,000	6,900	3,400
May 1998				
IB/SDA all rates	2,795,500	189,300	11,800	5,700
IB long-term rate	1,452,800	111,000	6,700	3,400
May 1999				
IB/SDA all rates	2,755,200	186,700	11,300	5,700
IB long-term rate	1,386,200	103,800	6,400	3,600
May 2000				
IB/SDA all rates	2,737,800	184,600	11,500	5,400
IB long-term rate	1,331,600	101,300	6,300	3,300
May 2001				
IB/SDA all rates	2,808,600	189,500	11,700	5,900
IB long-term rate	1,338,000	101,500	6,300	3,300
May 2002				
IB/SDA all rates	2,822,200	189,900	11,700	6,000
IB long-term rate	1,358,400	102,700	6,200	3,300
May 2003				
IB/SDA all rates	2,829,700	188,800	11,500	5,900
IB long-term rate	1,344,800	100,400	6,000	3,200
May 2004				
IB/SDA all rates	2,825,000	184,500	11,100	5,900
IB long-term rate	1,337,000	97,400	5,700	3,100
May 2005				
IB/SDA all rates	2,784,000	178,300	10,600	5,700
IB long-term rate	1,309,000	93,500	5,400	3,000

Notes:

1. Figures for the years 1997 to 1999 have been produced using 5 per cent. data and have been rated up in accordance with the Great Britain WPLS 100 per cent. incapacity benefit/severe disability allowance totals.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
3. 'Claimant' figures include all incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disability allowance (including IB credits only cases).

Source:
DWP Information Directorate, 5 per cent. samples from 1997 to 1999 and Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) 100 per cent. data thereafter.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Ribble Valley are claiming incapacity benefit. [33521]

Mrs. McGuire: As at May 2005 there were 3,400 people claiming incapacity benefit or severe disability allowance in the Ribble Valley parliamentary constituency.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost is to the Department of a medical examination for incapacity benefit. [34784]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* This information is confidential and cannot be disclosed as to do so may prejudice the commercial interests of the Department and/or its suppliers.

Office for Disability Issues

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 11 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 798W, on the Office for Disability Issues, what criteria his Department uses to decide whether a consultation will be *(a)* an informal exercise and *(b)* a formal consultation; in which circumstances each are used; for what reasons his Department decided the consultation on the establishment of the Office for Disability Issues would be an informal exercise; and how his Department communicates to relevant individuals and organisations the status of a consultation. [32551]

Mrs. McGuire: All Government Departments follow the Cabinet Office Guidelines on consultation. These guidelines clearly state how Departments should run formal consultations and are available in the Library (Cabinet Office Guidance on Consultations). However as this was an informal consultation and involved no change to either statute or regulations, the formal guidance was not applicable.

We were determined to ensure as many disabled people as possible could engage with us, and through the informal consultation we had many opportunities to engage, through regional consultation events, leaflets, intensive calls to disability organisations, signposts on local authority, Disability Rights Commission, Disability Now and You able websites and press advertising. We offered people the opportunity to express views by e-mail, in writing, by telephone, in various languages including Welsh and Braille and had copies of the consultation available in easy read and audiotape. We employed an external research company to ensure all responses were treated fairly and in unbiased fashion.

Pathways to Work

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of Pathway to Work participants have moved into jobs in each of the pilot areas. [17608]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 17 October 2005]:* The information is not available in the format requested because we only know about Jobcentre Plus and, NDDP job broker job entries. We also have information on return to work credit awards. However, we can provide information on job entries recorded through these channels and this is provided in the following table. The total number of job entries that actually occur will be higher than this as there will be a significant number of benefit leavers that have found jobs that were not the result of a direct intervention from Jobcentre Plus. The job entry proportion, as shown in the table, is an under-estimate of the true underlying job entry rate due to the fact that more recent cases will have had less time to find a job.

	All customers			*Customers attending initial eight week WFI*			*Customers starting on Choices programme*		
District	*Total*	*Number with job entry*	*Proportion with job entry (percentage)*	*Total*	*Number with job entry*	*Proportion with job entry (percentage)*	*Total*	*Number with job entry*	*Proportion with job entry (percentage)*
Renfrewshire, Inverclyde, Argyll and Bute	16,970	2,960	17	5,780	1,190	21	2,560	1,050	41
Gateshead and South Tyneside	12,170	1,510	12	3,660	470	13	1,640	570	35
East Lancashire	15,200	2,030	13	5,350	780	15	1,670	560	34
Bridgend and Rhondda, Cynon, Taf	18,420	3,040	17	6,070	1,030	17	3,140	1,540	49
Derbyshire	27,040	3,320	12	7,610	1,300	17	3,120	970	31
Essex	25,660	1,910	7	6,900	720	10	2,230	560	25
Somerset	9,490	1,270	13	2,720	450	17	1,330	580	44
Total	124,950	16,040	13	38,090	5,940	16	15,690	5,830	37

Notes:
1. Participants are defined as anyone who has contacted Jobcentre Plus about making a claim for incapacity benefits plus those existing claimants who have volunteered to participate.
2. Job entrants include all recorded job entries plus return to work credit awards for which no job entry is yet recorded.
3. Data are to the end of August 2005.
4. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Figures are presented for all customers entering the pilot, those customers who attend the initial work focused interview after eight weeks and those customers taking up an element of the choices package. All customers making a claim to incapacity benefit in the pilot districts are defined as participants as they are

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subject to the Pathways to Work regime. However a significant proportion of customers leave benefit early stages of the claim and therefore do not attend the initial work focused interview where the full range of support is explained.

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the Pathways to Work pilots currently in operation. [37308]

Margaret Hodge: The Pathways to Work pilots are operating in 11 areas.

The first three started operating in October 2003 and are in Bridgend, Renfrewshire and Derbyshire.

Further pilots in Gateshead and South Tyneside; Somerset; Essex and East Lancashire started in April 2004. Four more pilot areas were rolled out in October 2005 in Glasgow, Cumbria, Lancashire West, and Tees Valley.

A further 10 pilots in Durham, Lanarkshire and East Dunbarton, Staffordshire, Barnsley and Rotherham (to be merged with Doncaster), Manchester (to be merged with Salford and Trafford), Greater Mersey, Liverpool (to be merged with Wirral), Eastern Valleys, Swansea Bay (to be merged with West Wales), and City of Sunderland will roll-out in 2006.

Pensioner Poverty

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what proportion of pensioners were living in absolute poverty in each region of the UK in each of the last 30 years. [36911]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* The seventh annual 'Opportunity for all' report (Cm 6673) sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and reports progress against a range of indicators. Detailed information about the number and proportion of pensioners living in low income households for Great Britain is available in "Households Below Average Income (HBAI) 1994–95–2003–04", available in the Library.

Robust figures on pensioners in low income, broken down by region, for each of the last 30 years are not available. Three-year rolled averages for the number and proportion of pensioners in absolute low income are available for the Government office regions, Scotland and Wales from 1994–95. These are set out in the following tables. Equivalent data is not available for Northern Ireland, as the necessary information has only been collected for two financial years.

An individual in absolute low income is defined as someone living in a household with income below 60 per cent. of 1996–97 median income, adjusted for inflation.

*Number of pensioners in absolute low income**

(millions)

	Three-year rolling averages							
	1994–95 to 1996–97	*1995–96 to 1997–98*	*1996–97 to 1998–99*	*1997–98 to 1999–2000*	*1998–99 to 2000–2001*	*1999–2000 to 2001–02*	*2000–01 to 2002–03*	*2001–02 to 2003–04*
Before housing costs								
North East	0.12	0.11	0.10	0.09	0.09	0.07	0.06	0.04
North West and Merseyside	0.30	0.28	0.27	0.26	0.23	0.20	0.18	0.16
Yorkshire and Humberside	0.24	0.23	0.21	0.20	0.18	0.15	0.12	0.11
East Midlands	0.18	0.19	0.18	0.18	0.16	0.15	0.14	0.12
West Midlands	0.21	0.22	0.22	0.20	0.19	0.17	0.16	0.15
Eastern	0.25	0.21	0.20	0.20	0.19	0.17	0.14	0.12
London	0.20	0.20	0.19	0.17	0.16	0.15	0.13	0.12
South East	0.29	0.28	0.27	0.26	0.24	0.22	0.19	0.17
South West	0.24	0.24	0.23	0.22	0.19	0.17	0.15	0.13
Wales	0.15	0.14	0.13	0.12	0.11	0.09	0.07	0.07
Scotland	0.23	0.21	0.18	0.16	0.15	0.13	0.10	0.09

Source:
Family Resources Survey

Number of pensioners in absolute low income

(millions)

	Three-year rolling averages							
	1994–95 to 1996–97	*1995–96 to 1997–98*	*1996–97 to 1998–99*	*1997–98 to 1999–2000*	*1998–99 to 2000–2001*	*1999–2000 to 2001–02*	*2000–01 to 2002–03*	*2001–02 to 2003–04*
After housing costs								
North East	0.16	0.15	0.13	0.11	0.09	0.07	0.05	0.04
North West and Merseyside	0.35	0.33	0.31	0.27	0.22	0.17	0.14	0.12
Yorkshire and Humberside	0.29	0.27	0.25	0.22	0.18	0.14	0.11	0.08
East Midlands	0.21	0.21	0.19	0.18	0.16	0.13	0.12	0.10
West Midlands	0.25	0.26	0.24	0.21	0.18	0.15	0.13	0.11
Eastern	0.32	0.26	0.25	0.23	0.21	0.15	0.12	0.10
London	0.33	0.31	0.29	0.27	0.23	0.19	0.14	0.12
South East	0.38	0.35	0.32	0.31	0.26	0.22	0.17	0.15
South West	0.28	0.29	0.26	0.23	0.19	0.15	0.12	0.09
Wales	0.16	0.15	0.13	0.12	0.10	0.08	0.06	0.05
Scotland	0.28	0.26	0.23	0.20	0.17	0.13	0.10	0.08

Source:
Family Resources Survey

The following table gives the percentage of pensioners living in absolute low income for Scotland, Wales and Government office regions.

Percentage of pensioners in absolute low income

(percentage)

	Three-year rolling averages							
	1994–95 to 1996–97	*1995–96 to 1997–98*	*1996–97 to 1998–99*	*1997–98 to 1999–2000*	*1998–99 to 2000–2001*	*1999–2000 to 2001–02*	*2000–01 to 2002–03*	*2001–02 to 2003–04*
Before housing costs								
North East	26	23	21	20	20	15	12	9
North West and Merseyside	25	23	23	22	19	16	15	13
Yorkshire and Humberside	28	26	24	23	20	17	14	12
East Midlands	26	26	25	24	22	20	19	16
West Midlands	26	25	23	21	20	18	17	15
Eastern	24	22	22	21	20	17	14	12
London	20	19	18	17	15	14	13	12
South East	21	20	18	18	17	15	13	12
South West	24	25	23	22	19	17	15	12
Wales	27	25	23	22	19	16	13	12
Scotland	27	24	21	19	14	14	12	10
After housing costs								
North East	35	32	28	24	20	15	10	8
North West and Merseyside	29	28	26	23	19	14	11	10
Yorkshire and Humberside	33	31	28	25	21	16	12	9
East Midlands	29	29	27	24	21	17	16	13
West Midlands	31	29	26	23	20	16	14	11
Eastern	31	28	27	24	22	16	12	10
London	32	30	28	26	23	19	14	12
South East	27	25	23	22	18	15	12	10
South West	29	29	26	24	19	15	12	9
Wales	28	27	24	22	18	15	11	9
Scotland	32	29	26	23	19	15	11	9

Note:

1. Figures are provided using a three-year rolled average, as single-year estimates do not provide a robust guide to year-on-year changes. Figures are therefore not same as previously published single-year estimates.
2. Tables show numbers in millions and rounded to the nearest 10,000.

Source:

Family Resources Survey

Pensions

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many *(a)* contributors and *(b)* customers credited with contributions there were in the state second pension scheme (i) in total and (ii) in each (A) region and (B) county in each year since 2002–03; and what percentage of the working age population this represented in (1) the UK and in (2) each *(y)* region and *(z)* county. [34405]

Mr. Timms: In 2002–03 approximately 20 million people, representing 55 per cent. of the working age population started to accrue entitlement to the state second pension. This figure is made of 15.9 million people in work, 1.9 million carers and 2.2 million long term disabled people. No breakdown of these figures is available by region or county.

Notes:

1. The figure for 2002–03 should be regarded as provisional and may be subject to changes in future releases.
2. Population estimates are taken from Office for National Statistics, General Register Office for Scotland, Northern Ireland Statistics and Research Agency.
3. The figure is based on a one per cent. sample and is shown to the nearest thousand.

Source: Lifetime Labour Market Database

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total cost of *(a)* the basic state pension, *(b)* state second pension and *(c)* pension credits was in the last year for which figures are available; what percentage of gross domestic product that figure represents; and what the projected figures are in each case for (i) 2010, (ii) 2020, (iii) 2030, (iv) 2040 and (v) 2050. [34787]

Mr. Timms: The information is as follows.

Great Britain, £ million, real terms, 2005–06 prices

	(a) Basic state pension/basic retirement pension		*(b) State second pension/state earnings-related pension*		*(c) Pension credit*	
	Expenditure	*Percentage of GDP*	*Expenditure*	*Percentage of GDP*	*Expenditure*	*Percentage of GDP*
2004–05	42,373	3.5	7,529	0.6	6,140	0.5
2010–11	54,339	3.4	13,168	0.8	9,262	0.6
2020–21	81,809	3.1	25,066	1.0	15,145	0.6
2030–31	132,914	3.2	48,618	1.2	33,145	0.8
2040–41	197,113	2.9	92,089	1.4	75,471	1.1
2050–51	274,409	2.5	189,717	1.8	175,361	1.6

The following information relates to expenditure in Great Britain which the Department for Work and Pensions, is responsible for. Information relating to Northern Ireland is available from the Northern Ireland office.

Notes:

1. All expenditure figures are for Great Britain.

2. The percentage of gross domestic product (GDP) has been calculated using the UK money GDP figures provided, by HM Treasury, on 5 December 2005, following the pre-Budget report 2005.

3. As GDP is not available for Great Britain, the UK GDP has been applied to the Great Britain expenditure figures and future projections to provide a percentage of GDP.

4. Expenditure has been rounded to the nearest £ million.

5. GDP percentages have been rounded to one decimal place.

6. State second pension has been interpreted to mean additional state pension which therefore includes SERPS expenditure.

7. Pension credit expenditure is a combination of the guarantee and savings credits.

8. All figures are consistent with the pre-Budget report 2005 and with expenditure information which is published on the Department's internet website at the following address—http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd4/expenditure.asp. The internet tables have been updated recently following the pre-Budget report 2005.

Source:

Expenditure and percentage of gross domestic product figures have been taken from data which underlie the pre-Budget report 2005.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many single women pensioners in Tamworth constituency are receiving financial assistance to bring them up to the minimum pension level. [35674]

Mr. Timms: At June 2005, 500 single female pensioners in Tamworth parliamentary constituency were in receipt of the guarantee credit element of pension credit.

Notes:

1. Caseloads are rounded to the nearest hundred.

2. Pension credit (PC) replaced minimum income guarantee (MIG) on 6 October 2003. Existing MIG recipients were automatically converted onto pension credit on that date (assuming they still met the eligibility criteria).

3. Data from the Generalised Matching Service (QMS) 100 per cent. scan taken on 10 June 2005. The figure has been rated up to give month-end estimates.

4. These figures are early estimates. Operational processing times mean that a number of claim commencements and terminations are not reflected in the figures. The final figures incorporated within the Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) will take account of such cases.

Source:

Information Directorate, 100 per cent. data.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent representations he has received about stakeholder pensions; and what reviews his Department has undertaken on stakeholder pensions since they were introduced. [36899]

Mr. Timms: The Department receives a range of correspondence on pension issues including stakeholder pension inquiries but there have been no recent representations specifically on stakeholder pension policy.

Prior to the introduction of stakeholder pensions in April 2001, the Government advised that it would undertake a review of a number of provisions contained in the Stakeholder Pension Regulations 2000 after they had been in operation for three years. This review was concluded in October 2004, and after careful consideration, it was decided that no changes were necessary at that time. It was, however, recognised that developments in train in the wider pensions field might have a bearing on those provisions and that it might be necessary to look at them again at some point over the coming years.

Following the Sandier report in July 2002, which looked at medium and long-term retail savings in the UK, we reviewed the stakeholder pensions charge cap. This resulted in the annual management charge being revised from 1 per cent. of the value of the fund a year to 1.5 per cent. for the first 10 years of membership, reducing to 1 per cent. thereafter for stakeholder pension policies bought on or after 6 April 2005. We also introduced the requirement for providers to offer lifestyling, the process where at least five years before retirement the members pension savings are gradually moved into less volatile arrangements.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people have taken up stakeholder pensions in each year since their introduction; and what the average contribution by *(a)* employers and *(b)* individuals has been in each year. [37530]

Mr. Timms: The information available is in the following tables:

Calendar year	*Number of stakeholder pensions opened*
2001[1]	599,000
2002	638,000
2003	560,000
2004	523,000
Total	2,320,000

[1] April to December.

Notes:

1. Figures from the Association of British Insurers (ABI)
2. Figures rounded to the nearest 1,000.

£

Tax year	*(a) Average annual employer contribution*	*(b) Average annual individual contribution*
2001–02	420	950
2002–03	780	1,560
2003–04	760	1,430

Note:

The average annual employer contribution has been extrapolated from the average annual individual contribution to stakeholder pensions.

Sources:

(a) HMRC: These estimates provided are based on third party information. The data is for the full year and does not include a scheme start date, so where a scheme was started in-year, although the contributions would only have been made for part of the year they have been averaged over 12 months. Therefore the estimate

will not reflect the true annual average if the scheme had operated for a full year. This is particularly true for stakeholder pensions in their first year 2001–02.
(b) Personal and stakeholder pensions. Number of individuals contributing and average contribution by status and earned income. HM Revenue and Customs Table 7.10. Contributions will include those from employers, the national insurance rebate (also known as the "minimum contribution"), as well as individuals' contribution. http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/pensions/menu-by-year.htm#1

Quad Bikes

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what information his Department collects on the number of *(a)* quad bikes used for work and *(b)* accidents involving quad bikes used for work; and what steps his Department has taken to educate the public on quad bike safety. [30326]

Mrs. McGuire: The Health and Safety Executive does not collect information on the number of quad bikes used for work.

The Health and Safety Executive does not collect information on accidents specifically involving quad bikes. However information is collected on accidents involving all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), including quad bikes, and on accidents on rides on attractions such as go-karting, also including ATVs. Over the four-year period 2001–02 to 2004–05 in these categories there have been 127 work-related injuries to workers involving ATVs, of which seven were fatal. Over the same period there have been 84 work-related injuries to members of the public involving ATVs, of which one was fatal.

HSE does not produce guidance aimed specifically at the general public. However it does produce a range of guidance relating to the safe use of ATVs, including quad bikes, used in agriculture. HSE also works through the media to raise public awareness of the causes of accidents in agriculture involving ATVs, using press releases a[illegible] the annual accident statistics. In addition HSE works with industry's ATV/Quad Group, formed by the Agricultural Engineers Association (AEA) and the Outdoor Power Equipment Council (OPEC), which represents the majority of ATV manufacturers and suppliers. The group produces guidance and promotes the safe use of ATVs and quad bikes across the range of uses. As part of this work HSE has produced an instructional video, co-funded by the manufacturers of ATVs [illegible] quad bikes, that the manufacturers and suppliers have agreed to supply to all who buy an ATV or quad bike from members of the AEA and OPEC.

Refurbishment Projects

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list his Department's refurbishment projects that *(a)* are in progress and *(b)* will start in the next six months; what steps are being taken to ensure that these will procure timber from legal sustainable sources; and whether guidance is issued to contractors to ensure that the timber used on site during refurbishment comes from legal and sustainable sources. [14482]

Mrs. McGuire: The Department for Work and Pensions is undergoing an extensive long-term program to refurbish 900–1,000 Jobcentre Plus sites and Pensions call centres. In the current phase 117 sites are being refurbished with a further 86 sites due to commence refurbishment works before March 2006. A number of contractors and suppliers are used to undertake this work and the Department requires them to obtain timber from legal sources and encourages the supply of timber from sustainable sources. The Department requires all suppliers to submit details of certification schemes used for timber products—this information is collected and independently audited.

The Department's Estates Partners Land Securities Trillium undertake all remaining refurbishment projects on behalf of the Department. They have been instructed that all timber across the Department must be verified as being from legal and sustainable sources. This is included within all their specifications for refurbishment work. A supply chain report is presented annually to the Department, detailing the evidence presented for all the timber used. This report, and the evidence it contains, is then independently audited to ensure that the timber does meet the required standards. Any areas of weakness are identified and the Department works closely with Land Securities Trillium to ensure that performance is improved.

Royal Ordnance (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the Health and Safety Executive has indicated approval for production to continue at the former Royal Ordnance site in Chorley. [33966]

Mrs. McGuire: The Health and Safety Executive is not aware of any health and safety issues that might prevent the continuation of production at BAe Chorley. There was a fatal explosion at the site in March 2005, BAe voluntarily ceased production until any reasonably practicable safety improvements had been identified and implemented.

Limited production was resumed in September, excluding the process that had caused the explosion, but BAe has since announced that their sites at Chorley and Bridgwater will cease production at the end of 2006.

Winter Fuel Payment

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people received winter fuel allowance in Oxford, East in each of the last three years. [36851]

Mr. Timms: The information requested is in the following table. The information for winter fuel payments made in these years are also available in the Library.

	Payments made
2002–03	15,500
2003–04	15,345
2004–05	14,860

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Local authorities and parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.
Source:
Information Directorate, 100 per cent. sample.

Work Trials

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many jobseekers have undertaken a work trial; in what proportion of cases this has resulted in long-term employment; and if he will make a statement. [35069]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 14 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning how many jobseekers have undertaken a work trial and what proportion of these have resulted in long term employment. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

In answer to your specific question, to date, 14,290 jobseekers have started a work trial and 7,780 of those jobseekers went on to become employed as a result of the work trial. This represents a 54% job entry rate.

However, due to the limitations of the clerical collection of Management Information, we cannot trace employment details from the work trial back to the original customer and, therefore, we are not able to check if an individual work trial results in long term employment.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Animal Welfare Bill

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will ask the Home Office to review the Custody Plus policy in advance of the forthcoming Animal Welfare Bill. [30490]

Fiona Mactaggart: I have been asked to reply.

There are no plans to review the policy on Custody Plus—these provisions are currently planned to be implemented in the autumn of 2006.

Abattoirs

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many abattoirs are *(a)* EU-approved and *(b)* non-approved but operating with a derogation. [34598]

Caroline Flint: I have been asked to reply.

Under the Meat Hygiene Regulations implementing the EU Fresh Meat and Poultry Meat Directives, abattoirs are either fully licensed for intra-Community trade (EU approved) or licensed as low throughput (operating with a derogation).

The following table gives the number of licensed red meat and poultry meat abattoirs in each category in the United Kingdom as of 1 November 2005.

	Type of licence			
	Red meat abattoirs		*Poultry, farmed game bird and rabbit meat abattoirs*	
	Fully licensed	*Low throughput*	*Fully licensed*	*Low throughput*
England	152	98	54	44
Scotland	32	9	5	1
Wales	18	12	5	3
Northern Ireland	14	1	7	2
United Kingdom	216	120	71	50

Avian Influenza

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what conclusions she has drawn from the information that the sentinel birds at the quarantine centre in Essex did not become infected with avian influenza. [31473]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* As indicated in the Epidemiology report of this event, there was no evidence that the H5N1 virus had transmitted to other species in the facility including the sentinel chickens. This suggests that the separation of the various species prevented exposure to the virus to the other species.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will place in the Library a copy of the guidance issued to *(a)* farmers, *(b)* abattoirs and *(c)* poultry keepers regarding avian influenza; and if she will make a statement. [32621]

Mr. Bradshaw: I have arranged for copies of guidance the Department has issued to poultry keepers and other interested parties regarding avian influenza to be placed in the Library of the House.

These can also be found at:

http://defraweb/animalh/diseases/notifiable/disease/ai/index.htm

Biodiversity Ministerial Group

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what role the Inter-departmental Ministerial Group on Bio-diversity will play in the research into the impacts of internationally sourced commodity production on bio-diversity. [35074]

Mr. Morley: DEFRA have commissioned research work into the impacts of internationally sourced commodities on global biodiversity. This work will seek to identify the range of commodities with the largest effects on global biodiversity and identify gaps in the evidence base; palm oil will be one of the commodities investigated. We hope that the outcomes of this work will inform future policy development in the UK and internationally.

This project is one aspect of DEFRA's work on Business and Biodiversity, in the context of DEFRA's WSSD Delivery Plan on International Biodiversity. The Inter-departmental Ministerial Group on Biodiversity are monitoring implementation of the delivery plan.

Biomass Industry

Mr. Letwin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the suitability for use as biomass fuel of forestry waste from local government owned land. [22209]

Mr. Morley: No separate assessment has been made of the suitability of wood for fuel from local government owned woodland but this is not expected to be materially different from woodland on comparable land in any other ownership. The potential volume of woodfuel production from any single ownership, other than Forestry Commission land, has not been forecast.

Botulinum Toxin

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will introduce a requirement that the pharmaceutical industry use a completely non-animal method to confirm the potency of finished products containing botulinum toxin; and if she will make a statement. [34766]

Jane Kennedy: I have been asked to reply.

Botox is the trade name for one of the products containing botulinum toxin which is approved for the treatment of a number of serious and disabling conditions. International and United Kingdom regulations concerning safety and efficacy of medicines require testing for botulinum toxin products at various stages of their processing, from harvesting through to marketing as a finished product for use as a prescription only medicine.

The European Pharmacopoeia, which sets legal standards for many medicines, requires the product to be looked at in either a mouse test called an LD50 or with another test that has been shown to give similar information. Unfortunately, currently there are no tests that have been shown to be reliable enough to measure the product's strength.

Tests are being developed but at the moment they can only be used during the early stages of the manufacturing process. However, an acceptable assay in an animal model still remains a requirement to test the finished product before it can be released for use. Research work is ongoing in both the product companies and elsewhere to try and develop a reliable equivalent test that could replace the animal test but as yet no test has been approved by the Pharmacopoeia.

Coastal Erosion

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent assessment she has made of the effects of *(a)* erosion on the coastline and *(b)* rising sea levels in the East Riding of Yorkshire; what assessment she has made of the effect on local communities; and if she will make a statement. [36713]

Mr. Morley: DEFRA has policy responsibility for flood and coastal erosion risk management in England but operational responsibility falls to the various flood and coastal defence operating authorities who are expected to assess local risk and possible impacts and solutions. The Environment Agency is the principal operating authority responsible for flood risk management in England and this includes the risk of flooding from the sea. Measures to reduce coastal erosion risk fall to maritime district councils under the Coast Protection Act 1949.

The Holderness coastline is subject to erosion, management of which is principally the responsibility of East Riding of Yorkshire council. At the southern end of the coastline the land is more low-lying and subject to both erosion and coastal flooding; the Environment Agency therefore also has responsibilities.

Rising water levels in the Humber estuary have been the main driver for development by the Environment Agency of the Humber Estuary Flood Risk Management Strategy (HFRMS) which was published in draft form for public consultation in August 2005.

The HFRMS highlighted the serious issue of coastal erosion at Kilnsea where it is estimated that within two years erosion could lead to the loss of a flood defence embankment that protects eight houses to the south and east of Kilnsea village. At Easington, the HFRMS noted that the combination of erosion and wave overtopping is damaging the Easington Lagoons designated habitat site. The Environment Agency is also considering the potential, impacts for the coast and estuary from future serious breaches of Spurn point and a joint study is being set up with other stakeholders.

Shoreline Management Plans (SMPs) around the English coast are currently being revised. These provide large-scale assessments of the risks associated with coastal processes and present a long-term policy framework to manage them in a sustainable manner. East Riding of Yorkshire council will lead on the review of the "Flamborough Head to Gibraltar Point" SMP.

Current coastal research and development projects include one to consider the significance of the lowering by erosion of clay 'platforms' on the foreshore.

Contaminated Soil

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what criteria she uses in deciding whether additional security measures may be needed to protect road or rail shipments of radioactively contaminated soils from remediated sites. [35788]

Dr. Ladyman: I have been asked to reply.

Anyone wanting to transport radioactive material by road or rail will need to take into account the security measures required by The Carriage of Dangerous Goods and Use of Transportable Pressure Equipment (Amendment) Regulations 2005.

These security requirements are based on international agreements—the European Agreement concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Road and the Regulations concerning the International Carriage of Dangerous Goods by Rail—and include measures such as only offering the goods to carriers that have been appropriately identified, and fitting devices to stop the theft of the vehicle or its load.

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what criteria she uses in deciding whether to include upland farms covered by restrictions due to Chernobyl radioactive fall-out in areas to be designated under the revised radioactive land contamination regime. [35789]

Mr. Morley: I do not intend to provide separate criteria for upland farms in England.

Informed by the recent public consultation, I shall decide upon generic criteria to protect human health from land contaminated by radioactivity which is giving rise to lasting radiation exposure resulting from the after effects of a radiological emergency or a past or old practice or work activity.

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many sites have been identified as radioactively contaminated within the scope of Part IIA of the Environment Act 1990. [35839]

Mr. Morley: None. Radioactivity does not currently fall within the scope of Part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act 1990. Regulations are to be laid before Parliament in the new year to extend the regime to include radioactivity in England.

Departmental Building

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what *(a)* building and *(b)* refurbishment projects are planned by her Department in (i) 2005–06 and (ii) 2006–07; and what the expected costs are of each project. [34752]

Jim Knight: DEFRA has the following building and refurbishment projects planned in 2005–06 and 2006–07:

	£ million
(i) 2005–06	
(a) Building Projects	
VLA Weybridge: Energy Centre	3.3
VLA Weybridge: HV building	3.6
VLA Weybridge: ASU Building	5.3
VLA Weybridge: New Laboratories	43.7
Carmarthen: SVS Building	1.0
(b) Refurbishment Projects	
VLA Weybridge: Building 33	27.0
VLA Weybridge: HV supply	1.7
Reading: Northgate House	1.6
York: Kings Pool	17.5
London: Ashdown House	4.7
London: Nobel House	33.9
London: Eastbury House Ph II	0.5
London: 55 Whitehall	4.5
Scarborough: MFA offices	0.4
(ii) 2006–07	
(a) Building Projects	
VLA Weybridge: Stores Building	6.0
Alnwick: Reprovision of Offices	3.0
Norwich: Reprovision of Offices	2.0
(b) Refurbishment Projects	
London: Eastbury House Ph III	1.0

Departmental Tendering Policy

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her policy is on including *(a)* ethical and *(b)* environmental factors in tenders for services. [33331]

Mr. Morley: DEFRA expects to let all its contracts in accordance with moral principles, and would consider any case where evidence to the contrary was presented.

Environmental factors in contracts let by DEFRA have been considered on a case by case basis relative to the subject matter of the contract, and the requirements of Community law.

The Department will, very shortly, be making publicly available a "Sustainable Procurement Toolkit" which will enhance further the consideration of environmental factors in public sector contracts.

Departmental Vehicles

Mr. Crausby: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of vehicles used by her Department run on *(a)* petrol, *(b)* diesel and *(c)* liquefied petroleum gas. [36788]

Jim Knight: At 31 March 2005, the proportions of fleet vehicles owned by DEFRA and its Executive agencies, by fuel type are shown as follows:

	Percentage
(a) Petrol	3.9
(b) Diesel	90.8
(c) Liquid Petroleum Gas (LPG)	4.0
(d) Hybrid Electric Vehicles	1.3

Fleet cars are subject to caps on CO_2 emissions according to engine size.

Business mileage is also undertaken by officials in their own vehicles. It is not possible to give a breakdown by fuel type.

Domestic Central Heating

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps the Government are taking to help people over 60 who cannot afford the cost of the installation and maintenance of domestic central heating. [36822]

Mr. Morley: The Government's Warm Front Scheme in England provides a range of heating and insulation measures to householders in receipt of certain benefits. Where a new central heating system is installed, customers are provided with guidance on the efficient use of the system and two annual service visits. There are similar schemes in place in each of the devolved Administrations.

Warm Front has now assisted over one million households since its launch in June 2000. The new phase of the scheme was launched in June 2005, and is better equipped to target and assist those most in need in a sustainable way.

In the pre-Budget report, the Chancellor announced that an additional £300 million would be made available to tackle fuel poverty across the UK. In England, this means that an additional £250 million will be made available both to boost the Warm Front Scheme and extend its ability to provide central heating to poor pensioners, and to provide £300 off the cost of a central heating system for all other pensioners.

More information on the range of measures installed under Warm Front (including a breakdown of measures installed by constituency in England) and its equivalents in the devolved Administrations is available at www.eaga.co.uk

Farmers' Markets

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assistance her Department gives to farmers markets in rural areas. [37270]

Jim Knight: Farmers' markets, which this department has responsibility for, are an important outlet for local food producers, with the added advantage that the direct sales they can stimulate leave producers with a bigger share of the retail price. They have been shown to help bring life back into town centres and to stimulate trade in surrounding shops on days when they are held. They can also play a part in reinstating a more individual character to the local area, where high street uniformity has possibly crept in, and in restoring a more traditional 'market town' atmosphere.

The Department has encouraged farmers' markets by stressing to local authorities the benefits to the rural economy and to town centres which such markets can bring. In addition, we have also provided funding, at both a national and regional level, under our various grant schemes to help establish and raise awareness of farmers' markets. Earlier this year we provided funding for the 'Farmers Market' conference organised by The National Farmers' Retail and Market Association (FARMA) which was held at the Royal Horticultural Halls in London. Officials meet regularly with representatives from FARMA (an organisation that represents over 700 direct selling outlets) to explore how we can work together on our common goals of reconnecting farmers to their markets and helping them to add value.

Flood Defences (East Sussex)

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether she plans to increase funding for flood defences in Robertsbridge, East Sussex; and whether the funds will be spent on flood defences along Northbridge street. [36900]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 13 December 2005]:* I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave him on 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 508W. Northbridge street is protected by the new £4.5 million Robertsbridge flood alleviation scheme. It has the same standard of protection from flooding by the River Rother as the rest of Robertsbridge, that is against all flood events except those with a probability of occurrence in any one year of less than 1 per cent.

Flood Maps

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the level of accuracy is of flood maps drawn up by the Environment Agency. [36126]

Mr. Morley: The Flood Map, which replaced the Environment Agency's previous Indicative Floodplain Map in October 2004, combines data from a number of sources, and therefore it is not possible to put a precise figure on its 'accuracy'.

Flood mapping is a complex, detailed and extensive process that will never be completely accurate but the Environment Agency is committed top provide the best currently available information using nationally consistent principles.

The Flood Map incorporates the Environment Agency's local detailed model data for over 800 flooding 'hotspots'. It was produced using an in depth survey, detailed flow estimates and local knowledge.

This is extended to cover the whole of the floodplain in England using national scale 'generalised' modelling and mapping. This uses data which, by its nature, is of varying levels of detail depending on, for example, local topography.

The information provided by the Flood Map therefore covers the flood plains across the whole of England using the latest technology, a consistent approach and the best available data. It shows areas that are at risk of flooding but cannot provide detail on individual properties.

The Environment Agency has an ongoing programme of improvements to the Flood Map, focusing on areas of highest risk and uncertainty. An updated Flood Map is published on the internet quarterly to incorporate this new information as it becomes available.

Flooding

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the potential for improving water absorption by tree-planting to reduce flooding; and if she will make a statement. [37112]

Mr. Morley: DEFRA is responsible for policy on flood risk management in England. There has been some research on the impacts of woodlands and forestry on flood run-off. Responses to the recent public consultation on "Making Space for Water", DEFRA's developing new Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management, reinforced the need to continue this area of investigation alongside consideration of how other rural land management techniques might contribute to managing flood risk.

Evidence to date suggests that, while there can be an impact on frequent flood events at the local scale, effects are much less certain for more extreme events at the wider catchment level.

Food Allergies

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will publish the new rules on food allergies; and what products are covered by those rules. [35109]

Caroline Flint: I have been asked to reply.

The Food Labelling (Amendment) (England) (No. 2) Regulations 2004 (SI 2004/2824) came into force on 26 November 2004. They establish a list of 12 foods that will have to be indicated by reference to the source allergen whenever they or their derived ingredients are used in pre-packed foods whatever the level of use. This list consists of cereals containing gluten (wheat, rye, barley, oats), crustaceans, eggs, fish, peanut, soya beans, milk, tree nuts (such as almonds, hazelnuts, walnuts, cashews, pistachios, brazil nuts), celery, mustard, sesame, sulphur dioxide and sulphites (above 10 mg/kg).

Global Warming

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions she has had with experts on the effects of global warming on coastline and river levels. [37248]

Mr. Morley: The Department funds much of the UK work on climate change, its impacts and appropriate adaptation measures and so we are in regular contact with leading experts in this field.

The main effects on the coastline relate to sea level rise, compounded by long term land movement. For the UK, estimates were published in the 2002 UK Climate Impacts Programme (UKCIP) Scenarios of Climate change. Other factors include the frequency, duration and intensity of storms which drive waves and surges.

The effect of climate change on river levels depends on complex interactions between rainfall patterns (including both the frequency, intensity and duration of severe storms and longer term rainfall patterns that determine the degree of catchment wetness) and physical catchment characteristics.

The Department has since 1989 issued precautionary guidance on the climate change impacts that should be taken into account when designing flood and coastal erosion risk management measures. This was last updated in 2003 to take account of the UKCIP 2002 scenarios and other specific research on river and coastal impacts. The guidance is kept under review in the light of emerging research results; for example, those presented by leading experts at DEFRA's conference on 'Dangerous Climate Change', held in Exeter in early 2005. In developing our new Strategy for Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management—Making Space for Water-we have made a specific commitment to review our guidance in 2007. To support this review DEFRA has just commissioned a major piece of research over a 30 month period to understand, better the potential impacts on river flow of a range of future climate scenarios.

GM Products

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent international experience she has examined in relation to the withdrawal of GM products for reasons of their effect on *(a)* the environment and *(b)* animal welfare. [36423]

Mr. Morley: Under EU legislation each proposed release of a GM product is subject to a detailed risk assessment which involves careful scrutiny by independent scientists. An evaluation is made of all the risk factors that may arise, including the impact on the environment and animal welfare. This takes account of both British and international experience in the form both of relevant evidence from tests and trials, and in the form of existing scientific knowledge.

Once a GMO has been approved, it is possible that new scientific evidence (from either British or international sources) may come to light which might warrant a reassessment of the approval. There areprovisions under the terms of EU legislation which allow a member state to take safeguard action in these circumstances, if this is justified by the new information.

Ensuring safety is the Government's clear overriding objective, and we will only agree to the release of a GM product if we are satisfied that it is safe.

Greenhouse Gases

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 312W, on greenhouse gases, what estimate she has made of the change in carbon dioxide emissions from current levels to the Kyoto target period which will result from *(a)* changes in the future of energy supply, *(b)* economic activity, *(c)* fuel prices, *(d)* sectoral trends, *(e)* effects of current and future policy measures and *(f)* other major factors. [36587]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* I have been asked to reply.

Work to update the energy projections published in November 2004 is continuing. My Department is aiming to publish information on the projections in due course.

The November 2004 projections can be found at: http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/uep2004.pdf with an addendum later published, which extended the projections to 2020. This can be found at: http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/sepn/uep_addendum.pdf.

Markets

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what measures her Department is taking to encourage the use of markets. [35582]

Jim Knight: Farmers' markets, which this Department has responsibility for, are an important outlet for local food producers, with the added advantage that the direct sales they can stimulate leave producers with a bigger share of the retail price. They have been shown to help bring life back into town centres and to stimulate trade in surrounding shops on days when they are held. They can also play a part in reinstating a more individual character to the local area, where high street uniformity has possibly crept in, and in restoring a more traditional 'market town' atmosphere.

The Department has encouraged farmers' markets by stressing to local authorities the benefits to the rural economy and to town centres which such markets can bring. In addition, we have also provided funding, at both a national and regional level, under our various grant schemes to help establish and raise awareness of farmers' markets. Earlier this year we provided funding for the 'Farmers Market' conference organised by The National Farmers' Retail and Market Association (FARMA) which was held at the Royal Horticultural Halls in London. Officials meet regularly with representatives from FARMA (an organisation that represents over 700 direct selling outlets) to explore how we can work together on our common goals of reconnecting farmers to their markets and helping them to add value.

My noble Friend, Lord Bach, spoke at the "Making markets, Creating places" conference held at Borough Market in June 2005. That conference focused on the key role markets can play in towns and cities and highlighted their potential for supporting the growing numbers of quality food producers looking to sell their products. The event brought together leaders in the

urban regeneration and food policy fields along with those who have been at the forefront of revitalising city centre markets in the UK.

Pegasus Birds Quarantine Centre

Mr. Paice: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of whether a public health issue would arise if a hospital worker was running the Pegasus Birds quarantine centre. [28715]

Ms Rosie Winterton: I have been asked to reply.

Avian influenza does not easily cross the species barrier from birds to people, and there is no confirmed evidence that avian influenza is transmissible from person to person.

The normal infection control measures that are taken to protect people against the risk of any zoonotic diseases that birds can carry and to prevent infection of those caring for birds should protect against avian influenza risks.

Guidance on avoiding the risk of zoonotic infections, including avian influenza is available on the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) website and on the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) website.

Pesticides

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what meetings with pesticide companies the Government has had in the preparation of its response to the report by the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, crop spraying and the health of residents and bystanders; and what meetings with pesticide companies are planned. [35798]

Mr. Morley: My noble Friend, the Lord Bach, will be meeting with representatives of the Crop Protection Association on 11 January 2006. He has not held any other meetings with pesticide companies since the launch of the RCEP report in September and no other such meetings are currently planned.

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs which Government Departments will be involved in consultations and discussions about the Government's response to the report by the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution, crop spraying and the health of residents and bystanders. [35799]

Mr. Morley: DEFRA is currently addressing the recommendations and will co-ordinate a Government response by next summer. As part of this process DEFRA will be discussing the recommendations with a number of government departments and agencies and particularly those, such as the Department of Health and the Health and Safety Executive, which have responsibility relevant to some of the areas covered by the report.

Poultry Auctions

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether her Department's definition of higher risk events includes poultry auctions under licence. [34989]

Mr. Bradshaw: The auction of poultry is defined as a higher risk event and is currently prohibited as are all sales from exhibitions, shows, fairs and other gatherings.

Sheep/Goats

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether the United Kingdom's derogation from EU Council Regulation 21/2004 on identifying sheep and goats will continue after December 2005. [34858]

Mr. Bradshaw: Yes, the derogation is currently due to expire on 30 April 2006.

A decision on whether the derogation will be extended will be taken by the EU Standing Committee on the Food Chain and Animal Health before the derogation expires.

Sugar Subsidies

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the effect of the recent reductions of sugar subsidies by the EU on *(a)* encouraging trade in developing countries and *(b)* the overproduction and dumping of sugar. [35604]

Mr. Bradshaw: The existing EU sugar regime results in a structural surplus of around 5 million tonnes of sugar a year, much of which is disposed of on world markets with the aid of export subsidies. This depresses world prices as well as displacing other potential suppliers. It also requires the EU to limit access to its own market in order to protect its internal price structure.

Under the reformed arrangements agreed in November to take effect from July 2006, EU prices will be progressively reduced and the industry restructured to achieve a new balance of supply and demand consistent with the granting of full duty free access to all Least Developed Countries from 2009 (in addition to existing preferential access for African Caribbean and Pacific countries) and limiting exports to the new lower level of 1.27 million tonnes resulting from the recent WTO Panel ruling.

The impact of these changes is considered in detail in the Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment of options for reform of the EU Sugar Regime published by DEFRA in June 2005.

Water Reservoirs

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the water reservoirs that *(a)* have become operational in each year since 1990 and *(b)* are planned, giving the operating company in each case. [36482]

Mr. Morley: No major public water supply reservoirs have been built since 1990 or are currently under construction. In fulfilment of their duties to maintain adequate supplies of water, several water companies

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propose to construct five new reservoirs. These proposals were set out in the 25-year water resources plans they prepared in 2004.

Proposed location	*Company*
Broad Oak	Southern Water/Mid Kent Water/ Folkestone and Dover Water Services
Clay Hill	South East Water
Havant Thicket	Portsmouth Water
South West Oxfordshire	Thames Water
Lower Severn	Severn Trent

In each case the necessary approvals, such as planning permission, will need to be obtained.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Crown Prosecution Service

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General if he will list the complaints made by *(a)* members of the public, *(b)* hon. Members and *(c)* members of the House of Lords about the conduct of the Crown Prosecution Service in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; and what the outcome was in each case. [37372]

The Solicitor-General: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost (Code of Practice for Access to Government Information, part 2, section 9 a).

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females were employed by the Crown Prosecution Service in (i) Southend, (ii) Essex, (iii) Hertfordshire and (iv) the Metropolitan police area of London in each of the last 15 years for which figures are available. [37374]

The Solicitor-General: The number of males and females who were employed by the Crown Prosecution Service in (ii) Essex, (iii) Hertfordshire (iv) the Metropolitan police area of London for which figures are available are tabled as follows.

Southend is not a Crown Prosecution Service area but forms part of Essex area. It has not been possible to provide a breakdown for that part of the area alone.

CPS	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*
All staff	5,770	5,830	6,910	7,440	8,070	8,386
Male	2,110	2,110	2,340	2,500	2,680	2,797
Female	3,660	3,720	4,570	4,940	5,390	5,589
Essex						
Male	n/a	19	49	52	55	56
Female	n/a	29	73	88	92	102
Hertfordshire						
Male	n/a	18	22	22	26	28
Female	n/a	49	57	65	73	78
London						
Male	n/a	289	355	395	449	462
Female	n/a	530	704	770	885	911

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General how many cases of person-assisted suicide the Crown Prosecution Service has taken up over the last 10 years for which information is available. [37510]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service has records of the volume of specific offences handled only since full implementation of the Compass Case Management System in April 2004. These records show that, during the year ending March 2005, two offences under s.2*(1)* of the Suicide Act 1961 (aiding, abetting, counselling or procuring the suicide of another) proceeded to a hearing, followed by a further three offences during the period 1 April to 8 December 2005.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General what the target staffing level is of the Crown Prosecution Service in *(a)* Southend and *(b)* Essex; and what the actual level is. [37511]

The Solicitor-General: CPS areas are required to operate within set budgets, rather than having target staffing figures.

CPS Essex is organised into four district teams. The South East Essex team has responsibility for cases arising in Southend. As at 1 December 2005, CPS Essex employed the full time equivalent of 25.4 staff in the South East team and the full time equivalent of 137.8 staff in the area as a whole. CPS Essex is currently recruiting at prosecutor level and has recently appointed two administrative witness care officers, who are due to take up their positions shortly.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General how many cases have been discontinued in the Essex Crown Prosecution Service, broken down by category of offence, in the last five years for which information is available. [37512]

The Solicitor-General: In September 2004, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) introduced a system for the recording and analysis of principal offence types for which each defendant is prosecuted. Before this date, the CPS measured only the seriousness of the offence as summary, either-way or indictable only.

Since September 2004, CPS Essex has processed a total of 30,952 defendants of whom a total of 3,700 had their cases discontinued. This figure includes cases: where a bindover was accepted; where a discontinuance

decision was made by the prosecution; that are withdrawn with a reinstatement warning; in which no evidence is offered; and, a very small number where the indictment or prosecution was stayed.

18 defendants were processed under the offence type of homicide, of which two were discontinued.

4,601 defendants were processed under the offence type of offences against the person, of which 1,342 were discontinued.

292 defendants were processed under the offence type of sexual offences, of which 79 were discontinued.

769 defendants were processed under the offence type of burglary of which 126 were discontinued.

271 defendants were processed under the offence type of robbery, of which 44 were discontinued.

4,418 defendants were processed under the offence type of theft and handling, of which 466 were discontinued.

254 defendants were processed under the offence type of fraud and forgery, of which 40 were discontinued.

1,706 defendants were processed under the offence type of criminal damage, of which 284 were discontinued.

974 defendants were processed under the offence type of drugs offences, of which 64 were discontinued.

1,943 defendants were processed under the offence type of public order offences, of which 351 were discontinued.

13,141 defendants were processed under the offence type of motoring offences, of which 634 were discontinued.

1,592 defendants were processed under the offence type of all other offences, of which 261 were discontinued.

The above analysis takes no account of cases which resulted in an administrative finalisation, where the defendant could not be traced by the police, had died, or been found unfit to plead.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General if he will make a statement about the performance of the Crown Prosecution Service in *(a)* Southend and *(b)* Essex. [37513]

The Solicitor-General: CPS Essex performance data for the second quarter of 2005–06 shows improvements across a range of key indicators (measuring delivery of services to the public). The Area is achieving an overall rating of amber/green (on a scale where red indicates a negative likelihood and green indicates a positive likelihood) in relation to the likelihood of it meeting current targets. This equates to an overall performance improvement from the first quarter of 2005–06 and suggests improved delivery of Area business. These measurements relate to the Essex as a whole and do not break down to team performance within the county.

In addition, Essex CPS was designated as ready to move onto the statutory charging scheme with effect from Monday 12 December 2005. This reflects a significant achievement for the Area in relation to the provision of pre-charge advice to Essex police officers as part of the national rollout under the CPS Charging Programme.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General how many cases have been dealt with by the Essex Crown Prosecution Service by category of offence in the last five years for which information is available; and how many resulted in an *(a)* not guilty and *(b)* guilty verdict. [37514]

The Solicitor-General: In September 2004, the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) introduced a system for the recording and analysis of principal offence types for which each defendant is prosecuted. Before this date, the CPS measured only the seriousness of the offence as summary, either-way or indictable only.

Since September 2004, CPS Essex has processed a total of 30,952 defendants of which 25,228 resulted in a guilty verdict and 777 resulted in a not guilty verdict. Cases prosecuted by the CPS do not all conclude in a guilty or not guilty verdict. The figures for each principal offence code for defendants processed by CPS Essex between September 2004 and 8 December 2005 which concluded in a guilty or not guilty verdict are tabled.

18 defendants were processed under the offence type of homicide. 13 concluded in a guilty verdict and two concluded in an acquittal.

4,601 defendants were processed under the offence type of offences against the person. 2,957 concluded in a guilty verdict and 284 concluded in an acquittal.

292 defendants were processed under the offence type of sexual offences. 163 concluded in a guilty verdict and 48 concluded in an acquittal.

769 defendants were processed under the offence type of burglary. 626 concluded in a guilty verdict and 16 concluded in an acquittal.

271 defendants were processed under the offence type of robbery. 208 concluded in a guilty verdict and 14 concluded in an acquittal.

4,418 defendants were processed under the offence type of theft and handling. 3,875 concluded in a guilty verdict and 63 concluded in an acquittal.

254 defendants were processed under the offence type of fraud and forgery. 208 concluded in a guilty verdict and three concluded in an acquittal.

1,706 defendants were processed under the offence type of criminal damage. 1,376 concluded in a guilty verdict and 44 concluded in an acquittal.

974 defendants were processed under the offence type of drugs offences. 901 concluded in a guilty verdict and six concluded in an acquittal.

1,943 defendants were processed under the offence type of public order offences. 1,526 concluded in a guilty verdict and 61 concluded in an acquittal.

13,141 defendants were processed under the offence type of motoring offences. 12,316 concluded in a guilty verdict and 174 concluded in an acquittal.

1,592 defendants were processed under the offence type of all other offences. 1,268 concluded in a guilty verdict and 61 concluded in an acquittal.

The analysis takes no account of cases which resulted in an administrative finalisation (where the defendant could not be traced by the police, had died, or been found unfit to plead) or cases which were discontinued by the prosecution or discharged at committal.

CPS Essex outcomes by Principal Offence Category

2004–05

	Admin finalised	*Discharged committal*	*Prosecution dropped*	*Acquitted*	*Convicted*	*Total*
A Homicide	0	0	0	0	5	5
B Offences Against The Person	3	4	479	101	1,081	1,668
C Sexual Offences	0	1	32	20	65	118
D Burglary	0	0	52	7	248	307
E Robbery	0	1	8	6	71	86
F Theft And Handling	1	4	161	20	1,462	1,648
G Fraud And Forgery	0	3	18	2	90	113
H Criminal Damage	1	0	101	16	533	651
I Drugs Offences	1	2	23	2	373	401
J Public Order Offences	0	0	131	25	631	787
K All Other Offences (excluding Motoring)	0	1	101	19	562	683
L Motoring Offences	3	1	218	63	4,920	5,205
M Admin finalised	260	0	6	0	4	270
Total	269	17	1,330	281	10,045	11,942

2005–06 to 8 December 2005

	Admin finalised	*Discharged committal*	*Prosecution dropped*	*Acquitted*	*Convicted*	*Total*
A Homicide	1	0	2	2	8	13
B Offences Against The Person	10	1	863	183	1,876	2,933
C Sexual Offences	1	0	47	28	98	174
D Burglary	1	0	74	9	378	462
E Robbery	0	4	36	8	137	185
F Theft And Handling	8	1	305	43	2,413	2,770
G Fraud And Forgery	0	0	22	1	118	141
H Criminal Damage	1	0	183	28	843	1,055
I Drugs Offences	0	0	41	4	528	573
J Public Order Offences	5	0	220	36	895	1,156
K All Other Offences (excluding Motoring)	1	0	160	42	706	909
L Motoring Offences	13	0	416	111	7,396	7,936
M Admin finalised	694	0	1	1	7	703
Total	735	6	2,370	496	15,403	19,010

September 2004 to 8 December 2005 (combined figures)

	Admin finalised	*Discharged committal*	*Prosecution dropped*	*Acquitted*	*Convicted*	*Total*
A Homicide	1	0	2	2	13	18
B Offences Against The Person	13	5	1,342	284	2,957	4,601
C Sexual Offences	1	1	79	48	163	292
D Burglary	1	0	126	16	626	769
E Robbery	0	5	44	14	208	271
F Theft And Handling	9	5	466	63	3,875	4,418
G Fraud And Forgery	0	3	40	3	208	254
H Criminal Damage	2	0	284	44	1,376	1,706
I Drugs Offences	1	2	64	6	901	974
J Public Order Offences	5	0	351	61	1,526	1,943
K All Other Offences (excluding Motoring)	1	1	261	61	1,268	1,592
L Motoring Offences	16	1	634	174	12,316	13,141
M Admin finalised	954	0	7	1	11	973
Total	1,004	23	3,700	777	25,448	30,952

TRANSPORT

A21 Upgrade

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to hold further public consultations regarding the proposed A21 upgrade between Flimwell and Robertsbridge in East Sussex.[37527]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency will continue to consult with individuals, representative bodies and statutory bodies. Further public exhibitions will be held as the proposals are developed.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the public consultation held on 7 December, on the proposed A21 upgrade between Flimwell and Robertsbridge in East Sussex. [37529]

Dr. Ladyman: I have asked the Highways Agency for details of the outcomes following the discussions that took place at Hurst Green Village Hall on 7 December and expect to receive these shortly.

Airspace (Extraordinary Rendition)

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) on how many occasions since 1 January 2001 US-registered aircraft tail number *(a)* N44982, formerly N8068V and N379P, and *(b)* N313P operated in UK airspace; [34629]

(2) on how many occasions since 1 January 2001 US-registered aircraft tail number *(a)* N44982, formerly N8068V and N379P, and *(b)* N313P were provided with air traffic control services. [34630]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* This is an operational matter for National Air Traffic Services Ltd. (NATS). I have asked the chief executive of NATS to write to the right hon. and learned Member.

Biofuels

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment the Government have made of the environmental impact of the increased use of palm oil as a result of the Government's Renewable Fuel Obligation. [36938]

Dr. Ladyman: We have published a feasibility study and regulatory impact assessment for the Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation which consider the environmental benefits and impact of biofuels in some detail. Both of these documents are available in the House Library and on the Department's website at:

http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_roads/documents/divisionhomepaqe/610328.hcsp.

Car Accidents (Young People)

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer to the hon. Member for Tewkesbury (Mr. Robertson) of 6 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1118W, on car accidents (young people), what plans he has to improve the education environment for young drivers. [37304]

Dr. Ladyman: We aim to develop a more improved approach to training and testing. This will be based on research. To this end my Department has recently let two contracts. One is about improving the delivery of road safety education. The other is a review of pre-driver education, which will study the attitudes and influences on driving style that are developed at a young age and before any formal training is undertaken.

In addition the Cohort Study of Learner and Novice Drivers is looking at the methods used and experiences gained of those learning to drive and compares them to how the candidates performed in the practical driving test. The study also follows a sample of drivers for a 3-year period to analyse the experiences they have gained as novice drivers.

Two new projects are also about to be awarded. The Evaluation of the Driving Standards Agency Drivers' Record will investigate the extent of use of the Drivers' Record, and the influence it has on the level and nature of pre-test driver training and experience, and on driving test performance. The second new project concerns the Development of the Pass Plus Scheme for Newly Qualified Drivers, which will explore possible means of improving both the impact and uptake of Pass Plus.

Research continues on the content, delivery and recruitment to existing pre-test and post-test motorcycle training. The project, being conducted by TRL, is addressing issues such as key competencies and skills, whether training should vary according to bike type, how courses can attract riders and how the new practical test being introduced in 2008 will impact on current training courses.

Harbour Commissioners

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when powers under section 15 of the Harbours Act 1964 to remove a Harbour Commissioner from office were last used; what the circumstances were in which these powers were used; and if he will make a statement. [36714]

Dr. Ladyman: In the past 30 years, the period for which the Department retains records, no Section 15 Orders have been made to remove a Harbour Commissioner from office.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what guidance he has issued relating to *(a)* the conduct of Harbour Commissioners and *(b)* the practice to be followed on appointing new commissioners; if he will publish such guidance; and if he will make a statement. [36715]

Dr. Ladyman: Guidance to trust ports covering the appointment and conduct of Harbour Commissioners is issued in the form of our published document "Modernising Trust Ports—A Guide to Good Governance" a copy of which is available in the Library and on the Department's website at: http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_shipping/documents/divisionhomepage/032192.hcsp

Heavy Goods Vehicles

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether there are plans to introduce retrospective measures to require heavy goods vehicles to fit blind spot mirrors or cameras. [37271]

Dr. Ladyman: We understand the European Commission is developing a proposal for a directive that would require the existing heavy vehicle fleet to be equipped retrospectively with mirrors (or cameras) offering the same vision capability as will be required of all new heavy vehicles entering into service after January 2007. The Commission has as yet not discussed this issue with member states so no details are available.

Highways Agency

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what procedure has to be followed to claim compensation from the Highways Agency after a compulsory purchase order. [37142]

Dr. Ladyman: Following the making of a compulsory purchase order, a person or persons, whose property has been included in that order, are served with a notice to treat. The notice confirms the extent of the land affected and invites those with an interest to make a claim for compensation. On receipt of a claim, the Highways Agency instructs its valuer to negotiate and agree compensation with the claimant and their surveyor.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much the Highways Agency spent on the Compulsory Purchase Order of Stage Cottage, Hurst Green, East Sussex; and how much it has spent on the property since. [37175]

Dr. Ladyman: Stage Cottage was purchased in August 2005 by agreement for £350,000 under discretionary purchase terms. The property will be kept in management by the Highways Agency and let until the

A21 Flimwell to Robertsbridge road scheme has been developed in detail. The property is currently being refurbished at a cost of about £22,000 in preparation for letting.

M1

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport for what reason the M1 motorway was closed in Leicestershire on 5 December; on whose authority; what steps were taken to ensure the period of the closure was kept to a minimum; and if he will make a statement. [36712]

Dr. Ladyman: The M1 was closed southbound between Junctions 21 and 22 on 5 December from 9.45 am to 6.45 pm due to a serious road traffic accident involving five vehicles, including two HGVs and two vans. Leicestershire police closed the carriageway with assistance from the Highways Agency and its agents.

The length of closure was due to the severity of injuries and the fact that the vehicles involved were badly damaged and entangled, which increased the time of the recovery operation. The incident was classified by the police as a potential fatal scene, necessitating detailed investigation. The carriageway was reopened directly after the investigation was completed and the scene cleared.

Railways

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will make a statement on the operation of section 110 of the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003; [37518]

(2) what assessment he has made of the number of local authorities which have not complied with the provisions of section 110 of the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003. [37519]

Dr. Ladyman: Section 110 of the Act imposes no duty of compliance on local authorities. It amends an exemption from seat belt wearing by goods vehicle users to apply only when travelling less than 50 metres between stops. Regulations including the revised exemption came into force on 1 March 2005. Observed rates of seat belt wearing in light goods vehicles are as follows:

GB Percentage of seat belt wearing in light goods vehicles

	Drivers	*Front seat passengers*
October 2000	64	53
April 2001	63	52
October 2001	64	53
April 2002	64	51
October 2002	63	55
April 2003	63	55
October 2003	64	51
April 2004	67	53
October 2004	70	57
April 2005	68	58
October 2005	69	61

Source:
TRL Ltd surveys for Department of Transport

Road Building (North West England)

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his road building priorities are in the North West of England. [37342]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency has seven major improvement schemes (over £5 million) in the Trunk Road programme in the North West. These schemes are expected to start by April 2008, and are:

M6 Carlisle to Guards Mill (2006–07)

A5117/A550 Deeside Park Junctions Improvement (2006–07)

M62 Junction 6 Improvement (2007–08)

A590 High and Low Newton Bypass (2005–06)

A66 Temple Sowerby Bypass and Improvement at Winderwath (2005–06)

A57/A628 Mottram, Hollingworth and Tintwistle Bypass (2007–08)

A595 Parton to Lillyhall Improvement (2006–07)

The M60 junctions 5–8 widening scheme is under construction, and a scheme is also being developed to provide additional capacity on the M60 between junctions 12 and 18.

Further work is also being undertaken to determine how additional capacity on the M6 between Birmingham and Manchester should be provided—either by widening or by the construction of a new parallel 'expressway'.

A further six potential trunk road schemes are currently being prioritised as part of the regional funding allocation process.

Seat Belts

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment his Department has made of the effect on the number of people wearing seat belts of an increase in the fine to £80; and if he will make a statement. [37520]

Dr. Ladyman: No such assessment has been made.

Observed seat belt wearing rates are shown in the following table shows. The Department continues its publicity campaign to try to improve seat belt wearing in the rear of cars.

GB percentage of car seat belt wearing rates

	Drivers	*Front seat passengers*	*Rear seat adults (14+)*	*Rear seat children (13-)*	*Rear seat all*
October 2000	91	94	59	90	79
April 2001	91	93	55	90	78
October 2001	90	92	56	90	77
April 2002	91	93	58	92	79
October 2002	90	92	57	90	79
April 2003	91	92	61	90	80
October 2003	91	93	60	90	79

GB percentage of car seat belt wearing rates

	Drivers	*Front seat passengers*	*Rear seat adults (14+)*	*Rear seat children (13-)*	*Rear seat all*
April 2004	93	94	66	92	83
October 2004	93	94	65	93	83
April 2005	93	94	65	93	83
October 2005	92	94	68	94	85

Speed Limits

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to introduce 20 mph speed limits near schools in *(a)* Southend, *(b)* Essex, *(c)* Hertfordshire, *(d)* Greater London and *(e)* England and Wales; and if he will make a statement. [37516]

Dr. Ladyman: Local authorities already have the powers under section 84 of the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 to introduce local speed limits, including 20mph, when the national default limits are not deemed appropriate. The Department encourages their implementation in areas where vulnerable road users are present, including around schools. Local authorities are however best placed to determine where and when 20mph limits or 20mph zones are appropriate.

Tram Programmes

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list departmental meetings held in relation to the *(a)* Manchester, *(b)* Sheffield and *(c)* the Nottingham tram system programmes. [26550]

Derek Twigg: Departmental meetings are held frequently to discuss a range of departmental policies.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with ministerial colleagues in respect of Mersey Tram Line 1. [26549]

Derek Twigg: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport and I meet our ministerial colleagues to discuss a range of departmental policies regularly.

US-registered Planes

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on what dates planes registered in the US by Stevens Express Leasing have landed at domestic UK airfields in each of the last five years. [35999]

Ms Buck: The Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation sets out the international rights and obligations of the airlines of contracting states, including when it is necessary to seek prior permission to operate flights over or into another state. This is implemented by Article 138 of the Air Navigation Order 2005. Permission from the Secretary of State for Transport is only required by foreign aircraft operating civil flights into the UK where they land and take on board or discharge passengers or cargo, and where valuable consideration is given or promised in respect of that carriage. The Department for Transport has no records of aircraft operated by Stevens Express Leasing landing in the UK.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Bribery/Corruption

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether breach of the proposed legal obligation at an EU level for public officials to report bribery, corruption and business interests would constitute a criminal offence in the UK. [36320]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* We are not aware of the proposal to which the question refers. Requirements of this kind are normally dealt with in the UK in codes of conduct and we do not think the introduction of a criminal offence is necessary or appropriate.

Correspondence

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what percentage of correspondence from hon. Members to the Prison Service was answered within 20 working days between *(a)* January to March, *(b)* April to June and *(c)* July to September; and if he will make a statement. [33595]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information on the percentage of correspondence from hon. Members to the Prison Service answered within 20 working days from *(a)* January to March *(b)* April to June and *(c)* July to September 2005 is shown in the following table.

Percentage of correspondence from hon. Members to the Prison Service answered within 20 working days from (a) January to March (b) April to June and (c) July to September 2005

	Total (Percentage)
January to March	92.1
April to June	98.8
July to September	98.7

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Immigration and Nationality Directorate will reply to the letter from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, of 20 September on behalf of Mohammed Hassan, husband of Israa Yunis Gullid (Home Office Reference G1097755), (Correspondence Reference B22342/5). [36995]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to my right hon. Friend on 12 December 2005.

Crime (Shropshire)

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many and what percentage of prisoners released from Shrewsbury prison entered employment, education or training after being released in each year since 2002. [29163]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Employment, Training and Education outcomes for prisoners leaving Shrewsbury prison is given in the following table. The outcomes include those who attended FRESHSTART appointments at Jobcentre Plus, whereby prisoners who do not have a job or training place to go to on release are linked into employment, training and benefits advice and support immediately after release.

	2002-03	*2003-04*	*2004-05*
Discharges	725	623	643
ETE outcomes (inc. FRESHSTART)	186	217	266
ETE outcomes (inc. FRESHSTART) as percentage of total discharges	26	35	41

Electronic Tagging

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many tagged offenders have removed their tags since the policy was brought in. [19382]

Fiona Mactaggart: Between 1 April 2005, when the new contracts started, and 31 October 2005, a total of one, 664 subjects breached their curfew requirements by maliciously tampering with the tag. The figures include subjects who cut off the tag.

The system is designed to ensure that any attempt to remove a tag within the curfew address automatically registers as a tamper at the electronic monitoring service provider's control centre.

European Anti-crime Measures

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether it is a Government objective that legislation in criminal matters should be approximated with other EU member states in accordance with European Commission suggestions. [35646]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 8 December 2005]:* The Government believes that some limited EU approximation of criminal acts and penalties is necessary. This approximation should be restricted to that which is necessary to combat serious cross-border crime or in support of European Community policies, such as against environmental crime or shipping pollution. The Government does not support widespread approximation or harmonisation of member states legal systems.

Approximation of criminal acts and penalties, where necessary, should be taken forward in a manner which respects the principles of subsidiarity and proportionality. The legal traditions of individual member states should be respected and action at ED level should be taken only where this was justified on the basis of identified needs.

The European Commission recently published a Communication on the scope for community competence to legislate in criminal matters following the European Court of Justice judgment of 13 September 2005 (Case C-176/03 Commission *v.* Council) annulling the framework decision on the protection of the environment through criminal law. The Government are still considering the legal and political implications of this communication.

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the Government's policy is on the European Commission's proposals for a witness protection programme at EU level; and if he will make a statement. [36323]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* The UK Government stands ready to consider such proposals on their merits as and when they are made. We support work to encourage cross-border cooperation on witness protection and recently endorsed a Council of Europe Recommendation with that aim. We are also working with French colleagues on the development of a project to encourage cooperation between G8 countries.

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what powers the European Commission has to establish criminal offences in legislation *(a)* which has direct effect in member states and *(b)* which member states are obliged to implement. [36324]

Fiona Mactaggart: *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* The European Court of Justice's judgement of 13 September this year confirmed that where application of criminal penalties is essential to ensure that Community rules are fully effective, measures relating to the criminal law may be adopted under the treaty establishing the European Community. The court also confirmed, however, that as a general rule criminal law matters do not fall within the Community's competence.

The role of the European Commission is to propose legislation, which may then only be adopted in accordance with the relevant procedural provisions in the treaty. The Commission could present a proposal for a directive including a requirement for member states to establish criminal offences. If this proposal was consistent with the European Court of Justice's judgement of 13 September and if it was adopted by the Council (or the Council and Parliament in the case of co-decision), then member States would be obliged to implement the directive. Directives that are intended to confer rights on individuals can in some circumstances be relied upon in national courts by those individuals against the state where the state has failed to implement the directive by the prescribed implementation date, i.e. may give rise to direct effect. These conditions, however, would not be satisfied by the provisions of a directive which were concerned with the establishment of criminal offences rather than the creation of rights for individuals.

Female Circumcision

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are being taken by his Department in relation to the practice of British parents sending their daughters abroad for female circumcision. [26973]

Fiona Mactaggart: The recent Female Genital Mutilation Act 2003, which strengthened and replaced the Prohibition of Female Circumcision Act 1985 has been widely used to raise awareness of female genital mutilation. The Home Office, the Department of Health, the Department for Education and Skills and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) have together provided information about female genital mutilation to police forces and others in the Criminal Justice System; doctors and midwives throughout the

country; local authority social services departments and the education sector; and consular staff. Information about female genital mutilation—including signs that may indicate a child is being prepared for this to take place abroad—is also contained in guidance that the Association of Chief Police Officers issued to its members in March 2005; and in Working Together to Safeguard Children, the main multi-agency guidance on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This guidance is currently being revised and is due to be published in December. Further guidance for consular staff is also being developed by the FCO, in conjunction with the police and social services.

The Government also continue to fund voluntary organisations in the UK that are working to eradicate female genital mutilation.

Home Detention Curfews

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the average length of the curfew period was for those released under the home detention curfew scheme in each year from 1999 to 2000 and 2004–05. [30947]

Fiona Mactaggart: The requested information is in the following table, as recorded on the Prison Service IT system.

Average length of time (weeks) spent by an offender released on curfew, by year[1] England and Wales

2000	6.5
2001	6.6
2002	6.3
2003	8.9
2004	9.8
2005[2]	10.3

[1] Data for 1999 is not centrally available.
[2] Data shown for period up to 28 October 2005

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of offenders on home detention curfew (HDC) failed to complete the HDC period successfully in 2004–05; and if he will list the reasons they failed to do so. [29369]

Fiona Mactaggart: Of the 33,743 offenders released on HDC from 1 January 2004 to 31 October 2005, 16 per cent. were recalled to custody during the curfew period, as recorded on the Prison Service IT system. The reasons why are as follows.

Prisoners who are subject to the Home Detention Curfew scheme can have their licences revoked under the powers available to the Secretary of State provided in sections 38A(1) and 39 of the Criminal Justice Act 1991. The reasons for revocation are as follows:

breach of the curfew (section 38A(1)*(a)* of the Criminal Justice Act 1991);

the prisoner has not breached the curfew, but their whereabouts could no longer be electronically monitored—generally because of a change of circumstances such as they had lost their address (section 38A(1)*(b)* of the Criminal Justice Act 1991);

it was necessary to protect the public from serious harm (section 38A(1)*(c)* of the Criminal Justice Act 1991);

the curfewee had committed an offence or breached any other requirement of probation supervision (section 39 of the Criminal Justice Act 1991 and for offenders sentenced for offences committed on or after 4 April 2005, section 254 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003). Curfewees who are charged with a new offence may also be recalled on any of the preceding grounds depending upon the circumstances of the case.

Immigration

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to decide the application by Shahid Hussain lodged in May 2004 for variation for leave to remain in the UK, reference LR1581008817. [33716]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate notified Mr Hussain of the decision in his case on 8 December 2005.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to decide the application of Robima Kouser, reference LK1600016626, for variation of leave to remain in the UK, lodged in May 2006. [33719]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate notified Mrs Kouser of the decision in her case on 9 December 2005.

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects the application of Nabila Bi Hussain (reference no. H110722T) lodged in May for indefinite leave to remain in the UK to be determined. [33727]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate notified Mrs Hussain of the outcome of her application on 8 December 2005.

Murder Sentences (Appeals)

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the average cost of an appeal by an individual who pleaded guilty to murder and received a life sentence and then appealed against the sentence. [32471]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information requested is not available as costs for such particular types of appeal are not separated out.

Offender Rehabilitation

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list grants made to organisations in the Hampshire constabulary's area to promote rehabilitation of offenders in each of the last three years. [26197]

Fiona Mactaggart *[holding answer 9 November 2005]:* This information is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Parole Board

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many cases the Parole Board has processed in each month to date in 2005; and what the backlog of cases is. [32891]

Fiona Mactaggart: The number of cases processed by the Parole Board each month for the period January 2005 to October 2005 is set out in the following table. The Parole Board does not have a backlog.

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	Total cases[1]
January	1,322
February	1,289
March	1,303
April	1,582
May	926
June	1,446
July	1,715
August	1,515
September	1,577
October	1,644

[1] The figures include both cases considered on the papers and cases where the prisoner has requested a review by means of an oral hearing.

Police

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the financial impact on policing in Brent of the Government's decision to pass costs from the security operations following the July bombings onto the Metropolitan Police. [35587]

Hazel Blears: We have made very clear that we would help the Metropolitan Police Authority with additional policing costs arising from the July bombings but that we would also expect the authority to contribute towards the costs. We made an initial payment of £10 million in October and in the light of costs incurred have now increased that to £30 million.

Operational policing decisions are a matter for the chief officer of police.

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with the *(a)* chief constable and *(b)* police authority in Hertfordshire about structural re-organisation. [31511]

Hazel Blears: My right hon. Friend the Home Secretary wrote to all chief officers and chairs of police authorities in England and Wales on 22 September to set out his views on the development of options for force restructuring and to ask for proposals to be submitted to him by 23 December. Discussions with individual forces and authorities are ongoing at an official level.

Final reports from forces and authorities are expected by 23 December. However, ultimately it will be a matter for the police authorities to determine which options are included in their final submissions.

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what factors he took into account when limiting police forces in the West Midlands to two options for merger; and for what reasons West Mercia constabulary may not pursue other options. [30417]

Hazel Blears: The options submitted to the Home Office at the end of October by all forces and authorities in the West Midlands were assessed according to the design criteria in my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary's letter of 22 September. The options were also assessed in accordance with the overall position in the West Midlands region and the need to produce a credible landscape nationally. On this basis I provided the steer that the West Midlands regional force option and the two strategic force option were the most viable options for the region and should be progressed further. Feedback was provided to forces and authorities in the West Midlands region on the 9 November that the west midlands regional option and the two strategic force option (West Midlands police force/Warwickshire police force : Staffordshire police force/West Mercia police force) were the most suitable for progression based on the evidence submitted at that stage.

However, ultimately it is a matter for police authorities to decide which options are included in their final submissions on 23 December.

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will postpone the reorganisation of police forces in Wales until the outcome in England has been assessed. [33178]

Hazel Blears: No. As England and Wales share a common criminal justice system and the new policing landscape has to be consistent with that, implementation of any police restructuring in Wales will be undertaken to the same timetable as that for England. We will continue to work closely with our Welsh parliamentary colleagues and our colleagues at the Welsh Assembly Government to ensure the particular needs of Wales are taken fully into account throughout.

Prisoners

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) whether prisoners on the basic level of the incentives and earned privileges scheme are entitled to a one-hour visit every two weeks; [32887]

(2) how many prisoners do not have access to a one-hour visit every two weeks. [32888]

Fiona Mactaggart: Convicted prisoners on the basic level of the incentives and earned privileges scheme should normally receive two visits, each for a minimum of one hour, every four weeks. Unconvicted prisoners on the scheme have more generous allowances. Statistics on take up and length of visits are not collected.

Reasonable Force

Anne Snelgrove: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the effectiveness of the police and prosecutors' publication of a leaflet to combat confusion about current legislation on the use of reasonable force in protecting persons and their property. [35257]

Fiona Mactaggart: 300,000 of the leaflets were printed earlier this year, and distributed by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) and Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO). A further 500,000 have recently been printed and are being distributed through local Criminal Justice Boards and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships. In addition, the leaflet is available through the CPS and ACPO websites, with links on other websites including the Home Office website. Early informal feedback has been largely encouraging and the number of copies sought has been welcome.

Road Traffic Offences

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many prosecutions there have been for driving without due care and attention *(a)* in England, *(b)* Northamptonshire and *(c)* the Kettering constituency in each year since 1997. [36134]

Paul Goggins: Available information for England and within the Northamptonshire police force area from 1997 to 2003 (latest available) is given in the following tables.

It is not possible from data collected centrally to identify the constituency of Kettering within the geographical area covered by the Northamptonshire police force.

Data for 2004 will not be available until March 2006.

Table A: Proceedings at all courts for driving without due care and attention[1], England, 1997–2003

	Number of offences
1997	60,961
1998	56,876
1999	51,455
2000	47,077
2001	43,614
2002	39,959
2003	37,719

[1] Offence under s.3 of the Road Traffic Act 1988

Table B: Proceedings for driving without due care and attention[1], Northamptonshire police force area, 1997–2003

	Number of offences
1997	482
1998	252
1999	290
2000	228
2001	84
2002	42
2003	227

[1] Offence under s.3 of the Road Traffic Act 1988

Victim Support

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures his Department is taking to raise public awareness of the work of Victim Support. [35502]

Fiona Mactaggart: Since 1997 the Home Office has nearly trebled its grant in aid to Victim Support from £11.7 million to £30 million annually. Victim Support is an independent charity and it takes decisions about how best to use its resources to raise public awareness of its work.

Additionally the Department funded a project to research more effective ways to recruit volunteers. Recruitment materials developed were shown to be highly effective.

The Department responds to a lot of correspondence from the public in which it highlights the work of Victim Support. The victim and witness walkthrough on the public cjsonline website highlights the work of Victim Support and we have placed a duty on the police, from April 2006, to refer relevant victims to Victim Support unless they request not to be referred.

Victims of Terrorism

Helen Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the review of the possible introduction of a scheme to provide compensation for UK victims of terrorism abroad will be completed. [34641]

Fiona Mactaggart: Our consultation paper 'Rebuilding Lives: supporting victims of crime', issued on 7 December, explained that the question of helping British victims of terrorism and other acts of violence abroad raised complex issues which we wanted to consider thoroughly. It went on to say that we would make an announcement in due course.

Women Prisoners

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many women were received into segregation in each prison in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005 to date; [33097]

(2) how many women were held in segregation for more than one week in each prison in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2005 to date. [33099]

Fiona Mactaggart: Data on women received into segregation and on the number of women held in segregation for more than one week in each prison in 2004 and 2005 is shown in the following table.

Women received into segregation in each prison in 2004 and 2005

Establishment	*2004*	*2005*[1]
HMP/YOI Askham Grange	0	0
HMP/YOI Brockhill	169	80
HMP Bronzefield	[2]105	178
HMP Buckley Hall	217	87
HMP Bullwood	15	16
HMP Cookham Wood	143	113
HMP/YOI Drake Hall	99	57
HMP Downview	112	110
HMP/YOI East Sutton Park	0	171
HMP/YOI Eastwood Park	37	0
HMP Foston Hall	58	49
HMP/YOI Holloway	300	164
HMP/YOI Low Newton	52	82
HMP Morton Hall	21	13
HMP New Hall	391	341
HMP Peterborough	0	[3]106
HMP Send	0	0
HMP Styal	114	75

[1] As at 30 November 2005.
[2] Establishment opened in June 2004.
[3] Opened on 28 March 2005.

Work Permits

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 21 October 2005, *Official Report*, columns 45–6W, on work permits, if he will break down the number of permits issued in each year by country of origin. [35411]

Mr. McNulty: Figures for individuals working in social care are not identified separately. However work permits issued for the health care industry include social care approvals. The numbers of permits issued in each of the last five years by country of origin are presented in the following table.

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	Total
Philippines	6,592	10,014	11,143	12,015	11,453	51,217
India	1,939	4,137	6,482	9,835	13,479	35,872
South Africa	2,880	4,134	5,720	5,881	4,949	23,564
Zimbabwe	1,148	1,959	2,651	2,829	3,121	11,708
Nigeria	1,046	1,328	1,818	1,510	1,563	7,265
Australia	827	1,098	1,240	1,292	1,133	5,590
Pakistan	391	799	862	962	1,393	4,407
China Peoples Republic of	298	540	712	1,070	1,544	4,164
Ghana	340	563	630	850	843	3,226
Bulgaria	46	305	599	790	839	2,579
United States of America	401	437	429	482	602	2,351
New Zealand	390	488	536	504	397	2,315
Zambia	178	345	461	523	589	2,096
Trinidad and Tobago	470	433	391	383	336	2,013
Others	3,015	3,996	4,782	5,517	6,252	23,562
Total	19,961	30,576	38,456	44,443	48,493	181,929

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many helicopters are currently available to British troops in Afghanistan. [37277]

John Reid: British troops operating in Afghanistan as part of the International Security Assistance Force have a number of air assets available to them, including helicopters which are provided by coalition partners. These helicopters are allocated according to tasking and operational priority. There are no UK Military helicopters currently based in Afghanistan.

Airfield Review

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the progress of his airfield review. [36693]

Mr. Ingram: The Defence airfield review is making good progress. I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2055W.

Assessment Phase Work

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether companies undertaking Assessment Phase work are *(a)* reimbursed for the costs of that work and *(b)* undertake work at their own risk. [36038]

Mr. Ingram: Companies conducting Assessment Phase work under contract agree the price in competition, by reference to market forces or where competition is not available under the policy on No Acceptable Price No Contract. When negotiating the contract terms and conditions risks are allocated between the company and the Ministry of Defence on the basis of who is best able to manage them. Companies who decide to carry out private venture work at their own risk do so as part of their normal business. The result of this work might later lead to a MOD contract in which case the company normally seeks to recover their costs through the commercial arrangements agreed at the time.

Defence, Science and Technology Laboratory

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what changes to current staffing levels he expects will occur when the Defence, Science and Technology Laboratory is relocated. [36977]

Mr. Ingram: The Defence Science and Technology Laboratory (Dstl) is currently consolidating its activities onto three core sites as part of the site rationalisation programme. Although, any relocation programme is bound to affect staff it is not expected that there will be a major change in the overall number of staff employed by Dstl. The number of staff employed is determined by the scope and content of its programme for MOD and Government.

Departmental Staff (Relocation)

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what relocations involving more than 100 people are planned within his Department and its agencies in the next five years; and between which locations. [37004]

Mr. Touhig: I will write to the hon. Member and a copy of my letter will be placed in the Library of the House.

Drug Trafficking

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if the Government will donate helicopters no longer needed to Uruguay to assist in the fight against drug trafficking. [36744]

Mr. Ingram: There are currently no surplus helicopters available for disposal and no formal request from Uruguay has been received.

All requests for gifting of surplus Defence equipment from overseas Governments are considered on their merits.

Hearing Loss

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on what evidence he relied when setting the *(a)* threshold and *(b)* other rules that apply to compensation for veterans who have sustained a noise-induced sensorineural hearing loss as a result of their military service; and whether he consulted with any (i) veteran or (ii) disability group. [23613]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence's approach to the assessment of noise-induced sensorineural hearing loss in the War Pensions Scheme reflects that of the Government as a whole and is based on contemporary scientific evidence and understanding. This has been confirmed in recent years by several reviews carried out by independent audiological experts including an Industrial Injuries Advisory Council review. The Ministry of Defence also routinely scrutinises the published peer reviewed literature to ensure that compensation policy and approaches continue to take account of contemporary evidence.

The threshold for compensation for noise-induced hearing loss was introduced into the War Pensions Scheme in 1993. The Government consulted the Central Advisory Committee on War Pensions on this change which formed part of a wider package of changes that included the removal of rank differentials from war disablement pensions and increases in the rate of disablements pensions above the rate of inflation; the most severely disabled other ranks gained most from these increases. The Central Advisory Committee is a statutory body whose role is to consider matters put before it by the Minister. It includes members from the principle ex-service organisations including those representing disabled veterans.

I met Dr. John Low, chief executive of the RNID, on 25 October to discuss his organisation's concerns, including about the threshold for compensation. The RNID submitted a paper to the Department on 5 December. I will arrange to meet Dr. Low again in the new year once the Department has considered the RNID paper.

Iraq

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) which organisation is in charge of the investigation into the deaths of the six Royal Military Police who were killed at Al Majarr Al Kabir in Iraq on 24 June 2003; [30736]

(2) when charges will be brought against the killers of the six Royal Military Police who died at Al Majarr Al Kabir in Iraq on 24 June 2003. [30734]

Mr. Ingram: The Central Criminal Court of Iraq will conduct the investigation into the deaths of the six Royal Military Police in Iraq on 24 June 2003. The Central Criminal Court of Iraq follows the 'investigative model' whereby an investigative judge directs and oversees the investigation before deciding whether to refer the case to the trial court. The case papers, which take account of the Royal Military Police investigation into the incident, have been lodged with the court, to enable the investigative stage to begin. It will be for the investigative judge to decide whether to refer the case to the trial court once this stage has concluded.

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which UK organisations, including police forces, have been involved in the investigation into the deaths of six Royal Military Police who were killed at Al Majarr Al Kabir in Iraq on 24 June 2003. [30737]

Mr. Ingram: The incident in which six Royal Military policemen were killed in Al Majarr Al Kabir on 24 June 2003 has been the subject of an investigation by the Royal Military Police Special Investigation Branch.

Her Majesty's coroner will be holding an inquest into the deaths of the six soldiers in 2006.

IT Projects

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many IT projects have been developed for his Department since 2001; and whether he has agreed to make public *(a)* in full and *(b)* in part Gateway Reviews for these projects. [30492]

Mr. Ingram: There is no central list of IT projects developed for the Department since 2001 and the information could be provided only at disproportionate cost. Two major IT projects have been subject to the Gateway Review process, however, these are confidential to the Senior Responsible Owner and in line with Office of Government Commerce guidelines are not published as a matter of routine.

Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability Programme

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the target date is for the submission of a Main Gate proposal for the Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability programme. [36036]

Mr. Ingram: The Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability (MARS) project is in its Assessment Phase, the aim of which is to balance the key parameters of performance, cost and time. Proposals for a Main Gate investment decision will be made when we know with confidence the risks involved in building the MARS vessels, when we have a proper understanding of the costs involved and the implication in terms of the wider interface with other projects.

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the Assessment Phase of the Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability project is expected to be complete; whether it is considering *(a)* converting existing commercial ships and *(b)* building (i) hulls and (ii) complete ships abroad; and what the estimated cost of the assessment phase is. [36037]

Mr. Ingram: The Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability (MARS) project has only recently entered the Assessment Phase, the aim of which is to balance the key parameters of performance, cost and time. It is therefore too early to say what the final designs and specifications for these vessels might be and where the work will be carried out. We will use the assessment phase to look into the potential options, taking into account best value for money and wider industrial factors, before any decisions are made at the main gate investment point.

We expect that we will spend up to £44 million during the MARS Assessment Phase.

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people are members of the Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability Integrated Planning Team; and what the Team's budget is. [36039]

Mr. Ingram: There are currently 43 members of Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability (MARS) Integrated Project Team (IPT), although this figure is planned to rise to 54 by the end of this financial year. The MARS IPT has operating costs of some £2 million for this financial year, which includes staff costs and all associated administrative expenditure.

Nuclear Weapons

Mr. Kilfoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for what reasons the Government want to retain nuclear weapons. [32349]

John Reid: The Government's policy on nuclear weapons was set out in the 1998 strategic defence review. In the 2003 Defence White Paper (at paragraph 3.11), we set out our position as follows:

"We are committed to working towards a safer world in which there is no requirement for nuclear weapons and continue to play a full role in international efforts to strengthen arms control and prevent the proliferation of chemical, biological and nuclear weapons. However, the continuing risk from the proliferation of nuclear weapons, and the certainty that a number of other countries will retain substantial nuclear arsenals, mean that our minimum nuclear deterrent capability, currently represented by Trident, is likely to remain a necessary element of our security."

The Government are committed to retaining the independent nuclear deterrent.

Nuclear-related Research

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much his Department has allocated towards nuclear-related research in each of the last five years. [36602]

John Reid: Expenditure on nuclear-related research funded by the Ministry of Defence over the last five years amounts to the following:

Financial year	*Approx expenditure, 2005-06 prices (£ million)*
2000-01	87
2001-02	123
2002-03	63
2003-04	62
2004-05	79

Panther Command and Liaison Vehicle

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1263W, on the Panther Command and Liaison Vehicle, how many of the 401 vehicles ordered will replace *(a)* the Spartan, *(b)* the Truck Utility Medium (Landrover), *(c)* the Saxon and *(d)* the FV432 and FV436. [33576]

Mr. Ingram: Under current plans, we expect the PANTHER Command and Liaison Vehicle to replace the following numbers of in-service vehicles operating in command and liaison roles:

	Number
(a) Spartan	137
(b) Truck Utility Medium (Landrover)	225
(c) Saxon	3
(d) FV432	31
(e) FV436	5

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the definitions are of the terms *(a)* 'in service date' and *(b)* 'initial operating capability' as used in parliamentary answers. [36160]

Mr. Ingram: As defined on the MOD's Acquisition Management System website (www.ams.mod.uk), In Service Date (ISD) is declared when the military capability provided by the system is assessed as available for operational use. Initial Operating Capability (IOC) is the state achieved when the military capability is available in its minimum useful deployable form. The specific requirements for ISD and IOC will vary between projects depending on the nature of the role and the equipment in question, and are agreed at the point when the main investment decision is taken (referred to as Main Gate). Different definitions may have been used in projects begun before the introduction of SMART acquisition.

Project Hyperion

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) how much was allocated for setting up the collocated Army headquarters under Project Hyperion; and whether this budget has been revised; [37002]

(2) what changes to staffing levels will take place when the collocated Army headquarters are operational under Project Hyperion. [37003]

Mr. Ingram: It is too early to be precise about the impact on staffing levels. For planning purposes, we assume that collocation will lead to a reduction of at least 240 civilian and 100 military posts. However, the Army is still determining the possible size and structure of the new HQ organisation and we are unlikely to make an announcement until late 2006. Similarly, project costs and the budget for Project Hyperion continue to be refined and will be confirmed at Main Gate, which is unlikely to occur before November 2006.

Royal Air Force

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence where the posts based at RAF High Wycombe which are expected to move to other RAF units by 2008 will be relocated; and how many such posts will be relocated. [36926]

Mr. Ingram: Currently, there are 103 posts expected to relocate from RAF High Wycombe. The final location for these posts is yet to be decided.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much was allocated for setting up the collocated RAF headquarters; and whether this budget has been revised. [36978]

Mr. Ingram: £23.9 million was allocated from the Defence Modernisation Fund to set up the collocated Royal Air Force Headquarters. This has not been revised.

Submarines

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the recommendations by RAND to co-ordinate the Royal Navy's submarine design work with the United States of America. [32681]

Mr. Ingram: As a result of the RAND recommendations put forward in their report on sustaining design and production resources, a statement of intent (SoI) for co-operation and exchange between the United States of America and the United Kingdom of Great Britain on submarine concepts, design and construction was signed on 7 October 2005.

The SoI records the intention to work, to mutual advantage, in developing working relationships and agreements that enable the sharing of analysis and data on submarine platform and equipment requirements, concepts and design.

Additionally, the SoI provides for the benefits of interoperability and synergy in submarine construction, equipment production and logistic support to be maximised. Such work will not compromise the retention of submarine design capability in this country.

Ty Gwyn Nursing Home

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what discussions he has had with his colleagues in the Welsh Assembly Government regarding the closure of the Ty Gwyn nursing home for ex-servicemen suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder. [26152]

Mr. Touhig: MOD officials are in discussion with officials from the Department of Health and the devolved Administrations about the provision of services for former service personnel suffering from mental illness resulting from their service. They have not yet had the opportunity to discuss in detail the question of the closure of Ty Gwyn, which was one of a number of facilities with the capability for treating ex-service personnel suffering from PTSD. However, the question of whether its closure leaves any gaps in the capability for treating ex-service personnel suffering from PTSD is one of the subjects for discussion at a meeting planned for 19 December.

US Military Bases

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what authority UK military police forces have in United States military bases situated in the United Kingdom. [35459]

Mr. Ingram: The UK military police have lawful authority to arrest an individual suspected of a criminal offence if that person is subject to UK military law. The power is set out in the Service Discipline Acts. The United States visiting force is not subject to the Service Discipline Acts.

Under Article VII of the Agreement regarding the Status of Forces of the parties to the North Atlantic Treaty (SOFA), the United States visiting force stationed in the United Kingdom have the right to police the premises which they occupy and may take all appropriate measures to ensure the maintenance of order and security on such premises. Where there are no United States policing and security forces present, or a significant threat exists from demonstrator activity, the United States forces have agreed that the Ministry of Defence Police (MDP) can undertake the policing task on their behalf.

The MDP is a statutory British police force with constabulary powers as defined in the MDP Act 1987, as amended by the Anti-Terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001. Although the MDP can exercise these constabulary powers, incidents solely involving United States visiting force personnel and associated civilians will normally be handled by the United States authorities in accordance with SOFA.

US-registered Aircraft

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) on how many occasions since September 2001 US-registered aircraft tail number *(a)* N313P and *(b)* N44982, formerly N8068V and N379P, has landed at United Kingdom military airfields with (i) Kabul and (ii) Baghdad as its (A) origin and (B) destination; [35460]

(2) on how many occasions since September 2001 US-registered aircraft tail number *(a)* N313P and *(b)* N44982, formerly N8068V and N379P, has landed at United Kingdom military airfields with an airport in (i) Jordan, (ii) Syria, (iii) Romania and (iv) Poland as its (A) origin and (B) destination; [35444]

(3) on how many occasions since September 2001 US-registered aircraft tail number *(a)* N313P and *(b)* N44982, formerly N8068V and N379P, has landed at United Kingdom military airfields with an airport in (i) Libya, (ii) Uzbekistan, (iii) Morocco and (iv) Egypt as its (A) origin and (B) destination. [35443]

Mr. Ingram: The information requested is not recorded centrally and could be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Cemeteries (Gravesham)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what discussions her Department has had with the parish council in Gravesham about the re-use of cemeteries. [37621]

Ms Harman: We have no record of an approach by a parish council in Gravesham on this matter. In my statement on 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 3WS, I set out our immediate plans for taking forward our plans for burial law reform, including the question of re-using old burial grounds.

Criminal Cases (Competitive Tendering)

Mr. Grieve: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will publish the advice her Department has received on the impact on ethnic diversity in the legal professions of the introduction of competitive tendering for criminal cases; and if she will make a statement. [35085]

Bridget Prentice: The Lord Chancellor has asked Lord Carter of Coles to produce a plan to reform to the way publicly funded legal advice and representation are procured by the state.

The Legal Services Commission has commissioned research on ethnic diversity that includes an assessment of the possible impact of competitive tendering on legal aid firms that are owned or controlled by ethnic minorities. The Commission will publish this research once Lord Carter has reported early next year.

We want to see a fair and sustainable legal aid system that provides access to justice for all who need it, gives the taxpayer value for money and is fair for practitioners.

We also want to see a legal profession that is more reflective of the society it serves. On 23 November, I published a report "Increasing Diversity in the Legal Profession" setting out what steps the Government will take to achieve this.

Criminal Justice Act

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many sentences have been passed under Part 12 Chapter 5 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003; and what guidance has been provided by *(a)* the Government and *(b)* the courts on the assessment of dangerousness in section 229 of that Act. [32851]

Fiona Mactaggart: I have been asked to reply.

Between April 2005 (when the legislation was implemented) and October 2005, 321 prisoners were received into custody under an extended sentence and 220 prisoners were received under a sentence of imprisonment or detention for public protection.

The Government have not published any guidance on the assessment of dangerousness in section 229 of the Act. The Court of Appeal recently considered the dangerous offender provisions in the guideline case of R *v.* Lang and 12 others (Times November 10). The court set out several principles that courts should consider when deciding if an offender met the criteria of dangerousness as required by the Act.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps are taken by the Department to support staff with mental ill-health. [36264]

Bridget Prentice: The Department for Constitutional Affairs has a robust framework of policies, internal services and links with external service providers, which are designed to provide practical and timely support for employees with mental health problems. This framework is equally applicable to employees who suffer from other forms of disability or health problems.

This framework includes the managing attendance policy and policies in respect of disability, work/life balance and stress at work.

The DCA has a nation-wide network of human resources advisors, local disability advisors, and welfare officers, all of whom have extensive experience of working with and supporting people with mental health problems. The DCA uses its external occupational health service providers to obtain clinical and employment-related advice tailored to specific individual circumstances. Workplace assessments and risk assessments are available to individuals wherever appropriate.

The DCA makes appropriate use of the access to work and workstep programmes available through the Department of Work and Pensions.

In addition the DCA has a disability network, which is a staff network which actively provides ongoing support for employees with physical and mental health issues.

Effective Trial Management Programme

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the progress of the Effective Trial Management programme; and if she will make a statement. [34323]

Fiona Mactaggart: I have been asked to reply.

The Effective Trial Management programme has supported all criminal justice areas in considering the Criminal Case Management Framework issued jointly by the Attorney General, Lord Chancellor, Baroness Scotland and the Lord Chief Justice in July 2004. All criminal justice areas have now produced their local case management schemes based on the national framework. 33 areas have implemented their schemes and all areas will have implemented their schemes by January 2006.

The early results are promising and indicate reductions in headline ineffective trial rates. For example: in the Crown Court there have been percentage point reductions of 11.1 in Merseyside, 7.2 in Manchester, 7.0 Bedfordshire, 6.0 in Essex and 5.8 in Nottinghamshire. In the magistrates courts we have seen percentage point reductions of 9.0 in Merseyside, 8.2 in Humberside, 6.3 in Nottinghamshire, 5.8 in Manchester and the West Midlands. (Figures are based on an annual average prior to the implementation of ETMP compared with a rolling monthly average after the implementation of ETMP, gathered by the PSA1 Performance Branch of the DCA).

Evaluations of each area's scheme are underway and a full national evaluation will be produced by July 2006.

Probate Costs

Lady Hermon: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 11 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1339W, on probate costs, why the fee structure for grant of probate in Northern Ireland is calculated on a different basis from England and Wales; and what the sliding scale system operating in Northern Ireland is. [32741]

GREAT BRITAIN HOUSE OF COMMONS PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES (HANSARD)
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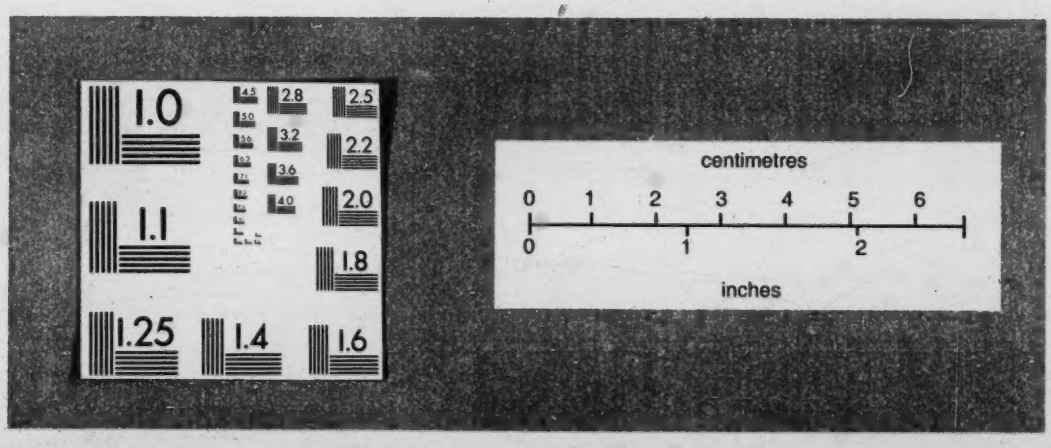

Bridget Prentice: The fee structure payable in respect of applications for grant of probate has differed historically between Northern Ireland and England and Wales.

In Northern Ireland fees for an application for grant of probate are charged on a sliding scale depending on the assessed value of the estate as follows:

Assessed value	*Probate Fee (£)*
Does not exceed £10,000	Nil
Exceeds £10,000 but does not exceed £25,000	75.00
Exceeds £25,000 but does not exceed £40,000	145.00
Exceeds £40,000 but does not exceed £70,000	260.00
Exceeds £70,000 but does not exceed £100,000	330.00
Exceeds £100,000 but does not exceed £200,000	410.00

An additional fee of £65.00 is taken for each £100,000 or part thereof where the assessed value exceeds £200,000.

Small Claims Court

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what progress has been made with research on raising the small claims court limit from £1,000; and if she will make a statement. [36133]

Ms Harman: The Better Regulation Task Force in its report, 'Better Routes to Redress' recommended that research should be carried out into the potential impact of raising the small claims limit for personal injury cases from the current limit of £1000. The Government indicated that it would carry out this research, and would also consider other options for dealing with these claims in a more proportionate and cost effective way.

The Government will be consulting shortly.

SCOTLAND

Departmental Expenditure

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much the Department and its agencies have spent on *(a)* the design and production of new logos and *(b)* employing external (i) public relations and (ii) graphic design agencies in each year since 2000, broken down by project. [33223]

David Cairns: Some costs were incurred on a logo for the "Friends of Scotland" project which was under the responsibility of the Scotland Office until 2003 when this was taken over by the Scottish Executive. Figures on logo costs for this project are not readily available and could be supplied only at disproportionate cost. The Scotland Office has not incurred any other costs on design and production of new logos or employed external public relations or graphic design agencies.

Departmental Tendering Policy

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what his policy is on including *(a)* ethical and *(b)* environmental factors in tenders for services. [33340]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office takes full advantage of contracts negotiated by the Scottish Executive or the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA), depending on the services being purchased. Thus, the Executive or DCA would generally take the lead in such matters.

However, the Scotland Office expects to let all its contracts in accordance with ethical principles, and would consider any case where evidence to the contrary was presented. Environmental factors in contracts let by the office would be considered on a case by case basis relative to the subject matter of the contract, and the requirements of Community law.

Devolution

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what devolution issues the Advocate-General has considered since 15 November. [36695]

David Cairns: Since 15 November, 62 devolution issues have been intimated to the Advocate-General for Scotland.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

African, Caribbean and Pacific Countries

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps he is taking in collaboration with other EU member states to honour the EU commitment to provide African, Caribbean and Pacific countries with viable non-reciprocal alternatives to economic partnership agreements. [37309]

Mr. Thomas: The UK Government's policy on alternatives to Economic Partnership Agreements (EPAs) was made clear in our position of March 2005. We believe that the European Commission should be ready to provide an alternative to an EPA at the request of any African Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) country. Any alternative offered should provide no worse market access to the EU than is currently enjoyed under Cotonou preferences.

The deadline for any ACP country to request an alternative has been extended from 2004 to the end of 2006, at the request of the ACP themselves. To date, no ACP countries have requested an alternative, nor disengaged from the ongoing EPA negotiations.

However, DFID has already supported research to feed an independent assessment into the debate on what steps would be needed to make one of the non-reciprocal alternative options—the generalised system of preferences (GSP) scheme—a viable alternative to

EPAs. In addition, a formal and comprehensive review of EPAs will be undertaken by the EU and ACP in 2006 to check that the negotiations and preparations are on track. In the context of this review, the UK will actively encourage the European Commission and other EU member states, to consider all possible alternative options available, particularly if requested by any ACP country.

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what financial support the African, Caribbean and Pacific countries will receive from the EU as a result of the reformed sugar regime in the years after 2006–07; and if he will make a statement; [36640]

(2) from which fund the accompanying measures for the 18 African, Caribbean and Pacific sugar protocol countries will be drawn; when the funds will be available; and if he will make a statement; [36639]

(3) what assessment he has made of the extent to which the EU funding for African, Caribbean and Pacific sugar group nations will enable them to develop adequate transitional programmes; and if he will make a statement; [36638]

(4) what EU procedures will be used for disbursing support for African, Caribbean and Pacific sugar group nations; what steps are being taken to avoid delays in the disbursement of funds; and if he will make a statement; [36636]

(5) what criteria will be used by the EU to determine how the transitional support for African, Caribbean and Pacific sugar group countries will be allocated. [36633]

Mr. Thomas: The European Commission will be providing transitional assistance to those African, Caribbean and Pacific countries (ACP) who will lose out as a result of reform, to help them to adjust to the change in price. The Commission have proposed €40 million of funding for transitional assistance in 2006, which is still being debated by the European Parliament and EU member states. While the Commission has indicated that funding for 2007 to 2013 will be more substantial, the exact amount will be decided as part of the debate over the next financial perspective. The UK Government will be aiming to achieve appropriate levels of funding as part of this broader agreement.

In its draft regulation of June 2005, the Commission proposed that the €40 million of funding for 2006 would come from the Commission's external relations budget. While the Commission has not yet made any official announcements about how much funding it will propose for 2007 to 2013, it has proposed that this should be funded out of the new Development Cooperation and Economic Cooperation Instrument (also in the external relations budget).

Assistance will be delivered through country-specific plans, which are to be 'elaborated in the country itself, in dialogue with the Commission'. In order to avoid delays in the disbursement of transitional assistance funding, the Commission is aiming to provide part of its funding to ACP countries in the form of budget support where this is appropriate.

The Commission expects that the 2006 funds will be available before the end of 2006. The exact timing will depend in part on the speed with which the sugar protocol countries complete their action plans. DFID are providing over £250,000 to the six sugar protocol countries in the Caribbean to help them complete these plans in a timely manner.

The Commission stated in their draft regulation that allocation will be based on the needs of each country, related in particular to the impact of the reform on the sugar sector in the country concerned, and to the importance of the sugar sector in the economy. We expect more detailed criteria to be determined in the New Year.

Central Asia

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his Department's policy is on support to local non-governmental organisations in Central Asia; and if he will make a statement. [36858]

Mr. Thomas: DFID's policy in Central Asia is set out in our Regional Assistance Plan for Central Asia, South Caucasus and Moldova (2004 to 2007). DFID aims to support civil society in Central Asia, including local non-governmental organisations (NGOs), to improve the accountability and responsiveness of Governments to their citizens. This includes their participation in the drafting, implementation and monitoring of nationally-led poverty reduction policy processes.

In the Kyrgyz Republic, DFID's programme includes work with local NGOs in the areas of public financial management, service delivery and sustainable livelihoods, and rural water and sanitation schemes. In Tajikistan, our support to NGOs is largely through community development and livelihoods programmes, and third party arbitration courts. We are also working with local NGOs through a regional HIV/AIDS programme in Central Asia. This programme has just begun in Kyrgyz Republic, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan and will run to 2008.

Correspondence

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many *(a)* letters from hon. Members, *(b)* letters from members of the public and *(c)* parliamentary questions from (i) hon. Members and (ii) Lords were dealt with by his Department in each year since 1995; in respect of the percentage his Department took (A) more than one month and (B) more than three months to provide a substantive answer; and if he will make a statement. [37395]

Mr. Thomas: The Cabinet Office, on an annual basis, publishes a report to Parliament on the performance of Departments in replying to Members and Peers correspondence. The report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005, *Official Report*, columns 137–40ws. Reports for earlier years are available in the Library of the House.

DFID's public inquiry point has received the following correspondence from members of the public over the years in question:

	Letters to PEP	*Campaign letters to PEP*	*TOs copied to PEP*	*Total*
2001	3,917	1,645	—	5,562
2002	1,657	2,282	—	3,939
2003	2,201	630	615	3,446
2004	1,234	2,583	257	4,074
2005[1]	1,608	3,748	278	5,634

[1] January to November.

Information on turnaround times is not held centrally and would incur a disproportionate cost to obtain.

DFID's parliamentary unit endeavours to reply to all parliamentary questions within parliamentary deadlines where possible. The information requested is not held centrally and would also incur a disproportionate cost to obtain.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what *(a)* building and *(b)* refurbishment projects are planned by his Department in (i) 2005–06 and (ii) 2006–07; and what the expected costs are of each project. [37394]

Mr. Thomas: The currently planned building and refurbishment projects are as follows:

£

	Planned spend		
	2005–06	*2006–07*	*Total planned spend*
Building projects			
New office—Nigeria (Kano)	475,000	1.2 million	2.6 million
New office—Pakistan	1.63 million	340,000	1.97 million
New office—Democratic Republic of Congo	750,000	700,000	1.8 million
New office—Ethiopia	1.7 million	900,000	3.8 million
New office—Mozambique	340,000	2 million	2.8 million
New office—Uganda	70,000	1.1 million	2.7 million
New office—Afghanistan	300,000	100,000	0.4 million
New office—Zimbabwe	100,000	1.3 million	3.3 million
New office—Jerusalem	Nil	900,000	1.7 million
New office—Bangladesh	[1]—	[1]—	5.0 million
Refurbishment projects			
Sudan office	300,000	1.4 million	1.9 million
Sierra Leone office	1 million	800,000	2.6 million
Abercrombie House, East Kilbride	740,000	—	740,000

[1] To be confirmed, still at planning stage.

Global Fund

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will increase the UK contributions to the Global Fund to the level of the contribution of the French Government. [36929]

Mr. Thomas: DFID has no further plans at the moment to increase the UK's contribution to the Global Fund. Prior to the Replenishment Conference in September, the Global Fund calculated that on the basis of Gross Domestic Product (GDP), the UK would have to contribute US$320 million for 2006 and 2007—equivalent to 4.5 per cent. of the Global Fund's resource needs for the period[1]. At the conference we increased our pledge to exceed our GDP "fair share"—to US$344 million for the replenishment period.

The Global Fund is just one instrument to channel funds for AIDS, TB and malaria. According to the Joint United Nations Programme on AIDS (UNAIDS) the UK was the second largest donor, of the Development Assistance Committee (DAC) country-members, providing direct bilateral support for HIV and AIDS to recipient countries in 2004. Of US$2.7 billion provided by DAC members in 2004 the UK contributed 20.5 per cent., second only to the US at 49.6 per cent.[2] In comparison the French Government provided 0.9 per cent.

The UK Government is committed to spending at least £1.5 billion over the next three years in AIDS related work, including our pledge to the Global Fund. Most of our spending on AIDS will go direct to developing countries, through Government, non governmental organisations or the private sector.

With regards to malaria and TB, DFID is a board member of the Roll Back Malaria Partnership (RBM). We have contributed £48.5 million to the RBM since 1999. We have pledged £7 million to the Stop TB Partnership through to 2008.

[1] The Global Fund Voluntary Replenishment 2005 "Technical Note 2: Contribution Scenarios" June 2005, Page 5.

[2] UNAIDS "Resource Needs for an Expanded Response to AIDS in Low and Middle Income Countries" August 2005, page 9. Note: these data exclude contributions to the Global Fund.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the outcome of the Global Fund Replenishment Conference held in London in September. [37495]

Mr. Thomas: I refer the hon. Member for St. Ives to the response given to my hon. Friend the Member for

Manchester, Central (Tony Lloyd) on 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1294W and the written ministerial statement I made to Parliament on 26 October.

Maldives

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance the Government has provided to the Maldives since the tsunami. [37614]

Mr. Thomas: DFID provided emergency support to the Maldives immediately after the tsunami, totalling £1,664,000. This has been given to several UN agencies and also for the provision of transportation material (see following table for details). We have also encouraged the provision of further assistance for longer-term reconstruction through the European Commission.

UK emergency humanitarian assistance to the Maldives has comprised:

£

Partner	*Activity*	*Amount*
United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP)	Emergency waste management	400,000
United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)	Restoration of livelihoods	500,000
	Landing craft and engineering equipment including airlift	550,000
The World Health Organisation (WHO)	Specialist disaster preparedness and epidemiological staff	105,000
	Air transport costs for Scottish water 40 MT water and collapsible water cans	81,000
United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF)	Water and sanitation engineer seconded to UNICEF for three months	28,000
UNICEF	A proportion of £4 million to UNICEF for water and sanitation in Indonesia, India, Maldives and Sri Lanka.	—

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what support the Government has provided to the people of the Maldives to promote democratic governance; and if he will make a statement. [37615]

Mr. Thomas: The Maldives is the richest country in South Asia and the Department for International Development does not maintain a regular programme there. Our support focuses upon poorer countries where we can have a greater impact upon poverty.

Her Majesty's Government is however, supporting and encouraging democratic and political reform in the Maldives. The British high commissioner in Colombo is accredited to the Maldives and maintains a regular dialogue with the Government there. Most recently, on 12 December, in his capacity as the local EU presidency, he led a delegation of European Union Ambassadors and Heads of Mission to Male to discuss democratic reform with President Gayoom. We will continue to promote and support the process of democratic reform in the Maldives, bilaterally and with EU partners.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

BBC Charter

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make it a requirement of BBC Charter renewal that *(a)* BBC websites and *(b)* BBC radio channels made available on-line are available free of charge only to licence payers. [34510]

Tessa Jowell *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* The Government have no plans to make the renewal of the BBC Charter conditional on the Corporation restricting access to BBC online content to licence fee payers or to United Kingdom residents.

However, the grant received by the BBC World Service from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office already includes an element towards the cost of making BBC online services available outside the UK.

Iraqi Heritage Sites

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will raise the issue of the protection of Iraqi heritage sites with other EU Ministers during her chairmanship of the Education Youth and Culture Council. [34372]

Tessa Jowell: The Education Youth and Cultural Council was held on 14 November. The subject of the protection of Iraqi heritage sites would not have been an appropriate agenda item for this meeting, which is concerned with EU business only.

However, when I have been made aware of potential damage to the heritage of Iraq, I have written to my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary requesting that he bring these concerns to the attention of those countries who had troops serving in the area, under the auspices of the multi national force, and emphasising that we should impress upon others the importance of caring properly for Iraq's heritage and the urgent need to protect its sites. As a result, the Foreign Office has raised these concerns with the relevant countries concerned.

The UK takes very seriously the need to respect Iraq's cultural heritage. The Iraq (United Nations Sanctions) Order 2003, introduced in response to United Nations Security Council Resolution 1546, makes it an offence to be in possession of illegally removed Iraqi cultural property, or to knowingly trade in such material.

Public Bodies/Agencies

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many staff were employed by non-departmental public bodies and agencies for which she has responsibility in 2004–05 in *(a)* total and *(b)* each (i) nation and (ii) region of the UK and *(c)* London. [35943]

Mr. Lammy: Total Executive NDPB staff numbers by department as at 31 March 2005 are recorded in table 2 of Public Bodies 2005, a copy of which is in the House Libraries, and which is available online at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/the_future_of_the_civil_service/agencies_and_publi_bodies/publications/pdf/public-bodies/publicbodies2005.pdf.

The number of staff in individual executive agencies as at 1 April 2004, including a regional analysis, is available in Civil Service Statistics 2004 which was published in February 2005, a copy of which is in House Libraries. It is also available online at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_of_the_civil_service/statistics/contents_for_civil_service_statistics_2004_report/number_of_civil_servants/index.asp.

However, the NDPB data do not detail the regional breakdowns requested. This information is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

CABINET OFFICE

Disabled People (Life Chances)

Danny Alexander: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on the initial activity undertaken by his Department in response to those recommendations in the Prime Minister's strategy unit report improving the life chances of disabled people where lead responsibility was assigned to all Government departments. [37074]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Since publication of the report in January 2005 the Department launched the 10-point plan—Delivering a diverse civil service—on 1 November 2005 that included a target for 3.2 percent., of the senior civil service to be people with disabilities. The plan includes a number of actions that will promote the recruitment and retention and career development of people with disabilities.

The Better Regulation Executive and the e-Government Unit provide guidance about consulting with diverse groups in policy development and service delivery.

The Cabinet Office will be developing plans to meet the new public sector duty to promote disability equality. The department will also work with the new Office for Disability Issues in delivering the strategy unit report recommendations that are assigned to all departments.

EU Presidency Team

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (1) how many staff work in the EU Presidency Team within the Cabinet Office; what the *(a)* civil service grade and *(b)* job description is of each; and how many are agency or contract staff; [35744]

(2) what the *(a)* total and *(b)* staff budget is for the EU Presidency Team within the Cabinet Office; if he will break this down by individual budget line; what the purpose of the team is; and when it was created. [35796]

Mr. Jim Murphy: There are three full-time staff in the EU Presidency Team located within the European Secretariat which is based within the Cabinet Office, one at Band A (formerly known as Grade 7 or Principal), one at B2 (Faststream), and one at C2 (formerly known as Administrative or Clerical Officer). None are agency staff. The pay budget for this team in 2005–06 is approximately £100,000. Other costs for this team were £13,464. The Band A worked on the Presidency part-time from January 2004, and was joined by the B2 in August 2004 and the C2 in January 2005. The objective of the team was to coordinate the planning, preparation and delivery of the UK Presidency of the EU across Whitehall and the devolved Administrations. The team will be wound up in the first few months of 2006.

Hampton Report

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster pursuant to the oral answer of 6 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 737–38, on the Hampton Report, how many *(a)* annual inspections of and *(b)* forms sent to businesses he expects will be undertaken when the recommendations of the Hampton Report are fully implemented. [36621]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Government's better regulation agenda, which includes the implementation of both 'Less is More' and Philip Hampton's recommendations, is focused on lighter-touch regulation, concentrating on cases where action is needed. The Government have no specific numerical target for the number of forms or inspections carried out following the implementation of these reports, but reducing the number of unnecessary forms and inspections is a central part of its agenda.

As set out in the better regulation action plan announced in May this year, Departments and regulators have been asked to publish simplification plans, containing information about the number of forms they send to businesses and the measures being taken to reduce their burden. All plans will be published by Pre-Budget Report 2006.

Philip Hampton's report recommended that regulators act proportionately, in accordance with an open and transparent risk assessment process. The principles of proportionality and openness are to be included in the forthcoming Regulatory Reform Bill, and have already been incorporated into the regulatory impact assessment process that Departments have to follow.

The implementation of 'Less is More', which will in due course lead to a target for the reduction of administrative burdens, will also drive this work forward.

Ministerial Travel

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the total cost of congestion charges paid for ministerial travel has been since the charge was introduced; and how much of that total is accounted for by travel by the Prime Minister. [36285]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The responsibility for the provision of ministerial cars and drivers has been delegated under the terms of the Framework Document to the Government Car Despatch Agency. I have asked its chief executive Mr. Roy Burke to write to the hon. Member. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library.

Office for Disability Issues

Danny Alexander: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster whether a Minister in his Department is planned to be nominated to take responsibility for liaison with the Office for Disability Issues; and if he will make a statement. [37073]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Cabinet Office participated jointly with the Departments of Work and Pensions; Health; Education and Skills; and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in the research and publication of the report "Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People". The report initiated the setting up of the Office for Disability Issues (ODI).

The Departments of Work and Pensions; Health; Education and Skills; and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are now the main stakeholders in the implementation of the report's recommendations.

Cabinet Office will be implementing the recommendations where lead responsibility was assigned to all Government Departments. Officials will liaise directly with the ODI and report as necessary to Ministers.

Prime Minister's Delivery Unit

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how much was spent by the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit in each year since its inception; and what its functions are. [35975]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Prime Minister's Delivery Unit (PMDU) was set up at the end of June 2001. Information on the amounts it has spent since it was set up are shown in the table.

	Amount spent (£)
2001–02	955,000
2002–03	3,106,000
2003–04	3,576,000
2004–05	3,673,000

PMDU's role is to help departments ensure delivery of my right hon. Friend, the Prime Minister's top public service priorities, in particular, delivery of the Prime Minister's top 2005 and 2008 public service outcomes; the unit is also working to increase capacity to drive delivery in the centre, departments and delivery agencies.

True North Project

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will make a statement on procurement project True North and what the cost of this project has been. [36292]

Mr. Jim Murphy: True North was the title of a project to procure services from the private sector for a data centre and managed hosting of Cabinet Office information technology applications that are shared across Government and public sector organisations. The contract for this service was awarded to a company called ITNet UK Ltd. On 25 July 2003 and valued at £83 million.

The Cabinet Office terminated the contract on 28 June 2004 for delays and other breaches of the contract by ITNet. An agreement to settle the dispute was reached on 29 July 2005. No payments were made to either side as part of the settlement agreement.

The delivery of operational services was not affected by the cancellation of the True North contract or the dispute.

The Cabinet Office made one single payment of £5 million to ITNet under the True North contract.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Administrative Savings

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what administrative savings have been made by his Department in each of the last eight years. [34953]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The 2000 Spending Review set the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) an efficiency target of 3 percent. of its budget over for 2002–03 and 2003–04. The savings were identified in areas such as procurement, reviewing staff requirements and internal markets. Corresponding adjustments were then made to Directorate's allocations. Savings amounted to:

	£ million
2001–02	7.0
2002–03	12.2

In the 2002 Spending Review, the FCO committed to save 2.5 percent. on its administration budget year on year. This was mirrored in the FCO's internal resource allocation: Directorates were allocated resources to meet new requirements and challenges but were required to find 2.5 percent. efficiency savings.

This amounted to:

	£ million
2003–04	19.7
2004–05	19.9

The FCO also saved an additional £6.6 million in 2004–05 as part of the efficiency plan agreed in the 2004 Spending Review.

Systematic data on efficiency savings realised (as opposed to planned) for the financial years before 2001–02 is not available and could not be reconstituted except at a disproportionate cost.

Assets (Corruption)

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what advice his Department has given developing countries as to how they can seek assistance from the United Kingdom in investigating, freezing and confiscating the assets of criminal origin which are believed to be located in the United Kingdom. [35403]

Ian Pearson: The United Kingdom is able to provide a full range of legal assistance to investigative, prosecutorial and judicial authorities in other countries and territories for the purposes of criminal investigations and criminal proceedings. The Home Office has placed mutual legal assistance guidelines on the internet which give detailed information about how assistance can be obtained from the United Kingdom. These guidelines also include information

regarding restraint and confiscation procedures in the United Kingdom. More information can be found at http://police.homeoffice.gov.uk/operational-policing/mutual-legal-assistance/?version=1.

British Antarctic Territory

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many visitors to the British Antarctic Territory there were in each of the last eight years, broken down by purpose of visit. [36082]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Visits to the British Antarctic Territory are held under the Antarctic treaty. The UK does not therefore monitor the number or type of visits undertaken to the Territory. All visits by British expeditions, ships or aircraft to any part of Antarctica, must be in accordance with the Antarctic Act 1994.

The International Association of Antarctic Tour Operators (IAATO) has published the following figures on tourist visitors to Antarctica. IAATO estimates that around 80 percent. of these are to the British Antarctic Territory:

Antarctic austral season	*Number of visitors*[1]
1997–98	9,604
1998–99	10,013
1999–2000	13,826
2000–01	12,248
2001–02	11,588
2002–03	13,571
2003–04	19,486
2004–05	23,175

[1] Estimated actual figures.

In addition, scientists from around 20 countries undertake scientific studies within the British Antarctic Territory. The number of visitors supporting British scientific activities in the British Antarctic Territory is as follows:

Antarctic austral season	*Number of visitors*
1997–98	385
1998–99	389
1999–2000	385
2000–01	388
2001–02	390
2002–03	365
2003–04	355
2004–05	423

British Embassies (Overnight Visitors)

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the people who stayed one or more nights at the British embassy in Washington in 2004–05. [32743]

Ian Pearson: We have compiled a list of official visitors who stayed one or more nights at the British ambassador's residence, Washington, between January 2004 and November 2005. A copy will be placed in the Library of the House.

Burma

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what plans he has to support the recommendations made in the Havel-Tutu report on Burma. [37335]

Ian Pearson: We fully support US efforts to secure discussion of Burma by the United Nations (UN) Security Council. We believe that such a discussion, including covering the human rights situation, would increase the pressure on the Burmese regime to effect genuine change. It would send a powerful signal to the Burmese leadership that the UN Security Council—the body with primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security—is concerned about the situation in Burma.

Cameroon

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures his Department *(a)* has taken and *(b)* plans to take to (i) encourage the continued development of a multi-party democracy in Cameroon and (ii) promote the conduct of free, fair and transparent elections at local and national level. [36717]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The UK is working hard with international partners to strengthen democracy in Cameroon.

In the past 18 months, the UK has supported activities to ensure the October 2004 presidential elections were more free and fair than previous elections. The main projects involved funding £180,000 towards the provision of 25,000 transparent ballot boxes with tamper-proof coded seals and £22,000 for the publication of the Cameroonian National Election Observatory's report, to demonstrate that the organisation was able to carry out a critical analysis of the electoral process. In common with other diplomatic missions, the British high commission sent out a team of 12 to observe the elections in five of the ten provinces. We co-ordinated closely with our EU, G8 and Commonwealth partners. We intend to continue such observation in the future.

The Cameroonian Government has recognised the need to reform the electoral law and we remain committed to assisting, principally through the Commonwealth. Our priorities are to see a revised electoral code and the introduction of an Independent Electoral Commission to organise future elections, which will support the development of a multi-party democracy in Cameroon.

Catering/Entertainment Contracts

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the total value is of *(a)* catering and *(b)* entertainment contracts let by his Department; and what value of such contracts has been let in each nation and region of the UK, including London. [37487]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The value of catering contracts let by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) for the current financial year (2005–06) in relation to the provision of catering and canteen facilities at its offices in London and Milton Keynes amounts to £1,625,096. Of this, £1,337,756 relates to the catering

contract for the offices in London and £287,340 relates to catering contracted for the offices in Hanslope Park, Milton Keynes. The cost to the FCO, via the subsidy paid to the contractor for the catering facilities at these sites, amounts to £154,848 (£128,592 for London and £26,256 for Milton Keynes).

The FCO delegates budgets for entertainment to individual internal departments and does not therefore hold a centralised record of contracts on entertainment. This information could therefore only be provided at disproportionate cost.

China

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has ruled out supporting the lifting of the EU embargo on arms exports to China; and if he will make a statement. [37278]

Ian Pearson: The Government support the decision of the European Council in December 2003 to review the EU Arms Embargo on China. This review is ongoing—it was last discussed by EU Foreign Ministers at the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 13 December. The Government do not wish to exclude any options for the review, nor to pre-empt the conclusion of the review. There is no consensus at present in the EU for lifting the embargo. Further consultations in the EU and with other international partners are necessary before any decision is taken. The European Council Conclusions in December 2004 stated that any decision on the arms embargo would not result in an increase of arms exports to China in either quantitative or qualitative terms.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what representations he has *(a)* made and *(b)* plans to make to the Government of the People's Republic of China about the Law on Population and Birth Planning; and if he will make a statement; [37370]

(2) when he last raised the issue of article 18 of the Law on Population and Birth Planning with the Government of China; what response he received; and if he will make a statement. [37371]

Ian Pearson: The Government have not made representations to the Chinese Government about China's right or need to implement family planning policies. We believe that China's family planning policies should be based on the principle of consent, and not coercion, as espoused by the International Conference on Population and Development. In this context, we are concerned about reports of enforced sterilisation and abortion. The EU, under the UK's presidency, raised the case of Chen Guangcheng, a lawyer who revealed information about forced abortions and sterilisations in Linyi City, Shandong Province, with the Chinese Government in October and November. We will continue to raise our concerns where appropriate.

Colombia

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Colombian Government that criminal investigations into human rights violations in Colombia carried out by *(a)* paramilitaries, *(b)* members of the armed and security forces and *(c)* guerrillas are advanced and those responsible brought to justice under the new Justice and Peace Law. [35247]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Through our embassy in Bogota, and also through the EU, we regularly impress on the Colombian Government the need to investigate thoroughly all human rights abuses and, where there is sufficient evidence, to prosecute those deemed responsible, regardless of their background, in accordance with the relevant Colombian laws. We reinforce this message in contact with visiting Colombian Ministers to London and the Colombian embassy, most recently in the meeting between my noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Lord Triesman of Tottenham) and the Colombian Vice-President on 28 November. We have urged the Government to crack down even harder on impunity and instances of collusion between state forces and officials and illegal armed groups. There has been some improvement in this regard.

Moreover, through the Ministerial Council Conclusions of 3 October available at http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/gena/86442.pdf, the EU confirmed its willingness to work closely with the Colombian Government, institutions and civil society of Colombia, as well as with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the G-24, and others who may be involved in monitoring the implementation of the judicial process established under the Justice and Peace Law.

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the extent to which the new Justice and Peace Law in Colombia complies with international law; and if he will make a statement. [35252]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The UK supports the position set out in the EU Ministerial Council Conclusions of 3 October, available at http://ue.eu.int/ueDocs/cms_Data/docs/pressdata/en/gena/86442.pdf. These conclusions highlight several defects in the Justice and Peace Law and note the concerns expressed by some observers that the law does not take into sufficient account the principles of truth, justice and reparation in accordance with internationally agreed standards. Nevertheless, the Council believes that if the law is effectively and transparently implemented, it will make a positive contribution to the search for peace in Colombia.

The Council confirmed its willingness to work closely with the Government, institutions and civil society of Colombia, as well as with the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, the G-24, and others who may be involved in monitoring the implementation of the judicial process established under the law.

The EU and its member states stand ready to assist the Colombian Government and civil society in providing support for communities affected by the internal conflict, victims groups, local reconciliation activities, and the reinsertion and demobilisation of child soldiers, complementing existing programmes developed by UNICEF and others.

Cyprus

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the proposed Ledra Street, Nicosia crossing point, with particular reference to Turkish Cypriot encroachment at the site. [36077]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The British Government welcomed the decision to open the crossing point at Ledra Street and we are therefore disappointed that difficulties have arisen. In our view, these provide a worrying example of the lack of trust between the parties in Cyprus. The deeper causes of the Ledra Street controversy can only be addressed through a meaningful process of negotiation aimed at a comprehensive settlement of the Cyprus problem. In the meantime, we strongly support the conduct of the United Nations Peacekeeping Force in Cyprus (UNFICYP) over Ledra Street, and its efforts to convert the current controversy into a genuine confidence building measure.

Early Retirement

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many of his Department's employees have taken early retirement in each year since 1997. [34042]

Ian Pearson: The annual number of officers who have taken early retirement for the years 1997 to 2005 are shown in the following table. Final figures for 2004 and 2005 include officers who took early retirement or severance to help the FCO meet staff savings required under the 2004 Spending Review.

	Number
1997	96
1998	44
1999	52
2000	67
2001	44
2002	33
2003	34
2004	59
2005	[1]170

[1] Approximate figure

EU Directives

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 15 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 474W, on EU directives, if he will make a statement on the further progress of the EU Directive on Services. [36061]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We have made significant progress on the Services Directive in technical discussions and in Council. Further delay to the European Parliament vote, now scheduled for January, means it will not be possible to reach formal agreement on the directive during our presidency. However, maximising progress on this important single market measure remains a priority for this Government.

EU Presidency

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the UK's presidency of the European Union; and what representations he has received from foreign Governments about it. [37531]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary set out the work programme for the UK presidency in detail in White Paper Cmnd 6611 presented to this House on 30 June. We have made progress in a number of areas, including the historic decision to open accession negotiations with Turkey and Croatia on 3 October. Last month, we achieved significant reform of the EU sugar regime and we continue to work on a range of issues from the fight against terrorism to the future financing of the EU. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and I are, of course, in regular contact with our EU counterparts on the whole range of European and international issues relevant to us as EU presidency.

Global Opportunities Fund

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the members of the panel of experts referred to in the Global Opportunities Fund report. [35618]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: As part of the Human Rights, Democracy and Good Governance programme of the Global Opportunities Fund, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office convened expert panels to advise on policy and projects relating to all the key themes within the programme (except discrimination—for which there is no expert panel) as follows:

Freedom of Expression Panel

Dr. Agnes Callamard
Nora Cranston
Karen Merkel
Ursula Owen
Anthony Borden
Helen Duffy
Jeremy Dear
Joan Smith
Lucy Popescu
Tina Carr
Gareth Price
Frances D'Souza
Sarah Wyatt
Lindsay Ross
Umit Ozturk
Rodney Finder
Nik Gowing
Peter Preston
Jonathan Freedland
Professor Ivor Gaber
Colin Bickler
Abd al-Rahman al-Rashid
Zahoor Niazi

Mark Stephens
Geoffrey Robertson QC
Mark Thompson
Jock Gallagher
Teresa Gautrey
David Goldberg
Chris Cobb-Smith
John Glendinning
Damian Tambini

Religious Freedom Forum

Barney Leith
Ian Naysmith
Abi Freeman
Wilfred Wong
Michael Bartlett
Ronald Maddox
Charles Reed
Dr. David Royle
IMAM Dr. Abdul Sajid
Iqbal Singh
Assad Rehman
Tina Lambert
Sayeed Nadeem Kazmi
Martyn Eden
Paul Renshaw
Andrew Clark
Dennis Wrigley
Raphael Walden
Dr. Zaki Badawi
Dr. Philip Walters
Dr. Pasha
Paul Cook
Dr. Hany Elbanna
Amanda Van Eck
Camilla Carr
Guy Calvert-Lee
Dr. Agnes Callamard
S. M. Abdul Qayum
Neville Kyrke Smith
Christine Allen
Paul Gillies
Urmi Shah
Prof J. S. Nielsen

Torture Panel

Andrew Coyle
Carla Ferstman
Christine Chinkin
Eric Sottas
Mark Thomson
Mike Kellet
Sir Nigel Rodley
Malcolm Evans
Sherman Carroll
Silvia Casale

Rule of Law Panel

Peter Carter
Jonathan Cooper
Jeremy Croft
Mark Ellis
Paul English
David Harris
Mel James
Roger Smith
Christian Wisskerchen

Child Rights Panel

Abdul Aziz
Judith Baker
Bill Bell
Rachel Bentley
Jonathan Blagbrough
Nick Corby
Jeremy Croft
Philippa Curtis
Simon Dowe
Atallah Fitzgibbon
Victoria Forbes Adams
Jonathan Glennie
Rachel Harvey
Casey Kelso
Adowa Kwateng
George Lane
Gerison Lansdown
Keith MacKenzie
David Maidment
Amira Malik
Baroness Sue Miller
Nasr Muflahi
Jane Oberman
Col O'Neil
Feyi Rodway
Nikhil Roy
Michael Shipler
Fred Shortland
Carron Somerset
Catherine Turner
Helen Veitch
Marie Wernham
Jenny Willott
Carolyn Willow
Wilfred Wong

Death Penalty Panel

Professor Roger Hood
Professor Peter Hodgkinson
Baroness Vivien Stern
Saul Lehrfreund
Ibrahima Kane
Philip Sapsford
Eric Prokosch
Harold Hillman
James Oury
Nicolas Blake
Edward Fitzgerald
Kier Starmer
Professor Nigel Eastman
Professor Philip Iya

Human Rights, Democracy and Good Governance Programme

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what criteria are used to assess the effectiveness of projects supported by the Human Rights, Democracy and Good Governance Programme. [35617]

Ian Pearson: The effectiveness of projects sponsored by the FCO under the Human Rights, Democracy and Good Governance Programme has been measured using the following indicators of success for the various thematic priorities:

Death Penalty

A net increase of one a year in the number of countries adopting a moratorium or which abolish the death penalty due, at least in part, to UK intervention.

Combating Torture

A measurable increase in the number of countries adopting specific laws criminalising torture;

An increase in the number of countries developing domestic mechanisms for inspecting detention centres;

An increase in signatures and ratification of Convention Against Torture (CAT) and its Optional Protocols.

Freedom of Expression

The successful resolution of cases of specific concern in countries of particular concern;

A measurable reduction in the incidence of hate speech.

Rule of Law

An increase in number of countries with responsibility for the penitentiary transferred to the Ministry of Justice;

An increase in number of countries with functioning, independent, professional judiciaries and legal professions.

Child rights

An increase in the number of ratifications of ILO Convention 182 on the worst forms of child labour.

Discrimination

An increase in the implementation of international minority rights standards at the national level.

Indonesia

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has received on the beheading of Christian teenagers in Indonesia; if he will make representations to the Indonesian authorities to take action to prevent such religiously-motivated killings; and if he will make a statement. [37165]

Ian Pearson: Immediately after the incident, President Yudhoyono condemned what he described as a "sadistic crime", and sent extra police to the area to ensure that violence did not flare up. On 14 November three men were arrested in connection with the crime.

The British ambassador in Jakarta has discussed the issue with senior Indonesian officials and expressed the UK's shock at the incident.

In September this year, President Yudhoyono stressed that the state guaranteed every citizen religious freedom and called on the police and members of the public to act to prevent violence against any faith. We co-sponsored with the Indonesian Government in Bali in July an international conference to promote inter-faith understanding and harmony.

We will continue to co-operate with the Indonesian Government on this important objective.

Iraq

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made in the investigation into the deaths of the six Royal Military Police who were killed at Al Majarr Al Kabir in Iraq on 24 June 2003. [30735]

Mr. Ingram: I have been asked to reply.

The Central Criminal Court of Iraq will conduct the investigation into the deaths of the six Royal Military Police in Iraq on 24 June 2003. The Central Criminal Court of Iraq follows the 'investigative model' whereby an investigative judge directs and oversees the investigation before deciding whether to refer the case to the trial court. The case papers, which take account of the Royal Military Police investigation into the incident, have been lodged with the court, to enable the investigative stage to begin. It will be for the investigative judge to decide whether to refer the case to the trial court once this stage has concluded.

Media Monitoring

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much his Department has spent on media monitoring activities in each of the last eight financial years. [35632]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Foreign and Commonwealth Office spending on media monitoring in the financial year 2004–05 was £436,591 and to date in the financial year 2005–06 is £326,241. Figures for previous years are not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Ministerial Meetings

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on how many occasions since his appointment the Minister for Europe has met *(a)* Turkish Cypriot leader Mehmet Ali Talat and *(b)* representatives of the UK's Greek Cypriot community. [34449]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Since my appointment, I have not met Turkish Cypriot Leader, Mehmet Ali Talat. I have not, so far, met representatives of the UK's Greek Cypriot community.

Rare Birds (Breeding)

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken to ensure carnivorous rodents and other invasive species are controlled on *(a)* Gough Island and *(b)* other breeding areas for rare birds. [36088]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Government are contributing £62,000 this year through the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) Overseas Territories Environment Programme (OTEP) to a Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) project to control rodents on Gough Island. We are working closely with Tristan da

Cunha, which includes Gough Island, to extend ratification of the agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels to them.

The amount of OTEP funding committed for bird conservation and control of invasive species across the Overseas Territories is presently £1,342,824.

The FCO last year provided £500,000 towards a highly successful project to restore seabird populations on Ascension Island.

Russia

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of *(a)* the decision of the Russian Parliament on the regulation of non-governmental organisations and *(b)* the impact this will have on (i) the ability of international human rights organisations to operate within Russia and (ii) the protection of human rights in that country. [35743]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Bill is described as a measure against extremism, terrorism and crime and would give Russian authorities greater control over non-governmental organisations (NGOs). Our concern is that the draft law as it stands may lead to further restrictions on civil society in Russia and could open the way to excessive official obstruction of the work of NGOs, including international organisations, damaging their ability to work for human rights within Russia.

At this early stage, it is not possible to judge with any certainty what the ultimate effect of the law will be. The draft legislation will have to pass a further two readings in the Duma before it is presented to the Federation Council from where it will then be passed to President Putin to sign into law. At each stage there is the possibility that the legislation will be amended.

We have been proactive in our response to reports about the draft law: on 22 November our ambassador in Moscow wrote to Duma Speaker Boris Gryzlov expressing concerns about the draft law and requesting more information about its implications. On 2 December our ambassador also delivered an EU demarche to Deputy Foreign Minister Grushko outlining the EU's concerns.

We welcome reports that on 5 December, President Putin asked the Government to prepare amendments to the draft law as soon as possible to take into account concerns expressed by the European Union and the Russian Public Chamber.

Taxis

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much has been spent by his Department on taxi travel in the 2005–06 financial year; and what proportion of such travel was undertaken in each nation and region of the UK, including London. [37488]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does not record expenditure on travel by taxi in the United Kingdom separately from travel on other forms of surface transport. In addition, the FCO does not identify its expenditure on travel in the United Kingdom by nation or region.

Ukraine

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had on Ukraine joining the European Union. [35190]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary discussed Ukraine's European aspirations with the Ukrainian Foreign Minister, Borys Tarasyuk, when they last met in London on 17 October.

World Trade Organisation (Hong Kong)

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will continue to press for trade justice at the World Trade Organisation meeting in December in Hong Kong. [36789]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Yes. I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him on 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2136W.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Academy Schools

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils excluded by other schools were at each academy *(a)* when it was granted that status and *(b)* at the latest available date. [35328]

Jacqui Smith: This question can be answered only at disproportionate cost.

Consultants

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress her Department has made in monitoring its use of consultants since the National Audit Office and her Department's internal audit report in March 2005. [36859]

Bill Rammell: Since the issue of the joint Internal Audit /National Audit Office report dated March 2005, steps to enhance the future monitoring of use of consultants have been taken. Enhancements include better arrangements to collect information on the number of consultants engaged, what they are doing and that a sound and properly approved business case is in place. In addition, accounting arrangements have been enhanced to ensure costs against both programme and running cost expenditure can be identified.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will publish the final report and action plan of the National Audit Office and her Department's internal audit report in March 2005 on engagement and use of consultants in her Department. [36860]

Jacqui Smith: Internal audit reports are produced for internal management purposes and are not published.

As part of this audit, which was carried out jointly with the National Audit Office, a good practice guide on the engagement and use of consultants was prepared. This has been distributed to all divisions in the Department. A copy of this guide has been placed in the House Libraries.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when the National Audit Office and Department for Education and Skills internal audit report, compiled in March, entitled Engagement and use of consultants in the DfES will be published; and if she will place a copy in the Library. [37369]

Jacqui Smith: Internal audit reports are produced for internal management purposes and are not published.

As part of this audit, which was carried out jointly with the National Audit Office, a good practice guide on the engagement and use of consultants was prepared. This has been distributed to all divisions in the Department. A copy of this guide has been placed in the House Library.

Correspondence

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will reply to the letter dated 4 November 2005 from the right hon. Member for Manchester, Gorton with regard to John Byenx. [37151]

Jacqui Smith: I replied to my right hon. Friend's letter on 11 December.

Mr. Binley: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she will reply to the letter of 1 November 2005 from the hon. Member for Northampton, South regarding the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children 'Talk 'til it stops' campaign against child abuse. [35426]

Maria Eagle: I responded to the hon. Member's letter on 7 December.

Criminal Offences

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by her Department since May 1997, broken down by Act. [26702]

Maria Eagle: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given on 11 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 450W, which gave details of criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by this Department in the 2002–03 and 2003–04 sessions.

Before the 2002–03 session nine new offences were created in legislation sponsored by this Department.

Seven of the offences relate to obstruction of an inspection. These are:

Paragraph 18(4) of Schedule 26 to the School Standards and Framework Act 1998; obstructing an inspection of nursery education;

Section 57(6) of the Learning and Skills Act 2000; obstructing an inspection by the Adult learning Inspectorate;

Section 63(5) of the Learning and Skills Act 2000; obstructing an Ofsted inspection of further education;

Section 79(5) of the Learning and Skills Act 2000; obstructing an ESTYN inspection of further education in Wales;

Section 118(7) of the Learning and Skills Act; obstructing an Ofsted inspection of the Connexions Service;

Section 122 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000; obstructing an Ofsted inspection of the careers service;

Section 164(7) of the Education Act 2002; obstructing an inspection of an independent school.

The other two offences are:

Section 119(5) of the Learning and Skills Act 2000; unauthorised disclosure of social security information provided in connection with the Connexions service;

Section 19(1) of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act 2001; failure to comply with a requirement relating to disclosure or inspection of documents in connection with the proceedings of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Tribunal or failing to attend the tribunal to give evidence.

In the 2004–5 session two new criminal offences have been created in legislation sponsored by this Department, in sections 109 and 111 of the Education Act 2005.

Both of these offences relate to unauthorised disclosure of information. The Education Act 2005 introduced provisions to allow tax and social security information to be shared for the purpose of deciding on or checking eligibility for education maintenance allowances and free school meals. Provision is then made for unauthorised disclosure of such information to be an offence.

Departmental Estate

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what *(a)* land and *(b)* property her Department (i) owns and (ii) rents in each constituency; and if she will make a statement. [33261]

Maria Eagle: The following table lists the properties and land that the Department for Education and Skills (i) owns and (ii) rents in each constituency.

Department for Education and Skills

Property centre	*Constituencies*	*Property name*	*Property number*	*Road/street*	*Town*	*Post code*	*Freehold or leasehold*
Operational Properties	Cities of London and Westminster borough	Bolton ST/ Piccadilly	29	Bolton Street	Westminster	W1J 8JB	Leasehold
Operational Properties	Cities of London and Westminster borough	Caxton House	—	Tothill street	Westminster	SW1H 9NF	Leasehold
Operational Properties	Cities of London and Westminster borough	Sanctuary Buildings	—	Great Smith street	Westminster	SW1P 3BT	Leasehold
Operational Properties	Darlington borough	Mowden Hall	—	Staindrop road	Darlington	DL3 9BG	Freehold
Operational Properties	Rother Valley Co.	Wales Bar	—	Mansfield road	Sheffield	S26 5PE	Freehold
Operational Properties	Sheffield Central borough	Moorfoot	—	The Moor	Sheffield	S1 4PQ	Freehold
Operational Properties	Sheffield Central	Sheffield Nursery	24	Kenwood Park road	Sheffield	S7 1NF	Freehold
Operational Properties	Sheffield Central	Units FF1, FF2 & FF3	128	Maltravers Road	Sheffield	S2 5AZ	Leasehold
Operational Properties	Weaver Vale	Castle View House	—	East Lane	Runcorn	WA7 2GJ	Freehold

Department for Education and Skills

Property centre	*Constituencies*	*Property name*	*Property number*	*Road/street*	*Town*	*Post code*	*Freehold or leasehold*
Sublet-Surplus Properties	Bolton North East borough	Atlas House	Unit 4	St. George's Square	Bolton	BL1 2HB	Leasehold
Sublet-Surplus Properties	Bolton North East borough	Bayley House	—	St. George's Square	Bolton	BL1 2HB	Leasehold
Sublet-Surplus Properties	Cities of London and Westminster	Grosvenor Crescent	12	Grosvenor Crescent	Belgravia	SW1X 7EE	Leasehold
Sublet-Surplus Properties	City of York borough	Albion Wharf	25	Skeldergate	York	YO1 2XL	Leasehold
Sublet-Surplus Properties	Coventry South borough	Brandon Court	—	Leofric Business Park	Coventry	CV3 2TE	Leasehold
Sublet-Surplus Properties	Great Grimsby borough	Acorn Business Park	Unit 4	Moss Road	Grimsby	DN32 0LT	Leasehold
Sublet-Surplus Properties	Luton South borough	Wesley House	19	Chapel street	Luton	LU1 2SU	Leasehold
Sublet-Surplus Properties	Middlesbrough borough	Sotherby road off Maxwell road	—	Sotherby road off Maxwell road	Middlesbrough	TS3 8BS	Freehold
Sublet-Surplus Properties	North Southwark and Bermondsey borough	Great Dover street	200	Great Dover street	Newington	SE1 4WU	Leasehold
Sublet-Surplus Properties	North Southwark and Bermondsey borough	Skyline House	200	Union Street	Southwark	SE1 0LX	Leasehold
Sublet-Surplus Properties	Peterborough borough	Blenheim Court	Unit 4	Peppercorn Close	Peterborough	—	Leasehold
Sublet-Surplus Properties	Redditch borough	The Oaks	Units 8/11	Clews Road	Redditch	B98 7ST	Leasehold
Sublet-Surplus Properties	Richmond Park borough	Manorgate House	2	Manorgate Road	Kingston Upon Thames	KT2 7AL	Leasehold
Sublet-Surplus Properties	Sittingbourne and Sheppey Co.	Medway Annex, Industrial Park	Unit 10	Crown Quay lane	Sittingbourne	ME10 3JH	Leasehold
Sublet-Surplus Properties	Wolverhampton North East borough	Enterprise House		Wobaston Road	Wolverhampton	WV9 5HA	Leasehold

Disability Rights

Tony Baldry: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what action the United Kingdom Government are taking to ensure children's rights are fully and appropriately addressed in the final text of the forthcoming convention on human rights of people with disabilities. [35258]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Education and Skills (DfES) is committed to improving the life chances of everyone, to help them realise their full potential, including disabled children. My officials are working with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), who take the lead for the UK Government, to ensure our aims for disabled children are reflected within the convention.

Disabled People (Services)

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to assess the impact of children's services on families with disabled children; and if she will make a statement. [37345]

Maria Eagle: The Governments document Every Child Matters Change for Children (December 2004) sets national and local priorities for children's services in England based around an outcomes framework containing five outcomes for all children and young people, including disabled children and young people. These outcomes were given legal force in the Children Act 2004. Within this framework, local authorities evaluate their own services and set their priorities for development. The Department monitors services through annual priorities meetings with local authorities, guidance to them on preparing their plans, and field force support including where necessary formal intervention. Inspectorates assess the contribution of services to improving the outcomes for children through annual performance assessments of children's services by Ofsted and the Commission for Social Care Inspection, and multi-inspectorate joint area reviews of children's services. These mechanisms consider the impact of services on disabled children and their families.

Drinking Water

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools have used their developed capital to improve drinking water provision in each of the last three years. [37329]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 13 December 2005]:* The Department does not collect this information. Devolved formula capital (DFC) gives maintained schools direct funding to help support the capital needs of their buildings. Schools decide how they use the funding, but are advised to invest it in the priorities agreed locally and identified in local asset management plans. This could include making improvements to the provision of drinking water.

In the current financial year, 2005–06, a typical primary school is receiving approximately £25,500 of DFC for its investment priorities, and a typical secondary school is receiving £87,250. By 2007–08, these figures will rise to £34,250 and £113,000 respectively.

Faith Schools

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) whether the Department has a target for the creation of faith schools; [37018]

(2) what assessment the Department has made of the impact of its policies on the number of faith schools. [37019]

Jacqui Smith: We welcome faith schools to the maintained sector, where parents and the local community want them, but we do not have a target for the creation of faith schools. Nor have we made a formal assessment of the impact of our policies on the number of faith schools. Decisions about whether new faith schools should open are made locally, following consultation, by the School Organisation Committee or schools adjudicator if the Committee are not unanimous. Decisions are made on the merits of the individual proposals, and in the light of local circumstances.

The White Paper "Higher Standards Better Schools For All" aims to make it easier for independent schools, including faith schools, to enter the maintained sector but proposals will still have to follow the local decision making process. We have funded the Association of Muslim Schools UK to assess how many independent Muslim schools wish to join the maintained sector and are able to do so in their existing buildings. The Association is due to report back at the end of March.

Foundation Schools

Mr. Todd: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many foundation schools were placed in special measures in each year since 1999. [37152]

Jacqui Smith: 14 primary and 24 secondary foundation schools went into special measures during the period 1 September 1999 to 31 August 2005. The breakdown by year is shown in the following table together with the total number of primary and secondary schools going into special measures for comparison purposes. Currently some 3 per cent. of primary schools and 25 per cent. of secondary schools have foundation status.

	Number of foundation schools in special measures		*Number of schools in special measures*	
	Primary	*Secondary*	*Primary*	*Secondary*
1 September 1999 to 31 August 2004	4	7	169	35
1 September 2000 to 31 August 2001[1]	2	1	98	21
1 September 2001 to 31 August 2002	3	0	96	19
1 September 2002 to 31 August 2003	3	1	98	31
1 September 2003 to 31 August 2004	1	8	130	60
1 September 2004 to 31 August 2005	1	7	55	36

[1] One special school was also placed in special measures during 2000–01.

Holocaust Memorial Day

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans her Department has made in preparation for Holocaust Memorial Day 2006. [37378]

Jacqui Smith: The Department for Education and Skills fully supports the aims of Holocaust Memorial Day. From 2001 to 2005, the DfES worked closely with the Home Office to help deliver the day by producing free resources for schools.

Those resources are still available and suitable for Holocaust Memorial Day 2006. They are promoted by the newly established independent Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, with whom the Department has a good relationship. The Department will soon be releasing a letter of support for Holocaust Memorial Day 2006 activities, and is in ongoing discussions as to other ways the Department can be of assistance in 2006 and in future years.

Learning and Skills

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many 14 and 15-year-olds spent up to two days per week in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 at (i) a further education college and (ii) a work-based learning provider. [35184]

Bill Rammell: The vast majority of 14 to16-year-old learners who attend FE colleges or work- based learning providers will be part of either the Increased Flexibility programme (IFP) or Young Apprenticeship programme (YA). Since

September 2002, the Increased Flexibility programme (IFP) for 14 to16-year-olds has enabled schools, in partnership with FE colleges to offer pupils the opportunity of vocational learning through new GCSEs in vocational subjects and part-time placements in colleges. In 2003/04 we estimate that there were around 90,000 14 to16- year-olds participating in the programme of which around 70 per cent. were being taught in FE colleges for part of the week, and 3 per cent. attended other providers. Figures for 2004–05 and 2005–06 are not available, however, it is anticipated that participation in IFP will be similar to 2003–04.

The Young Apprenticeship (YA) programme also began in September 2004 and enables 14 to 16-year-olds pupils to pursue industry specific vocational programmes outside of school for up to two days a week, in many cases spending time in FE colleges or with training providers. The first YA cohort in 2004 involved around 1,000 pupils. A second cohort began in September 2005 involving a further 2,000 pupils.

The data on IFP and YA has been obtained from baseline data collection exercises with participating schools as part of the national evaluations of these programmes.

Ministerial Visits

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many times she has visited *(a)* Dacorum and *(b)* Hertfordshire in her official capacity in the last 12 months; and what the purpose was of each visit. [29909]

Maria Eagle: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has visited Hertfordshire once in the last 12 months. The visit was to St. Michael's Catholic Secondary School in Watford to celebrate the school being one of the top 100 most-improved schools nationally.

She has not yet visited Dacorum.

Missing Children

Helen Southworth: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which local authority children's services have agreed joint protocols with their local police authority for management of cases of children reported missing from home or care. [36478]

Maria Eagle: This information is not collected centrally.

Part-time Students

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what *(a)* financial and *(b)* other support her Department provides for part-time students in higher education; and if she will make a statement. [37613]

Bill Rammell: This Government continue to build upon the improved support for part-time students introduced in 2004/05. In the current academic year, a statutory fee grant of up to £885 (for a student studying at 75 per cent. of the equivalent full-time course) and a course grant of up to £250 are available for students domiciled in England and Wales. The grants are means-tested in order to target funding most effectively.

From 2006/07 fee grants for English students studying in England will be increased by 27 per cent. (compared to 2005/06). That means that a student studying at 75 per cent. intensity could receive up to £1,125 in fee support. In addition, the course grant of up to £250 will continue to be available. The National Assembly for Wales will be responsible for determining student support arrangements for Welsh-domiciled students from the academic year 2006/07.

Part-time students who need additional financial help with fees or other costs may be provided with discretionary support through their Higher Education Institution (HEI). My Department is allocating £12 million to support part-time students at HEIs in England during 2006/07, an increase from £3 million in 2005/06.

It is for individual institutions to determine the type and amount of pastoral and other support they provide for their students.

Public Service Agreements

Mr. Philip Hammond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how the quality of data used to measure progress against the need to improve the basic skill level of adults as required by 2004 Public Service Agreement target number 13 is assessed. [29198]

Phil Hope: The detail about measurement issues relating to the improvement in adult basic skills levels to achieve the 2004 PSA target 13 is described in the technical note, published by HM Treasury.

In addition to the information within the technical note, over 80 percent. of the data used to measure the target comes from the ILR. Measures the Learning and Skills Council undertake to assess the quality of this dataset include:

Good maintenance of the 'Skills for Life' flag on the ILR, which can be used by providers to keep a check on exactly how many 'Skills for Life' learners they currently have.

The learner information suite (LIS) includes the ILR validation reports which improve data quality by showing errors and warnings in ILR data.

LIS reports show 'Skills for Life' numbers, and providers can run these reports to see exactly how many 'Skills for Life' learners they currently have, helping to maintain the quality of data.

Credibility reports applied throughout the data collection process to maintain accurate data.

Quarterly administrative statistics on qualifications will also be collected directly from awarding bodies. This will be used to verify Learning and Skills Council, prison service and Jobcentre Plus data on achievements, assess the coverage of these sources and allow adjustments for under-coverage.

Spending review 2004—DFES PSA targets—technical notes

Target	*Technical note*
Tackle the adult skills gap	
13. Increase the number of adults with the skills required for employability and progression to higher levels of training through: improving the basic skill levels of 2.25 million adults between the launch of 'Skills for Life' in 2001 and 2010, with a milestone of 1.5 million in 2007; and reducing by at least 40 percent. the number of adults in the workforce who lack NVQ 2 or equivalent qualifications by 2010. Working towards this, one million adults in the workforce to achieve level 2 between 2003 and 2006.	The first part of this target covers those aged 16 and above in England, who have left compulsory education excluding those in school sixth forms. The target refers to individuals significantly improving their basic skills. This could be through public or privately supported provision. Publicly supported provision is largely funded by the Learning and Skills Council, but also includes provision through, Jobcentre Plus, the Prison Service and other Government funded routes. The LSC are also proposing to have this target. Improvement refers to the individual passing an appropriate attainment threshold in: Literacy, Numeracy or ESOL at Entry Level 3, Level 1or Level 2 mapped to the National Standards developed by the Qualification and Curriculum Authority. Key Skills test in Application of Number or Communication at Levels 1 or 2 GCSEs in Maths or English. There will be portfolio-based assessment for some, especially those at the lowest skill levels. The target refers to numbers of adults not qualifications. Progress will be monitored through collation of administrative statistics on recruitment, retention and achievement from the Learning and Skills Council and other relevant sources. This data will be received quarterly. Additional sources include quarterly data of learning within the Prison Service and Jobcentre Plus. To improve timeliness, quarterly administrative statistics on qualifications will also be collected directly from Awarding Bodies. This will also be used to verify LSC, Prison Service and Jobcentre Plus achievements, assess the coverage of these sources and allow adjustments for under-coverage. The time lag between qualifications and data collected by the LSC is about six months and for Awarding Body data is about three months. The target period began on 1 April 2001 and ends on 31 July 2010 at the end of the academic year 2009/10. Final data on achievement will be available in Autumn 2010. A milestone of 1.5 million achievements by 2007 will be reported against in Autumn 2007. The second part of the PSA target covers attainment of all economically active adults in England between the ages of 18–64 (males) or 18–59 (females). Economically active adults, who also constitute what is meant by "the workforce", are either employees, self-employed or unemployed

Spending review 2004—DFES PSA targets—technical notes

Target	*Technical note*
Tackle the adult skills gap	
	according to the International Labour Organisation (ILO) definition and thus actively seeking work. Progress towards the target will be measured in terms of the increase in the number of economically active adults with a level 2 or higher qualification between 2001 and 2010. The data used to monitor progress towards achieving the target come from the Autumn quarter of the LFS (available in January of the following year). All achievements recorded through the LFS, whether gained through public or private investment, will count towards the target This reflects the nature of the target as a shared ambition, whose achievement is dependent not just on Government interventions and funds but also on the voluntary actions of employers and individuals choosing to spend time and private resources on achieving qualifications. The baseline for 2010 is the Autumn 2001 LFS figure (when 16.0 million economically active adults had at least a level 2 qualification whilst 7.1 million were below level 2). After allowing for the estimated increase in the size of the workforce between 2001 and 2010, achievement of a 40 percent. reduction in the numbers without a level 2 requires an additional 3.6 million first level 2 or higher qualifications over that period. From spring 2007 the LFS is likely to change from being a seasonal quarterly survey to calendar quarters. The 4th quarter (sampling in October, November and December) will provide the closest comparison to the old Autumn quarter (sampling in September, October and November) used to set the target baseline. Therefore the final target outturn will be assessed using the 4th quarter of the 2010 LFS. The baseline for the 2006 milestone target is autumn 2002 to be assessed against the autumn 2006 quarter of the LFS. The Level 2 threshold is reached by obtaining any of the following: Five or more GCSEs at grades A*-C; an intermediate GNVQ; an NVQ level 2 or any other equivalent Level 2 qualification; one A-level (grade A to E); 2 AS levels (grades A to E) or any other full Level 3, Level 4 or Level 5 qualification. Figures related to this target have been previously published in an annual statistical first release (SFR) since 2001, most recently in "The Level of Highest Qualification Held By Young People and Adults: England 2003", published on 5 February 2004. The SFR is within the National Statistics remit.

Note:
The Labour Force Survey was re-grossed in spring 2004 in line with the 2001 Census results. Estimates published before this date will not be consistent with those published subsequently. However, future publications will present a consistent record of progress since the base year.

Qualifications

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of working age people in *(a)* Tamworth constituency and *(b)* England hold a qualification at degree level or equivalent or above. [37825]

Bill Rammell: From the 2004/05 Annual Local Labour Force Survey, the percentage of working age people in *(a)* Tamworth constituency and *(b)* England hold a qualification at degree level or equivalent or above is *(a)* 16.2 per cent. (10,000 people), and *(b)* 26.1 per cent. (7,948,000 people). This compares with 23.0 per cent. (734,000 people) in the West Midlands.

School Closures

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) how many primary schools have closed in England in each of the last five years; [34226]

(2) how many secondary schools in England have closed in each of the last five years. [34353]

Jacqui Smith: The numbers of local authority maintained primary and secondary schools (including middle schools) that have closed in each of the last five years, are set out in the following table.

	Primary	*Secondary*
2001	209	27
2002	197	26
2003	202	33
2004	224	42
2005[1]	229	25

[1] This is includes all schools up until 2 December 2005

The table includes all school closures including those schools that have closed as a result of an amalgamation or local reorganisation, those where a new school has opened in their place (eg a school with a religious character, an academy or a fresh start school) and those that have closed and have not been replaced.

School Exclusions

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many exclusions there were of *(a)* boys and *(b)* girls from schools in (i) Brent and (ii) London in each of the last five years; and what the (A) age and (B) ethnic origin was of each excluded child. [35578]

Jacqui Smith: Accurate local statistics on the characteristics of excluded pupils are not available for recent years due to known quality issues with the data provided by schools to the Department. An annual checking exercise carried out with local authorities confirms overall numbers of permanent exclusions but this does not extend to gender, age and ethnic origin breakdowns. The Department does hold information about the individual characteristics of the majority of excluded pupils who are permanently excluded but does not publish data in a form that identifies individuals. This practice is consistent with the Data Protection Act, the Human Rights Act 1998 and with other relevant provisions.

The available information for Brent and London is given in the table.

National estimates of pupil characteristics can be found in the Statistical First Release on 'Permanent and Fixed Period Exclusions from Schools and Exclusion Appeals in England 2003/04', http://www.dfes.gov.uk/rsgateway/DB/SFR/s000582/index.shtml.

Maintained primary, secondary and all special schools[1,2]
Number and percentage of permanent exclusions:
Brent local authority, London Government office region:
1999/2000 to 2003/04

	1999/2000					
	Number			Percentage[3]		
	Boys	Girls	Total	Boys	Girls	Total
London	1,076	213	1,289	0.20	0.04	0.12
304 Brent	45	12	57	0.24	0.06	0.15

	2000/014		2001/024		2002/034		2003/044	
	Number Total	Percentage[3] Total	Number Total	Percentage[3] Total	Number Total	Percentage[3] Total	Number Total	Percentage[3] Total
London	1,448	0.14	1,456	0.14	1,473	0.14	1,585	0.15
304 Brent	49	0.13	38	0.10	54	0.14	69	0.18

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Includes maintained and non-maintained special schools.
[3] The number of permanent exclusions expressed as a percentage of the number (headcount) of pupils, excluding dually registered pupils.
[4] Figures are as confirmed by local authorities via the data checking exercise.
Source:
Annual Schools Census

School Science

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps are being taken to encourage more graduates into teaching *(a)* physics, *(b)* chemistry and *(c)* mathematics at (i) GCSE and (ii) A Level. [37020]

Jacqui Smith: In relation to schools, since 2000, we have provided £6,000 bursaries to PGCE trainee teachers in a range of priority subjects. We have also provided them with a £4,000 "Golden Hello". From September 2005 the bursary for mathematics and science trainees rose to £7,000, and from September 2006 it will increase to £9,000 for all priority subject trainees. Mathematics and science teachers will also be provided with an increased "Golden Hello" of £5,000 (£2,500 for other priority subjects).

Routes into teaching are now also much more diverse. Over 15 per cent. of newly qualified teachers are trained through employment based teacher training schemes (EBTTS)—mainly the Graduate Teacher Programme (GTP), the Registered Teacher Programme (RTP), and the Overseas Trained Teacher Programme (OTTP). Each of these schemes carries its own incentives, comprising of a combination of support with the costs of training, salary grants and training grants.

We also started 'Teach First' in 2003 and this involves training top graduates from some of the UK's top universities to achieve Qualified Teacher Status. Trainees are trained to teach priority subjects in some of London's most challenging schools. The scheme began in London and will be extended to Manchester in 2006 and four other cities from 2007/08.

The TDA is also funding enhancement courses to increase the number of people able to start initial teacher training in physics, chemistry and mathematics. These courses fill gaps in the subject knowledge of participants who in all other respects meet the requirements for teaching. Following a successful pilot, these courses will be made available nationally from January 2006, and will enable up to 700 additional people per year to qualify to teach in these subjects. Courses are free to participants, and each participant receives a training bursary of £150 per week.

All secondary teacher training will enable participants to teach to GCSE level, and in many cases to A-Level.

In the post-compulsory sector, there are two main incentive programmes in place for attracting new teachers. Training Bursaries were introduced in 2000 and offer an additional £6,000 in shortage areas but rising to £7,000 for Maths and Science, and this will rise to £9,000 from September 2006. "Golden Hellos" were introduced in 2002 and currently offer an additional £4,000 for shortage areas (e.g. ICT, engineering, construction) but rising to £5,000 for Maths and Science.

Schools (Hounslow)

Alan Keen: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will take steps to ensure that all schools in the London borough of Hounslow are *(a)* rebuilt and *(b)* modified to meet (i) Building Bulletin Standards 93 (for insulation) and (ii) 101 (for ventilation). [36403]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* For secondary schools, the Building Schools for the Future Programme in conjunction with the Academies programme aims to renew all secondary schools in England in 10 to 15 waves starting from 2005–06. Investment available for primary schools will be increased by an additional £150 million in 2008–09 and £500 million from 2009–10 onwards. Central Government capital support for investment in schools has increased from under £700 million in 1996–97 to £5.5 billion this year and will rise further to £6.3 billion by 2007–08.

All new buildings and some alterations or refurbishment works are subject to the acoustic performance standards of the Building Regulations. For schools, Building Bulletin 93 is quoted in the regulations as an approved document, whereby compliance with section 1 of the Bulletin would satisfy the acoustic requirements of the regulations.

Compliance with the Bulletin would also satisfy the acoustic requirements of the Education (School Premises) Regulations.

The Building Regulations similarly contain ventilation performance standards. Consultation on the draft Building Bulletin 101 is nearing completion and it is anticipated that this Bulletin will in spring 2006 similarly become an approved document under the Building Regulations, whereby compliance with the Bulletin would satisfy the ventilation requirements of the regulations.

The reply given on 8 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1457W, by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary of State for Transport (Ms Buck), refers to the White Paper "The Future of Air Transport", in which the Government stated that operators of the larger UK airports are expected to offer acoustic insulation or alternative mitigation measures for noise-sensitive buildings such as schools.

Schools (Internet Access)

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in England have access to the internet. [36853]

Jacqui Smith: Over 99 per cent. of schools in England (primary and secondary) are connected to the internet. Actual school numbers are not collected.

As at November 2005, 85 per cent. of schools (99 per cent. of secondary schools and 83 per cent. of primary schools) had access to broadband.

Schools Commissioner

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what power the Schools Commissioner will have to compel local authorities to open new schools under the proposals in the Schools White Paper. [37713]

Jacqui Smith: The Schools Commissioner will have no power to compel local authorities to open new schools under the proposals in the Schools White Paper. The Schools Commissioners role in relation to local authorities will be to support and challenge them in carrying out their new duties to promote choice, diversity and fair access; and to advise the Secretary of State on the exercise of her powers of intervention if they are failing in those duties.

Schools White Paper

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment her Department has made of the *(a)* demand and *(b)* resource implications for pupil referral units of proposals in the Schools White Paper. [37666]

Jacqui Smith: We propose in the White Paper that full time education should be provided to pupils who have been excluded from the sixth day of their exclusion. We estimate that this additional provision will cost around £16 million a year from September 2007.

It is for local authorities and schools to determine the most appropriate provision for pupils who have been excluded, or have different needs, from a range of available local provision including pupil referral units and other types of alternative educational provision. The impact on demand for places in pupil referral units will therefore vary according to local circumstances.

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she will take to ensure that independent schools wishing to apply for trust status under the proposals in the Schools White Paper are *(a)* of an acceptable educational standard and *(b)* financially secure; and what criteria she will set in each case. [37668]

Jacqui Smith: Independent schools wishing to join the maintained sector as trust schools will be required to follow similar procedures, and satisfy similar criteria, that apply currently to independent schools joining the maintained sector as voluntary aided schools. As part of their published proposals they will be required to provide prescribed information which includes a recent Ofsted report on the independent school and a statement of the independent school's accounts. Our guidance to local authorities and the schools adjudicator will require them to take into account standards at the school and financial viability when making their decision.

Teachers

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the number of trained teachers not employed in teaching, broken down by subject specialism. [37159]

Jacqui Smith: Information on the subject specialism of out of service teachers is not available.

Table 46 of the Statistics of Education, School Workforce in England, 2004 edition provides the number of qualified teachers under the age of 60 not in service at March 2003. This publication has been placed in the House Libraries.

Table 46a: Out of service teachers aged under 60, qualified teachers out of service[1, 2] at 31 March 2003 aged under 60 who were previously in service, by last known sector, calendar year of last service, sex and age at 31 March 2003[3, 4]—England

Thousand

	Calendar year of last service									
	Nursery and primary					*Secondary*				
	Before 1988	*1988 to 1992*	*1993 to 1997*	*1998 to 2003*	*All years*	*Before 1988*	*1988 to 1992*	*1993 to 1997*	*1998 to 2003*	*All years*
Men										
Under 25	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.1	0.1
25–29	—	—	—	0.5	0.5	—	—	—	1.4	1.4
30–34	—	—	0.2	0.7	0.9	—	—	0.9	2.2	3.1
35–39	0.2	0.4	0.6	1.2	0.1	0.9	1.0	1.7	3.7	

Table 46a: Out of service teachers aged under 60, qualified teachers out of service[1, 2] at 31 March 2003 aged under 60 who were previously in service, by last known sector, calendar year of last service, sex and age at 31 March 2003[3, 4]—England

Thousand

	Calendar year of last service									
	Nursery and primary					Secondary				
	Before 1988	1988 to 1992	1993 to 1997	1998 to 2003	All years	Before 1988	1988 to 1992	1993 to 1997	1998 to 2003	All years
40–44	0.2	0.3	0.2	0.5	1.2	1.8	1.3	0.8	1.5	5.4
45–49	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.6	1.7	5.1	1.3	0.9	1.8	9.1
50–54	1.8	0.4	0.4	0.7	3.3	10.6	1.7	1.1	2.2	15.6
55–59	3.2	0.4	0.2	0.3	4.1	12.0	1.3	0.7	1.1	15.0
Total	5.8	1.6	1.7	4.0	13.0	29.6	6.6	5.4	11.9	53.5
Women										
Under 25	—	—	—	0.4	0.4	—	—	—	0.2	0.2
25–29	—	—	0.1	4.1	4.3	—	—	0.1	3.4	3.5
30–34	—	0.1	2.1	5.9	8.1	—	0.1	1.7	5.2	7.0
35–39	0.1	2.1	3.2	4.3	9.7	0.1	1.7	2.4	3.9	8.1
40–44	1.2	2.1	1.8	2.6	7.6	2.7	2.4	1.8	3.1	9.9
45–49	4.4	1.8	1.7	3.2	11.1	8.1	2.3	1.8	3.6	15.9
50–54	12.2	2.3	2.2	4.1	20.7	15.2	2.6	2.1	4.3	24.1
55–59	16.4	2.2	1.7	2.6	22.8	18.3	2.3	1.8	2.8	25.2
Total	34.2	10.5	12.8	27.1	84.7	44.4	11.3	11.8	26.5	94.0
Men and women										
Under 25	—	—	—	0.5	0.5	—	—	—	0.3	0.3
25–29	—	—	0.2	4.6	4.8	—	—	0.1	4.7	4.9
30–34	—	0.1	2.4	6.6	9.1	—	0.1	2.6	7.5	10.1
35–39	0.1	2.3	3.6	4.9	10.9	0.2	2.6	3.5	5.6	11.8
40–44	1.3	2.4	2.0	3.0	8.7	4.5	3.7	2.6	4.5	15.3
45–49	5.0	2.1	2.0	3.8	12.8	13.2	3.6	2.7	5.4	25.0
50–54	14.0	2.6	2.6	4.8	24.0	25.8	4.3	3.2	6.4	39.7
55–59	19.6	2.5	1.9	2.9	26.9	30.2	3.6	2.5	3.9	40.3
Total	40.0	12.1	14.5	31.1	97.7	73.9	17.9	17.3	38.4	147.4

Thousand

	Calendar year of last service									
	Special and PRU					Other[5]				
	Before 1988	1988 to 1992	1993 to 1997	1998 to 2003	All years	Before 1988	1988 to 1992	1993 to 1997	1998 to 2003	All years
Men										
Under 25	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
25–29	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	0.2	0.2
30–34	—	—	—	0.1	0.1	—	—	0.1	0.4	0.5
35–39	—	—	—	0.1	0.1	—	0.1	0.2	0.5	0.8
40–44	—	—	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.3	0.5	1.3
45–49	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.4	0.7	0.4	0.4	0.7	2.3
50–54	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.6	1.6	0.7	0.7	1.1	4.0
55–59	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.5	2.2	0.6	0.4	0.7	3.8
Total	0.7	0.3	0.3	0.6	1.9	4.7	2.0	2.1	4.1	12.9
Women										
Under 25	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
25–29	—	—	—	0.1	0.1	—	—	—	0.5	0.6
30–34	—	—	—	0.2	0.3	—	—	0.3	1.2	1.5
35–39	—	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.4	—	0.2	0.5	1.0	1.7
40–44	0.1	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.7	0.4	0.5	0.5	0.9	2.3
45–49	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.3	1.1	1.4	0.5	0.6	1.2	3.7
50–54	0.7	0.2	0.2	0.3	1.4	2.1	0.6	0.8	1.9	5.4
55–59	0.8	0.1	0.1	0.2	1.3	2.5	0.7	0.7	1.5	5.4
Total	2.1	0.7	0.8	1.5	5.2	6.4	2.6	3.4	8.2	20.6
Men and women										
Under 25	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
25–29	—	—	—	0.1	0.1	—	—	—	0.8	0.8
30–34	—	—	0.1	0.3	0.3	—	—	0.4	1.7	2.1
35–39	—	0.1	0.2	0.3	0.6	—	0.3	0.7	1.5	2.5
40–44	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	0.9	0.6	0.8	0.8	1.4	3.6
45–49	0.6	0.3	0.2	0.4	1.5	2.1	1.0	1.0	2.0	6.0
50–54	1.0	0.3	0.3	0.5	2.0	3.6	1.3	1.5	2.9	9.4
55–59	1.1	0.2	0.2	0.3	1.8	4.7	1.3	1.1	2.1	9.1
Total	2.8	1.0	1.1	2.1	7.0	11.1	4.6	5.5	12.3	33.5

Thousand

	Calendar year of last service				Total
	Before 1988	*1988 to 1992*	*1993 to 1997*	*1998 to 2003*	*All years*
Men					
Under 25	—	—	—	0.1	0.1
25–29	—	—	0.1	2.1	2.2
30–34	—	—	1.2	3.4	4.7
35–39	0.1	1.2	1.6	2.9	5.8
40–44	2.2	1.9	1.4	2.6	8.0
45–49	6.6	2.1	1.7	3.2	13.6
50–54	14.2	2.8	2.3	4.1	23.4
55–59	17.6	2.4	1.3	2.1	23.4
Total	40.7	10.5	9.6	20.5	81.2
Women					
Under 25	—	—	—	0.7	0.7
25–29	—	—	0.2	8.1	8.4
30–34	—	0.2	4.2	12.6	16.9
35–39	0.2	4.1	6.3	9.4	20.0
40–44	4.4	5.1	4.2	6.7	20.5
45–49	14.3	4.9	4.2	8.4	31.7
50–54	30.2	5.6	5.3	10.5	51.6
55–59	38.0	5.3	4.3	7.1	54.7
Total	87.1	25.1	28.8	63.4	204.4
Men and women					
Under 25	—	—	—	0.8	0.8
25–29	—	—	0.3	10.2	10.5
30–34	—	0.2	5.4	16.0	21.6
35–39	0.3	5.3	8.0	12.2	25.8
40–44	6.7	7.0	5.6	9.3	28.5
45–49	20.8	7.0	5.9	11.6	45.3
50–54	44.3	8.5	7.6	14.6	75.0
55–59	55.6	7.7	5.6	9.2	78.1
Total	127.8	35.6	38.4	83.9	285.7

[1] Excluding those who are receiving a pension from the Teachers Pension Scheme (TPS).

[2] Some in service teachers may be shown as not in service because their service details are not recorded. These may include qualified teachers in the 'old' university sector, teachers in the independent sector who are not members of the Teachers Pension Scheme (TPS), part-time teachers outside the maintained nursery, primary and secondary sector who are not members of the TPS.

[3] Provisional data.

[4] Figures below 50 will be rounded to zero.

[5] Other includes the independent sector, further and higher education.

Source:

Database of Teacher Records.

Table 46b: Out of service teachers aged under 60, qualified teachers who have never been in service[1] up to 31 March 2003 aged under 60, by calendar year qualified, sex and age at 31 March 2003[2, 3]—England

Thousand

	Calendar year qualified								
	Before 1988	*1988 to 1992*	*1993 to 1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*All years*
Men									
Under 25	—	—	—	—	—	0.0	0.1	0.4	0.6
25–29	—	—	0.5	0.4	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.4	2.3
30–34	—	0.3	2.0	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.2	3.2
35–39	0.4	1.2	0.9	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	3.1
40–44	2.2	0.6	0.5	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	3.7
45–49	5.5	0.3	0.4	0.1	0.0	0.0	—	—	6.4
50–54	4.7	0.2	0.3	0.0	—	—	—	—	5.3
55–59	2.7	0.2	0.2	—	—	—	—	—	3.1
Total	15.6	2.8	4.7	1.0	0.8	0.7	0.8	1.3	27.7
Women									
Under 25	—	—	—	—	—	0.2	0.6	1.5	2.3
25–29	—	—	1.4	1.0	0.9	0.9	0.8	1.0	6.0
30–34	—	0.7	4.0	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.5	6.7
35–39	0.8	2.2	1.4	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.2	0.3	5.4
40–44	4.6	0.8	0.8	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.2	0.2	7.1
45–49	13.3	0.5	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	15.0
50–54	6.3	0.4	0.5	0.1	0.0	0.0	—	—	7.3
55–59	3.6	0.3	0.2	—	—	—	—	—	4.1
Total	28.7	4.9	9.0	2.1	1.8	1.6	2.1	3.8	53.9
Men and women									
Under 25	—	—	—	—	—	0.2	0.7	1.9	2.9
25–29	—	—	1.9	1.4	1.3	1.2	1.1	1.4	8.3
30–34	—	1.0	6.0	0.8	0.6	0.4	0.4	0.7	9.9

Table 46b: Out of service teachers aged under 60, qualified teachers who have never been in service[1] up to 31 March 2003 aged under 60, by calendar year qualified, sex and age at 31 March 2003[2, 3]—England

Thousand

	Calendar year qualified								
	Before 1988	*1988 to 1992*	*1993 to 1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*All years*
35–39	1.2	3.4	2.3	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.5	8.4
40–44	6.8	1.5	1.4	0.3	0.2	0.2	0.2	0.3	10.8
45–49	18.9	0.8	1.1	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.2	21.4
50–54	11.0	0.6	0.7	0.1	0.1	0.0	0.1	0.1	12.7
55–59	6.3	0.4	0.4	—	—	—	—	—	7.3
Total	44.3	7.7	13.7	3.1	2.6	2.3	3.0	5.1	81.6

[1] Some in service teachers may be shown as not in service because their service details are not recorded. These may include qualified teachers in the 'old' university sector, teachers in the independent sector who are not members of the Teachers Pension Scheme (TPS), part-time teachers outside the maintained nursery, primary and secondary sector who are not members of the TPS.
[2] Data are provisional.
[3] Figures below 50 will be rounded to zero.
Source:
Database of Teacher Records.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) whom she has asked to carry out the review of the framework for teaching mathematics; what the terms of reference are; and which experts have been invited to submit evidence; [36020]

(2) how many responses she has received to her Department's consultation on reviewing the framework for teaching mathematics. [36021]

Jacqui Smith: The Primary National Strategy has been asked to renew and update its framework for the teaching of mathematics. The renewed framework will reflect the significant improvements in mathematics teaching we have seen since the framework was introduced in 1999 and will draw on the latest evidence to ensure that it supports schools and settings to raise attainment still further by delivering education tailored to the needs of every child.

The strategy's terms of reference are to ensure that the renewed framework for teaching mathematics provides schools and settings with:

(a) a clearer set of age-related outcomes relating to learning progression in mathematics, which will inform the structure of the curriculum;

(b) better sign-posting to the range of teaching materials and professional development opportunities currently on offer to support teaching practice;

(c) an increased sense of drive and momentum on mathematics, making adjustments to learning objectives involving some progressive scaling up of expectations for each year group.

A period of informal consultation is currently under way. Discussions are being held with consultancy groups drawn from national samples of head teachers, teachers, local authority representatives, subject and professional organisations and higher education institutions. A consultation forum has been set up on the DfES website. To date, well over 100 contributors have taken part in consultancy group discussions and the website consultation forum has had 40 contributions posted on it, many of which are from local authorities feeding back comments from their meetings with local teachers.

The strategy will continue to hold discussions with experts across the mathematics community to elicit their views on proposed content and structure of the revised framework and will post documentation on the website for wider comment. After Easter 2006, a draft revised framework will be published for more formal consultation.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Alcohol-related Illness/Deaths

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many deaths there were in *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* Upper Bann in each of the last five years in which alcohol was the primary cause. [36385]

Angela E. Smith: The following table gives the number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland and Upper Bann parliamentary constituency in each year between 2000 and 2004 where the underlying cause of death indicated a condition directly related to alcohol[1]

Number of alcohol-related deaths registered in Northern Ireland and Upper Bann parliamentary constituency, 2000–04

	Alcohol-related deaths[1]	
	Northern Ireland	*Upper Bann*
2000	193	7
2001	210	11
2002	246	11
2003	211	11
2004	260	17

[1] For the years 2001–04 the cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10). The codes used to define alcohol-related deaths are:
F10—Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol;
142.6—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy;
K70—Alcoholic liver disease;
K73—Chronic hepatitis, not elsewhere classified;
K74—Fibrosis and cirrhosis of liver; and
X45—Accidental poisoning by and exposure to alcohol.
For the year 2000 the cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10). The codes used to define alcohol-related deaths are:
291—Alcoholic psychoses;
303—Alcohol dependence syndrome;
305.0—Non-dependent abuse of alcohol;
425.5—Alcoholic cardiomyopathy;
571—Chronic liver disease and cirrhosis; and
E860—Accidental poisoning by alcohol.

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will estimate the annual costs resulting from alcohol-related illness in the Province. [36501]

Mr. Woodward: In the Report, Reducing Alcohol Related Harm in Northern Ireland, it was estimated that, in 1997–98, the last year for which costs are available, the social costs to the HPSS amounted to £26.8 million per year. This included the costs of occupied psychiatric and acute beds, general practice costs and responses to alcohol-related harm.

Benefits

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Upper Bann have been in receipt of *(a)* disability living allowance, *(b)* income support and *(c)* jobseeker's allowance in each of the last five years. [36251]

Mr. Hanson: The information requested is shown in the following tables.

Month of May	*Upper Bann disability living allowance recipients*
2001	9,372
2002	9,735
2003	10,063
2004	10,745
2005	11,230

	Upper Bann income support recipients
February 2001[1]	9,505
May 2002	9,762
May 2003	9,968
May 2004	5,522
May 2005	5,631

[1] May 2001 data is unavailable.

	Upper Bann jobseekers allowance recipients
February 2001[1]	1,649
May 2002	1,587
May 2003	1,480
May 2004	1,324
May 2005	1,226

[1] May 2001 data is unavailable.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cases of fraud have been detected in Northern Ireland in relation to *(a)* disability living allowance, *(b)* incapacity benefit and *(c)* jobseeker's allowance in each of the last five years. [36503]

Mr. Hanson: The information requested is shown in the following tables.

	2001–02[1]	*2002–03*[1]	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005-YTD*[2]
Disability living allowance	3	14	34	48	40
Incapacity benefit	76	80	110	133	117
Jobseekers allowance	264	279	520	470	349

[1] The figures for 2001–02 and 2002–03 are incomplete as a number of cases have been deleted from the database in order to comply with the requirements Data Protection Act. It is not possible to quantify these cases.
[2] Ending 30 November 2005

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people have been *(a)* prosecuted and *(b)* convicted in relation to benefit fraud in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [36504]

Mr. Hanson: The total number of people that has been *(a)* prosecuted and *(b)* convicted in relation to benefit fraud in Northern Ireland from year 2001–02 to date are as follows:

	Prosecuted	*Convicted*
2001–02	471	467
2002–03	335	322
2003–04	243	238
2004–05	236	234
2005-YTD (Ending 30 November)	138	132

Bortezomib

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many patients received bortezomib within each of the health board areas in the Province in the last year for which figures are available. [36495]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Bovine Tuberculosis

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what control programme operates in Northern Ireland in relation to bovine tuberculosis. [36628]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD), has in place a bovine tuberculosis (TB) control programme, which aims to bring about a substantial reduction in TB disease levels in Northern Ireland. The incidence of TB has been decreasing in Northern Ireland since early to mid-2003. This trend has continued during the first ten months of 2005.

The control measures are based on a programme of testing, the slaughter of infected animals, the restriction of movements of animals to and from infected herds and surrounding herds, and the tracing of contact animals.

Following the TB policy review undertaken in 2002, DARD has introduced a number of new measures to strengthen the control of TB in Northern Ireland. The most important of these measures are tighter restrictions on overdue tests and changes to the valuation system, including the establishment of an independent appeal panel to resolve valuation disputes.

Work is also underway on the feasibility of further measures that can be introduced to control TB. This includes a pilot on the use of the gamma interferon blood test, in combination with skin testing, to assist in the detection of TB in cattle in certain circumstances, and a review of the existing arrangements for TB testing arrangements.

In relation to badgers and TB, a Badger Stakeholder Group was established in May 2004 to review all the relevant information available on badgers and to consider the potential need for a badger management

strategy to help reduce TB levels in Northern Ireland. At present, work is being finalised on cost/benefit information relevant to Northern Ireland to assist the Group, and the results of that work will be presented to the Group at a further meeting. The Group is expected to report in early 2006. No decision will be taken on badgers in Northern Ireland until the work of the Badger Stakeholder Group has been completed.

Child Abuse

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will *(a)* initiate an inquiry into clerical child sexual abuse in every school in the maintained sector in Northern Ireland and *(b)* initiate a joint inquiry with authorities in the Republic of Ireland into clerical child sexual abuse in every Roman Catholic diocese that straddles the border; and if he will make a statement. [36565]

Mr. Woodward: Officials from the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSSPS) have held separate meetings with the PSNI, the Department of Health and Children in the Republic of Ireland, the National Children's Office in the Republic of Ireland and senior representatives of the Roman Catholic Church to discuss implications of the Ferns Report and other disclosures relating to allegations of clerical abuse against children. PSNI has also met separately with senior representatives of the Roman Catholic Church. A further meeting involving DHSSPS, PSNI and senior representatives of the Roman Catholic Church is scheduled before Christmas following which decisions will be taken by DHSSPS and the PSNI on the appropriate course of action to be followed.

Children Act

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer to question 34657, what work his Department is undertaking to exercise the power under section 12 of the Children Act 2004. [37434]

Mr. Woodward: The Children Act 2004 does not apply to Northern Ireland. However, the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety intend to consult on a range of childcare issues early in 2006, which may include the sharing of information.

Civil Service

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the length of time it takes a Northern Ireland civil servant in each grade to progress to the maximum point of the pay scale. [36723]

Angela E. Smith: Depending on the payscale in question, it takes a civil servant in the Northern Ireland civil service between seven and 12 years to progress from the minimum to the maximum point of the scale.

It is the NICS' longer-term strategy to reduce the length of time it takes to progress to the maximum of a pay scale.

Commissioner for Victims

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he sought advice from the Commissioner for Public Appointments before appointing the Commissioner for Victims; and if he will make a statement. [36982]

Angela E. Smith: The Commissioner for Public Appointments was not consulted on the appointment of the Interim Commissioner for Victims and Survivors. The Interim Commissioner for Victims and Survivors for Northern Ireland was appointed on a non-statutory basis to take forward some essential preparatory work in advance of the post being established under law. That work included, for example, reviewing the efficiency and effectiveness of current funding arrangements and considering the practical issues of establishing a victims and survivors forum. The Interim Commissioner has been asked to produce a report for Ministers by the end of 2006.

I can confirm, however, that the Government will be bringing forward legislation to establish the post of Commissioner for Victims and Survivors. That appointment will be subject to the full public appointments process.

Community Care Grants

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Upper Bann have submitted claims for community care grants in each of the last five years; and how many were awarded. [36252]

Mr. Hanson: The information is not available in the form requested.

Cross-border Bodies

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which cross-border bodies have put the minutes of their board meetings on their websites; on what date each did so; and what steps are being taken to require those cross-border bodies which did not so publish their minutes to do so. [34770]

Mr. Hain: The content of the websites of cross-border bodies is a matter for each body. The Loughs Agency, an agency of the Foyle, Carlingford and Irish Lights Commission currently publishes minutes of its board meetings on its website (www.loughs-agency.org).

The dates of the relevant Loughs Agency board meetings and the dates they were published are detailed in the following table:

Date of board meeting	*Date published on website*
23rd meeting—19 May 2004	26 May 2004
24th meeting—15 September 2004	21 September 2004
25th meeting—17 November 2004	22 November 2004
26th meeting—15 December 2004	20 December 2004
27th meeting—23 February 2005	28 February 2005
28th meeting—20 April 2005	25 April 2005
29th meeting—24 June 2005	28 June 2005

The Loughs Agency has also advised that minutes relating to meetings prior to the 19 May 2004 have been removed from the website for technical reasons. It is the agency's plan to reinstate them when their new website comes online early 2006. The minutes from board meetings since 24 June will be put on the website as soon as possible.

Dentistry

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many dental nurses are employed in the Province specifically to treat *(a)* children and *(b)* adults with complex needs. [36502]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is not collected centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Property

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent by his Department's Ministers on *(a)* new furnishings, *(b)* art and *(c)* new vehicles in each Northern Ireland department headquarters in each year since the suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly. [36511]

Mr. Woodward: The information is as follows:

(a) And *(b)* are Nil for DHSSPS.

(c) In 2004 the Department purchased four emergency response vehicles for HPSS preparedness. Two Ford Ranger super cab 4x4s and two Iveco Eurocargo box vans at a total cost of £83,252.

Eastern Health and Social Services Board

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will address the financial situation of the Eastern Health and Social Services Board arising from the regional capitation formula to enable reduction of waiting lists for elective treatment. [36780]

Mr. Woodward: The Eastern Health and Social Services Board share of resources through the regional capitation formula is reducing in line with its share of the Northern Ireland population. A detailed research programme is currently being taken forward to further consider the capitation formula. This work is still progressing and is expected to inform future allocation decisions.

In relation to waiting lists, a comprehensive programme of elective care reform is being progressed across Northern Ireland. By March 2006, no patient should be waiting longer than 12 months for inpatient or day case treatment, with shorter waiting times for major joints (nine months), cataracts (six months) and cardiac surgery (six months).

ECT Machines

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether he has received reports that staff at one of the Province's psychiatric hospitals were unable to provide the serial numbers of their ECT machines, and did not have calibration cards or means to assess compliance with manufacturers' pre-calibration settings for the machine. [36497]

Mr. Woodward: The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has received communication containing allegations about the use of ECT machines. These refer to experiences in the early 1990s. Guidance on good practice "Medical Device and Equipment Management for Hospital and Community-based Organisation" was issued on July 1999. This covered the issue of keeping a record of serial numbers and employing a routine maintenance policy to keep equipment working reliably and safely.

Emergency Services

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to ensure emergency services can respond promptly to terrorist or serious incidents in the south western part of Northern Ireland after the withdrawal of acute medical services from Tyrone County Hospital in Omagh; and if he will make a statement. [35848]

Mr. Woodward: All of the Health and Personal Social Services, including the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service (NIAS) have a generic Major Incident Plan which is designed to cover large scale incidents and terrorist events happening anywhere in Northern Ireland.

In the event of terrorist or serious incident occurring in the south western part of Northern Ireland, the Western Health and Social Services Board and the NIAS would each instigate their respective major incident plans. These plans anticipate the use of multiple hospitals for dealing with major emergencies. The NIAS plan allows for the Ambulance Commander to designate receiving hospitals, part of this is to ensure that the workload is evenly dispersed to the appropriate hospitals in relation to patients clinical requirements. The plan also contains the deployment of NIAS Emergency Equipment Vehicles (these are placed at strategic locations in Northern Ireland) which contain additional equipment for dealing with mass casualties.

The Southern and Western Health and Social Services Boards are working with the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service to ensure that ambulance services in the south western part of Northern Ireland are responsive to the needs of the population. The current planning for Sperrin Lakeland includes the creation of appropriate networks of Ambulance, A & E service, Critical care and other acute services across the Western Health and Social Services Board area and beyond to deal with casualties resulting from serious incidents.

In addition to Major Incident Plans, there are special provisions for Chemical, Biological, Radiological or Nuclear (CBRN) incidents. The Northern Ireland Fire and Rescue Service is being equipped and trained to respond to such incidents as part of its New Dimensions role. The NIAS also have special provisions for dealing with CBRN incidents throughout Northern Ireland.

Engagements

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many councils in Northern Ireland he has met since his appointment. [29885]

Mr. Hain: Between my appointment as Secretary of State for Northern Ireland in May and 30 November 2005 I met with Lisburn city council, Ballymena borough council and North Down borough council.

My ministerial colleagues have also met during this period with Carrickfergus borough council, Down district council, Ards borough council, Omagh district council and Belfast city council.

EU Initiatives

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of whether the four main European Union initiatives associated with Northern Ireland are going to meet their N+2 targets for 2005. [35307]

Angela E. Smith: Both the INTERREG IIIA Ireland/Northern Ireland cross border programme and the LEADER+programme have already incurred sufficient expenditure to meet their 2005 N+2 targets. Forecast expenditure for the EQUAL and URBAN II programmes indicate that these too should be able to meet their 2005 N+2 targets, but with very narrow margins.

General Practitioners

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many general practitioners in Northern Ireland are aged over 65 years. [36381]

Mr. Woodward: I refer the hon. Gentleman to my answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 225W.

Housing Executive Homes

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many new Housing Executive homes were built in *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* Upper Bann in each of the last 10 years. [36516]

Mr. Hanson: Housing associations assumed responsibility for the delivery of social housing from the Housing Executive in 1998. This answer therefore includes both housing association and Housing Executive completions.

The figures include new build and houses purchased from the open market either in good condition or for rehabilitation, prior to letting. All are additions to social housing stock.

The number of completions in Northern Ireland is as follows:

	Number
1995–96	2,805
1996–97	2,037
1997–98	2,117
1998–99	1,739
1999–2000	1,557
2000–01	1,342
2001–02	1,763
2002–03	1,295
2003–04	854
2004–05	1,073

The Housing Executive does not maintain its records by constituency and a full response by constituency is therefore not possible. However, a composite response can be given in respect of the Banbridge and Craigavon council areas, which straddle the Upper Bann constituency, but only for the last seven years. Further information can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

The number of completions in respect of the two council areas is as follows:

	Banbridge	*Craigavon*
1998–99	37	71
1999–2000	0	53
2000–01	10	58
2001–02	32	13
2002–03	1	0
2003–04	0	18
2004–05	0	7

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) how many Housing Executive homes have been condemned as unsafe in each of the last 10 years; [36517]

(2) how many Housing Executive homes in Upper Bann have been condemned as unsafe in each of the last 10 years. [36527]

Mr. Hanson: The information is not readily available in the format requested and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Housing Executive homes in *(a)* Northern Ireland and *(b)* Upper Bann are vacant. [36528]

Mr. Hanson: There are a total of 4,288 void Housing Executive properties in Northern Ireland and 338 in the Upper Ban constituency.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Housing Executive dwellings are scheduled to be built in each council area in Northern Ireland over the next 10 years. [36541]

Mr. Hanson: Housing Associations assumed responsibility for the delivery of social housing from the Housing Executive in 1998. This answer therefore refers to Housing Association planned starts. The social housing development programme operates on a five-year time frame and is rolled forward each year to take account of changing needs and priorities. A 10-year projection is therefore not available.

The current target is to provide 1,500 new social houses per annum over the next five years. The following table shows the gross programme proposed in each year.

Planned social housing starts

District council	*2005–06*	*2006–07*	*2007–08*	*2008–09*	*2009–10*
Antrim	57	17	8	8	51
Ards	26	58	0	53	165
Armagh	4	0	0	17	54
Ballymena	11	16	12	34	9
Ballymoney	0	3	0	4	21
Banbridge	44	0	5	0	0
Belfast	1,194	850	1,143	542	440
Carrick	30	0	0	21	11
Castlereagh	68	20	20	45	108
Coleraine	31	0	20	4	25
Cookstown	5	0	0	28	0
Craigavon	12	18	0	30	16
Derry	113	93	192	253	112
Down	30	39	0	62	97
Dungannon	0	19	12	80	22
Fermanagh	31	11	0	58	62
Larne	0	5	0	14	12
Limavady	6	6	10	0	6
Lisburn	142	360	200	143	370
Magherafelt	0	0	14	14	10
Moyle	0	0	10	6	24
Newry and Mourne	27	63	24	89	187
Newtownabbey	2	57	31	137	43
North Down	40	133	11	66	145
Omagh	7	8	0	17	30
Strabane	0	4	21	38	20
Totals	1,880	1,780	1,733	1,763	2,040

Infection Control

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the level of use of hand gels by *(a)* members of hospital staff and *(b)* visitors to hospitals in Northern Ireland for the purposes of infection control. [36382]

Mr. Woodward: The Department has not made any assessment on the use of hand gels by members of hospital staff or visitors to hospitals for the purpose of infection control.

Interpreting Services

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the response of 13 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 598W, on interpreting services, what the plans are for the provision and monitoring of interpreting services within the local health service. [36355]

Mr. Woodward: The Department plans to publish a consultation document during the first quarter of 2006, to invite views on possible arrangements for the future of interpreting services for HPSS service users and those who deliver the services. In the interim the Department has written to the Eastern Health and Social Services Board offering continuation funding for the existing Regional Interpreting Service.

Irish Language Policy

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the cost of implementing an Irish language policy has been to each Government Department in the Province since the policy was introduced. [36353]

Mr. Hanson: Information in the form requested is not readily available and could be compiled only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. MacEntee

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1630W, if he has provided Mr. MacEntee with all the information he has requested. [32256]

Mr. Hain: Mr. MacEntee made a general request for information held by the British Government which is relevant to his terms of reference. The British Government have given Mr. MacEntee all the information that they have identified as being relevant to his terms of reference. We have also provided him with further additional information which he has requested and are currently engaged in correspondence with him with a view to providing further assistance to his Commission of Investigation.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1630W, on the Barron Inquiry, whether the further information provided to Mr. MacEntee included information on *(a)* a white van with a UK registration plate and *(b)* the location of British Services personnel at the time of the bombings. [33929]

Mr. Hain: The British Government have given Mr. MacEntee all the information that they have identified as being relevant to his terms of reference. His terms of reference include:

"Why the Gardaí did not follow-up on the following leads:

i. information that a white van, with an English registration plate, was parked outside the Department of Posts and Telegraphs in Portland Row and was later seen parked in the deep sea area of the B & I ferry port in Dublin, and the subsequent contact made with a British Army officer on a ferry boat leaving that port;

ii. information relating to a man who stayed in the Four Courts Hotel between 15 and 17 May, 1974 and his contacts with the UVF;

iii. information concerning a British Army corporal allegedly sighted in Dublin at the time of the bombings."

Any information relating to these points which was uncovered by the Government's trawl of their files would have been passed to Mr. MacEntee.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1630W, on the Barron inquiry, to what the further information provided to Mr. MacEntee relates. [32329]

Mr. Hain: The Commission of Investigation into the Dublin and Monaghan Bombings of 1974 under Patrick MacEntee is required, in general, to be carried out in private. The material which the British Government provided to Mr. MacEntee was given to him in confidence.

Myeloma

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his most recent estimate is of the number of myeloma sufferers in the Province. [36496]

Mr. Woodward: Estimates of prevalence are not routinely produced by the NICR, due to the uncertainty surrounding these estimates. However the results of a recent population-based survey (Morris et al, 2004), published in the *British Journal of Haematology*, indicate that approximately 75 cases of myeloma are diagnosed in Northern Ireland each year.

This information has been provided by the Northern Ireland Cancer Registry and is the most up to date currently available.

Orange Halls (Attacks)

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many attacks on Orange halls have been reported to the police in Northern Ireland in each of the last 30 years for which there are records. [36557]

Mr. Woodward: I have been advised by the PSNI that records date back to 1990 and that statistics are collated from Orange halls and Apprentice Boys halls together. The following table from PSNI records details the number of attacks on Orange halls/Apprentice Boys halls over the last 15 years to 8 December 2005.

Number of attacks on Orange halls/Apprentice Boys halls

1990	6
1991	11
1992	17
1993	12
1994	8
1995	42
1996	38
1997	41
1998	29
1999	26
2000	26
2001	16
2002	4
2003	19
2004	6
2005 (to 8 December)[1]	30

[1] 2005 statistics are provisional and may be subject to minor amendment.

Note:
Includes incidents such as stones thrown, petrol bombs thrown, shots fired, malicious fires, etc.

Overseas Nurses

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many nurses from overseas have been employed in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [36568]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is provided in the following table.

Number of nurses from overseas employed within the NI HPSS as at 30 September over the last 10 years

	Headcount	*Whole-time equivalent*
1996	2	1.49
1997	2	1.49
1998	1	1.00
1999	1	1.00
2000	20	20.00
2001	104	104.00
2002	297	297.00
2003	742	740.55
2004	844	842.15
2005	863	862.81

Notes:
1. The figures detailed in this table refer specifically to nurses who have been recruited from overseas by individual trusts.
2. Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust supplied figures as at 31 December for the years 2003 and 2004. Figures for Belfast City Hospital HSS Trust for 2003 and 2004 rely on information submitted by staff.

Source:
NI HSS Trusts

Police

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many police officers have taken early retirement in each district command unit in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [31986]

Mr. Woodward: District command units were only formed in 2001. During the period 1 April 2001 until 1 November 2005 1,632 officers have taken early retirement from district command units within the police service.

A breakdown of the figures is set out in the following table:

District command unit	*Early retirement through voluntary severance*	*Medical retirement*
Antrim DCU	33	14
Ards DCU	30	22
Armagh DCU	23	23
Banbridge DCU	28	12
Belfast East DCU	68	41
Belfast North DCU	62	66
Belfast South DCU	86	35
Belfast West DCU	38	70
Ballymena DCU	19	13

District command unit	Early retirement through voluntary severance	Medical retirement
Ballymoney DCU	16	3
Carrickfergus DCU	20	15
Coleraine DCU	38	21
Cookstown DCU	16	20
Craigavon DCU	45	28
Castlereagh DCU	44	23
Dungannon and South Tyrone DCU	15	35
Downpatrick DCU	42	26
Fermanagh DCU	39	37
Foyle DCU	16	23
Larne DCU	21	14
Limavady DCU	17	9
Lisburn DCU	36	35
Magherafelt DCU	21	18
Moyle DCU	5	1
Newtownabbey DCU	28	17
Newry and Mourne DCU	30	31
North Down DCU	45	35
Omagh DCU	19	26
Strabane DCU	10	9
Grand total	910	722

In respect of the period 1 April 1995—31 March 2001 1,510 officers retired from the service early on medical grounds or voluntary severance.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many police officers have been *(a)* prosecuted and *(b)* disciplined as a result of investigation by the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland. [36559]

Mr. Woodward: The Police Ombudsman advises that the Director of Public Prosecutions has directed charges in 30 cases of police officers as a result of investigation by the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland. The chief constable advises that 139 police officers have been disciplined as a result of investigation by the Police Ombudsman for Northern Ireland.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Police Service of Northern Ireland officers are on secondment to other police services. [36338]

Mr. Woodward: There are currently 17 members of the Police Service of Northern Ireland on secondment to other police services.

Poverty Statistics

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 235W, on poverty statistics, to what he ascribes the increase in pensioner poverty in Northern Ireland; what steps he has taken to address increases in pensioner poverty in Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [36563]

Mr. Hanson: The change in the number of pensioners, recorded by the Family Resources Survey as in poverty, should be treated with some caution, because some variation is to be expected from one year to the next in the results of sample surveys. Results from a longer period of time would be required to confirm the trend. It would not be prudent to speculate about possible explanations.

Since 1997 we have taken many steps to tackle pensioner poverty, including the introduction of pension credit, winter fuel payments and free television licences. Also, since 2000 the basic state pension has risen substantially more than inflation. As a result of these measures during 2005–06 pensioner households will be on average £29 a week better off while the poorest third of pensioner households will be on average £39 a week better off compared with 1997.

Pension credit has been key to this increase in income, currently guaranteeing a minimum income of £109.45 a week for single pensioners and £167.05 for couples. The Government are committed to increasing the guarantee credit element of pension credit by earnings next year and in the next spending round 2006 to 2008.

Skin Cancer

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many cases of skin cancer were diagnosed in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [36334]

Mr. Woodward: The following tables detail the number of incidences of Malignant Melanoma of the skin (ICD-10 C43) and Non-melanoma skin cancer (ICD-10 C44) in Northern Ireland between 1994 and 2003.

Malignant Melanoma of the skin (ICD-10 C43)

Year of diagnosis	Incident cases
1994	178
1995	169
1996	175
1997	159
1998	177
1999	179
2000	187
2001	215
2002	245
2003	208

Non-Melanoma skin cancer (ICD-10 C44)

Year of diagnosis	Incident cases
1994	2,093
1995	2,054
1996	2,234
1997	2,196
1998	2,174
1999	2,261
2000	2,213
2001	2,157
2002	2,377
2003	2,414

This information has been provided by the Northern Ireland Cancer Registry and is the most up to date currently available.

Smoking

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer to question 34727, on smoking in enclosed public places, if he will set out the scientific evidence he considered in reaching his decision. [37223]

Mr. Woodward: The World Health Organisation's International Agency for Research on Cancer has classified second hand smoke as a Group 1 human carcinogen. Other Group 1 carcinogens include asbestos, arsenic, benzene and radon gas.

The Federal Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) in the US and the American Conference of Government Industrial Hygienists (ACGIH) have concluded that even proposed new technologies, such as displacement ventilation systems, which may reduce second hand smoke exposure levels by 90 percent., still leave exposure levels which are 1,500 to 2,500 times the acceptable risk level for hazardous air pollutants. The conclusion of the OSHA/ACGIH ventilation panel is that dilution ventilation is not a viable control option for Environmental Tobacco Smoke.

The US Surgeon General, the US Environmental Protection Agency, the World Health Organisation, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, the American Medical Association and the American Lung Association have all concluded that there is no safe level of exposure to second hand smoke.

The Government's Scientific Committee on Tobacco and Health (SCOTH) has concluded that exposure to second hand smoke is a cause of lung cancer and, in those with long-term exposure, the increased risk is estimated to be in the order of 24 percent. In 2004, SCOTH indicated that the weight of evidence published on the causal effect of exposure to second hand smoke on the risk of ischaemic heart disease is now stronger than at the time of SCOTH'S 1998 report and that the increased risk is estimated to be in the order of 25 percent. SCOTH also concluded that the evidence published since 1998 continues to point to a strong link between exposure to second hand smoke and adverse effects in children.

Supermarkets (Product Source)

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what representations he has made to UK supermarkets to encourage them to source more of their products from Northern Ireland producers. [36555]

Angela E. Smith: The issue of local sourcing has been a high priority since the UK supermarkets entered the Northern Ireland retail market. The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development and Invest Northern Ireland continue to work closely with the retail multiples to encourage them to increase trade with Northern Ireland suppliers. Also, as part of the implementation of the "Fit For Market" report, supermarket representatives are currently participating in the development of a domestic marketing campaign for local produce. I consider that this work is vital to maximise the uptake of local produce and bring long-term benefit to the Northern Ireland agri-food industry.

Temporary Accommodation

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland are living in temporary accommodation, broken down by *(a)* constituency and *(b)* council area. [36550]

Mr. Hanson: The information is not available in the form requested. The Housing Executive has information only in respect of those accepted as homeless whom it places in temporary accommodation. The following table sets out that information by district council level.

Numbers in temporary accommodation by district council area at 7 December 2005

Council area	*Number*
Belfast	639
Antrim	17
Moyle	1
Ballymena	50
Ballymoney	4
Carrickfergus	13
Coleraine	38
Larne	5
Newtownabbey	12
Armagh	5
Banbridge	5
Dungannon	23
Fermanagh	35
Craigavon	12
Newry	24
North Down	24
Castlereagh	14
Downpatrick	53
Lisburn	130
Ards	14
Derry	125
Cookstown	1
Limavady	2
Magherafelt	0
Omagh	7
Strabane	4
Total	1,257

Tourist Attractions

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what plans he has to develop the Black Pigs Dyke as a tourist attraction. [36543]

Angela E. Smith: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) currently has no plans to develop the Black Pigs Dyke as a tourist attraction.

The NITB recognises that there are many visitor attractions across Northern Ireland that add to the overall visitor experience, however, the Black Pigs Dyke has not been prioritised within NITB's SFA for development from 2004–07.

Local authorities also have a level of responsibility for development of tourism attractions within their respective areas. To gain recognition as a tourism attraction local authorities take the lead in highlighting key tourism strengths within their area.

Travel Schemes

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects the all-island free travel scheme for Ireland to be operational. [36745]

Mr. Woodward: I would refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave on 1 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 694W.

Travellers

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with authorities in Scotland regarding improvements for travellers from Northern Ireland using the roads infrastructure to and from the ports of Stranraer and Cairnryan. [36487]

Mr. Woodward: There have been no such discussions. However, in late 2004 there was correspondence between John Spellar MP, the then Minister for Regional Development and Nicol Stephen MSP, the then Minister for Transport in the Scottish Executive, welcoming plans for substantial improvements on both the A75 and A77 routes scheduled for completion between 2006 and 2008.

Water Supplies/Usage

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his estimate is of the number of homes in Northern Ireland that are not connected to the water supply, broken down by constituency; and what plans he has to make this facility available to each of those homes. [36549]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Executive of Water Service (Mrs Katharine Bryan) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Mrs Katharine Bryan, dated 13 December 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about the number of homes in Northern Ireland that are not connected to the water supply, broken down by constituency, and what plans there are to make the facility available to each of those homes (36549). I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Water Service.

It is estimated that less than 1% of households in Northern Ireland are not connected to the public water supply. Water Service does not, at present, have a database of all household customers connect to mains water and cannot therefore supply the information on a constituency basis. However, a comprehensive customer database is currently being developed in preparation for the proposed introduction of domestic charging from April 2007 and this will identify any households not connected to the public water supply.

Water service currently has a duty to provide water and sewerage services but is not required to do anything which is not practicable at a reasonable cost. For this reason, Water Service has always operated a policy of reasonable cost. The allowances for watermain schemes are £5,000 for properties, which were occupied and on which rates were being paid on or before 31 May 2000, and £2,900 for other properties. The higher reasonable cost allowance for existing properties not connected to the public watermain reflects the importance attached to reducing the number of such properties. The policy provides Water Service with an objective mechanism to consider applications for new water and sewerage services in a consistent and equitable manner. The policy seeks to strike a balance between the interests of householders and taxpayers, within the context of resources made available for water and sewerage services.

Where the cost of providing a first-time service exceeds the total reasonable cost allowance, Water Service will proceed with the scheme if the householders who will benefit from the scheme agree to meet the balance.

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his estimate is of the average volume of water used by a *(a)* domestic residence and *(b)* domestic residence where the supply pipe also supplies a farm in Northern Ireland in each of the last two years. [37012]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Water Service (Mrs. Katharine Bryan) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Mrs. Katharine Bryan, dated 14 December 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about the average volume of water used by *(a)* domestic residence and *(b)* domestic residence where the supply pipe also supplies a farm in Northern Ireland in each of the last two years (37012). I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Water Service.

The volume of water used by domestic properties varies considerably depending on the type of property, the household size and other factors such as the number of domestic appliances. However, the average volume of water used by all types of domestic properties in Northern Ireland was 348 litres per property per day in 2003/04 and 346 litres per property per day in 2004/05. These figures are derived from data obtained from a sample of 102 discrete areas, containing 5,000 domestic properties, which broadly represent the proportion of property types across Northern Ireland.

Domestic residence, where the supply pipe also supplies farms are metered. The volume of metered supply includes water for both domestic and agricultural consumption and information on these two elements is not directly available. In other words, we do not collect directly the information you require on the volume of water used by farmhouses. However, the nearest estimate of the domestic consumption could be obtained from the data relating to detached properties which is included in the sample of 5,000 domestic properties. The volume of water used by detached properties was 415 litres per property per day in 2003/04 and 448 litres per property per day in 2004/05.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Animal Welfare

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with Guide Dogs for the Blind on the impact of louder fireworks on dogs and other animals. [37842]

Mr. Sutcliffe: None.

Asbestos

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will remove textured coatings from the list of licensed materials that only licensed, trained and insured asbestos contractors are authorised to remove. [30909]

Mrs. McGuire: The Health and Safety Commission is currently consulting on a proposal that would mean that work with textured coatings containing asbestos would no longer need to be done by licensed asbestos contractors. It is one of a number of proposals set out in the consultative document 'Proposals for revised Asbestos Regulations and an Approved Code of Practice' which seeks to implement amendments to the European Asbestos Worker Protection Directive and to simplify and rationalise the legislative regime by combining the three sets of current asbestos regulations—on controls, licensing and prohibitions—into one.

Under current asbestos legislation and the proposed revisions, all work with asbestos, whether or not it needs to be done by a licensed contractor, requires a suitable and sufficient risk assessment, adequate control to prevent or reduce exposure, and trained personnel.

Employers are also required to hold insurance under the Employers' Liability (Compulsory Insurance) Act and there are no changes proposed to this legislation.

Carbon Capture

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with *(a)* oil and gas exploration companies and *(b)* power generation companies about potential liability for carbon reservoirs created in former oil and gas cavities as part of a carbon capture and storage scheme. [36928]

Malcolm Wicks: This issue has been raised by several stakeholders as a key issue for the implementation of carbon capture and storage. This is currently being considered by the Department as part of the broader issue of how to license and regulate carbon dioxide storage.

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment has been made by his Department of the relative *(a)* ease of installation and *(b)* effectiveness of carbon capture technology applied (i) pre-combustion and (ii) post-combustion; and whether there are significant cost differences between the two extraction methods. [36962]

Malcolm Wicks: These technologies along with oxy-firing, were considered in the Carbon Abatement Technology Strategy. Based on current information we cannot distinguish between post and pre-combustion on the basis of ease of installation and effectiveness. Also, the estimated costs of the technologies are comparable.

Clean Coal Technology

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research his Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated into the costs and benefits of clean coal technology. [37616]

Malcolm Wicks: Since 1999 the Department has provided £13 million to the Cleaner Coal Technology Programme and an additional £3.5 million for collaborative Cleaner Coal Technology Projects with the USA.

The Department has supported work on the development of Clean Coal Technologies to reduce atmospheric pollution (oxides of nitrogen and sulphur) and carbon dioxide emissions. The costs and benefits of reducing atmospheric pollution have not been assessed because the need for these technologies was driven by regulations such as the Large Combustion Plant Directive, and the methods for valuing the benefits of pollution abatement have a wide range of uncertainty.

The cost of carbon dioxide abatement through the application of carbon capture and storage (CCS) has been examined in the DTI's Carbon Abatement Technologies Strategy (June 2005). This drew on a wide range of sources including programmes organised by the International Energy Agency as well as a public consultation, and estimated costs of £38-£127 per tonne of carbon for abatement on coal fired plant. This should be compared to the social cost of carbon dioxide emissions, which is highly uncertain although a recent report for DEFRA indicated a range from £35-£1,000 per tonne of carbon emitted.

Company Law Reform Bill (Explanatory Notes)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry why the Explanatory Notes to the Company Law Reform Bill [HL] were not made available at the same time as the Bill itself; on what date they were published; what steps he *(a)* has taken and *(b)* plans to take to ensure that Explanatory Notes to Government Bills sponsored by his Department are published at the same time as the Bill itself; and if he will make a statement. [37558]

Alun Michael: Our departmental policy is to publish Explanatory Notes at the same time as Bills are published wherever possible. The Company Law Reform Bill is a very substantial Bill, and the Explanatory Notes were not ready to be published until 17 November 2005. Explanatory material on key clauses was made available on the day that the Bill was published.

Concessionary Coal

Mr. David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many former mineworkers or beneficiaries in Midlothian are in receipt of *(a)* cash in lieu and *(b)* concessionary coal. [37560]

Malcolm Wicks: In the Midlothian constituency, 1,189 former mineworkers or beneficiaries are in receipt of cash in lieu and 237 are in receipt of concessionary fuel.

Domestic Gas Supplies

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what charges gas companies may make for the installation of domestic mains gas supply; [36823]

(2) what *(a)* grants and *(b)* other assistance are available to rural communities to receive mains gas supply. [36824]

Malcolm Wicks: Gas transporters are obliged, on request, to connect a domestic property within 23 metres of an existing gas main. Under normal circumstances, the gas transporter will apply a standard charge, agreed with the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem) for providing such a connection. This charge varies slightly between different parts of Great Britain. The transporter will ordinarily bear the cost of installing the first 10 metres of pipe in the public highway. Gas transporters are able to recover the reasonable costs of providing connections to properties more than 23 metres from a gas main. Connections may also be arranged through gas suppliers, which will oversee the process, but will charge the customer for this service.

There are no grants for the provision of connections to the mains gas network. Grants to install gas central heating systems are available to qualifying households under the Government's Warm Front scheme.

Environmental Best Practice (Businesses)

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department is taking to promote environmentally responsible behaviour by British businesses. [37307]

Malcolm Wicks: We expect companies to comply with the legal requirements on environmental matters and we encourage them to exceed those standards in addressing the environmental impacts of their activities. The Government's approach to encouraging responsible business practice is outlined on the Government website on Corporate Social Responsibility—www.csr.gov.uk.

We promote environmentally responsible behaviour in a number of ways, for example, through the Envirowise advisory service which we fund with DEFRA for companies wishing to improve their environmental efficiency.

The Department is also helping to return landfill tax monies from the Business Resource and Efficiency Programme back to business through:

The Technology Programme, including previous calls for proposals on Waste Management and Minimisation and Meeting the Challenge of the Zero Emission Enterprise; and current calls on Design and Manufacture of Sustainable Products and Contaminated Land Remediation Technologies;

Support for the Resource Efficiency and Waste Management Knowledge Transfer Network;

Support for the National Industrial Symbiosis Programme.

Fireworks

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many injuries associated with fireworks and bonfires there were over the recent Halloween period; and what the figures were in each year since 2001, broken down by primary care trust area. [37556]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Each year firework injury statistics are collected over a four-week period around 5 November, this includes Halloween. Statistics for 2005 will not be available until March 2006. Copies of the total injury statistics for NHS trusts for the years 2001–04 have been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Fuel Cell Technology

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what support his Department gives to the *(a)* development of fuel cell technology and *(b)* application of such technology to the transport sector. [37228]

Malcolm Wicks: DTI provides support for industrial collaborative research and development for fuel cells through the DTI Technology programme. The programme seeks to advance fuel cell technology for both stationary power generation and transport applications, with a view to achieving the cost reductions and performance levels necessary for commercial deployment.

Basic research in universities on both fuel cells and hydrogen is supported by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), including through the SUPERGEN initiative.

The Government also provided funding of over £450,000 for the trial of three hydrogen-powered fuel cell buses in London as part of the CUTE project. £7.5 million of funding has been provided for the fuel cell and low carbon vehicle technology Centre of Excellence (CENEX) based in Loughborough.

On 14 June 2005, the Government announced a funding package worth £15 million for hydrogen and fuel cell demonstration projects. This scheme is currently in preparation, and will require EC state aids approval.

Gas

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the future security of supply of the importation of gas. [35526]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 7 December 2005]:* Diverse supplies, delivered through competitive markets, are the most efficient way to ensure security of gas supply. The Government is committed to working with others to provide an appropriate framework for international trade in gas, and to developing partnerships with gas producing and transit countries. However, there is concern that changes in other Governments' national rules are potentially diverting cargoes of Liquefied Natural Gas away from Great Britain, and that gas supplies via the interconnector from continental Europe have not fully responded to recent strong price signals; Ofgem and the Government are pursuing these issues with the European Commission. The Government's Energy Review, due to report in 2006, will look at the reliability of energy supplies in the medium and long term.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the cost of boosting the storage capacity of gas in the UK from 11 days to 60 days. [32645]

Malcolm Wicks: The UK currently has gas storage capacity of more than 75 days. This is mainly in the rough gas storage facility operated by Centrica Storage Ltd but also includes capacity available in the medium and short range storage facilities, for example at Hornsea. Further Information is available on the National Grid website: http://www.nationalgrid.com/uk/Gas/Data

Subject to regulatory consents, a further 10 storage projects could be completed by 2010. Together these would more than double GB's storage capacity. Independent energy consultants estimate that the investment in these projects might in total cost some £1.3 billion.

Greenhouse Gases

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much was allocated to support industries developing new methods of reducing their emissions of greenhouse gases in 2005–06. [36985]

Malcolm Wicks: The Carbon Trust is an independent company grant funded predominantly by Defra for England, and via separate relationships with the devolved Administrations, to take the lead on business and public sector energy efficiency and encourage the

development of a low carbon sector in the UK. Defra has allocated £60.6 million in 2005–06 to support the work of the Carbon Trust.

The Government also support the development of low carbon energy generation technologies. This is a commitment of around £500 million between 2002–08. Eligible renewable energy sources can also gain support through the Renewables Obligation.

Low Carbon Buildings Programme

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what role fuel cells will play in implementing the Low Carbon Buildings programme. [37227]

Malcolm Wicks: The Low Carbon Buildings programme is currently being finalised and is due to start in April 2006, subject to state aid approval. The programme will be technology blind and it is intended that fuel cells technologies in micro-CHP mode will be eligible for support.

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will publish the responses to the consultation paper Microgeneration Strategy and Low Carbon Buildings programme. [37229]

Malcolm Wicks: The responses to the consultation paper on the Microgeneration Strategy and Low Carbon Buildings programme were published on Monday 12 December and can be found at http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/consultations/consult_closed.shtml.

Nuclear Decommissioning Authority

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he expects to receive the final version of the Nuclear Decommissioning Authority's national strategy. [35834]

Malcolm Wicks: I expect to receive the NDA's proposed strategy before the House rises for the Christmas recess. It will go to the Scottish Ministers at the same time. The Scottish Ministers and I will then have until 31 March 2006 to consider and approve the NDA's proposed strategy.

Nuclear Power Stations

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what parliamentary approval is required to confirm a decision to commence building *(a)* a nuclear power station and *(b)* a series of nuclear power stations. [36742]

Malcolm Wicks: Under section 36 of the 1989 Electricity Act approval is required from the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (in Scotland approval is required by Scottish Ministers) for the construction or operation of any power station with a capacity in excess of 50 MW, which would include all nuclear power stations.

Parliamentary approval is not required to confirm a decision for the building of power stations of any type.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what studies his Department has made of the impact on carbon dioxide release of the expanded use of lower grade ores in the production of nuclear energy. [37116]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has undertaken no studies to examine the impact that lower grade uranium ores would make on carbon dioxide emissions.

However, the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency has informed the Department that there is no imminent use of low-grade ore envisioned. And, the nature of the ores to be mined in the near future is very much similar to that of the past 40 years.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the exclusion zone for building around nuclear power stations is. [37245]

Malcolm Wicks: There is no exclusion zone for building around nuclear power stations. Developments can, and do take place. These are controlled by the local planning authorities, which consult with relevant stakeholders including the station operator and the Health and Safety Executive. A developer must be able to demonstrate to the satisfaction of these bodies that any proposed development does not have a significant adverse effect on the safety case for the site.

Nuclear-related Research

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much his Department has allocated to nuclear-related research in each of the last five years. [36603]

Malcolm Wicks: The expenditure on nuclear energy technology research from 2000 to 2005 is set out in the following tables.

Expenditure by the EPSRC on nuclear fission research

Financial year	*Nuclear fission (£ million)*
2000–01	0.13
2001–02	0.33
2002–03	0.31
2003–04	0.21
2004–05	0.13

Figures for direct Government expenditure (but not including spending by the Research Councils) on nuclear fission

Financial year	*Nuclear fission (£ million)*
2000–01	0
2001–02	2
2002–03	2.1
2003–04	2.1
2004–05	2.2

Note:
Expenditure in support of Meteorological Office emergency response arrangements currently accounts for approximately £2.1 million.

Figures for nuclear fusion R and D

Financial year	*Nuclear fusion (£ million)*
2000–01	17.0
2001–02	14.4
2002–03	14.6
2003–04	15.6
2004–05	19.5

Note:
The UK's indirect contribution to the European fusion programme, via central European Union funding for the EURATOM Framework Programme, is excluded.

Oil/Gas Supplies

Mr. Blizzard: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the likely effect of the proposed changes to the oil tax regime on future *(a)* exploration for and *(b)* production of oil and gas in the UK continental shelf. [37121]

Malcolm Wicks: The changes to the North sea fiscal regime announced by my right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his pre-Budget statement on 5 December were subject to detailed analysis to ensure that the North sea tax regime delivers the Government's objectives of striking the right balance between oil producers and consumers, by promoting investment and ensuring fairness for taxpayers. They are not expected to have a significant effect on exploration for oil and gas on the UK continental shelf. They are also not expected to have a significant effect on production. While the increase in the rate of the supplementary charge may impact a very small number of marginal investments, the Ring Fence Expenditure Supplement should provide an incentive to investment, particularly by new entrants, a small but important sector for the continued vitality of the North sea. The industry can now plan for the future safe in the knowledge that there will be no further increases in North sea taxation for the lifetime of this Parliament and with the offer of discussions with Government to tackle wider structural issues which affect the stability of the North sea oil tax regime.

Peninsular Power Ltd

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what indications have been given to Peninsular Power Limited concerning his Department's likely response to applications from that company for extensions of the crop targets specified in the terms of the offer of a grant under its Bio-energy Capital Grant scheme to the proposed biomass energy generator at Winkleigh in Devon. [33976]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has received no such request from the company. If the Department were to receive such a request, our requirements are amendable, but consideration of any amendment would need to ensure that *(a)* they are in line with the objectives of the scheme *(b)* any revisions are not likely to affect the assessment of the competition under which the grant undertakings were originally awarded.

Phoenix Fund

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has for the Phoenix Fund; what other funding streams he expects will be available for community development funding agencies; and if he will make a statement. [36704]

Alun Michael: The Phoenix Fund was introduced in 1999 as a time-limited programme to help build good practice on business support for under-represented groups and deprived communities. It was not designed to provide long-term core funding for these organisations. Under the 2004 spending review for the period 2006–07 to 2007–08, the DTI is making available a £6 million per annum contribution to regional development agencies, toward their support for enterprise in under-represented groups and deprived communities. The Government have also introduced the Community Investment Tax Relief scheme to enable community development funding agencies to raise finance from the private sector. The first 23 accredited Community Development Finance Institutions are aiming to raise over £80 million this way, which is double the figure that has been committed to the sector through the Phoenix Fund. Furthermore, following the Graham Review of the Small Firms Loan Guarantee scheme, there is now scope for more Community Development Finance Institutions to become Small Firms Loan Guarantee scheme lenders under the new arrangements and it is hoped this can be taken forward from next March.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent discussions he has had with regional development agencies about replacement finance for the Phoenix Fund. [36705]

Alun Michael: The Phoenix Fund was only ever intended to be a time limited, pump priming fund and was, exceptionally, extended to 2006.

Under the 2004 Spending Review for the period 2006–07 to 2007–08, DTI is making available a £6 million per annum contribution to regional development agencies (RDAs), toward their support for enterprise in under-represented groups and deprived communities. As part of our ongoing engagement with regional development agencies (RDAs), the Secretary of State and I met RDA representatives in November when we discussed the future promotion of enterprise in the regions and the RDAs' contribution towards this.

Power Supplies

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with energy providers on their ability to protect vulnerable individuals in the event of a breakdown in power delivery; and if he will publish the *(a)* protocol for identifying such individuals and *(b)* guidance on support to be provided to them. [35812]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 8 December 2005]:* While gas supplies will be tighter this winter than in previous years, National Grid report that under all credible scenarios gas and electricity supply can be maintained to domestic customers, small businesses and other organisations. The regulation of gas and electricity supply, including arrangements in respect of vulnerable customers, is the responsibility of the Office of Gas and Electricity Markets (Ofgem). Ofgem requires gas and electricity suppliers, under section 37 of their licences, to provide services for persons who are of pensionable age, disabled or chronically sick. These obligations include the maintenance of a Priority Service Register, and the provision of special services to meet the access, communication and safety needs of eligible customers. Relevant information about customers on the register is passed to gas and electricity distribution companies to enable them to comply with their obligations in the event of certain categories of supply failure.

Renewable Energy

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what plans he has to encourage smaller, non-excluded energy production schemes being set up to take advantage of the Renewable Energy Certificates. [35266]

Malcolm Wicks: I assume the hon. Member is referring to Renewable Obligation Certificates (ROCs).

Many microgenerators already benefit from the Renewables Obligation (RO). However, feedback from microgenerators, as part of the current Review of the RO, suggested that the some of the administrative requirements might act as a barrier to accessing the benefits of the RO. One potential barrier is that the RO order defines the obligation in terms of the supply of electricity to customers in Great Britain. As a result there is a requirement that even generators that consume their own electricity must first sell it to a supplier before buying it back for their own consumption.

The Climate Change and Sustainable Energy Bill is currently before Parliament, and the Government intend to use this to introduce primary legislation that would allow the removal of this requirement for small generators. The Government would also like to use the same Bill to introduce primary legislation, which would allow agents to act on behalf of small generators through the process of accreditation and claiming ROCs and allowing ROCs to be issued to agents. It will also allow agents to amalgamate the output of small generators.

The Government are also carrying out further work, outside of the current Review of the RO, to address other barriers preventing the widespread take-up of microgeneration technologies. The Government will be publishing a strategy for the promotion of microgeneration next year.

Mr. Yeo: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will develop mechanisms for supporting fuel cell technology and hydrogen energy akin to the Renewables Obligation. [37226]

Malcolm Wicks: There are no plans at the present time to do so. Hydrogen and fuel cell technologies offer significant potential to contribute to the Government's target of 60 per cent. CO_2 reduction by 2050. On the 14 June, the Government announced a funding package worth £15 million for hydrogen and fuel cell demonstration projects.

Social/Community Policies (Businesses)

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps his Department is taking to promote responsible social and community practices by business. [36200]

Malcolm Wicks: DTI leads for the Government on corporate social responsibility, in liaison with other Departments who will all have an interest in this wide ranging agenda.

Our approach to corporate social responsibility is to create the right framework to encourage companies to make socially responsible practice an integral part of their business operations, to the benefit of both society and business.

By working with organisations like Business in the Community we have supported a range of initiatives that benefit local communities. The Government also encourage corporate community involvement through, for example by means of the publication of 'A guide to tax incentives for corporate giving', which was published jointly by HM Treasury and Home Office.

Information about the Government's approach can be found on the Government CSR website www.csr.gov.uk.

Sunday Trading

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the impact that increasing Sunday trading hours in England would have on *(a)* the volume of road traffic, *(b)* the number of shoppers travelling to (i) out-of-town shopping centres, (ii) main supermarkets and (iii) high street stores and *(c)* smaller local convenience stores. [37113]

Mr. Sutcliffe: We are currently considering the case for liberalising Sunday trading hours. The factors referred to by the hon. Member will clearly be relevant to this trade and industry.

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what form of public consultation will take place as part of the review he has announced into Sunday trading laws; and whether he expects the review will take evidence from the public. [37209]

Mr. Sutcliffe: We will be consulting widely and considering the views of all interested parties, including members of the public, before any decisions are taken. Ministerial colleagues and officials are actively discussing with stakeholders and inviting views and evidence on the issue. Officials have also commissioned a cost benefit analysis of the case for further liberalisation from independent consultants, which will be published.

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he will announce the timetable for his proposed review of Sunday trading laws; what the terms of reference will be; who he expects will lead the review; to whom they will report; and if he will make a statement. [37210]

Mr. Sutcliffe: There is no fixed timetable for this work. Departmental officials have been asked to evaluate the case for further liberalisation of Sunday trading hours. To assist in this, we have invited independent consultants to carry out a cost-benefit analysis of the options.

Telecommunications

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 798W, on telecommunications, when the chief executive of Ofcom will respond. [32571]

Alun Michael: The chief executive responded to the hon. Member on 2 December. A copy of the letter has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Wind Farms

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many applications for consent to the development of *(a)* offshore and *(b)* onshore wind farms have been made to his Department under (i) section 36 of the Electricity Act 1989 and (ii) section 3 of the Transport and Works Act 1992 in each of the last five years; and what percentage have been (A) granted and (B) refused. [36972]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is set out in the following table

	Applications		
	Onshore S36	*Offshore S36*	*Offshore TWA*
2001	0	1	0
2002	1	5	4
2003	3		1
2004	2	1	0
2005	2	5	0
Total	8	12	5

The number granted, refused and not yet determined is as follows:

Total	*Granted*		*Refused*	*Not yet determined*	
	Number	*Percentage*		*Number*	*Percentage*
25	12	48	0	13	52

In addition two applications which had been received before 2001 were determined in the period. One was granted and one refused.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment has been made of wind levels in the Bridgwater constituency; and in what locations. [37241]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has made no assessment of the wind levels in his Bridgewater constituency. However, wind levels are of interest to wind farm developers, as it will determine whether any proposed development is viable.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what consultation has been undertaken on off-shore wind turbines in the Bristol channel. [37243]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has undertaken no consultation on offshore wind turbines in the Bristol channel.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what guidelines he has issued on the siting of wind turbines near to nuclear power stations. [37244]

Malcolm Wicks: None.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research he has commissioned on wind levels at Hinkley Point nuclear reactor. [37247]

Malcolm Wicks: None.

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent research he has commissioned into the costs and benefits of wind farms; and if he will make a statement. [37612]

Malcolm Wicks: The Environmental Change Institute, on behalf of the DTI, recently published a report into wind power and the UK wind resource. Some of the report's main findings were:

Wind power availability is greater during winter than at other times of the year, and is on average stronger during the day than overnight;

Wind power delivers around two and a half times as much electricity during periods of high electricity demand as during low demand periods;

Low wind speed conditions affecting 90 per cent. or more of the UK would occur in around one hour every five years during winter; and

The chance of wind turbines shutting down due to high winds speed conditions is very rare—high winds affecting 40 per cent. or more of the UK would occur in around one hour every 10 years.

A copy of the report is available online from www.eci.ox.ac.uk/renewables/ukwind.

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what account he will take of the protection afforded to the North Wales coastline by the Constable Bank in considering the application for consent to develop the Gwynt y Mor wind farm. [37913]

Malcolm Wicks: Offshore wind farm developers are required to produce an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) when submitting an application for consent. The Government will take into account the EIA, and many other considerations, before reaching a decision on whether to grant consent. The Government will also consult statutory advisors such as the Countryside Council for Wales.

A copy of npower renewables non-technical summary of the Gwynt y Mor environmental statement is available from their website. Their website address is http://www.npower-renewables.com/gwyntymor/index.asp

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what account he will take of the cost of key components in considering the application for consent to develop the Gwynt-y-Mor wind farm. [37914]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government do not take into account the cost of the project when considering an application for consent to develop an offshore wind farm. The cost of the Gwynt-y-Mor wind turbine project is a matter for the developer.

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what financial compensation is made available to persons whose property values are adversely affected by the development of wind farms pursuant to the granting of departmental consents. [35171]

Malcolm Wicks: A study by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors in 2004 suggests that wind farms have no lasting impact on UK house prices. It shows that local house prices recover from any initial impact once a wind farm has been operating for two years.

Also evidence from the "Public attitude to wind farms: a survey of local residents in Scotland" conducted by MORI in 2003 suggests that those living nearest to wind farms are their strongest advocates. The results of this survey can be found at: http://www.scotland.gov.uk/library5/environment/pawslr-00.asp

Worker Exploitation

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what role his Department plays in tackling exploitation of workers in developing countries. [36201]

Malcolm Wicks: The UK has played a leading role in ensuring that the international framework to promote international labour rights and to tackle abuses of those rights throughout the world is in place, particularly through its work with the International Labour Organisation (ILO), which is the UN specialised agency responsible for developing, promoting and monitoring labour standards. DWP as lead Department for the ILO play an active role in the ILO Committee on Multinational Enterprises and DTI fully supports the promotion and follow-up of the ILO Declaration of Principles Concerning Multinational Enterprises and Social Policy which seeks to enhance the positive social and labour effects of multinational corporations' operations throughout the world.

We also actively encourage UK-based international companies which operate in other countries, and which are subject to the laws applicable in those countries, to apply high standards of corporate behaviour, including those which protect workers' rights.

For example, DTI promotes the OECD Guidelines for Multinational Enterprises which recommend standards of responsible business conduct for businesses operating in or from the 39 adhering countries and have written to the FTSE 100 companies to raise awareness of these expectations. We have also set out our approach to encouraging environmentally and socially responsible practice internationally in our International Strategic Framework on Corporate Social Responsibility published in March.

HEALTH

Abattoirs

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what prosecutions of abattoirs for breaches of legislation on standards of hygiene have *(a)* taken place and *(b)* succeeded in each year since 1985 in which proceedings are complete. [34597]

Caroline Flint: Figures on prosecutions for breaches of legislation on standards of hygiene are only available for the period since the establishment of the Meat Hygiene Service in 1995. Prior to that date, enforcement responsibility lay with individual local authorities and no central record of prosecutions is available.

The table provides details of prosecutions pursued in relation to breaches of fresh meat and poultry meat hygiene regulations and legislation in respect of removal of specified risk material at licensed meat plants (abattoirs, cutting plants and cold stores).

	Prosecutions pursued	*Successful cases*
1996–97	7	6
1997–98	21	20
1998–99	28	27
1999–2000	20	18
2000–01	6	6
2001–02	12	12
2002–03	6	5
2003–04	22	22
2004–05	18	14
2005–06	13	13

Acute Trust Hospitals

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the acute trust hospitals with major accident and emergency departments that do not also have paediatric services on the same site. [31888]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Age-related Macular Degeneration

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of cases of age-related macular degeneration caused by smoking in each year since 1997–98. [33268]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The data requested is not routinely collected. A paper from the British Journal of Ophthalmology in May 2005 estimated that approximately 28,000 cases of age-related macular degeneration in people aged 75 years and above in the United Kingdom may be attributable to smoking.

Agriculture and Fisheries Council

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the UK voted at the EU's Agriculture and Fisheries Council meeting in October on the application to accept genetically modified maize MON863. [35107]

Caroline Flint: A vote on a proposal for the authorisation of food ingredients derived from genetically modified MON863 maize was taken at the European Union Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 24–25 October. The United Kingdom voted in favour of this proposal, having been satisfied that the necessary criteria of safety, consumer information, and nutritional quality had been met.

Alcohol-related Illness

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 11 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 710W, on alcohol-related illness, what the equivalent figures for 2004–05 were. [35423]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is shown in the table.

Counts of finished admission episodes for selected alcohol[1] related diseases by strategic HA of residence and age grouping

Strategic health authority of Residence		*Aged under 18*	*Aged 18 and above*	*Age not known*
Q01	Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire SHA	161	1,649	3
Q02	Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire SHA	123	829	—
Q03	Essex SHA	72	1,079	—
Q04	North West London SHA	80	1,473	5
Q05	North Central London SHA	68	1,068	3
Q06	North East London SHA	53	1,246	2
Q07	South East London SHA	88	1,835	2
Q08	South West London SHA	121	1,284	3
Q09	Northumberland, Tyne and Wear SHA	150	1,738	2
Q10	County Durham and Tees Valley SHA	164	1,304	—
Q11	North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire SHA	229	1,307	—
Q12	West Yorkshire SHA	165	1,438	—
Q13	Cumbria and Lancashire SHA	291	2,249	1
Q14	Greater Manchester SHA	398	2,974	1
Q15	Cheshire and Merseyside SHA	339	3,850	—
Q16	Thames Valley SHA	143	1,246	—
Q17	Hampshire and Isle of Wight SHA	193	1,587	1
Q18	Kent and Medway SHA	164	963	—
Q19	Surrey and Sussex SHA	265	1,894	—
Q20	Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire SHA	154	1,553	2
Q21	South West Peninsula SHA	181	1,334	5
Q22	Dorset and Somerset SHA	94	803	—
Q23	South Yorkshire SHA	128	1,227	—
Q24	Trent SHA	230	2,298	—
Q25	Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland SHA	84	1,163	—
Q26	Shropshire and Staffordshire SHA	170	1,330	—
Q27	Birmingham and the Black Country SHA	241	2,279	—
Q28	West Midlands South SHA	162	1,367	—
Q99	Wales	20	137	—

Counts of finished admission episodes for selected alcohol[1] related diseases by strategic HA of residence and age grouping

Strategic health authority of Residence		Aged under 18	Aged 18 and above	Age not known
S	Scotland	3	48	—
U	England—Not otherwise specified	28	1,017	31
W	Wales	—	1	—
X	Foreign (incl. Isle of Man and Channel Islands)	14	97	1
Y	Unknown	33	614	33
Z	Northern Ireland	—	18	—
TOTAL		4,809	46,299	95

[1] Alcohol related diseases defined as following ICD-10 codes recorded in primary diagnosis
F10—Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol
K70—Alcoholic liver disease
T51—Toxic effect of alcohol
NHS Hospitals, England 2004–05
Notes:
A finished admission episode is the first period of in-patient care under one consultant within one healthcare provider. Please note that admissions do not represent the number of in-patients, as a person may have more than one admission within the year.
The primary diagnosis is the first of up to 14 (seven prior to 2002–03) diagnosis fields in the Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) data set and provides the main reason why the patient was in hospital.
Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data (i.e. the data are ungrossed).
Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reasons alcohol-related referrals to the community mental health service in the Alnwick and Berwick areas have been suspended; and if she will make a statement. [24452]

Mr. Byrne: This is a matter for the Newcastle, North Tyneside and Northumberland Mental Health National Health Service Trust.

Ambulance Services

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many communication systems are in operation in the Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire ambulance services; which of them are interoperable with those of the police services; how they would be unified in the event that the ambulance services were merged; and what the unification would cost. [35711]

Caroline Flint: I am informed by Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire strategic health authority that there are three communication systems in operation in the Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire ambulance services. The system in Wiltshire Ambulance National Health Service Trust is interoperable with those of the police services.

It has not yet been agreed how these systems would be unified or what the cost of unification would be as the planned structure for the new ambulance trust has not yet been finalised.

Avian Influenza

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the process by which an emergency mass vaccination for influenza would take place. [21776]

Ms Rosie Winterton: It is important to be clear about the differences between seasonal 'flu, avian 'flu and pandemic 'flu. Avian influenza is a disease which mainly affects birds. Seasonal 'flu refers to the virus that circulates in the human population and causes widespread illness each winter. Pandemic 'flu will only occur after an avian virus has mutated into a novel strain which can spread easily between humans, and to which they do not have immunity.

The Department is currently developing plans for mass vaccination for pandemic influenza. Plans will depend on a number of factors, such as the rate at which a vaccine is supplied to the United Kingdom. In October 2005, the Department announced that it is inviting manufacturers to tender for a contract to supply pandemic influenza vaccine once the pandemic strain is known. The proposal to purchase in advance the capacity needed to make a pandemic influenza vaccine will make sure that an effective vaccine is available for use in the UK as quickly as possible after an influenza starts. The UK will need approximately 120 million doses to be available as soon as possible.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance is being prepared on prevention of the spread of avian influenza to humans; and what the cost has been to date. [19245]

Ms Rosie Winterton: It is important to be clear about the differences between seasonal 'flu, avian 'flu and pandemic 'flu. Avian influenza is a disease which mainly affects birds. Seasonal flu refers to the virus that circulates in the human population and causes widespread illness each winter. Pandemic 'flu will only occur after an avian virus has mutated into a novel strain which can easily spread between humans, and to which they do not have immunity.

Avian influenza is a disease of birds and very few humans have been affected. HN1 is the strain currently circulating in poultry and is known as avian (bird) 'flu. Although there is a risk that bird 'flu may spread to the United Kingdom, the risk to humans remains low. The Department for Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) has produced a contingency plan for dealing with Avian influenza and this is available on their website at: www.defra.gov.uk/animalh/diseases/notifiable/disease/avianinfluenza-contplan.htm

A joint Government Department and industry working group on worker protection has produced guidance for poultry workers on protection against the risk of Avian influenza. This was published on Defra's website on 31 October and will be made available to the poultry industry through their poultry organisations. All involved in developing the guidance have borne their own costs. Defra will be paying for the production of leaflets, posters, etc.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures she has put in place for enhanced medical surveillance of human population cohorts assessed as most at risk from co-infection by the H5N1 and a human host adapted influenza virus. [24011]

Ms Rosie Winterton: It is important to be clear about the differences between seasonal 'flu, avian 'flu and pandemic flu. Avian influenza refers to the virus that circulates in the human population and cause

widespread illness each winter. Pandemic 'flu will only occur after an avian virus has mutated into a novel strain which can spread easily between humans, and to which they do not have immunity.

The cohort at most risk from co-infection by the H5N1 and a human influenza virus is that group of people who are exposed to wild birds or poultry in which avian influenza is suspected or confirmed. Among the measures which are recommended around such incidents, which will be overseen by the Health Protection Agency, is the monitoring of the health of all such people after assessment of their risk of exposure.

Our present strategy is risk based and there is no evidence that there is at present an elevation of risk to people who are exposed to wild birds or poultry in the United Kingdom.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what priority she gives to workers in the energy industry in her contingency plans to protect key workers in the event of an outbreak of avian influenza. [20952]

Ms Rosie Winterton: It is important to be clear about the differences between seasonal 'flu, avian 'flu and pandemic 'flu. Avian influenza is a disease which mainly affects birds. Seasonal 'flu refers to the virus that circulates in the human population and causes widespread illness each winter. Pandemic 'flu will only occur after an avian virus has mutated into a novel strain which can spread easily between humans, and to which they do not have immunity.

The Government are building a stockpile of antiviral drugs to treat people who become ill with pandemic 'flu rather than for prophylaxis. Since the stockpile of Tamiflu is intended to be large enough to cover all of those likely to become ill, the issue of prioritisation between competing claims for antiviral drugs ought not to arise. However, if a pandemic strikes before the stockpile is complete or the clinical attack rate is higher than expected, antivirals will need to be prioritised, initially health care workers, and to those who fall into one of the "clinical at risk" groups, as defined by seasonal 'flu. Once a vaccine for the pandemic 'flu strain has been developed, health care workers and other essential service key workers may need to be vaccinated first, as it will be important to maintain health and other essential services.

Final decisions will be made based on emerging information about the pandemic virus. However, given it is unlikely that a vaccine will be available for the first wave of a pandemic, it is important that businesses consider how they would maintain services.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to make use of *(a)* schools, *(b)* village halls and *(c)* other public buildings as temporary health care facilities in the event of an influenza pandemic; and if she will make a statement. [22125]

Ms Rosie Winterton: These are issues for local planners. "The UK Influenza Pandemic Contingency Plan" contains estimates of potential impact on primary and secondary care which local planners can use to ensure that their contingency plans are appropriate for a potential influenza pandemic. We have also provided operational guidance to the national health service on preparing for an influenza pandemic to help organisations formulate their plans.

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many syringes and needles she estimates will be necessary to deal with a pandemic influenza threat; what timetable has been put in place for their procurement; and if she will make a statement. [33803]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Arrangements for accessing supplies of a pandemic vaccine are still the subject of contractual discussion with manufacturers. Those arrangements will determine the requirement for needles and syringes and decisions on procurement are dependent on the outcome of those discussions.

Blood/Bone Marrow Donors

Kerry McCarthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps are being taken to encourage people from black and minority ethnic communities to become *(a)* blood donors and *(b)* bone marrow donors. [35312]

Caroline Flint: NHS Blood and Transplant (NHSBT) is responsible for managing blood supplies in England and North Wales and for managing the British Bone Marrow Register (BBMR). It does this through its operating division—the National Blood Service (NBS). The NBS recruits blood donors from the general public and potential bone marrow donors from the active blood donor populations.

In 2004, the NBS commissioned the Central Office of Information to lead on a long-term strategy to attract more people from ethnic communities to give blood and join the BBMR. A campaign called "OneBlood" is addressing existing barriers by raising awareness of the importance and relevance of blood donation, encouraging individual and community ownership of the issue, tackling religious objections and myths and encouraging blood donation.

The NBS has also developed an advertising campaign, "Are you my Type?' which features black and minority ethnic celebrities.

Borellia

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment her Department has made of the use of prolonged intravenous ceftriaxone therapy in the treatment of Borellia infection. [34960]

Caroline Flint: The British National Formulary recommends that ceftriaxone may be used intravenously for Lyme disease associated with moderate to severe cardiac or neurological abnormalities, late Lyme disease and Lyme arthritis, with a duration of treatment of generally two to four weeks. For Lyme arthritis a suitable oral follow on antibacterial agent is needed. Early Lyme disease can be treated with doxycycline, or amoxicillin if doxycycline is contra-indicated.

Breast Cancer

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of non-urgent referrals by general practitioners each year for investigations into possible breast cancer which are later identified as having breast cancer. [27559]

Ms Rosie Winterton: All women with suspected breast cancer should be referred urgently by their general practitioner under the two week out-patient waiting time standard. From the data centrally collected, we cannot identify those women who were routinely referred with other breast conditions but who were subsequently diagnosed with breast cancer. The number of patients who were treated for breast cancer who were referred under the two week wait and those who were referred through other routes is shown in the table.

	Number of patients treated for breast cancer who were urgently referred under the two week wait	*Number of patients treated for breast cancer who were referred through other routes*[1]	*Percentage of patients treated for breast cancer who were referred through other routes*[1]
2002–03	11,705	16,075	42.13
2003–04	15,163	16,090	48.52
2004–05	14,575	16,244	52.70

[1] Includes patients referred routinely with other breast conditions and those patients referred through the breast screening service.

The Cancer Plan target of 31 days from diagnosis with cancer to first treatment, to be achieved from December 2005, picks up those patients who are referred with other conditions but who are subsequently diagnosed with cancer to ensure they receive prompt treatment.

Cancelled Operations

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many operations were cancelled by Lancashire hospital trust *(a)* for medical reasons and *(b)* because of lack of beds at (i) Royal Preston hospital and (ii) Queen's Park hospital in each month between January 2004 and September 2005. [34523]

Mr. Byrne: The information is not available in the format requested. However, information relating to the Lancashire Teaching Hospitals National Health Service Foundation Trust and the East Lancashire Hospitals NHS trust is available on a quarterly basis which is shown in the following table.

Lancashire teaching hospitals NHS trust—cancelled operations

Year/ quarter		*Number of last minute cancelled operations*
2003–04		
Q4	January to March	145
2004–05		
Q1	April to June	102
Q2	July to September	114
Q3	October to December	059
Q4	January March	131
2005–06		
Q1	April to June	123
Q2	July to September	84

East Lancashire hospitals NHS trust—cancelled operations

Year/ quarter		*Number of last minute cancelled operations*
2003–04		
Q4	January to March	166
2004–05		
Q1	April to June	176
Q2	July to September	156
Q3	October to December	127
Q4	January to March	130
2005–06		
Q1	April to June	112
Q2	July to September	82

Notes:

1. Data are collected each quarter on an NHS trust basis only.
2. A last minute cancellation is one that occurs on the day the patient was due to arrive, after they have arrived in hospital, or on the day of their operation. For example, if the patient is to be admitted to hospital on a Monday for an operation scheduled for the following day (Tuesday). If the hospital cancels the operation for non-clinical reasons on the Monday then this would count as a last minute cancellation. This includes patients who have not actually arrived in hospital, but who have been telephoned at home prior to their arrival.
3. Some common non-clinical reasons for cancellations by the hospital include: ward beds unavailable; surgeon unavailable; other emergency patient needing theatre; theatre list over-run; equipment failure; administrative error; anaesthetist unavailable; theatre staff unavailable; and critical care bed unavailable.

Source:
OMCO

Cancer

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department has taken to increase awareness of *(a)* breast and *(b)* prostate cancer among ethnic minority communities. [34930]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Together with Cancer Research UK, the Department produces the "Be Breast Aware" leaflet, which advises women on how to be breast aware and what signs to watch for.

The leaflet is widely available from primary care surgeries and breast screening units and is available in Bengali, Chinese, Gurjarati, Polish, Punjabi, Urdu and Vietnamese.

Currently we are providing £58,710 to fund Breast Cancer Care's "Here for you, Near to you" project, which aims to provide breast cancer information and awareness for ethnic minority groups.

We have previously provided Breakthrough Breast Cancer with £40,000 to fund their "To develop the voice of breast cancer patients" project. This project was aimed at difficult to reach groups, ethnic minorities and socially disadvantaged.

Thanks to the work of the Prostate Cancer Advisory Group (PCAG) we now have, for the first time, a definitive set of key messages for the general public about the prostate, including prostate cancer. 20 voluntary, patient and professional groups have signed up to the key messages.

A pilot communications programme using the key messages, jointly funded by the Department and signatories to the Prostate Cancer Charter for Action, is expected to start in February 2006.

We are currently providing £105,000 to the Prostate Cancer Charity to improve awareness of the risks and symptoms of prostate cancer in African and Afro-Caribbean men in Britain. We have previously provided the Prostate Cancer Charity with £135,000 to fund a project to increase awareness of prostate cancer in all men.

Care Homes

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many residential care and nursing *(a)* homes and *(b)* places she estimates there will be in (i) 2005, (ii) 2006 and (iii) 2007. [34599]

Mr. Byrne: The Government believes that care homes are only one of a range of options that should be available to support people with long-term care needs.

The Department has made no formal estimate of the number of care home places available between 2005 and 2007. However, according to the latest United Kingdom market survey, published in September 2005 by the independent healthcare analysts Laing and Buisson, the level of spare capacity in the care home sector has remained the same over the last three years, at 10,000 to 15,000 places, despite the fall in the number of care home places.

Chase Farm Hospital

Mr. Burrowes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the future provision of accident and emergency services at Chase Farm hospital. [30051]

Jane Kennedy: Responsibility for the provision of local services rests with local national health service organisations working in conjunction with local stakeholders and their strategic health authorities. I understand that the local disposition of services between Barnet hospital, which is a new private funded initiative funded hospital, and Chase Farm hospital is proposed to be the subject of an engagement exercise with local people. There is still much further work to be done taking into account the results of engagement before proposals reach the stage of formal consultation which is expected in the new year.

A strategic outline case has already been approved for an £80 million development on the Chase Farm site which would replace many of the old Victorian buildings. A revised outline business case is expected by the North Central London strategic health authority towards the end of November for the development which will need to be seen in the context of the future services on the site. It offers a good opportunity to replace unacceptable buildings and to demonstrate a commitment for appropriate services on the Chase Farm hospital site well into the future.

Choose and Book Programme

Glenda Jackson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made of the likely effects of the Choose and Book programme not being fully operational on the predicted date on primary care trusts' ability to meet their targets; [32112]

(2) when the Choose and Book programme will become fully operational. [32123]

Mr. Byrne: Meeting the public service agreement targets on booking and choice is not dependent on the choose and book service, as manual systems are available. Implementation and utilisation of the choose and book service requires complex changes to local information technology systems and management and clinical staff practices, which presents considerable challenges. National roll-out of choose and book is progressing, supported by the Department and NHS Connecting for Health. Utilisation is now increasing rapidly and it is anticipated that this will continue through 2006.

Citygate Public Affairs Ltd.

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what meetings her Department has held with Citygate Public Affairs Ltd. since July. [36756]

Jane Kennedy: The Department does not maintain a central list of such contacts. Ministers and civil servants, including special advisers meet many people as part of the process of policy development and business delivery. All such contacts are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Ministerial Code, Civil Service Code, Code of Conduct for Special Advisers and Guidance for civil servants on contacts with lobbyists and people outside Government.

Coeliac Disease

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what research she has evaluated on the aetiology of coeliac disease and the effects on it of the consumption of genetically modified foodstuffs; [35072]

(2) what the incidence of coeliac disease was in each year from 1994 in *(a)* England, *(b)* Leeds and *(c)* Morley and Rothwell constituency. [35073]

Mr. Byrne: It is known that coeliac disease is an inherited genetic disease caused by an intolerance to gluten, a protein found in foodstuffs containing wheat, barley and rye. We have not evaluated any research on the effects of consumption of genetically modified foodstuffs.

Data on the incidence of coeliac disease is not collected, although Coeliac UK estimates that the condition affects one per cent. of the United Kingdom population.

Compensation Claims

Mr. David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the budget of health trusts in England is to meet the cost of compensation claims in 2005. [35039]

Jane Kennedy: This information requested is not held centrally.

Continuing Care/Delayed Discharges

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how compliance with the directions on continuing care and delayed discharge issued on 27 February 2004 is monitored. [34823]

Mr. Byrne: It is the responsibility of the strategic health authorities and national health service trusts to ensure that they adhere to their legal obligations.

Correspondence

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will answer the letters from the hon. Member for Colchester of 3 February 2005 and 15 September 2005. [35079]

Ms Rosie Winterton: My noble Friend Lord Warner replied to the hon. Member's letter of 3 February 2005 on 16 February, and a copy of the reply has been sent to him.

A careful search has shown no trace of his letter of 15 September 2005 being received in the Department. However, if the hon. Member would like to send a copy of this letter, I will ensure that a reply is sent to him without delay.

Cystic Fibrosis

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what priority will be attached to drugs for cystic fibrosis sufferers during the review of NHS commissioning arrangements for specialised conditions. [30671]

Mr. Byrne: The review into specialised services commissioning arrangements has been set up to investigate current commissioning arrangements for specialised services in general and make proposals for improvements; it has been asked to report in the spring. The review will not be looking at individual services, like cystic fibrosis.

Darent Valley Hospital

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* average and *(b)* longest waiting time for out-patient appointments at Darent Valley Hospital. [34578]

Caroline Flint: Data about out-patient waiting times is collected at national health service trust level and by timeband. The median time waited for an outpatient appointment at Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust at September 2005 was 7.4 weeks, with no patients waiting longer than 17 weeks.

Dentistry

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* dental nurses, *(b)* dental hygienists and *(c)* dental therapists there have been in the NHS in each year since 1997. [27544]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The majority of dental care professionals are employed by independent general dental practitioners. We do not hold data centrally on the numbers of these professionals, but we estimate that there are currently some 30,000 dental nurses, 3,600 dental hygienists and 600 dental therapists working in England. The number of dental therapists is likely to increase very significantly over the next few years, following Government funding for a fourfold increase in the number of training places, from 50 to 200 annually, in 2003 to support the development of team working in dentistry.

The table contains information on dental therapists directly employed in the hospital and community health services, that is excluding therapists employed by independent general dental practitioners.

NHS hospital and community health services—qualified dental therapists in England as at 30 September

	Headcount
1997	126
1998	119
1999	122
2000	125
2001	148
2002	203
2003	164
2004	175

Source:
Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census

Ms Gisela Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what measures she plans to put in place to ensure the creation of new dental schools do not adversely affect existing dental schools; [27581]

(2) what account she will take, when considering allocation of additional undergraduate dental places, of *(a)* the availability of significant core teaching facilities, *(b)* outreach facilities and *(c)* integration into Local Improvement Finance Trust schemes; [27582]

(3) whether existing dental schools will be able to make their case for additional undergraduate dental places on the same basis as applications for new dental schools when bids for additional places are considered. [27583]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Government are funding 170 additional training places for dental students. A joint implementation group (JIG) made up of representatives of the higher education funding council for England (HEFCE), the Department and the national health service is managing this expansion of dental training. In April the JIG invited bids for the training places from all higher education institutions in England indicating that it would apply the following criteria to their evaluation: geographical context; innovation; quality; value for money and widening participation. Bids have been received from both universities with existing dental schools and those currently without dental schools. The JIG will be making recommendations to the HEFCE Board for consideration at its meeting on 26 January 2006.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the impact of schedule 3, part 1, paragraph 3, of the new draft dental contract on registrations, with particular reference to the renewal of an age bar; and if she will make a statement. [28070]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The purpose of schedule 3, part 1, paragraph 3, is to prohibit, unless there are reasonable grounds, dentists refusing to provide services on the

grounds of age. The final dental contracts regulations, laid before Parliament on 9 December, amended the draft regulations in response to issues raised during consultation in the summer. The final regulations clarify that, subject to the agreement of the local primary care trust, a practice may enter into a contract to provide services to specific categories of patients such as children.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will *(a)* bring forward proposals to define in statute the dental services that a primary care trust has to commission and *(b)* seek to ensure that the relevant legislation sets targets for primary care trusts on dentistry. [28509]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The new arrangements for local commissioning mean a primary care trust (PCT) must commission either mandatory services for a new general dental services (GDS) contract, and either mandatory and advanced services or advanced services only in a personal dental services contract (PDS). Mandatory services are defined at regulation 14 (4) of the National Health Service (General Dental Services Contracts) Regulations 2005.

The regulations governing GDS contracts and PDS agreements do not set targets for PCTs on dentistry. In line with the approach set out in "National Standards Local Action" it is for PCTs to set standards or targets that are appropriate to their local circumstances.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the likely impact of the new General Dental Services contract on the number of registrations with an NHS dentist; and whether dentists will be provided with incentives to ensure patients are registered. [28687]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The evidence from personal dental service pilots is that moving away from a fee-per-item system supports dentists in carrying out simpler courses of treatment, such as fillings, where there are fewer individual items within each course. This frees up significant time that can be used in part to see a greater range of patients. The new general dental service (GDS) contract will allow all dentists to work in this way. The new type of GDS contract will also require dentists to have regard to the new National Institute of Health and Clinical Excellence guidelines on patient recall intervals. These guidelines are likely to mean many patients are recalled by their dentist less often than the current six monthly intervals. The dental reforms will also give primary care trusts (PCTs) the financial ability to commission new NHS dental services more readily if a dentist in their area chooses to deregister NHS patients.

Dentists will no longer receive payment based on the number of patients registered but in return for a guaranteed annual contract value they will be expected to provide an agreed level of service over the course of a year. Taken in conjunction with the application of the NICE guidelines this will support improvement in patient access.

It is not possible to predict with complete accuracy the overall impact that these measures will have but we are confident that they will together support significant improvement in patient access.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her estimate is of the number of general and personal dental service dentists per head of population in *(a)* each strategic health authority area and *(b)* England. [31909]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the following table.

Number of general dental services (GDS) and personal dental services (PDS) dentists per 10,000 head of population in England by strategic health authority (SHA) area as at 30 September 2005

	Number of dentists	*Dentist per population per 10,000*
England	20,890	4.17
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire	924	4.13
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire	873	5.40
Essex	662	4.05
North West London	1,145	6.24
North Central London	766	6.24
North East London	720	4.70
South East London	741	4.89
South West London	756	5.72
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear	582	4.17
County Durham and Tees Valley	421	3.67
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire	659	3.99
West Yorkshire	836	3.97
Cumbria and Lancashire	791	4.10
Greater Manchester	1,059	4.17
Cheshire and Merseyside	1,063	4.51
Thames Valley	1,132	5.34
Hampshire and Isle of Wight	802	4.45
Kent and Medway	665	4.13
Surrey and Sussex	1,427	5.54
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire	1,039	4.71
South West Peninsula	762	4.71
Dorset and Somerset	560	4.62
South Yorkshire	514	4.02
Trent	1,019	3.79
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland	579	3.64
Shropshire and Staffordshire	602	4.01
Birmingham and the Black Country	930	4.09
West Midlands South	707	4.53

Notes:

1. Data includes all notifications, received by the Dental Practice Board, up to 2 November 2005 for England and 19 October 2005 for SHA data. Figures for the numbers of dentists at specified dates may vary depending upon the notification period, e.g. data with a later notification period will include more recent notifications of dentists joining or leaving the GDS or PDS.

2. A dentist may have a contract in more than one SHA. Therefore, data at this level may include duplication. England data excludes duplication.

3. The dentists include principals, assistants and trainees. Prison contracts are excluded from the data.

4. The postcode of the dental practice was used to allocate dentists to specific geographic areas. SHA areas have been defined using the Office for National Statistics all fields postcode directory.

5. The number of dentists per 10,000 people has been calculated using 2004 population data, as this is the most up to date available.

Source:

NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the written ministerial statement of 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 17WS, on national health service dentistry, if she will break down the 859 training places for 2005 by dental schools; and how many of these places have been taken up by overseas students. [31965]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* A breakdown of the 859 training places is shown in the table. All of the 859 students were from the United Kingdom or other countries in the European Union and are in addition to any students the schools admitted from other overseas countries.

Training places, dentistry

Dental school	*Admissions 2005*
Queen Mary's London	101
Birmingham	90
Bristol	84
Guy's Kings St. Thomas'	166
Leeds	84
Liverpool	89
Newcastle upon Tyne	98
Manchester	63
Sheffield	84
Total	859

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of the population in the area served by Burntwood, Lichfield and Tamworth primary care trust was registered with an NHS dentist in each year since 1997. [32036]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The percentage of the population who were registered with an national health service dentist in Burntwood, Lichfield and Tamworth primary care trust as at 30 September each year is as follows:

	Percentage of population
1997	56
1998	51
1999	50
2000	49
2001	49
2002	49
2003	48
2004	48
2005	52

Notes:
1. Registration rates (i.e. the percentage of the population registered with a dentist) have been estimated by including registrations in the area of the dentist according to the postcode of the dental surgery (not the patient's address). So the registration rates for some areas may be affected by some patients receiving dental treatment in a different area from the one in which they live.
2. The registration rates use population estimates for the primary care trust areas for the nearest year for which data are available. Figures for 1997 to 2000 have been calculated from 2001 population data. Figures for 2004 and 2004 have been calculated from 2003 population data.
3. The changes in registration period from two years to 15 months under the General Dental Services from 1 September affected the registration numbers from December 1997 onwards, so the 1997 figures are not comparable with later figures. Data for 2004 and 2005 include some personal dental service proxy registrations, that is counts of patients seen in the past 15 months.
Source:
Health and Social Care Information Centre

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will commence the review of community dental services. [32487]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The review of community dental services commenced in early 2004 and the resulting consultation document, "Creating the Future" was published in December 2004. The Department has since invited NHS Employers, the organisation representing national health service employing organisations, to negotiate new pay, terms and conditions for salaried primary care dentists.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the three-year dental pay deal will be extended beyond April 2006. [32488]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The current pay deal for salaried primary dental care services ends in April 2006. The doctors and dentists pay review body will make recommendations for levels of pay in 2006–07. We have also asked NHS Employers to take forward negotiations on a new pay system for salaried primary care dentists.

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many new dentists have been recruited in the area covered by the Rochdale primary care trust in each year since 1997. [32769]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The number of dentists that have joined general dental services (GDS) or personal dental services (PDS) in Rochdale primary care trust as at 30 September each year since 1997 is shown in the table.

	Number
1997	1
1998	5
1999	1
2000	2
2001	9
2002	3
2003	1
2004	0
2005	5

Note:
The number given is for complete new entrant dentists. This means the dentist had an open GDS or PDS contract in September of the specified year but no GDS or PDS contract in September of the previous year.
Source:
Dental Practice Board

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what additional resources she is making available in the Rochdale primary care trust area to increase NHS dental registration. [32771]

Ms Rosie Winterton: An additional £250 million has been invested in national health service dentistry over the last two years to bring new dentists into the NHS and to address access in areas where historically there have been the biggest problems seeing an NHS dentist. We are implementing reforms in April 2006, which will enable primary care trusts (PCTs), including Rochdale PCT, to build further on this. They will be able to commission services from local dentists in ways that best meet the needs of their local population.

The Department will issue PCT dental budgets for next year shortly.

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists have been recruited to work in Lincolnshire in each year since 2000. [33945]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The number of dentists who have joined the general dental services (GDS) or personal dental services (PDS) in the county of Lincolnshire as at 30 September each year is shown in the table.

NHS dentists recruited to work in Lincolnshire 2000–05

	Complete new entrant
2005	25
2004	13
2003	14
2002	22
2001	17
2000	19

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists received gross earnings from the NHS of *(a)* over £500,000, *(b)* over £250,000, *(c)* over £100,000 and *(d)* over £50,000 in each year since 1997; and what her most recent estimate is of the average net earnings a dentist receives from the NHS. [25269]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The requested information on gross earnings is shown in the table. Gross fees cover both the dentist's net income and practice expenses.

The estimated average general dental service (GDS) net income for a dentist with a reasonable commitment to the GDS in 2004–05, excluding low earners, namely those dentists with GDS earnings less than £59,100 in 2004–05 was £70,000. Gross fees for principal dentists also include payment for work done by their assistant dentists.

These estimates wholly exclude income from non-GDS work.

Number of General Dental Service principals in England by gross GDS fee income

Number of GDS principals in England with earnings greater than or equal to	*1996–97*	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*
£50,000	9,438	9,321	9,290	9,318
£100,000	4,741	4,816	5,265	5,346
£250,000	167	189	274	335
£500,000	10	14	20	29
Total Dental Rates Study Group (DRSG) population in England	13,505	13,587	13,592	13,733

Number of GDS principals in England with earnings greater than or equal to	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*[1]
£50,000	9,327	9,257	9,205	9,134	7,580
£100,000	5,653	5,837	5,972	6,133	4,843
£250,000	412	472	558	674	638
£500,000	42	58	54	91	89
Total Dental Rates Study Group (DRSG) population in England	13,750	13,687	13,639	13,667	12,114

Notes:
1. During 2004–05, the proportion of dentists working in personal dental service (PDS) increased from 7 per cent. to 23 per cent. This will lead to a significant break in the general dental service earnings series. Comparable PDS earnings data are not held centrally.
2. Payments data relate to fees for treatments and patients capitation and exclude additional elements such as seniority and commitment payments.
3. This table uses gross GDS fee income figures for dental rates study group (DRSG).
Source:
Dental Practice Board payments data

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists have *(a)* joined and *(b)* withdrawn from NHS practice in each of the last five years. [34168]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The table shows the number of dentists who have joined and left the general dental services (GDS) or personal dental service (PDS) in England as at 30 September each year.

General dental services (GDS) and personal dental services (PDS), number of dentists who have joined and left the GDS or PDS in England as at 30 September each year

	Complete new entrant	*Complete leaver*
2005	2,283	1,097
2004	1,632	1,224
2003	1,474	1,236
2002	1,523	1,352
2001	1,747	1,207

Notes:
1. Complete new entrant means the dentist had an open GDS or PDS contract in September of the specified year but no GDS or PDS contract in September of the previous year.
2. Complete leaver means the dentist had an open GDS or PDS contract in September of the previous year but no GDS or PDS contract in September of the specified year.
Source:
Dental Practice Board

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 21 July 2005 to the hon. Member for Northavon (Steve Webb), *Official Report*, column 2155W, on dentistry, what plans her Department has to monitor clinical and distance standards for access to NHS dentistry in line with the undertaking given by the Prime Minister in September 1999 in relation to access to a local NHS dentist. [24105]

Ms Rosie Winterton: It is for primary care trusts (PCTs) locally to set standards for access and monitor local performance.

PCTs decide distance standards for each type of call (routine, emergency and urgent) and for type of area (urban or rural). The majority of PCTs in urban and rural areas typically have standards for routine calls of 10 miles and urgent calls at 15 miles. In October 2004, around 90 per cent. of callers to National Health Service Direct were being advised of available NHS dental services within PCTs' locally agreed distance standards.

Mr. Kenneth Clarke: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of the population in the area served by Rushcliffe primary care trust was registered with an NHS dentist in each year since 1997. [30873]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the table.

The percentage of the population who were registered with a national health service dentist in Rushcliffe primary care trust (PCT) area as at 30 September each year

	Population (percentage)
1997	56
1998	53
1999	53
2000	54
2001	53
2002	52
2003	49
2004	45
2005	47

Notes:

1. Registration rates, that is the percentage of the population registered with a dentist, have been estimated by including registrations in the area of the dentist according to the postcode of the dental surgery, not the patient's address. So the registration rates for some areas may be affected by some patients receiving dental treatment in a different area from the one in which they live.
2. The registration rates use population estimates for the PCT areas for the nearest year for which data is available. Figures for 1997–2000 have been calculated from 2001 population data. Figures for 2004 and 2005 have been calculated from 2003 population data.
3. The changes in the registration period from two years to 15 months under the general dental services from 1 September 1996 affected the registration numbers from December 1997 onwards, so the 1997 figures are not comparable with later figures. Data for 2004 and 2005 include some personal dental service proxy registrations, that is, counts of patients seen in the past 15 months.

Source:

Health and Social Care Information Centre

Departmental Estate

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2107W, on the departmental estate, how much rent has been paid by the Department on the properties to which the answer refers since they ceased to be used as Community Health Council buildings. [35820]

Jane Kennedy: The following rent has been paid since December 2003 on the properties referred to; having established that there was no national health service interest they have been actively marketed:

22–24 High Road, Willesden—£58,750.

A notice to break the lease from June 2006 has been served.

128 The Grove, Stratford—£48,000.

An assignment of the lease to a third party has been completed.

42 Fulham Palace Road, Fulham—£56,000.

The lease expires in December 2005.

45–47 Praed Street, Paddington—£260,000.

Part sub-let at £72,000 per annum.

Departmental Running Costs

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the annual running costs of the Department of Health were in each year since 1999. [35309]

Jane Kennedy: Detailed information on administration costs for the Department back to 1999–2000—and with projections to 2007–08—is set out in Figure 8.1 of the 2005 Departmental Report (CM 6524) which is available in the Library.

ECG Machines

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much has been spent since 1997 on buying ECG machines in hospitals. [26472]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department is unable to provide an exact figure as this information is not collected centrally. However, following the launch of the national service framework for coronary heart disease (CHD) in March 2000, as part of a one-off central initiative, the Treasury Capital Modernisation Fund made £25 million available for a range of CHD equipment including electrocardiogram machines where these were a local priority.

Electronic Magnifiers

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will provide electronic magnifiers for the visually impaired through the NHS. [33611]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 1 December 2005]:* The national health service hospital eye service provides optical devices and loans low vision aids, such as high-powered reading lenses, hand-held and stand magnifiers and telescopes, to people with visual impairment. In addition, some primary care trusts have local arrangements for the provision of low vision aids through community based opticians.

Electronic magnifiers are classed as aids to daily living and as such providing them is the responsibility of local authority social services departments. Social service departments assess individuals' needs and arrange services to meet those needs. This can include the provision of closed circuit television. However, hand-held, stand and spectacle-mounted magnifiers are generally easier to use, more widely available and more accessible.

In keeping with the principle of flexibility in meeting local needs, NHS hospital trusts, primary care trusts and social service departments are being encouraged to work more closely together, including the possibility of establishing joint budgets for equipment which could allow for the provision of a wider range of services and equipment than has hitherto been available.

Epilepsy

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many people in each strategic health authority have been diagnosed with epilepsy since 1997, broken down by age group; [35428]

(2) how many patients diagnosed with epilepsy since 1994 have been reported as having suffered an adverse reaction after failing to take their anti-epilepsy drugs as prescribed; and what types of adverse reaction these were. [35357]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the number of people diagnosed each year with epilepsy is not collected.

Adverse reactions can sometimes occur when patients are taking prescribed drugs. If epilepsy patients are not taking their anti-epilepsy medication then it is likely their symptoms associated with epilepsy will return. We do not collect information on the number of these cases.

Fertility Treatment

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how many women who underwent *(a)* in vitro fertilisation and *(b)* ovulation induction in England and Wales were hospitalised due to (i) serious and (ii) minor complications in each of the last five years for which information is available; [34760]

(2) how many women who underwent *(a)* in vitro fertilisation and *(b)* ovulation induction in England and Wales suffered (i) a miscarriage, (ii) bleeding, (iii) ectopic pregnancy and (iv) ovarian hyperstimulation syndrome in each of the last five years for which information is available; [34761]

(3) what recent discussions her Department has had with *(a)* the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists, *(b)* the British Medical Association and *(c)* the Royal College of Nursing about the complications of in vitro fertilisation; and if she will make a statement. [34762]

Caroline Flint: Data on incidences of complications following in vitro fertilisation (IVF) and ovulation induction, including hospital admission for complications of these treatments, are not collected centrally by the Department nor routinely recorded by the Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA).

The Department has not met the professional bodies recently to discuss complications of treatment. However, the HFEA, in its role as the national regulator, regularly meets professional bodies to discuss a range of issues relating to the provision of IVF, including complications of the treatment.

Fibromyalgia

Mr. Hepburn: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to make the general public aware of the symptoms of fibromyalgia. [34492]

Mr. Byrne: We have no specific plans to raise public awareness of the symptoms of fibromyalgia.

NHS Direct, NHS Direct On-line and NHS Direct Interactive have been established to provide advice and information on health and self-care. Through these services, people have access to information on a range of conditions and illnesses, including fibromyalgia.

Free School Milk

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent discussions she has had with the Department for Education and Skills about the provision of free milk in schools for those aged between seven and 11 years. [35491]

Caroline Flint: No recent meetings have taken place between the Department and the Department of Education and Skills to discuss specifically the provision of free milk in schools for those aged between seven and eleven years. However, both departments meet regularly to discuss a range of issues across the school food agenda.

Good Hope Hospital (Waiting Times)

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how long a patient has had to wait on average for a *(a)* heart bypass, *(b)* breast cancer treatment, *(c)* hip replacement, *(d)* cataract treatment and *(e)* kidney transplant at Good Hope hospital in Sutton Coldfield in each year since 1997. [29382]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information requested is shown in the table.

Median time waited, in days, for selected procedures at Good Hope Hospital National Health Service Trust, 1997–98 to 2003–04

	1997–98	1998–99	1999–2000	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04
Breast Cancer	16	12	10	12	9	9	14
Cataract	[1]—	[1]—	7	9	118	12	13
Heart by-pass	60	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—
Hip replacement	204	208	168	185	330	212	210

[1] No operations in that year.

Notes:

1. There were no kidney transplant operations carried out in the years shown.

2. Ungrossed data—Figures have not been adjusted for shortfalls in data, that is, the data is ungrossed.

3. Main operation—The main operation is the first recorded operation in the HES data set and is usually the most resource intensive procedure performed during the episode. It is appropriate to use main operation when looking at admission details, for example, time waited, but the figures for "all operations count of episodes" give a more complete count of episodes with an operation.

4. Time waited (days)—Time waited statistics from Hospital Episode Statistics (HES) are not the same as the published waiting list statistics. HES provides counts and time waited for all patients admitted to hospital within a given period whereas the published waiting list statistics count those waiting for treatment on a specific date and how long they have been on the waiting list. Also, HES calculates the time waited as the difference between the admission and decision to admit dates. Unlike published waiting list statistics, this is not adjusted for self-deferrals or periods of medical/social suspension.

Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics (HES), Health and Social Care Information Centre

General Practitioners

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she will abolish the 48 hour general practitioner access target. [31903]

Mr. Byrne: No.

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total cost of salaries for general practitioners was in the last five years for which figures are available. [29689]

Mr. Byrne: Table 1 shows the total combined spend by primary care trusts (PCTs) in England, for both general medical services (GMS) and personal medical services (PMS), on payments to general practitioners and, since financial year 2004–05, practices in providing primary medical services (PMEDs) for financial years 2000–01 to 2004–05.

The cost of salaried GMS GPs included in table 1 figures are separately reported for financial years 2000–01 to 2003–04 in table 2.

Table 1: GMS/PMS total expenditure 2000 to 2004–05

	Total GMS including PMS spend (£ million)
2000–01	3,650
2001–02	3,816
2002–03	4,060
2003–04	4,623
2004–05[1]	5,905

[1] 2000–01 to 2004–05 general medical practitioner figures include both combined GMS and PMS GP spend.

Notes:

1. Data 2000–01 to 2003–04 are based on combined discretionary, non discretionary and PMS spend.

2. Data for 2004–05 nGMS Contract spend is funded solely through Discretionary Unified Allocations.

3. All data for 2000 to 2003–04 are taken from the audited health authority/PCT returns for England to the NHS summarised accounts. Data for 2004–05 are taken from the 303 PCTs in England and are unaudited. As such they are still subject to change.

Table 2: Salaried GPs 2000–04

	GMS salaried GPs only (£ million)
2000–01	3
2001–02	3
2002–03	6
2003–04	6
2004–05	n/a

Notes:

1. Salaried doctors as defined under SFA para. 52 relate to GMS only and are funded through discretionary GMS spend to the unified budget.

2. Data are taken from the HA/PCT audited returns for England 2000 to 2003–04 only. 3. Data from 2004–05 are not available centrally.

4. Separate data for PMS salaried GPs are not available centrally.

Health Outside Hospitals

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1294W, on Health Outside Hospitals, whether she had received expressions of interest to run the consultation from companies with whom the Central Office of Information did not hold framework agreements prior to the contract being awarded; when Opinion Leader Research agreed a framework agreement with the Central Office of Information; when this framework agreement was advertised in the *Official Journal* of the European Union; and what assessment she has made of the cost-effectiveness of restricting the number of companies to which the "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" contract could be offered to those with which the Central Office of Information holds a framework agreement. [31891]

Mr. Byrne: No expressions of interest were received from companies with whom the Central Office of Information (COI) did not hold framework agreements.

Opinion Leader Research secured the current framework agreement with the Central Office of Information in December 2004. It was advertised in the *Official Journal* of the European Union in February 2004.

Opinion Leader Research had previous framework agreements with the Central Office of Information concurrently from 1998 to 2001 and from 2001 to 2004.

The process of restricting the number of companies, open to tender for the "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" contract, to only those whom the COI held a framework reduced the amount of time taken to procure services, from several months to a few weeks, while still conforming with procurement legislation.

Health Service Commissioning

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what definition she uses of *(a)* contestability and *(b)* the internal market in the commissioning of national health services. [31720]

Mr. Byrne: New providers will give patients wider choice in where they receive treatment. Independent sector providers will provide a challenge by offering high quality and innovative services, and patient choice will challenge national health service providers to match the service quality and performance of the independent sector, thus promoting improved patient services.

Health Services (Uxbridge)

Mr. Randall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dental practices in Uxbridge constituency have *(a)* opened and *(b)* closed since 1997. [29768]

Ms Rosie Winterton: As at 30 September 2005, there were 11 dental surgeries working in the national health service general dental service (GDS) or personal dental service (PDS) within Uxbridge parliamentary constituency. Of these, one had opened since 30 September 1997. No dental surgeries have closed within this area in the same time period.

Healthy Eating

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department is taking to promote healthy eating among *(a)* children and *(b)* the general population. [35490]

Caroline Flint: The "Choosing Health" White Paper sets out the Government's strategy to promote healthy eating among children and the general population. Action includes healthy start which reforms the welfare food scheme, the 5 A DAY programme, the school fruit and vegetable scheme, the joint Department of Health and Department of Education and Skills food in schools programme and the obesity social marketing programme.

Hemel Hempstead General Hospital

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the strategic health authority plans are for the level of services to be provided by Hemel Hempstead general hospital; and if she will make a statement. [26828]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire strategic health authority have advised that the implementation of "Investing In Your Health" will mean that Hemel Hempstead hospital will have the following:

A new state-of the-art surgicentre:

Performing thousands of elective operations every year. It should be completed by September 2007 and ready to open its doors in early October.

Over the course of a year, a similar number of patients will be seen at Hemel Hempstead hospital as at Watford hospital.

It will deliver all West Hertfordshire's day case surgery, most elective orthopaedic activity and most non-cancer related general surgery. It will also provide some planned day case paediatric surgery.

Among the procedures to be performed there will be hip and knee replacements, cataracts, grommets, tonsillectomies and hernias.

Accident and emergency (A and E) department:

Fully medically-staffed (24 hour round the clock presence of a doctor).

The department will not treat major trauma cases but it is expected that around 80 per cent. of the people currently visiting the A and E department would be safely cared for under the new arrangement. Patients will be seen and treated far more quickly than at present. Under current arrangements they have to wait as more urgent cases come in.

It will include a children's rapid assessment unit where children with an illness or injury can be assessed and then either treated or sent to a more appropriate place for treatment.

Diagnostic services:

A full range of diagnostic services such as magnetic resonance imaging, computerised tomography scan, electrocardiogram, x-ray and blood tests will be available.

Although most cancer treatment will be provided at the new state-of-the-art Hatfield hospital cancer unit, many diagnostic minor illness or injury will be seen and treated far more quickly than at present as under current arrangements they have to wait as more urgent cases come in.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to close the children's ward at Hemel Hempstead hospital; and if she will make a statement. [30261]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* Any decisions regarding the children's ward at Hemel Hempstead hospital are a matter for the local national health service, which has responsibility for the reconfiguration and delivery of local service, working in partnership with its local community.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to reopen York Ward at Hemel Hempstead hospital; and if she will make a statement. [30262]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* Any decision regarding the re-opening of York Ward at Hemel Hempstead hospital is a matter for the local national health service, which has the responsibility for the reconfiguration and delivery of local services, working in partnership with the communities it serves.

Hepatitis C

Mr. Laxton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health where in England the survey of prevalence of hepatitis C antibody was carried out. [33587]

Caroline Flint: The Health Protection Agency (HPA) has carried out surveys of the prevalence of hepatitis C virus (HCV) antibodies in several populations that have differing degrees of risk of acquiring HCV. These are: adults in hospitals, women attending antenatal clinics, people attending genitourinary medicine (GUM) clinics, prisoners, and injecting drug users (IDUs). These and the areas where the surveys were undertaken are outlined in the table[1].

Population surveyed	*Regions covered*	*Date of survey*
Adults in hospitals (residual sera from specimens collected)	Wales, London, South East, South West, North West, Eastern, West Midlands and Northern and Yorkshire	1996
Women attending antenatal clinics	London and Northern and Yorkshire	1996
People attending GUM clinics (includes injecting drug users)	Anglia and Oxford, London, (North Thames, South Thames), North West, Northern and Yorkshire, Trent and West Midlands	1995 and 1996
Prisoners[2]	England and Wales	1997 and 1998
Injecting drug users[3]	All regions of England	1998–2004

[1] The regional data are based on the region where samples were collected—they are not necessarily the region where individuals lived at that time.

[2] The survey covered eight prisons in England and Wales and was categorised by prison type and not by region.

[3] Data for each region are available in supplementary tables on the HPA website at: http://www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/hiv_and_sti/publications/Annual2005_ua/ua_idu_2004.pdf

HIV/AIDS

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 2 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1144W, on HIV tests, if she will break down the figures by sex. [35410]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is shown in the tables.

Number of HIV tests offered[1] in Genitourinary Medicine Clinics by sex and strategic health authority, London: 2003 and 2004

		2003		2004	
Strategic Health Authority	*Clinic name*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
North Central London	Archway Sexual Health Clinic	2,743	2,854	3,162	3,514
	Clare Simpson House	674	852	1,258	1,794
	Moorfields Eye Hospital	64	45	65	52
	Mortimer Market Centre	7,387	7,045	8,563	8,072
	St. Ann's Hospital	1,699	2,693	2,786	3,703
	The Royal Free Hospital	1,849	2,101	1,625	1,795
	Town Clinic	870	1,340	1,082	1,634
North East London	Forest Healthcare	966	796	755	671
	Homerton Hospital	5,611	6,277	5,166	4,975
	John Scott Health Centre, Choices N4	4	13	19	71
	Newham General Hospital	1,625	1,804	2,677	3,106
	Oldchurch Hospital	460	421	302	299
	St. Bartholomew's Hospital	2,407	1,940	3,168	2,251
	Sydenham Centre	345	377	360	390
	The Royal London Hospital	4,355	4,592	3,812	4,550
North West London	Central Middlesex Hospital, Patrick Clements Clinic	3,141	3,225	3,328	3,501
	Charing Cross Hospital	2,554	3,166	3,661	4,829
	Ealing Hospital, Pasteur Suite	1,089	852	2,067	2,117
	Jefferiss Wing	8,402	8,842	9,807	10,604
	John Hunter Clinic, 4th floor	4,547	4,504	5,014	4,736
	Northwick Park Hospital	1,526	2,280	1,431	2,075
	South Westminster Centre	4,233	2,333	5,453	3,252
	Tudor Wing, Hillingdon Hospital	1,190	901	1,115	825
	West Middlesex University Hospital	1,736	1,462	3,491	2,769
South East London	Beckenham Hospital	1,265	1,443	1,437	1,831
	King's College Hospital[2]	6,155	6,827	8,681	8,793
	Lloyd Clinic, Second Floor	3,198	2,668	2,586	2,324
	St. Thomas's Hospital	8,726	8,072	8,224	7,428
	Trafalgar Clinic	2,601	2,740	2,977	2,855
South West London	Kingston Hospital	1,889	2,145	2,611	3,052
	Mayday University Hospital	1,921	2,142	4,622	5,006
	Queen Mary's University Hospital	1,907	3,006	1,940	3,014
	St. Helier Hospital	2,065	1,954	2,303	2,208
	The Courtyard Clinic	7,112	8,762	7,083	9,182

[1] Offered defined as KC60 codes S2 (HIV antibody test and sexual health screen) + P1A (HIV antibody test no sexual health screen) + P1B (HIV antibody test offered and refused).
[2] King's College Hospital does not collect information for code S2.

Number of HIV tests taken[1] in Genitourinary Medicine (GUM) Clinics by sex and strategic health authority, London: 2003 & 2004

		2003		2004	
Strategic Health Authority	*Clinic name*	*Male*	*Female*	*Male*	*Female*
North Central London	Archway Sexual Health Clinic	2,148	2,175	2,432	2,559
	Clare Simpson House	577	685	1,009	1,304
	Moorfields Eye Hospital	51	35	54	36
	Mortimer Market Centre	6,894	6,242	7,841	7,054
	St. Ann's Hospital	1,267	1,228	1,738	1,716
	The Royal Free Hospital	1,358	1,575	1,269	1,403
	Town Clinic	608	802	733	935
North East London	Forest Healthcare	917	743	573	521
	Homerton Hospital	3,901	4,256	3,636	3,375
	John Scott Health Centre, Choices N4	4	13	19	65
	Newham General Hospital	1,199	1,293	1,642	1,609
	Oldchurch Hospital	323	304	283	283
	St. Bartholomew's Hospital	673	468	1,756	1,231
	Sydenham Centre	316	341	344	373
	The Royal London Hospital	1,262	1,150	320	243
North West London	Central Middlesex Hospital, Patrick Clements Clinic	2,090	2,179	2,345	2,345
	Charing Cross Hospital	2,007	2,271	2,365	2,786
	Ealing Hospital, Pasteur Suite	764	675	1,539	1,734
	Jefferiss Wing	6,298	6,365	6,992	7,791

Number of HIV tests taken[1] in Genitourinary Medicine (GUM) Clinics by sex and strategic health authority, London: 2003 & 2004

Strategic Health Authority	Clinic name	2003		2004	
		Male	Female	Male	Female
	John Hunter Clinic, 4th floor	3,436	2,989	4,047	3,501
	Northwick Park Hospital	1,124	1,540	1,191	1,586
	South Westminster Centre	3,524	1,761	4,584	2,436
	Tudor Wing, Hillingdon Hospital	926	770	885	724
	West Middlesex University Hospital	1,733	1,266	2,283	1,701
South East London	Beckenham Hospital	775	776	880	1,035
	King's College Hospital[2]	3,277	3,176	4,244	3,788
	Lloyd Clinic, Second Floor	2,382	1,793	1,930	1,664
	St. Thomas's Hospital	4,992	4,680	5,195	4,584
	Trafalgar Clinic	1,905	1,911	2,236	2,030
South West London	Kingston Hospital	1,558	1,905	2,162	2,427
	Mayday University Hospital	1,001	1,135	1,618	1,569
	Queen Mary's University Hospital	1,106	1,447	1,130	1,455
	St. Helier Hospital	899	795	1,081	988
	The Courtyard Clinic	4,968	5,914	4,228	4,756

[1] Test taken defined as KC60 codes S2 (HIV antibody test and sexual health screen) + P1A (HIV antibody test no sexual health screen).
[2] King's College Hospital does not collect information for code S2.
Notes:
The data used to compile these tables were taken from the KC60 return, which is made by all GUM clinics to the Health Protection Agency. The data does not represent the number of HIV tests offered and taken up by the population resident within each SHA, as many patients cross health boundaries to access GUM clinics. In addition, the gender and sexual orientation mix varies between clinics. Some clinics are attended by a high number of men who have sex with men and consequently this influences the number of HIV tests offered and taken.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to tackle HIV/AIDS. [33629]

Caroline Flint: Measures to reduce the spread of HIV/AIDS were set out in the "National Strategy for Sexual Health and HIV" (2001) and the public health White Paper "Choosing Health", published last November, available from the Library and from the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/05/89/45/04058945.pdf.

These measures include targeted HIV prevention and health promotion work with those most at risk of HIV infection, such as gay men and African communities, provided through community organisations such as the Terence Higgins Trust and the African HIV Policy Network. The Choosing Health White Paper also announced a new high profile national campaign, to promote safer sex messages, aimed at reducing the prevalence and spread of all sexually transmitted infections including HIV. On 1 December, the Department published for consultation and action plan to tackle HIV related stigma and discrimination, which is available on the Department's website at www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/39/93/04123993.pdf.

In addition to these national measures, primary care trusts are responsible for providing HIV prevention and services which meet the needs of their local populations. To support them in this role, the Department, working with professional bodies, has published recommended standards for national health service HIV services; a toolkit of best practice for sexual health promotion, and guidance on commissioning.

Hospices

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what public funding has been provided to hospices in the Gravesham area in each year since 1997. [35608]

Caroline Flint: The Department does not routinely collect the data requested. The level of funding given to local hospices is a matter for discussion between the commissioning primary care trust and the hospice.

Hospital Facilities

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what regulations she has made concerning separate *(a)* sleeping areas, *(b)* washing facilities and *(c)* toilet facilities in new NHS hospital buildings. [35191]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We appreciate the fact that many hospital patients feel more comfortable if they are in an area with other people of their own gender. We have set clear standards requiring the NHS to treat patients with dignity and respect, in environments that are supportive of privacy.

Guidance issued to the national health service on the design of healthcare facilities sets out best practice standards in providing separate accommodation for the sexes, and maintaining patients' privacy and dignity. Single-sex accommodation is provided in 97 per cent. of NHS trusts.

Hospital Finance

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many hospitals in England are in debt; by how much in each case; and if she will make a statement. [32018]

Mr. Byrne: The latest available audited data on the financial position of national health service trusts in England is for 2004–05. The 2004–05 financial position of all NHS organisations, including NHS trusts that reported an overspend in 2004–05, has been placed in the Library. It is also available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/PublicationsAndStatistics/FreedomOfInformation/ClassesOfInformation/fs/en

Hospital Food

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 28 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 581W, on hospital food, if she will provide a breakdown of the information by *(a)* NHS trust and *(b)* region. [33471]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is available in the Library.

Hospital Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which hospitals are planning staff cuts; and what sectors of jobs are being cut in each case. [32189]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not collected centrally. Local delivery plans suggest that the national health service is planning to increase the overall number of staff in the period from March 2004 to March 2006.

Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether *(a)* new build and *(b)* refurbishment programmes in the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust since 1997 were completed within budget. [33571]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not collected centrally but can instead be provided by the Hull and East Yorkshire Hospitals National Health Service Trust.

Hull Royal Infirmary

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health at what operational capacity the MRI scanners at Hull Royal Infirmary operated in the last period for which figures are available. [32962]

Mr. Byrne: Data on the operational capacity of magnetic resonance imaging scanners are not collected centrally. Data on the number of magnetic resonance imaging scans performed in 2004–05, by national health service trusts are available at:

http://www.performance.doh.gov.uk/hospitalactivity

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of eligible heart attack victims received blood clot removing drugs within 20 minutes of arriving at the Hull Royal Infirmary in the last period for which figures are available; and what the average percentage for hospitals in England was in the same period. [32972]

Mr. Byrne: The percentage of eligible heart attack victims receiving blood clot removing drugs at Hull Royal Infirmary within 20 minutes for July to September 2005 was 48 per cent. The national aggregate average for the same period was 61 per cent.

Hull Royal Infirmary with the local ambulance service should continue to work together to increase the proportion of people suffering from heart attack who are treated within an hour of calling for help. The national target is to increase this proportion by 10 percentage points per year.

There may be good clinical reasons for taking time to administer appropriate drugs; for example, complex symptoms sometimes require more expert advice or more tests.

Source:

Myocardial Infarction National Audit Project

Immunisation

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment her Department made of *(a)* the impact on general practitioners' finances and *(b)* the availability of immunisation services before the five-in-one vaccine was introduced; and if she will make a statement. [33539]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 1 December 2005]:* Uptake levels of diphtheria, tetanus, pertussis, Hib and polio at 24 months of age has not changed significantly since the introduction of Pediacel in September 2004 and remains around 93 per cent. for England. No assessment has been made of the impact of Pediacel's introduction on general practitioner's finances and could not be easily done.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioners have indicated that they intend to opt out of the Government's childhood immunisation programme; and if she will make a statement. [33541]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 1 December 2005]:* There is no information available centrally on how many practices are planning to opt out of providing childhood immunisation services. Should they choose to do so, as provided for within the new primary medical care contractual arrangements, a practice would lose one per cent. of their global sum payment.

Intensive Care

Kitty Ussher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the effect on pandemic planning of a reduction in high dependency or intensive care services at Burnley General Hospital. [26125]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 29 November 2005]:* It is for the local national health service to assess the potential demands in its area and to plan appropriate responses that may include opening additional capacity, cancelling or diverting planned work and providing care in a variety of locations away from traditional critical care areas.

All NHS organisations are expected to have plans in place which are appropriate for a possible human 'flu pandemic and which are regularly tested and updated. The operational guidance on planning for a 'flu pandemic originally published in May 2005 and updated in October 2005 contains planning checklists for strategic health authorities (SHAs), primary care trusts and NHS trusts to inform their plans. The Department will be working with SHAs to ensure those plans are in place across the country.

IT Projects

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many of the IT projects costing over £1 million in

use in her Department and introduced since 1997 have been scrutinised by the Public Accounts Committee; and if she will list them. [26590]

Mr. Byrne: Since 1997 none of the Department's projects costing £1 million or more and in use was subject to scrutiny by the Public Accounts Committee.

Mental Health

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many non-British passport holders are detained in the United Kingdom under the Mental Health Act 1983. [33110]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This information is not held centrally.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made in implementing the objectives of *(a)* the Mental Health National Service Framework and *(b)* the NHS Plan since 2000 in (i) North West Leicestershire and (ii) England. [33287]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The implementation of the "national service framework for mental health" is envisaged to take 10 years and a comprehensive account of the progress made in the first half of the implementation period is available in the national director for mental health's report, "The National Service Framework for Mental Health—Five Years On".

Most of the targets set for mental health services in the "NHS Plan" have now been met. At the end of March, there were 343 crisis resolution, 262 assertive and 109 early intervention teams in England. In addition, 1,520 community gateway, 654 carer support and 648 graduate primary care staff were employed in the national health service.

Since the publication of the NHS Plan, 205 secure beds and 75 specialist rehabilitation hostel places for people with personality disorders have been created. The NHS Plan included a target to move up to 400 inappropriately placed patients out of the high security hospitals, which was achieved by its end of 2004 target date. All prisoners with severe mental health illness now have a care plan and 360 prison in-reach staff have been recruited to help manage prisoners with severe mental illness.

At the end of March, Leicester Partnership NHS Trust, which delivers mental health services in North West Leicestershire, was providing six crisis resolution, one early intervention and four assertive outreach teams. In addition, 38.7 whole-time equivalent (wte) graduate primary care, 10 wte community gateway and 2.2 wte carer support staff were employed by the Leicester Partnership NHS Trust at the end of March.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has had with the Healthcare Commission on measures to improve the performance of NHS mental health services. [33288]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has worked closely with the Healthcare Commission on the development of performance indicators for assessing mental heath services in 2005–06 and expects to do so for 2006–07. This covers the assessment of both mental health provider trusts and the commissioning role of primary care trusts. The Healthcare Commission's assessments of mental health services are based on the framework of standards and objectives set out in "National Standards, Local Action—Health and Social Care Standards and Planning Framework for 2005–06 to 2007–08".

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent on *(a)* talking treatments and *(b)* drug treatments for mental health problems delivered through primary care services in each strategic health authority area in each year between 2000–01 and 2004–05. [34355]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information is not available in the requested format. Information about spend on drugs listed in the British National Formulary Chapter 4 (central nervous system drugs) that were dispensed in the community in England in each year from 2001–02 to 2004–05 is shown in table 1.

Table 1

	£
2000–01	915,273,032
2001–02	1,077,116,609
2002–03	1,217,777,827
2003–04	1,346,269,724
2004–05	1,439,405,155

Notes:

Prescription information is taken from the Prescription Cost Analysis system, supplied by the Prescription Pricing Authority, and is based on a full analysis of all prescriptions dispensed in the community (i.e. by community pharmacists and appliance contractors, dispensing doctors, and prescriptions submitted by prescribing doctors for items personally administered in England.) Also included are prescriptions written in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man but dispensed in England. The data do not cover drugs dispensed in hospitals, including mental health trusts, or private prescriptions.

Information about spend on talking treatments that were delivered in primary care is not held centrally by the Department. The National Survey of Investment in Mental Health Services has captured information on planned spend on psychological therapy services since 2001–02. This information is shown in table 2 and reports of the National Survey of Investment in Mental Health Services for each financial year from 2001–02 to 2004–05 are available at www.dh.gov.uk

Table 2

	£
2001–02	103,471,000
2002–03	122,052,000
2003–04	129,352,000
2004–05	141,378,000

New Vaccines

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* role and *(b)* process is of (i) the National Institute for Healthcare and Clinical Excellence and (ii) the Joint Committee for Vaccines and Immunisation in (A) approving and (B) licensing new vaccines; and if she will make a statement. [31202]

Jane Kennedy: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) was set up to give advice to the national health service on best clinical practice including clinical and cost effectiveness of drugs and other treatments. Details of NICE'S processes and methodologies are available on NICE'S website at www.nice.org.uk.

The Joint Committee for Vaccines and Immunisation (JCVI) has no role in licensing new vaccines. The Medicines Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) is responsible for licensing vaccines. In this work MHRA would seek advice from the Commission on Human Medicines (CHM), the Government's independent safety experts.

The JCVI's role is to advise the Secretaries of State for Health, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland on matters relating to communicable diseases, preventable and potentially preventable through immunisation. The JCVI does make recommendations to the Secretaries of State on the suitability of new vaccines for the national immunisation programme.

The JCVI committee and the institute have collaborated to work on topics such as the use of antiviral agents for influenza.

NHS Doctors (Suspensions)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps her Department *(a)* has taken and *(b)* plans to take to ensure that national health service doctors suspended by hospital trusts have their cases dealt with (i) justly and (ii) speedily; and if she will make a statement. [35966]

Jane Kennedy: We took steps in 2001 to improve the performance of the NHS in dealing with suspensions by establishing the National Clinical Assessment Authority, which is now part of the National Patient Safety Agency. New suspensions procedures agreed in 2004 gave the National Clinical Assessment Authority a key role in advising on the management of all suspensions. By April 2005, the total of long-term exclusions of all types, including what was previously called gardening leave, had halved from 56 in June 2003 to a figure of 25.

A new disciplinary framework agreed with the medical and dental professions was implemented in June this year. It is mandatory across NHS trusts and will speed up local procedures for handling disciplinary cases.

Notes:

Complete new entrant means the dentist had an open GDS or PDS contract in September of the specified year but no GDS or PDS contract in September of the previous year.

Source:

Dental Practice Board

NHS Bodies

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people are employed by the *(a)* Dental Practice Board, *(b)* NHS Logistics Authority, *(c)* NHS Pensions Agency, *(d)* Prescription Pricing Authority and *(e)* NHS Counter Fraud and Security management service; and where each of their main centres of employment is. [32022]

Jane Kennedy: The establishment numbers, in whole time equivalents, (wte) as at 1 April 2005 and the centres of employment for the organisations requested are:

Organisation	*Centres of employment*	*Establishment (wte)*
Dental Practice Board	Eastbourne	273
NHS Logistics Authority[1]	Mainly Alfreton, with other distribution centres in: Bury St. Edmunds Maidstone Normanton Runcorn Bristol Bridgwater	1,313
NHS Pensions Agency	Fleetwood	367
Prescription Pricing Authority	Mainly Newcastle with smaller operations divisions in: Bolton Durham Liverpool Manchester Preston Sheffield Wakefield West Bromwich	2,123
NHS Counter Fraud and Security Management Service	London	251

[1] Represents the actual headcount (in wtes) and does not include open vacancies

NHS Logistics

Mr. Mike Hall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) how much was spent by NHS trusts in 2003–04 on consumable goods not purchased from NHS Logistics; and how much of that sum is represented by *(a)* drugs, *(b)* medical and surgical equipment-maintenance, *(c)* x-ray equipment purchase, *(d)* x-ray film and chemicals-purchase, *(e)* x-ray equipment-maintenance, *(f)* laboratory equipment maintenance, *(g)* contract hotel services (including cleaning), *(h)* postage, *(i)* telephones, *(j)* advertising, *(k)* travel, *(l)* subsistence and removal expenses, *(m)* other transport costs, *(n)* electricity, *(o)* gas, *(p)* other fuels, *(q)* water and sewerage, *(r)* external general services contracts, *(s)* furniture, office and computer equipment, *(t)* computer hardware, maintenance contracts and data processing contracts, *(u)* business rates, *(v)* rent, *(w)* building and engineering equipment, *(x)* building and engineering contracts, *(y)* total purchase of healthcare from non-national health service bodies, *(z)* total external contract staffing and consultancy services and (aa) auditors' remuneration; [32879]

(2) how much each NHS trust spent in 2003–04 on consumable goods *(a)* purchased and *(b)* not purchased from NHS Logistics; [32878]

(3) pursuant to the answer of 28 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 585W, on NHS Logistics, how many of the products and services were purchased direct from the manufacturers and service providers by NHS trusts. [32880]

Jane Kennedy: The following table shows those categories of products and services used by NHS Trusts which are not purchased through the NHS Logistics Authority, or where, as indicated, there is minimal activity.

The spend by NHS trusts for 2003–04 for these categories was as follows.

Products and services—2003–04	£
Drugs (including Gases)[1]	2,307,732,964
Medical and Surgical Equipment—Maintenance	114,079,014
X-Ray Equipment—Purchase	32,698,714
X-Ray Film and Chemicals—Purchase	58,124,105
X-Ray Equipment—Maintenance	63,116,985
Laboratory Equipment—Maintenance	27,427,273
Contract Hotel Services (Incl. Cleaning)	406,385,852
Postage	69,197,837
Telephones	206,527,436
Advertising	132,167,883
Travel, Subsistence and Removal Expenses[2]	363,547,841
Other Transport Costs (Includes Transport and Moveable Plant)	304,926,808
Electricity	129,952,456
Gas	102,981,452
Other Fuels (Including Oil And Coal)	36,304,157
Water And Sewerage	59,349,315
External General Services Contracts	267,412,996
Furniture, Office and Computer Equipment[1]	272,320,110
Computer Hardware, Maintenance Contracts and Data Processing Contracts	220,932,679
Business Rates	220,256,280
Rent	274,567,538
Building and Engineering Equipment	125,835,348
Building and Engineering Contracts	265,638,567
Total Purchase Of Healthcare From Non-NHS Bodies	3,326,347,129
Total External Contract Staffing And Consultancy Services	230,988,111
Auditors Remuneration	78,720,480
Total Non-Pay Revenue Expenditure	9,697,539,332

[1] Minimal activity through the NHS Logistics Authority
[2] Not able to break this down into individual categories of *(k)*travel,*(i)* subsistence and removal expenses.

The information requested in relation to consumable goods *(a)* purchased and *(b)* not purchased from NHS Logistics is not readily available and could be only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

The quantities of products and services purchased direct from the manufacturers and service providers by NHS trusts is not readily available and could only be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

NHS Pensions Agency

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made of the likely impact on staff employed to deliver NHS student grants and bursaries at Hesketh House in Fleetwood when the NHS Pensions Agency based on that site is contracted out of the Department; [26422]

(2) how many organisations put in bids to take up the contract to run the NHS Pensions Agency; [26424]

(3) if she will place in the Library the business case produced on the contracting out of the NHS Pensions Agency; [26425]

(4) what assessment she has made of the likely impact on jobs at Hesketh House in Fleetwood of the contracting out of the work of the NHS Pensions Agency; [26426]

(5) what consultation she expects the new NHS Business Services Authority to undertake when it implements the process of contracting out the NHS Pensions Agency; [26427]

(6) if she will list those she consulted on the decision to contract out the work of the NHS Pensions Agency; [26428]

(7) when the decision was made to contract out the work of the NHS Pensions Agency based at Hesketh House in Fleetwood. [26429]

Jane Kennedy: The NHS Pensions Agency is to become part of the Business Services Authority (BSA) on 1 April 2006. This was first announced in the report, "Reconfiguring the Department of Health's Arm's Length Bodies" published in July 2004. This report reflected Government policy to reduce costs of administration through modernisation of systems and use of private sector capability where appropriate. "The Implementation Framework for Reconfiguring the DH's Arm's Length Bodies:, redistributing resources to the NHS frontline" published in November 2004 built on this approach. In implementing these reports, consideration is being given to market testing a wide range of the BSA's functions, not just those of the NHS Pensions Agency.

Following a review of the NHS Pensions Agency by KPMG, a report recommending full outsourcing of this mostly administrative business was published on 21 May 1998. The decision to outsource elements of the business was announced on 6 March 2000. The KPMG report was placed in the Library of the House on the same day. Expressions of interest were invited through the official Journal of the European Community on 20 June 2000 and 33 organisations responded.

The outcome of the procurement process was to award a contract covering about half of the NHS Pensions Agency's functions to Paymaster (1836) Limited with an option to expand to all its functions at a point in the future. The contractual terms agreed at that time obliged the NHS Pensions Agency to negotiate with Paymaster (1836) Limited first on any proposed expansion of the outsourcing arrangements.

Should a decision be made to expand the existing outsourcing arrangements at the NHS Pensions Agency, full consultation will be undertaken with both trade unions and employees.

If outsourcing some or all of the NHS Pensions Agency is extended as a result of current negotiations, employees dealing with NHS Pensions and the student bursary scheme will transfer to the private sector partner under the provisions of the Transfer of Undertakings (Protection of Employment) Regulations.

The resulting contract with the private sector supplier will reflect the principles of the Joint Statement of Good Practice issued on 6 October 2005 by the Department, NHS Employers, the Confederation of British Industry and the Business Services Association, together with a number of trade unions. That statement commits private sector suppliers who contract with the NHS to meet minimum standards on pay, conditions of service and work force issues.

Similarly, contractors are required to offer all transferring NHS employees membership of a pension scheme broadly comparable to the NHS scheme.

NHS Professionals

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when she expects NHS Professionals to become completely self-funding; [30956]

(2) what the average time taken was between an invoice being received and payment being made by users of services of NHS Professionals in the last year for which figures are available; [31068]

(3) how many statutory demands for payment NHS Professionals has received in each year since its creation; [31074]

(4) how much NHS Professionals has spent on external consultants in each year since its creation; [31077]

(5) what percentage of suppliers of services to NHS Professionals are waiting for payment of services rendered *(a)* three months to six months ago, *(b)* six months to 12 months ago and *(c)* 12 months ago or longer; [31078]

(6) what the total amount of payment made to suppliers of services to NHS Professionals has been to compensate for late payment and other associated legal costs since it became operational; and if she will make a statement. [31079]

Mr. Byrne: NHS Professionals is currently working with officials in the Department to develop a three year corporate strategy underpinned by annual business plans so that it can become self-financing and prepare to take on independent status from 2007–08 as proposed in the review of Departmental arm's length bodies in 2004.

NHS Professionals meets the Best Payment Practice in the NHS, which requires at least 95 per cent. of suppliers to be paid within 30 days. During the financial year 2004–05 it received two statutory demands for payment, paid a total of £2,000 to compensate for late payment and other associated legal costs and spent a total of £2.5 million on external consultants. The external consultant costs included the provision of internal audit facilities, support for the relocation of the main offices in the south to a new contact centre and the development of a new booking system. Information relating to the percentage of suppliers of services to NHS Professionals waiting for payment of services rendered is not held centrally.

NHS Reforms

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has had with *(a)* NHS staff and *(b)* trade unions about the implications for staff of the reforms proposed in Commissioning a Patient-led NHS. [19647]

Mr. Byrne: The Department has had several discussions with stakeholders. In our proposals sent out on 28 July, we indicated that we were minded to require primary care trusts (PCTs) to reduce their service-provision functions by the end of 2008. Since that document, we have listened to stakeholders. The policy moving forward, in relation to service-provision, is that this will be a matter for PCTs to determine locally. So any move away from direct provision of services will be a decision for the local NHS within the framework set out in the forthcoming White Paper and after local consultation, including professions allied to medicine.

We will support PCTs who want to do that, but we will not instruct PCTs to do it, nor will we impose any timetable. What matters is getting the best services for each community—and that is what the White Paper will focus on.

Nurses

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of the nurses who qualified in *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003 and *(c)* 2004 found nursing employment in the NHS. [32066]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nurses have been employed by Lancashire NHS Teaching Trust in each year since 1997. [33519]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

Nurses employed by Lancashire National Health Service Teaching Trust, 1997 to 2004

Headcount

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*[1]	*2003*	*2004*
Chorley and South Ribble	701	746	775	772	603	n/a	n/a	n/a
Preston Acute	1,272	1,234	1,264	1,256	1,330	n/a	n/a	n/a
Lancashire Teaching	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	1,915	1,928	1,855
Total	1,973	1,980	2,039	2,028	1,933	1,915	1,928	1,855

[1] The Lancashire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust was formed in 2002 following a merger of the Chorley and South Ribble NHS Trust with the Preston Acute Hospitals NHS Trust.

Source:

Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many school nurses are practising in Ribble Valley constituency. [33520]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information relating to the number of qualified nurses, national health service hospital and community health services, employed by the Hyndburn and Ribble Valley primary care trust (PCT) in the school nursing area of work as at 30 September 2004 is shown in the table.

Practising school nurses in Ribble Valley

Headcount

	Hyndburn and Ribble Valley PCT
All qualified school nurses	13
Qualified school nurses[1]	3
School nursing nurses[2]	10

[1] Only registered nurses with a specific school nursing qualification are defined as qualified school nurses.
[2] Other qualified nurses who work in the school nursing area of work but who do not hold a specific school nursing qualification.
Source:
Health and Social Care Information Non-Medical Workforce Census 2004

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nurses have been employed by Sandwell and City Hospital Trust in each year since 1997. [33285]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In 2002 Sandwell Healthcare National Health Service Trust and the City Hospital NHS Trust merged to form Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust. Responsibility for community nursing services transferred to Oldbury and Smethwick Primary Care Trust.

The information in the table shows the number (headcount) of nurses at each organisation.

NHS hospital and community health services: Qualified nursing, midwifery and health visiting staff (including GP practice nurses) in each specified organisation as at 30 September each specified year

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Total for the specified organisations	1,936	2,172	2,164	2,136	2,361	2,247	2,304	2,368
Sandwell Healthcare NHS Trust	950	968	1,013	1,062	1,093	—	—	—
The City Hospital NHS Trust	986	1,204	1,151	1,074	1,268	—	—	—
Oldbury and Smethwick PCT	—	—	—	—	—	175	170	196
Sandwell and West Birmingham Hospitals NHS Trust	—	—	—	—	—	2,072	2,134	2,172

Source:
Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census.
Health and Social Care Information Centre General and Personal Medical Services Statistics.

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many full-time equivalent NHS nurses have been employed by the NHS in each year since 1997. [33353]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

All qualified nurses in hospitals and primary care, including practice nurses employed by unrestricted principals and equivalents (UPEs)[1], in England; 1997–2004

Full-time equivalent

	All qualified nurses	*HCHS qualified nurses*	*Practice nurses[2]*
1997	256,093	246,011	10,082
1998	257,597	247,238	10,359
1999	261,340	250,651	10,689
2000	266,987	256,276	10,711
2001	277,334	266,171	11,163
2002	291,285	279,287	11,998
2003	304,892	291,925	12,967
2004	315,440	301,877	13,563

[1] UPEs includes GMS unrestricted principals, PMS contracted GPs and PMS salaried GPs
[2] Data as at 1 October 1997 to 1999 and 30 September 2000 to 2004
Notes:
1. Full-time equivalent figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.
2. Figures are rounded to the nearest whole number.
3. Due to rounding totals may not equal the sum of component parts.
4. Figures exclude learners and agency staff.
Source:
Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census
Health and Social Care Information Centre General and Personal Medical Services Statistics.

Obesity

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much her Department spent on reducing obesity in each of the last 30 months; how much the Department plans to spend on reducing obesity in the next 12 months; and if she will make a statement. [32752]

Caroline Flint: It is not possible to separate out the total amount spent by the Department on reducing obesity over the last 30 months. However, a number of nutrition and physical activity interventions have contributed to tackling obesity. The 2005–06 cost of these include £2 million for the Five-a-day programme, £135 million for Healthy Start, £36.8 million for the school fruit and vegetable scheme, £1.2 million for local exercise action pilots (LEAP) and £1 million for pedometers. Primary care trusts have also received £3 million for training on obesity.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will list the incentives available to general practitioners to *(a)* identify and *(b)* treat obesity in children; [33111]

(2) what incentives are available to general practitioners *(a)* to identify and *(b)* to manage obesity in children. [33351]

Caroline Flint: There are no specific incentives for identifying or treating childhood obesity in the current general medical services (GMS) contract. However, under the new GMS contractual arrangements, general practitioners must provide essential services that would include the provision of advice in connections with the care of obese children, including relevant health promotions advice.

Ostomy, Incontinence and Wound Care

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to change the arrangements for the provision of *(a)* ostomy, *(b)* incontinence and *(c)* wound care services and related products; and if she will make a statement. [34052]

Jane Kennedy: The Department is conducting a formal consultation about possible changes to the arrangements for the provision of dressings, incontinence appliances, stoma appliances, chemical reagents and other appliances to primary and secondary care.

The consultation was published on 24 October 2005 and closes on 23 January 2006.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in England are receiving *(a)* ostomy, *(b)* incontinence and *(c)* wound care (i) products and (ii) services from the NHS. [34054]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not collected by the Department.

Postnatal Care

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average length of stay in hospital is after delivery for women who have given birth. [34430]

Mr. Byrne: The length of stay in hospital after delivery for women who have given birth is a decision for the medical professionals involved and will vary depending on the medical circumstances of each individual case. In 2003–04, about 15 per cent. of women left hospital on the same day as delivery took place, about 35 per cent. left the next day, 20 per cent. two days later and 15 per cent. three days later.

Poverty-induced Ill Health

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to *(a)* commission and *(b)* evaluate research on the relationship between poverty and ill health; and if she will make a statement. [34689]

Caroline Flint: The Department is not currently funding and has no plans to commission studies specifically related to poverty and health.

The Department has supported and continues to support a range of studies looking at associated issues. Over the last eight years, research has been commissioned on both the impact of socio-economic circumstances on health, and also on the impact of mainstream and targeted services. For example, projects have been supported on inequalities in the outcome of pregnancy; the health effects of welfare advice in primary care; and on the effect of out of home day care on the health of disadvantaged families. A project on inequalities in the health of older people looked at the association between health and material and social well-being among older people using various indicators.

In addition, the Department is the principal funder, with other Government Departments, of the five-year English Longitudinal Study of Ageing. The study was begun in 2003 and is gathering data on income, housing, health and other areas from its representative sample of some 12,000 people aged 50 and over.

Primary Care Trusts

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects final proposals for the reconfiguration of primary care trusts to be published; whether these proposals will be put out for public consultation; and when she expects the proposals to be given effect. [25108]

Mr. Byrne: On 15 October, strategic health authorities (SHAs) submitted their proposals for the reconfiguration of primary care trusts (PCTs), which set out how they intend to strengthen their commissioning function. These proposals were assessed by an independent external panel drawn from and representing a wide range of stakeholder interests, to determine whether the SHA proposals meet the criteria stipulated in "Commissioning a Patient-Led NHS" (July 2005).

Following consideration by the external panel and Ministers, proposals for PCT reconfiguration will go forward for local consultation in December. The consultation period will begin on 14 December, running for 14 weeks.

No decisions on the reorganisation of PCTs will be taken until this process has been completed. However, we anticipate, subject to local consultation, that the first organisational changes will come into effect from early summer.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she plans to grant strategic health authorities powers *(a)* to remove the chief executives of primary and acute trusts and *(b)* to require primary care trusts to outsource or market test services; and if she will make a statement. [28655]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 15 November 2005]:* We have no plans to extend powers to strategic health authorities to remove the chief executives of primary and acute trusts.

There is no requirement for primary care trusts to outsource or market test services.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what administrative savings have been made by the Burntwood, Lichfield and Tamworth primary care trust since its inception; and what the forecast figures were for such savings. [32040]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not hold information on administrative savings or on forecast savings figures for primary care trusts.

David Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether her Department is able to offer additional support to a primary care trust which has failed to pay *(a)* sums it owes to a social services authority under an agreement under section 31 of the Health Act 1999 and *(b)* its business rates; and if she will make a statement. [33468]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 1 December 2005]:* All national health service bodies are required to pay undisputed invoices within a reasonable time period.

Strategic health authorities monitor the performance of individual NHS bodies and work with poor performance organisations to achieve and maintain a level of payment performance consistent with government accounting regulations and the Better Payment Practice Code.

The growth in financial allocation to primary care trusts (PCTs) for 2005–06, 2006–07 and 2007–08 was 9.6 per cent., 9.2 per cent. and 9.4 per cent. respectively. The Department does not plan to offer any additional support to PCTs.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the revised proposals for the reconfiguration of strategic health authorities and primary care trusts in *(a)* Lancashire and Cumbria and *(b)* elsewhere in England meet the 15 per cent. savings criteria set out in Sir Nigel Crisp's letter of 28 July; and if she will make a statement. [35206]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* Each strategic health authority has submitted for consultation reconfiguration proposals which will achieve their share of the required £250 million savings.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff were employed in communication roles in each primary care trust on 1 October *(a)* 2003, *(b)* 2004 and *(c)* 2005; and if she will make a statement. [32629]

Mr. Byrne: The requested information is not collected centrally.

Public Engagement Contracts

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 12 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 991W, on public engagement contracts, which other companies were asked to tender for the contract to run the Your Health, Your Care, Your Say consultation. [31896]

Mr. Byrne: The tender for the Your Health, Your Care, Your Say, consultation was issued to four agencies, three of which responded; ICM Research, Market and Opinion Research International (MORI) and Opinion Leader Research (OLR).

Public Service Agreements

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how she will measure progress towards meeting her Department's Public Service Agreement target to offer a personalised care plan for vulnerable people most at risk. [35196]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the reply given by my hon. Friend the Under-Secretary to the hon. Member for South Cambridgeshire (Mr. Lansley) on Monday 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1705–6W.

Racial Equality

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many race equality impact assessments her Department had completed in the period *(a)* April 2004 to March 2005 and *(b)* April 2005 to November 2005; and how many assessments in each period resulted in a change of policy. [32840]

Ms Rosie Winterton: In the period April 2004 to March 2005, 29 policies were assessed as part of the regulatory impact assessment process for race equality impact. None of these revealed the need for full race equality impact assessment. No race equality impact assessments have been completed since April 2005.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance the Commission for Racial Equality has given to the Department on the time within which a race equality impact assessment should be carried out in relation to published legislative proposals. [33280]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Commission for Racial Equality has issued guidance to public bodies on producing and publishing race equality impact assessments, but this does not prescribe specific timescales. The Department arrangements for publishing such assessments are set out in its race equality scheme for 2005 to 2008.

Radiotherapy

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent estimate she has made of the average waiting times for *(a)* radical and *(b)* palliative radiotherapy in the area covered by Lancashire NHS Teaching Trust. [33518]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for South Cambridgeshire (Mr. Lansley) of 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 407W, on radiotherapy, if she will make a statement on her plans for an 18-week waiting time target. [34735]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The 18 week pathway for December 2008 will measure from general practitioner referral to the start of hospital treatment including, where appropriate, radiotherapy. As is the case now, where the clinician decides that the patient requires urgent treatment waiting times will be much shorter. The national health service cancer plan targets will remain in place.

Rapid Review Panel

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the letter sent to the hon. Member for South Cambridgeshire by the Minister of State, the right hon. Member for Liverpool, Wavertree (Jane Kennedy), on the Rapid Review Panel, dated 25 October, of the 118 products which have been reviewed by the Rapid Review Panel, if she will list the products which are in widespread use; and what estimate she has made of the time saved in introducing these products into widespread NHS use by the rapid review panel's proceedings. [32071]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is not collected centrally but to 29 November 2005, 134 products have been reviewed by the Rapid Review Panel (RRP) and reported on the Health Protection Agency's (HPA) website.

Of these products, Bardex 1C silver alloy hydrocel catheter, Dermamed skin protectant and Chloraprep topical antiseptic were given a recommendation 1, which means a clear benefit has been shown.

Bardex 1C was introduced into national health service logistics stock in September 2005 and 15 trusts have so far begun to draw stock from this supply but others may be purchasing direct from the supplier. Chloraprep topical antiseptic is currently subject to consultation regarding its licence status and further information on Dermamed is being sought by the Purchasing and Supply Agency.

Respiratory Diseases

James Brokenshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in *(a)* Rainham and Wennington and South Hornchurch wards and *(b)* the remaining wards of the London borough of Havering were diagnosed with (i) lung cancer, (ii) asthma, (iii) pneumonia and (iv) chronic obstructive pulmonary disease in each of the last five years; and what the national average number of cases of each disease was in each year. [34515]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Information is not collected centrally for all the conditions that are being requested. However the information in the table shows the number of newly diagnosed cases of lung cancer in South Hornchurch, Rainham and Wennington ward and the London borough of Havering and England for the period covering 1999 to 2003.

Numbers of newly diagnosed cases of lung cancer by selected areas and England, 1999–2003

Area	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*Total*
South Hornchurch ward	11	14	8	7	15	55
Rainham and Wennington ward	9	9	8	7	8	41
Total for the remaining wards of Havering London borough	128	155	159	107	154	703
England	31,778	31,439	31,131	30,328	29,889	154,559

Source:
Office for National Statistics

School Food

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to source a greater proportion of the produce used in the school fruit and vegetables scheme from the UK. [35053]

Caroline Flint: We are obliged to tender competitively for the school fruit and vegetable scheme supply contracts and cannot, under current European Union competition law, favour United Kingdom growers in our tendering process.

We are keen to explore ways of maximising locally grown produce and have designed the consumption calendar to reflect any seasonality for produce on a national and international level. Some products cannot be grown in the UK.

Secondments

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 285W, on secondments, whether pension contributions for those NHS staff who are seconded to her Department are paid by her Department; and how many staff are on secondment or loan *(a)* into and *(b)* out of her Department expressed as a headcount. [36606]

Jane Kennedy: Staff seconded into the Department from the national health service will normally remain on their own organisation's payroll and the Department will reimburse their salary and pension contribution.

There are currently 49 staff on secondment or loan into the Department.

There are currently 180 staff recorded on the human resource systems as being on secondment or loan out of the Department.

Selby and York NHS Primary Care Trust

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the financial situation is of the Selby and York NHS primary care trust. [34718]

Mr. Byrne: Selby and York primary care trust (PCT) recorded a deficit of £6.6 million in 2004–05 and is projecting a deficit of £9.968 million in the current financial year. The PCT is working with its national health service partner organisations to put in place a financial recovery plan.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made of the likely impact of the decision of York and Selby Primary Care Trust to delay referrals of all non-urgent cases for up to six months or more; and if she will make a statement; [34517]

(2) what representations she has received on the decision of Selby and York NHS Primary Care Trust to delay the treatment of non-urgent cases; [34716]

(3) what assessment she has made of the impact on the York Hospital NHS Trust of the cancellation of non-urgent operations; and if she will make a statement. [34717]

Mr. Byrne: From December all patients will receive inpatient treatment within six months of the decision being made to treat. Patients residing within the Selby and York Primary Care Trust area will receive treatment within this timeframe. The Department has received no representations on this issue.

Sexual Health

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much funding was available to *(a)* North Somerset

primary care trust and *(b)* all English primary care trusts for sexual health-related issues in the last year for which figures are available. [33686]

Caroline Flint: Primary care trusts (PCTs) are responsible for providing sexual health services which meet the needs of their local populations. Records are not held centrally of the amounts made available for sexual health by each PCT.

In addition to local allocations, certain additional amounts of funding have been allocated by the Department in order to implement the national strategy for sexual health and HIV, and the sexual health elements of the "Choosing Health" White Paper. North Somerset PCT have received £125,000 for 2004–05. For all English PCTs, the total figure for 2004–05 is £37,765,000 capital and revenue funding.

John Cummings: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the level of funding was for sexual health services in Easington primary care trust in each year since 2002. [34063]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not collected centrally. However, the Department has allocated the following funding to Easington primary care trust as the lead PCT for the Durham Chlamydia screening programme, which is shown in the table.

	Funding (£)
2003–04	150,000
2004–05	301,000
2005–06	478,000
Total	929,000

Notes:
The funding is allocated to Easington PCT which is then shared with the other Durham PCTs (Darlington, Derwentside, Durham and Chester-le-Street, Durham Dales, and Sedgefield)
Source:
Dept of Health

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will begin the national advertising campaign on sexual health announced by her predecessor on 26 November 2004. [34225]

Caroline Flint: Our current plans are to aim to launch the new sexual health campaign around spring 2006.

Shropshire and Staffordshire Health Authority

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the budget of the Shropshire and Staffordshire Health Authority is for 2005–06; and what plans she has to increase this budget for the next financial year. [24292]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Shropshire and Staffordshire Strategic Health Authority has a resource budget of £5.0 million for its running costs in 2005–06.

The Department has not determined strategic health authority budgets for 2006–07.

Smoking

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children have suffered observable damage as a result of their mothers smoking during pregnancy in each year for the last 10 years. [34425]

Caroline Flint: The figures requested are not routinely collected.

The national health service leaflet, "Smoking in Pregnancy" sets out the substantial risks that smoking in pregnancy presents including slow growth of the foetus, premature birth, stillbirth, low birth weight, and cot death. A copy of the leaflet is available in the Library.

Spinal Injuries

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the spinal injuries units in England; and if she will make a statement. [34288]

Mr. Byrne: There are 11 spinal injury units in the United Kingdom. Eight of theses specialist spinal cord injury centres are based in England and are listed as follows:

The North of England Spinal Injuries Centre
The James Cook University Hospital
Marton Road, Middlesbrough
Cleveland TS4 3BW
The Midland's Centre for Spinal Injuries
The Robert Jones & Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital
Oswestry
Shropshire SY10 7AG
The Duke of Cornwall Spinal Treatment Centre
Salisbury District Hospital
Odstock Road
Salisbury SP2 8BJ
The Princess Royal Spinal Injuries Unit
Northern General Hospital
Osborne Building
Merries Road
Sheffield S5 7AU
The Regional Spinal Injuries Centre
Southport and Formby General Hospital
Town Lane
Kew
Southport PR8 6NJ
The London Spinal Injuries Unit
Royal National Orthopaedic Hospital
Brockley Hill
Stanmore HA7 4LP
National Spinal Injuries Centre
Stoke Mandeville Hospital
Mandeville Road
Aylesbury
Bucks HP21 8AL
Yorkshire Regional Spinal Injuries Unit
Pinderfields General Hospital
Aberford Road
Wakefield WF1 4DG

Following the year-long review that the Department announced in April, 2003, new arrangements for the commissioning of specialised services were introduced. Strategic health authorities and primary care trusts now have responsibility for the planning, commissioning and monitoring of specialised services, working collaboratively within regional commissioning

consortia. They should assess the healthcare needs of their population and commission services for their local area.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many serious spinal cord injuries have occurred in each of the last five years. [34289]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is shown in the table.

Count of finished consultant episodes where primary diagnosis is spinal cord injury in national health service hospitals England 1999–2000 to 2003–04

	Finished consultant episodes
1999–2000	698
2000–01	679
2001–02	675
2002–03	825
2003–04	962

Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics, Health and Social Care Information Centre

Stem Cell Research

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many diseases were cured as a result of *(a)* adult and *(b)* embryonic stem cell research in each year since 2002; and if she will make a statement. [34532]

Jane Kennedy: Research with embryonic stem cells has been licensed to allow scientists to understand and develop treatments for conditions such as motor neurone disease, diabetes and cystic fibrosis. It is still too early to speak of cures, but scientific and medical opinion is that stem cell research will revolutionise medicine in the 21st century.

There has been a number of encouraging early stage clinical trials with adult embryonic stem cells. As a result of the United Kingdom stem cell initiative, the Government are investing £100 million in stem cell research and clinical trials over the next two years.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the ongoing projects using embryonic stem cells; and if she will make a statement. [34533]

Jane Kennedy: The Human Fertilisation and Embryology Authority (HFEA) is responsible for licensing research to produce embryonic stem cell lines. A list of current licenses can be obtained from the HFEA website http://www.hfea.gov.uk/Research.

There are no central figures for research involving embryonic stem cell lines, but the Medical Research Council's Stem Cell Steering Committee maintains details of embryonic stem cell lines that have been ethically sourced with informed donor consent.

In response to the United Kingdom stem cell initiative, the Government have announced a total investment of £100 million in stem cell research over the next two years.

Strategic Health Authorities

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what capital allocations she expects to be made to the Surrey and Sussex strategic health authority over the next three years; and for what purpose each allocation will be made. [35161]

Caroline Flint: No decisions have yet been made on national health service capital allocations for 2006–07 onwards.

The last round of capital allocations was announced in January 2003, covering 2003–04, 2004–05 and 2005–06.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people are employed in the NHS in each strategic health authority in London. [35621]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is shown in the table as national health service staff by main staff group for London Government office region by strategic health authority, as at 30 September 2004.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether strategic health authorities have a duty to report problems experienced by their constituent trusts in paying their suppliers to her Department. [34282]

Mr. Byrne: Strategic health authorities are required to monitor the performance of individual national health service bodies and work with poor performing organisations to achieve and maintain a level of payment performance consistent with Government accounting regulations and the better payment practice code.

SHAs do not have a specific duty to report problems experienced by NHS trusts and primary care trusts within their health economy to the Department, but, they do report to the Department on all aspects of performance.

Sunset Clauses

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her policy is in respect of the use of sunset clauses in legislation. [34136]

Jane Kennedy: The appropriateness of a sunset clause for the whole or part of any proposed legislation is considered on a case by case basis. It is also addressed when a regulatory impact assessment relating to legislation is being prepared.

Temporary/Agency Staff

Kelvin Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* temporary and *(b)* agency staff there were in the Department in each year since 2002. [36921]

Jane Kennedy: For information on temporary staff, I refer my hon. Friend to table A in Civil Service Statistics which covers permanent and temporary staff numbers (full-time equivalent basis) in the Department. Civil Service Statistics are available in the Library and on the Cabinet Office Statistics website at:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_of_the_civil_service/statistics/civil_service_statistics/index.asp

Information on agency staff is not collected centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

However, we are currently in the process of improving the data coverage of our human resource system and will in future include information on all non-permanent departmental staff.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to reduce the number of *(a)* agency and *(b)* non-permanent staff employed in her Department. [37216]

Jane Kennedy: The Department reports regularly to its managers on its establishment and vacancy factors to enable them to manage resources effectively. Recruitment controls that were in place during the Department's change programme have been relaxed to allow managers to recruit to posts, thus reducing the need for temporary cover.

Urology Services

Mr. Brazier: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the oral statement of 20 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 503WH, on the review of urology services at the Kent and Canterbury hospital, when she expects an announcement to be made on the future of the services. [35002]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 8 December 2005]:* This is a local matter. However, the Kent and Medway strategic health authority has advised that it is anticipated that an announcement on the outcome of the review of urology services at Kent and Canterbury hospital will be made following a meeting to be held on 19 December 2005.

Worcestershire NHS Mental Health Trust

Miss Kirkbride: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the budget was for the Worcestershire NHS Mental Health Trust in each year since 1997. [32460]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Worcestershire Mental Health Partnership National Health Service Trust was established (as the Worcestershire Community and Mental Health NHS Trust) on 1 April 2000. Comparable figures are not available prior to 2000–01.

The following tables show the total income for the trust each year.

Worcestershire community and mental health NHS trust
Total income: £000

	Amount
2000–01	82,692
2001–02	89,824
2002–03	52,241

Worcestershire mental health partnership NHS trust
Total income: £000

	Amount
2003–04	49,971
2004–05	58,808

Source:
Audited summarisation schedules of the Worcestershire Community and Mental Health NHS Trust and the Worcestershire Mental Health Partnership NHS Trust.

Working Time Directive

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made of the impact of the European working time directive on the quality and depth of training received by junior doctors; [33313]

(2) what assessment she has made of the impact of the European working time directive on continuity of patient care. [33315]

Mr. Byrne: This Government are committed to the overall aims of the working time directive (WTD) and ensuring fair working hours for doctors in training.

The national health service is introducing changes to the way that hospitals are organised that improves continuity of care, including the hospital at night project. Changes to working patterns means it is increasingly important to make best use of training opportunities throughout the whole of the working day. The better managed, better structured and more robust training arrangements set out in modernising medical careers (MMC) will lead to more meaningful and focused training. This should be a benefit in developing rotas to support the implementation of the working time directive.

Standards for postgraduate medical training are set by the Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board. A doctor cannot be entered on the specialist register until these standards have been met.

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment she has made of the workload of *(a)* consultants and *(b)* registrars following implementation of the European working time directive; [33316]

(2) what assessment she has made of the impact of the European working time directive on clinical exposure for surgical trainees; [33317]

(3) what research her Department has undertaken into the impact of the European working time directive on *(a)* junior doctors and *(b)* surgical trainees. [33318]

Mr. Byrne: The working time directive (WTD) was implemented for the vast majority of national health service staff groups in 1998 in accordance with regulations. The Government negotiated an extension to the WTD for doctors in training to enable phased implementation from August 2004.

Implementation of the WTD is the responsibility of NHS trusts, and all employees are entitled to appropriate working hours and rest breaks.

However, the Department of Health in England worked with the health professions and NHS employers to provide joint guidance and invested an extra £46 million to support WTD implementation, including 20 national pilots and the hospital at night project. We are also funding independent research on the impact of WTD on medical training.

Standards for postgraduate medical training are set by the Postgraduate Medical Education and Training Board. A doctor cannot be entered on the specialist register until these standards have been met.

Written Answers to Questions

Thursday 15 December 2005

CABINET OFFICE

Christmas Presents

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the cost is of employing people to wrap Christmas presents for the Prime Minister's Office; and if he will make a statement. [37236]

Mr. Jim Murphy: No staff are employed to wrap Christmas presents for the Prime Minister's Office.

Ecovert plc

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what contracts have been entered into between the Cabinet Office and Ecovert plc in the last three years. [37237]

Mr. Jim Murphy: Following a competitive tendering exercise, the Cabinet Office entered into a contract with Ecovert FM Ltd. on 1 April 2002 for the provision of a total facilities management service covering its estate in London and Basingstoke. This includes ad hoc project works. The Cabinet Office has not entered into any other contracts with Ecovert FM Ltd.

Public Bodies

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster to how many posts in public bodies he has the power to appoint individuals. [36617]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster is responsible for making appointments to five advisory non-departmental public bodies. These are the Advisory Committee on Advertising; the Advisory Panel on Public Sector Information; the Better Regulation Task Force (which becomes the Better Regulation Commission on 1 January 2006); the Civil Service Appeal Board; and, the Security Vetting Appeals Panel. Further information about these bodies can be found on the Public Bodies database at http://www.knowledgenetwork.gov.uk/ndpb/ndpb.nsf/

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster if he will list the former hon. Members who left Parliament in 2005 who have since been appointed to public bodies by his Department, broken down by party; and who was responsible for making each appointment. [36679]

Mr. Jim Murphy: No former hon. Members who left Parliament in 2005 have since been appointed to a public body sponsored by the Department.

Prime Minister's Delivery Unit

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many staff are employed by the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit; and at what grade. [35974]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Prime Minister's Delivery Unit's agreed staffing profile for 2005–06 was 41.5 full-time equivalent staff, breaking down as the following mix of grades:

	Number
Senior Civil Service 3	1
Senior Civil Service 2	3
Senior Civil Service 1	14
Cabinet Office Band A	14.5
Cabinet Office Band B2	4
Cabinet Office Band B1	4
Cabinet Office Band C2	1

In October 2005 the unit expanded, with seven posts transferring in from elsewhere in the Cabinet Office to work on an initiative to assess the wider capability of Whitehall Departments to deliver their objectives. Their grade breakdown is as follows:

	Number
Senior Civil Service 2	1
Senior Civil Service 1	2
Cabinet Office Band A	3
Cabinet Office Band B1	1

As with any unit that actively manages its staffing complement through turnover and succession planning, at any given point PMDU may have slightly more or fewer staff than the profile quoted aforementioned.

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Clergy

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners how many retired Church of England clergy who are in receipt of a pension have subsequently returned to the ministry full-time. [37933]

Sir Stuart Bell: For the majority of clergy, ministry does not cease when they retire and start to receive a pension. Many retired clergy continue to make a vital contribution through honorary and assistant ministry. Occasionally they are licensed to a benefice and may even receive a part-stipend in addition to their pension. The Pensions Board has discretion to suspend or reduce pension if the recipient is in work which falls within the definition of pensionable service. The total they receive by way of pension and stipend should not exceed the National Minimum Stipend (currently £18,060 p.a.).

In 2004 there were two such cases and there have also been two cases so far in 2005. Aggregate figures for all retired clergy are not available.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Appeal Court Hearings

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many appeals were heard by the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) where there were *(a)* two Appeal Court judges and *(b)* one Appeal Court judge sitting in each of the last five years for which information is available. [36186]

Ms Harman: The number of appeals heard when there were two judges sitting in the full Court of Appeal is set out in the table. No appeals were heard by a judge sitting alone in the full Court of Appeal.

December to November each year	*Number*
2000–01	268
2001–02	623
2002–03	726
2003–04	607
2004–05	665

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list the cases heard by the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) in which all proceedings are complete where there were *(a)* two Appeal Court judges and *(b)* one Appeal Court judge sitting in each of the last five years for which information is available. [37541]

Ms Harman: A list setting out the names of cases where an application or appeal was heard by two judges sitting in the full Court of Appeal has been placed in the Libraries of both Houses. No applications or appeals were heard by a judge sitting alone in the full Court of Appeal.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidance she issues about the number of judges required to hear an appeal in the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division); what the *(a)* maximum and *(b)* minimum number of judges required is to hear an appeal before that Court; and if she will make a statement. [37542]

Ms Harman: No guidance is issued by the Minister. The governing provisions in section 55, Supreme Court Act 1981 do not set a maximum number of judges; a court consisting of two judges may be duly constituted for the hearing of an appeal against sentence but cannot hear an appeal against conviction, for which a minimum of three judges is required.

Civil Legal Aid (Gravesham)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the availability of civil legal aid to people living in Gravesham. [37620]

Bridget Prentice: The Legal Services Commission contracts with service providers throughout England and Wales to provide a range of legal and advice services across different categories of law.

There are currently six service providers with a contract to undertake civil legal aid work in Gravesham. Service providers in Gravesham may help people who live outside the area, and people who live in Gravesham may visit a service provider in a different area.

Any person residing in England or Wales can access free quality legal advice and information through Community Legal Service Direct. This service is available direct to the public through a telephone line, website and information leaflets.

Departmental Guidance (Evidence/Documentary Access)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what her policy is with regard to *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in her Department giving evidence to the (i) Scottish Parliament, (ii) National Assembly for Wales and (iii) Northern Ireland Assembly committees; and to what categories of document she gives (A) full access, (B) restricted access and (C) no access to the (1) Scottish Parliament, (2) National Assembly for Wales, (3) Northern Ireland Assembly and (4) House of Commons select committees. [37409]

Bridget Prentice: Requests for the attendance of Ministers or officials to give evidence to the devolved legislatures, and for the provision of information to the assemblies, will be considered on a case by case basis. This consideration will reflect the principles set out in the Cabinet Office guidance "Departmental Evidence and Response to Select Committees (July 2005)" and the Department for Constitutional Affairs' Devolution Guidance Note 12, "Attendance of UK Ministers and Officials at Committees of the devolved legislatures"; and the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act.

The principles underlying the provision of information to House of Commons Select Committee are set out in "Departmental Evidence and Response to Select Committees", particularly sections 4B and 4C.

External Media Relations

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much her Department spent on external media relations in each year since 2001. [29575]

Bridget Prentice: The Department spent nothing in 2001–02, £14,100 in 2002–03, £154,140 in 2003–04 and £141,451 in 2004–05. This can be explained primarily by spending on independent PR consultants by the Commission for Judicial Appointments and spending on the Living Together campaign which aims to increase awareness and understanding of the legal issues surrounding cohabitation.

High Sheriffs

Mr. Beith: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the arrangements were for *(a)* the advertisement of vacancies and *(b)* the selection of nominees in preparing the 2005 nominations for high sheriffs in England and Wales. [34448]

Ms Harman: The arrangements for seeking nominees are a matter for individual counties. Local selection panels are, however, encouraged to cast the net as widely as possible and to consider candidates from a wide variety of backgrounds.

Media Relations

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how much the Department has spent on external media relations in each month of the last year. [14683]

Bridget Prentice *[pursuant to the reply, 24 November 2005, Official Report, c. 1355W]:* The Department spent £10,415.41 on external media relations in each month of the last year. I had previously stated that the amount spent was £5,670 but this figure failed to take account of spending by the Commission for Judicial Appointments on independent consultants.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Digital Broadcasting

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what her latest estimate is of the number of non-digital television sets in the UK; what the average is per household; what the estimated cost to the Government is of *(a)* digital switchover and *(b)* support to viewers on low incomes to facilitate changeover; and if she will make a statement. [32204]

James Purnell: On 8 November 2005, Ofcom published research by the Generics Group[1] which examined the cost and power consumption implications of digital switchover for UK households. The report estimates that there are 24.8 million primary sets and 24.3 million secondary sets in regular use. This excludes television sets that are used exclusively for other purposes such as video gaming. Ofcom's most recent figures for digital take up were published on 9 December 2005. As of 30 September 2005, 65.9 per cent. of homes—round 16.4 million homes—can receive digital television services on at least one set. A further 650,000 homes have access to multichannel television services through analogue cable. Ofcom do not have detailed estimates for digital take up for second or third sets take up. The Generics Group research estimates that around 28 per cent. of secondary sets are used to receive digital television.

Targeted support will be available to households where someone is aged 75 or over; and to households where someone has a severe disability-defined as those people eligible for either disability living allowance or attendance allowance. The full details and costs of the scheme are currently being developed, but the assistance will consist of providing the necessary equipment to convert one television set and the relevant support to install and use such equipment. This help will be free for the poorest eligible households, those on income support, jobseeker's allowance or pension credit; other qualifying households will pay a modest fee. The scheme will be established and funded by the BBC, as envisaged in the BBC Charter Green Paper published in March.

There are no central estimates of the overall cost to Government of digital switchover. However, other than the costs of updating television equipment within the Government sector, the only costs will be those incurred for research, communications and other programme support costs for the Digital Switchover Programme.

[1] Cost and power consumption implications of digital switchover—Generics Group. Published by Ofcom on 8 November 2005

Elite Athletes (Financial Support)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on financial support for elite athletes. [37617]

Mr. Caborn: Financial support for elite athletes during the period April 2005 to March 2009 is being provided through a number of schemes.

UK Sport's World Class Performance Programme will provide £98 million to sport's national governing bodies and elite athletes to assist their preparation and participation at winter and summer Olympics and Paralympics.

The Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (TASS) is providing £17 million to our most talented young people in the form of scholarships, bursaries and TASS 2012 scholarships.

In addition, our elite athletes are able to train at a number of world-class facilities throughout England that have been developed as part of the English Institute of Sport with an investment of £120 million from Sport England's Lottery Fund.

London Olympics

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will publish the commitments made by the Government to the International Olympic Committee to restrict betting on the 2012 London Olympics; and by what means she will implement those commitments. [37274]

Mr. Caborn: No such commitments have been given.

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what funding submissions she has received directly from the British Olympic Association for elite sport in the run-up to the 2012 Olympic games. [37288]

Mr. Caborn: I have not received a funding submission from the British Olympic Association for elite sport in the run-up to the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games.

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with the Disability Rights Commission on promoting the London Paralympics; and if she will make a statement. [37610]

Mr. Caborn: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has not, at this stage, held discussions with the Disability Rights Commission (DRC) on the promotion of the London 2012 Paralympic games. However, the

DRC has been involved in the preparations for the games through their membership of London 2012's London Disability Organisations Forum. As preparations gather pace, discussions are taking place between the 2012 stakeholders to determine the best way to engage and consult with disability organisations on various aspects of the games over the coming years.

We are determined that the London 2012 Paralympic games will be a showcase for Paralympic sport, strengthening the Paralympic Movement and setting new standards for services, facilities and opportunities for disabled people. The games will inspire greater numbers of young people—and in particular those with disabilities—to become involved with sport and to aspire to elite performance.

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Kettering (Mr. Hollobone) of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1W, on the Olympic Games, who the members are of the Nations and Regions Group of London 2012; and what the relevant experience of each is. [35831]

Mr. Caborn: The 2012 Nations and Regions Group is Chaired by Charles Allen and includes a representative from each English region and the devolved Administrations.

The full list of current members is; Charles Allen, Chief Executive of ITV, London 2012 Board Member and Chief Executive of Manchester 2002; Keith Mills, Deputy Chairman of the London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games; Jeff Moore, Chief Executive of the East Midlands Development Agency; Stephen Castle, Board Member of the East of England Development Agency and Chair of the East of England Regional Sports Board; Neale Coleman, Adviser to the Mayor of London; Tim-Cantle Jones, Chair of the North East Regional Sports Board; Andy Worthington, Chair of the North West Regional Sports Board; Aideen McGinley, Permanent Secretary of the Northern Ireland Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure; Julia Bracewell, Chair of Sport Scotland; Mary McAnally, Chair of the South East Regional Sports Board and a member of the South East Regional Development Agency; Ged Roddy, Chairman of Sport England South West; Gareth Hall, Chief Executive of the Welsh Development Agency; Derrick Anderson, Chair of the West Midlands Regional Sports Board and Non-Executive Director of London 2012; David Gent, Chief Executive of Sport England Yorkshire; Sue Killen, Director General, Department for Culture, Media and Sport; and Tom Wright, Chief Executive of VisitBritain.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions her Department has had with regional and local bodies about plans to attract Olympics-related activities to Northamptonshire in the run up to the 2012 games. [36137]

Mr. Caborn: We have established a Nations and Regions Group to ensure the whole of the UK is engaged with and benefits from the Games in 2012.

The Nations and Regions Group met on 4 November to discuss how best to co-ordinate UK wide interests in staging the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games, and will meet again on 24 January to confirm its remit and membership.

Each of Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and the regions of England is establishing a regional working group, responsible for taking work forward and reporting to the Nations and Regions Group. They will include representatives from regional development agencies (RDAs), regional sports boards and other relevant stakeholders. Under this arrangement, Northamptonshire would participate through the East Midlands Group.

The RDAs will of course play a vital role in this work, and we will write to them shortly to ask them to develop plans to maximise business and development opportunities offered by the 2012 Olympics in their regions.

National Lottery

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what arrangements are in place to ensure that organisations in receipt of lottery awards *(a)* are monitored effectively and *(b)* spend the awarded resources as intended. [37975]

Mr. Caborn: Each lottery distributing body's financial directions require the body to set up appropriate project monitoring and evaluation arrangements for both ongoing and completed projects, which are supported with lottery funds.

The exact nature of monitoring will vary in individual cases depending on the size, nature and complexity of the project concerned. The directions also say that distributors should make a condition of each lottery award that it should be repaid in certain circumstances. This includes cases where the purpose of the grant is not fulfilled.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the implications of lottery funding for the London 2012 Olympics for lottery grants for other sports; and if she will make a statement. [37618]

Mr. Caborn: We have been quite clear since launching our Olympic bid three years ago that lottery proceeds would form a key part of the public funding package. We have allowed for up to £1.5 billion to be raised in this way, some of which will be raised by new lottery games solely for this purpose. We expect the non-Olympic good causes to receive up to 5 per cent. less in income, as a result of sales diversion, over the eight-year period from 2005 to 2013. In addition, up to £410 million will be redirected from the proceeds of non-Olympic lottery games after 2009.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the amount of lottery funds distributed in the South East region in 2004–05. [37619]

Mr. Caborn: 3,560 awards worth over £122 million were made by Lottery bodies to projects in the South East region during financial year 2004–05. The expenditure of these awards may be spread over several years. Similarly the amount spent during 2004–05 will have included parts of awards made during previous years.

The Department holds information on the geographical breakdown of Lottery awards, rather than expenditure.

This information is derived from the Department's Lottery award database, searchable at www.lottery.culture.gov.uk, which uses information supplied by the Lottery distributors.

National Coaching Certificate

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions her Department has had with the *(a)* National Governing Bodies and *(b)* the Department for Education and Skills on the implementation of the National Coaching Certificate. [37272]

Mr. Caborn: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has worked closely with Sportscoach UK and 21 National Governing Bodies to develop their sport specific qualifications in line with UK Coaching Certificate Levels 1–5. Six of these National Governing Bodies have been involved in a UKCC endorsement pilot. A further 10 sports are working with Sportscoach UK to progress their sport specific qualifications.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has been involved in discussions with Department for Education and Skills regarding the level of support available for the UK Coaching Certificate from Learning and Skills Councils and I have written to Phil Hope, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Skills regarding this issue.

National Sports Foundation

Mr. Andy Reed: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she expects to announce details of the National Sports Foundation; and if she will make a statement. [37273]

Mr. Caborn: The Chancellor outlined details of the National Sports Foundation in his pre-Budget report document "Britain meeting the global challenge: Enterprise, fairness and responsibility".

The National Sports Foundation will be established from April 2006, bringing public and private sectors together to invest in grass roots sport. The Government has committed £27.5 million over the next two years, and will be encouraging the private sector to match this funding, aiming to raise at least a further £30 million from private investors over this period.

The foundation will aim to attract new sources of investment from both large and small private sector firms not traditionally associated with sports sponsorship, ensuring the investment is targeted at community sport development rather than elite and professional sport. To do this, the foundation will:

be a high profile, one-stop shop for private investors and community sport organisations who need project funding, with a single web-based point of access;

act as broker, bringing together investors and projects to meet the needs of both;

have a national and regional dimension;

have a visible, respected and enterprising "Champion" promoting the benefits of investing in the foundation;

fund initiatives that focus on increasing participation, particularly projects that promote diversity in sport, or improve the infrastructure of community sporting provision, for example by providing facilities and coaches; and capitalise on the nationwide Olympic "feel-good" factor to ensure lasting benefits for community sport.

Special Advisers

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will list the *(a)* advisers and *(b)* special advisers to her Department whose role relates to (i) sport and (ii) the Olympics; whether each is paid; and what other official posts each holds. [37859]

Mr. Caborn: DCMS employs a special adviser who advises on sport and Olympics matters. He is paid and holds no other official posts.

Sport (West Midlands)

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what financial assistance has been given to junior *(a)* Rugby League, *(b)* Rugby Union, *(c)* football and *(d)* cricket in (i) the West Midlands, (ii) Staffordshire and (iii) Tamworth constituency in each of the last five years. [37832]

Mr. Caborn: Exchequer and Lottery funding is allocated by Sport England to the National Governing Bodies of Sports. It is not possible to identify the funding that went specifically to juniors as Sport England does not capture this information. However, benefiting young people is a key priority for Sport England's investment in National Governing Bodies and the potential for projects to benefit junior sport is integral to funding decisions.

The Exchequer funding made available to the governing bodies of the sports mentioned over the last five years is as follows:

Rugby Union £2.3 million, and £9.4 million through the Community Club Development Programme (CCDP)

Cricket £2.1 million, and £9.4 million through CCDP

Football £0.8 million, and £9.4 million through CCDP

Rugby League £1.4 million.

As the funding is awarded to the governing body we are not able to provide information on figures to a specific area or region.

However, the table summarises Sport England's lottery investment over the last five years in the West Midlands, Staffordshire and Tamworth.

Lottery awards (including Awards For All) in the last five years

£

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
West Midlands						
Cricket	628,974	584,065	602,058	579,691	133,433	83,538
Football	872,839	1,069,784	619,083	569,147	262,798	79,851
Rugby League	17,088	24,466	36,581	26,536	19,970	24,991
Rugby Union	322,693	75,056	90,628	209,416	481,450	2,995
Staffordshire						
Cricket	258,739	190,270	32,669	19,544	9,769	7,155
Football	225,212	77,833	85,884	72,641	26,155	—
Rugby League	1,395	—	—	—	—	3,000
Rugby Union	6,241	—	4,987	5,000	—	—
Tamworth						
Cricket	—	4,648	—	—	4,060	—
Football	35,884	4,858	3,194	—	8,105	—
Rugby League	—	—	—	—	—	—
Rugby Union	—	—	—	—	—	—

Sports Funding

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what financial assistance has been given to junior *(a)* Rugby League, *(b)* Rugby Union, *(c)* cricket and *(d)* football in (i) the North West, (ii) Lancashire and (iii) Chorley in each of the last five years. [37124]

Mr. Caborn: It is not possible to split the funding that went to juniors as Sport England does not specifically capture this information. However, benefiting young people is a key priority for all of their community investment and the potential for projects to benefit junior sport is integral to every funding decision made.

The Exchequer funding made available to the governing bodies of the sports over the last five years is as follows:

Rugby Union—£2.3million, and £9.4million through the Community Club Development Programme (CCDP)

Cricket—£2.1 million, and £9.4 million through CCDP

Football—£0.8million, and £9.4 million through CCDP

Rugby League—£1.4 million.

As the funding is awarded to the governing body we are not able to provide information on figures to a specific area or region.

I can, however state what lottery money Sport England have invested in the North West, Lancashire and Chorley. This is detailed in the following table:

Lottery awards (including awards for all) in the last five years

£

	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
North West						
Cricket	1,477,205	856,960	1,258,364	3,359,823	586,916	80,335
Football	1,329,765	4,631,167	1,172,168	1,544,410	405,709	200,835
Rugby League	356,657	753,716	125,567	705,612	1,377,480	31,780
Rugby Union	107,763	563,060	357,496	1,058,444	199,701	34,881
Lancashire						
Cricket	46,585	127,988	183,131	52,863	32,148	23,477
Football	73,644	385,928	75,673	82,318	58,692	40,701
Rugby League	14,314	4,127	8,665	7,130	39,362	—
Rugby Union	14,113	181,107	182,260	4,830	11,550	4,963
Chorley						
Cricket	—	5,000	—	3,520	—	4,500
Football	—	—	—	9,886	—	—
Rugby League	—	—	3,695	—	49,203	—
Rugby Union	—	—	—	—	5,000	—

Swimming Pools

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many public access 50 metre swimming pools there are in *(a)* England, *(b)* London and *(c)* Havering; and how many are planned prior to the Olympics in 2012. [37957]

Mr. Caborn: There are sixteen 50 metre swimming pools with public access in England, of which two are in London. There are no 50 metre swimming pools in Havering. A further six pools are currently being developed and this includes two for the new Aquatic Centre in Stratford.

An additional three 50 metre pools and two water polo pools are planned for the Olympic games and these

will be redistributed following the games against an agreed legacy strategy.

Sport England is working with the Amateur Swimming Association to consider swimming pool provision in London, including the impact of the Olympic games pool provision.

UK Film Industry

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) if she will make a statement on Government support for the UK film industry; [34803]

(2) what financial assistance is available to film makers from the UK Government to fund film production. [34804]

James Purnell: The Government are committed to supporting a sustainable, stable and successful film industry. The UK Film Council, our strategic body for film, allocates lottery money for filmmaking, and works with the Government and other funding bodies to promote the widest possible enjoyment and understanding of cinema throughout the UK. The Government themselves continue to make available effective and appropriately-targeted tax relief for filmmakers.

DEFENCE

Afghanistan

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last had discussions with his Dutch counterpart about the possible deployment of Dutch troops to southern Afghanistan; and what the outcome was of such discussions. [37127]

John Reid: I have regular discussions with allies including the Dutch about NATO operations in Afghanistan.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* salary bill was and *(b)* administrative costs were for his Department in (i) each (A) nation and (B) region of the UK and (ii) London in 2004–05. [35868]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence publishes pay costs by region in the HMT Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis (PESA). The data for 2003–04 is contained in Table 8.20 of the Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2005 (Cm 6521) which was published in April 2005 (see page 131). We are currently undertaking work on the analysis of the 2004–05 data, and this will be published in the PESA tables in April 2006.

MOD does not currently collect data on administrative budgets.

Departmental Staff (Relocation)

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent assessment he has made of the potential *(a)* to reduce and *(b)* to relocate departmental posts in the main London building. [36998]

Mr. Touhig: An assessment was made at the end of 2004, as part of work on the SR04 efficiency programme, that identified the potential for a reduction of around 300 posts in the MOD's main London building. In addition, some individual posts may be relocated but there are no plans for major relocations. Future staffing levels and requirements will be reviewed regularly.

Early Retirement

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many of his Department's employees have taken early retirement in each year since 1997. [34047]

Mr. Touhig: The following table gives details of the number of Ministry of Defence civilian employees that took early retirement in each of the financial years 1997–1998 to 2004–2005.

Financial Year	*Headcount*
1997–98	1,420
1998–99	920
1999–2000	1,060
2000–01	990
2001–02	830
2002–03	700
2003–04[1]	1,200
2004–05	790

[1] The streamlining of Head Office prior to the reoccupation of Main Building in London led to 540 personnel taking early retirement on Compulsory early retirement on structural grounds.

Note:

This table used the revised definition of civilian personnel (www.dasa.mod.uk), but excludes Royal Fleet Auxiliary and Locally Engaged Civilian staff for whom no information on civilian early retirements is available.

Far East POWs

Ben Chapman: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received from non-qualifying claimants for the ex-gratia payment scheme for Far East prisoners of war in response to his offer of compensation for distress caused by his Department's failure to set out the eligibility criteria clearly. [32335]

Mr. Touhig: A number of those who claimed under the scheme but did not qualify, and who may be entitled to the £500 compensation payment, have written to the Department criticising its level. Of some 175 payments that have so far been made, one has been returned.

Media Monitoring

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much the Department has spent on media monitoring activities in each of the last eight financial years. [35627]

Mr. Touhig: The following table sets out MOD's expenditure on media monitoring activities for the last two completed financial years. Information relating to the costs of media monitoring for the preceding six financial years in the format requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Financial year	Expenditure (£ million)[1]
2004–05	0.350
2003–04	0.421

[1] This figure is made up of expenditure for daily press cutting services and a subscription to the Cabinet Office Media Monitoring Unit. The total is rounded to the nearest £1,000.

Post-traumatic Stress

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what provision his Department has made for veterans suffering from severe post-traumatic stress disorder. [24841]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence recognises Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) as a serious and disabling condition and continues to take all appropriate steps to address this and other more common stress-related disorders among Service personnel, reflecting the wider medical understanding of prevention and care.

The provision-of health care for veterans is primarily the responsibility of the NHS. However, under a provision of the war pensions scheme, the MOD funds remedial treatment at one of the treatment centres of the Ex Services Mental Health Society (Combat Stress) for those with service-related accepted mental health problems; this includes cases of PTSD.

As part of the Veterans Programme, the MOD is working closely with the Department of Health and the devolved Administrations to ensure excellent mental health services for veterans, including those suffering from PTSD. Discussions are taking place on a number of questions relating to the provision of such services, including exploring whether any changes need to be made to arrangements to address the needs of those suffering from severe PTSD.

Public Bodies/Agencies

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many staff were employed by non-departmental public bodies and agencies for which he has responsibility in 2004–05 in *(a)* total and *(b)* each (i) nation and (ii) region of the UK and *(c)* London. [35892]

Mr. Touhig: Information on the number of staff, employed between 2004–05, by each of MOD's executive non-departmental public bodies in total and for each nation and region of the UK and London is as follows:

Nation: England

Museum	Total[1]	UK region (including London)
National Army Museum	86	Chelsea—London Government Office Region (82) Sandhurst—South East Government Office Region (4)
RAF Museum	169	Cosford/Stafford—West Midlands Government Office Region (49) Hendon—London Government Office Region (120)
Royal Naval Museum	32	Portsmouth Naval Base—South East Government Office Region (32)
Royal Navy Submarine Museum	22	Gosport, Portsmouth—South East Government Office Region (22)
Museum Royal Marines	29	Southsea, Hampshire—South East Government Office Region (29)
Fleet Air Arm Museum	65	Yeovilton, Somerset—South West Government Office Region (65)

[1] As of 31 March 2005. Includes full and part time staff. Figures taken from the Cabinet Office Public Bodies website http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/the_future_of_the_civil_service/agencies_and_public_bodies/publications/pdf/public-bodies/publicbodies2QQ5.pdf

Information on the number of staff employed by agencies in total and for each nation (England, Scotland, Wales, N Ireland and overseas) can be found in the UK Defence Statistics 2005 Publication under tables 2.6, 2.6a and 2.6b (pages 52–54). A copy is available in the Library of the House. Information on the number of staff employed by agencies in each region of the UK and London could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Departmental Costs

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the *(a)* salary bill was and *(b)* administrative costs were for his Department in (i) each (A) nation and (B) region of the UK and (ii) London in 2004–05. [35877]

Jim Fitzpatrick: As stated in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Resource Accounts 2004–05 (HC 301, 20 July 2005), the total salary bill for ODPM was some £226,643,000. Total expenditure within the administration cost limit for the year, also taken from the accounts, was £310,744,000.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not monitor regional or central London administrative costs relating to the central Department separately. Such a breakdown could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

A breakdown, by English region, of expenditure and salaries (within the administration costs limit) by the Government Offices is set out as follows.

£

Government offices	Salary/ expenditure	Total administrative costs/expenditure (net of receipts)
North East	10,214	13,887
North West	12,060	17,778
Yorkshire and Humberside	9,463	13,454
West Midlands	9,530	15,286
East Midlands	9,035	11,937
East	8,951	15,076
South West	10,542	14,725
South East	11,137	14,372
London	13,177	18,870
Regional co-ordination unit (in London)	2,260	6,025
Total	96,369	141,410

Departmental Grants

Tim Loughton: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the projects and services run by the NSPCC which have received public funding from his Department in each of the last three years; how much funding was provided in each case; and over what time scale. [34245]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has made no payments to the NSPCC for projects or services in any of the last three years.

Fire Services

Mr. Gray: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his current estimate is of the overall cost of establishing regional fire control centres in *(a)* the South West, *(b)* the other regions and *(c)* in total. [35685]

Jim Fitzpatrick: FiReControl is a national project. There are no separate budgets for each regional control centre. For information on the one-off costs of delivering FiReControl, I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 358W. The national cost will be £160 million.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* genuine and *(b)* malicious fire emergency calls have been received in (i) Brent and (ii) London in each year since 1997. [35589]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The figures for the financial years from April 1999 are set out in the following table. The current computer incident recording system used by the London Fire Brigade (which has provided these figures) was introduced in April 1999 and there is no readily available data on a comparable basis for 1997 and 1998.

(a) genuine calls are given as incidents attended which are either a primary fire, secondary fire, chimney fire, automatic false alarm or good intent false alarm.

(b) Malicious calls are given as malicious false alarms attended.

	Fires			*False alarms*			
	Primary fire	*Secondary fire*	*Chimney fire*	*AFAs*	*Good intent*	*All "genuine" calls to fires*	*Malicious false alarms*
London							
1999–2000	21,879	27,004	93	47,828	14,020	110,824	12,487
2000–01	21,699	25,018	89	49,191	13,942	109,939	11,370
2001–02	22,342	33,052	64	50,825	15,333	121,616	12,204
2002–03	19,577	27,829	67	49,171	14,554	111,198	9,995
2003–04	20,054	37,255	75	50,836	16,035	124,255	9,864
2004–05	17,379	22,948	65	51,562	14,308	106,262	7,586
Brent							
1999–2000	795	510	2	1,263	411	1,307	429
2000–01	745	483	1	1,312	380	1,229	482
2001–02	857	515	1	1,273	403	1,373	379
2002–03	726	495	0	1,191	407	1,221	376
2003–04	771	743	1	1,319	447	1,515	402
2004–05	623	501	0	1,125	399	1,124	312

Formula Grant

Jim Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the assumed population of the City of Newcastle-upon-Tyne was for formula grant purposes in *(a)* 2002–03, *(b)* 2004–05, *(c)* 2005–06 and *(d)* 2006–07. [38063]

Mr. Woolas: The population figures for City of Newcastle-Upon-Tyne used in formula grant calculations in 2002–03, 2003–04, 2004–05, 2005–06 and 2006–07 are shown in the following table:

	Settlement year						
Mid Year Estimate (MYE)	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*Amended 2003–04 published in 2004–05*	*2004–05*	*Amended 2004–05 published in 2006–07*	*2005–06*	*2006–07*
2000	270,484	—	—	—	—	—	—
2001	—	259,567	—	—	—	—	—
2001 (Revised)	—	—	266,241	—	—	—	—
2002	—	—	—	260,268	—	—	—
2002 (Revised)	—	—	—	—	266,012	—	—
2003	—	—	—	—	—	266,589	—
2004	—	—	—	—	—	—	269,465
Population projection in 2006	—	—	—	—	—	—	263,888

Notes:

1. The mid-2000 population estimates used in the 2002/03 settlement were based on the 1991 Census.
2. Settlements for 2003–04 to 2006–07 have used population figures derived from the 2001 Census.
3. Revised population estimates for 2001 and 2002 published by the ONS have been reflected in Amending Reports by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister.
4. In the 2006–07 Settlement, population projections for 2006 will be used for the dominant data drivers of population as this allows the settlement to be more forward looking. The mid-2004 population estimates have also been used but within wider indicators used in the top-up formulae.

Source:

Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Jim Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the formula grant was in respect of reimbursement of the costs of concessionary fares in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 for each local authority in the County of Tyne and Wear; and how much is proposed for 2006–07. [38064]

Mr. Woolas: Government support for concessionary fares is funded via the Revenue Support Grant Settlement. Revenue Support Grant is an unhypothecated block grant. This means that authorities are able to spend the grant on any service. It is not therefore possible to say how much grant an authority received for a particular service.

Media Relations

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much his Office spent on external media relations in each year since 2001. [29573]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) was created as a central department in its own right in May 2002, since then the ODPM has spent £619,072.66 on media relations with the Central Office of Information over the period.

The figure breaks down as follows:

ODPM	*£*
2002–03	247,612.45
2003–04	99,161.92
2004–05	160,320.75
2005–06	111,977.54

All spend has been to help promote fire safety in the home

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has spent no money on external commercial media relations in this period.

Occupational Health

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much his Department spent on occupational health in each of the last five years. [35581]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was created on 29 May 2002. The information requested is tabled as follows:

Financial Year	*Expenditure (£)*
2002–03 (June to March)	11,622
2003–04	11,406
2004–05	39,069
2005–06 (to end October)	18,086

Parliamentary Questions

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he will reply to Question 27463 from the hon. Member for St Albans, tabled on 8 November. [33447]

Yvette Cooper: I answered the hon. Member on 1 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 681W.

Sunset Clauses

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his policy is in respect of the use of sunset clauses in legislation. [34317]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The appropriateness of a sunset clause for the whole or part of any proposed legislation is considered on a case by case basis. It is also addressed when a regulatory impact assessment relating to legislation is being prepared.

Sustainable Communities Plan

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment the Government have made of the potential impact of the Sustainable Communities Plan on the different growth rates of the English regions. [26926]

Yvette Cooper: The Government have set out a full response to the Barker Review of Housing Supply on 5 December 2005. This builds on the Sustainable Communities Plan and seeks to deliver a better balance between housing supply and demand in every English region. We recognise that affordability problems are not exclusively a problem in London and the South East, but extend to the South West and into parts of the Midlands and hot spots in the North.

We have announced a package of measures, including increases in housing supply, reforms to improve the planning system's responsiveness to the housing market and we are consulting on a planning gain supplement to provide funding to support additional housing supply.

By providing homes where demand is highest, we will tackle constraints to the continued economic development of the country as a whole. National growth is partly dependent on enabling the continued development of London and the South East. Constraints on London and the South East's housing supply and economic development are likely to harm the economy and job growth of the UK as a whole, given the links between regions.

Addressing constraints to growth in London and the South East should also reduce long-term regional disparities in house price inflation. This will enable people to move between regions to take advantage of employment opportunities. Labour mobility helps to reduce disparities between regions. In addition, improving the supply responsiveness of the housing market may also reduce inflationary pressures and all regions will benefit from lower economic volatility as well as lower real interest rates.

We are taking steps to help northern regions to maintain the rate of improvement they have shown in recent years. We have set a regional economic performance target, jointly owned by ODPM, the Treasury and the Department for Trade and Industry, to help narrow the persistent gaps in economic growth rates between the regions. To meet this objective the Government have taken significant measures, in areas such as education, skills, employment and transport, to improve the economic performance of all the English regions.

The housing market renewal pathfinders, which form a key element of the Sustainable Communities Plan, also have an important part to play. They will deliver a

greatly improved choice of good quality housing in nine areas of the North and Midlands, thus helping to make them more attractive to employers and more competitive nationally and internationally.

Town and Parish Councils

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of funds raised through town and parish council precepts in England were spent on *(a)* capital and *(b)* revenue projects in the last year for which figures are available. [35387]

Mr. Woolas: The information requested is not collected centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Unlawful Activities

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what activities have been made unlawful by legislation introduced by his Department since May 2003; and if he will make a statement. [36217]

Jim Fitzpatrick: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by the Minister for Housing and Planning, my hon. Friend the Member for Pontefract and Castleford (Yvette Cooper) on 26 January 2005, *Official Report*, columns 433–37W. No additional Office of the Deputy Prime Minister Acts of Parliament have been passed since that answer was given.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Academy Schools

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many staff in her Department are involved in promoting and setting up academy schools; which *(a)* outside agencies and *(b)* consultancies are involved; and at what cost to date. [36286]

Jacqui Smith: The Academies programme is a £5 billion programme to create 200 Academies open or in the pipeline by 2010. The following table gives the number of my Department's staff employed on the Academies programme (as at the end of the financial year) and the associated running costs for each year since 2002. In addition, my Department employs the external consultants Veredus, Alligan, PriceWaterhouse Coopers and Atkins to advise on the programme as the need arises together with various other individuals providing a consultancy service.

Financial year	*Number of DfES staff*	*Cost (£000)*	*Cost of consultants (£000)*
2002–03	25	784	1,725
2003–04	30	1,762	3,776
2004–05	45	2,000	5,685
2005–06[1]	67	2,147	3,539

[1] Costs and staff numbers to end November 2005.

Outside agencies involved in the programme include the Specialist Schools and Academies Trust, and the 13 project management companies on the DfES framework: Alligan Ltd; Appleyards Consulting; BDP; Cambridge Education Ltd; Faber Maunsell; MouchelParkman; Nord Anglia Education; PKF; Place Group Ltd; Precept; Tribal Education; Turner and Townsend; 3Es.

Children Act

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 7 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1337W, what work her Department is undertaking in pursuance of the exercise of the power under section 12 of the Children Act 2004. [37230]

Beverley Hughes: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Education and Skills issued on 8 December the following written ministerial statement.

"I am announcing today a step change in the support the Government provides to front-line professionals in children's services by leading the implementation of an information sharing index.

The information sharing index is a key element of the Every Child Matters programme to transform children's services by supporting more effective prevention and early intervention. Its goal is to improve outcomes and the experience of public services for all children, young people and families. Better information sharing is essential for early and effective intervention. The index will provide a tool to support better communication among practitioners across education, health, social care and youth offending. It will allow them to contact one another more easily and quickly, so they can share information about children who need services or about whose welfare they are concerned.

Our decision about the way forward with the index has been informed by substantial input from, and consultation with, many front-line practitioners and managers across a wide range of children's services organisations. We have also drawn extensively on the experience of local index approaches run under existing legislation by Trailblazer local authorities. Our conclusions respond to what stakeholders have told us they need to be able to do their jobs more effectively and take account of views expressed on the design of the index.

The index will be a simple basic online system containing:

minimal identifying information for each child; name, address, date of birth, gender, and contact details for parents or carers. Each child will also have a unique identifying number. In almost all cases this will be a scrambled version of their Child Reference Number (which all children are allocated when a claim for child benefit is made);

contact details for their educational setting and GP practice and for other practitioners or services working with them; and

where a practitioner judges it appropriate and necessary, an indicator showing that they wished to be contacted by other practitioners because they have relevant information to share, are taking action, or have undertaken an assessment in relation to that child.

No case information will be held on the index. Children, young people, or, where appropriate, their parents or carers will be able to ask to see their records and to challenge any inaccuracies, in accordance with data protection legislation.

There will be a single central index with its data partitioned into 150 parts, one relating to each local authority in England. A central index will ensure that the system works for children who move areas or who access services from more than one area. Partitioning the data will ensure local authorities take the lead in maintaining the accuracy of the data for children living in their area.

To avoid double-inputting of data and to ensure high standards of accuracy, information on the index will be drawn from and updated through existing systems. It will use proven technology.

Technical access to the index will be either through the practitioner's existing case management systems, via a web link or, where an approved practitioner has no access to appropriate IT facilities, via another approved user who does have IT access.

The Government are determined that the index will be as secure as possible, and will therefore ensure it complies with rigorous security standards. Access to it will be granted only to authorised users who have undergone appropriate checks, including those provided by the Criminal Records Bureau. Practitioner use of the index will be audited to ensure information is only accessed where it is necessary for practitioners to do so, and so guard against inappropriate access by authorised users.

The Government are today making available a report on local authority Trailblazer experience. Copies will be placed in the Library of the House.

The experience of the Trailblazers identifies significant benefits in the effectiveness of services. These include improved access to information to inform action, better identification of children not receiving universal services, and better multi-agency communication and information exchange. Scope for significant efficiency gains has also been demonstrated from time saved by practitioners on such tasks as identifying other services involved with a child, tracking down and contacting the individual practitioners involved, and making wasted referrals to services already involved with a child. These savings have been quantified as worth over £88 million per annum across England. We do not intend to reduce funding for children's services, but instead to enable savings realised to be reinvested in more and better services for children and more effective use of staff time. We anticipate that this will enhance staff satisfaction with their jobs.

The Government will commit substantial resources to the index. One-off implementation costs will be an estimated £224 million over the next three years—this includes the costs of adapting systems that will supply the data to the index and adapting the day-to-day systems used by practitioners so they can access the index from their own systems. It also includes the cost of ensuring the original data supplied to the index is accurate, that there are robust systems in place to ensure security, and that staff are trained to use the index properly. Operating costs, thereafter, will be £41 million per year. Most of these costs will fund the additional staff needed to ensure the on-going security, accuracy and audit of the index. Both set-up and running costs will be funded by central Government, so that the costs to local authorities do not form a pressure on the council tax.

Our plan is that a technically robust, secure and accurate index is available to support children's services across England by the end of 2008. To enable this to be achieved we plan to publish draft regulations under Section 12 of the Children Act 2004, which will be subject to the affirmative resolution procedure. An initial set of regulations in spring 2006 will provide the necessary vires to allow trials to take place for the creation of the initial records. We then plan to publish in autumn 2006 the main regulations to govern the operation of the index. We will consult publicly on draft regulations in the summer/autumn of 2006.

Implementation will be led by a dedicated project team within DfES. The Project Team will continue to work closely with local authorities, users and other stakeholders to ensure that developments continue to be relevant and lead to more effective practice. Building on the current knowledge gained by the local authority Trailblazers, the project team will directly and actively seek the views of children, young people and families and will ensure those views are taken into account as we develop the index."

I have written to the hon. Member about the information sharing index announcement, and also to other hon. Members and Peers who have expressed an interest in the index.

Correspondence

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when her Department will reply to the letter sent by the hon. Member for Brent, East dated 2 February on behalf of Mr. Eric Brentini. [33858]

Bill Rammell: My hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children, Young People and Families replied to the hon. Member's letter on 12 December.

Dedicated Schools Grants

Michael Fabricant: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school allocation of dedicated schools grant per pupil is in each local education authority for 2006–07, listed in descending order of grant. [36584]

Jacqui Smith: Allocations of dedicated schools grant are not broken down between primary and secondary schools. The following table sets out the guaranteed unit of funding for local authorities' allocations of dedicated schools grant for 2006–07, listed in descending order.

Local authority	*Guaranteed DSG per pupil (£)*
City of London	6,708
Tower Hamlets	5,610
Camden	5,551
Hackney	5,491
Kensington and Chelsea	5,211
Lambeth	5,208
Southwark	5,162
Islington	5,146
Hammersmith and Fulham	5,034
Lewisham	4,997

Local authority	*Guaranteed DSG per pupil (£)*
Westminster	4,853
Greenwich	4,745
Newham	4,526
Wandsworth	4,513
Haringey	4,478
Ealing	4,339
Brent	4,316
Hounslow	4,167
Waltham Forest	4,115
Manchester	4,104
Barking and Dagenham	4,097
Barnet	4,081
Harrow	4,051
Nottingham	4,041
Merton	4,004
Birmingham	4,000
Enfield	3,984
Bristol, City of	3,929
Hillingdon	3,919
Slough	3,911
Salford	3,877
Richmond upon Thames	3,873
Liverpool	3,851
Halton	3,832
Blackburn with Darwen	3,828
Kingston upon Thames	3,826
Luton	3,819
Button	3,810
Croydon	3,806
Reading	3,797
Sandwell	3,762
Middlesbrough	3,759
Redbridge	3,757
Rochdale	3,744
Kingston Upon Hull, City of	3,738
Knowsley	3,737
Bexley	3,723
North East Lincolnshire	3,719
Havering	3,719
Thurrock	3,708
Leicester	3,700
Southampton	3,697
Coventry	3,696
Brighton and Hove	3,692
Oldham	3,687
Wolverhampton	3,684
Peterborough	3,681
South Tyneside	3,670
Stoke-on-Trent	3,651
Portsmouth	3,650
Newcastle upon Tyne	3,643
Bradford	3,642
Isle of Wight	3,640
Rotherham	3,633
Windsor and Maidenhead	3,627
Medway	3,626
Milton Keynes	3,620
Hartlepool	3,620
Southend-on-Sea	3,620
East Sussex	3,598
Bracknell Forest	3,590
Gateshead	3,585
Redcar and Cleveland	3,583
Durham	3,581
Tameside	3,578
St Helens	3,577
Walsall	3,577
Sunderland	3,576
Derby	3,574
Blackpool	3,573
Surrey	3,569
West Berkshire	3,569
Bolton	3,567
Stockton-on-Tees	3,562
Wigan	3,552
Dudley	3,549
Darlington	3,547
Kirklees	3,543
Doncaster	3,541
Bury	3,537
Lancashire	3,536
Leeds	3,532
Sheffield	3,529
Bromley	3,525
Torbay	3,525
Essex	3,524
Sefton	3,523
Kent	3,523
Calderdale	3,520
Rutland	3,520
Telford and Wrekin	3,515
Wirral	3,514
Hertfordshire	3,507
Buckinghamshire	3,507
Plymouth	3,493
Bath and North East Somerset	3,492
West Sussex	3,489
Wakefield	3,488
Stockport	3,484
Oxfordshire	3,480
Cheshire	3,471
North Yorkshire	3,458
Nottinghamshire	3,457
Barnsley	3,452
North Tyneside	3,451
Cumbria	3,447
Hampshire	3,441
Bournemouth	3,435
North Lincolnshire	3,435
Trafford	3,432
Derbyshire	3,429
Norfolk	3,423
Wokingham	3,422
Dorset	3,418
Warrington	3,414
Lincolnshire	3,414
Cambridgeshire	3,407
Bedfordshire	3,407
Warwickshire	3,404
York	3,397
Northamptonshire	3,384
Staffordshire	3,381
Swindon	3,378
Suffolk	3,372
Somerset	3,365
Cornwall	3,362
Gloucestershire	3,358
North Somerset	3,357
Poole	3,349
Solihull	3,342
Shropshire	3,339
Wiltshire	3,337
Worcestershire	3,337
Devon	3,335
Northumberland	3,330
East Riding of Yorkshire	3,322
Herefordshire	3,297
South Gloucestershire	3,281
Leicestershire	3,224

Note:

Isles of Scilly has been omitted from the table, since special funding arrangements apply.

Exam Results

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average A-level attainment has been of entrants to undergraduate courses leading to qualified teacher status in each year since 1995. [31104]

Bill Rammell: The latest available information is given in the following table. Figures for 2004/05 will be available in January 2006.

Average "A" level points for English domiciled entrants to English HE institutions who have one or more "A" level qualifications on entry and who are aiming for the qualification of first degree with QTS

Academic year	*Average A level points*[1]	*Number of entrants*
1995/96	12	6,135
1996/97	12	5,710
1997/98	13	5,735
1998/99	15	5,350
1999/2000	14	4,925
2000/01	14	4,775
2001/02	15	4,765
2002/03	202	4,315
2003/04	201	4,855

[1] Figures up to and including 2001/02 are based upon students who hold one or more A level (or AS equivalent) qualification on entry. The average score given is based upon the "A" level points for the student's best three "A" levels (or "AS" equivalents). For 2002/03 onwards, figures are based upon students who hold either GCE "A" level or VCE "A' level qualifications. The average score given is the average tariff points score based upon all "A" level qualifications (not just the best three).

Note:
Figures have been rounded to the nearest 5.

Source:
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA) student record.

Higher Education

Sammy Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average pay of teachers in higher education was in 2004–05; and what percentage change in their pay there has been in the last three years. [29264]

Bill Rammell: The latest available figures are shown in the table. Figures for 2004/05 will be available in January 2006. Significant changes were made to the content, structure, coverage and definitions of the source data in 2003/04 which means that the figures for that year are not directly comparable with those for earlier years.

Average salary[1] *of full-time HE academic staff with teaching responsibilities, HE institutions in the UK*

	2000/01 (£)	*2001/02 (£)*	*2002/03 (£)*	*Percentage change 2000/01 to 2002/03*	*2003/04*
Professors	52,400	53,900	56,200	7.2	56,900
Senior lecturers[2] and researchers	38,500	39,500	40,700	5.8	41,800
Lecturers	29,400	30,300	31,600	7.5	32,500

[1] The HESA Staff Record changed markedly in structure, coverage and content in 2003/04. In addition, the definition of salary changed. For the years up to 2002/03, salary represented the monies received in respect of institutional duties actually being paid on the date of the HESA staff count (31 July) or for those who have left during the year, the salary on leaving, "including" any regular payments for additional duties, responsibility allowances or honoraria regardless of their source. In 2003/04, the salary represented the gross basic salary per annum, in pounds sterling as stated in the contract at the reference date of HESA's staff count or at the end date of the contract if earlier, "excluding" any regular payments for additional duties, responsibility allowances or honoraria, regardless of their source.
[2] Including Principal Lecturers.

Note:
Figures have been rounded to the nearest 100.

Source:
Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA).

Learner Support Funds

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of the learner support funds were distributed to *(a)* 14 to 16-year-olds, *(b)* 16 to 19-year-olds and *(c)* those aged over 19 years in (i) 2003–04 and (ii) 2004–05; and what estimate she has made of the likely proportion in (A) 2005–06, (B) 2006–07 and (C) 2007–08. [36044]

Bill Rammell: The information requested is shown in the table.

Adult/youth split

	Actual		*Planned*		
	2003–04	*2004–05*	*2005–06*	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
Young People (16–19)	216	337	481	584	606
Adults (19+)	113	116	115	127	134
Total financial support for learners in FE	329	453	596	711	740

Learner support funds are not paid to learners under age 16. However Care to Learn, which provides help with child care costs for young parents who want to continue in learning, has been available to pre-16s since 1 August 2004. Care to Learn helped 431 pre-16s in that year, the youngest of whom was 13. The total cost for pre-16s was just under £308,000 for that academic year.

Learning and Skills Council

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answers of 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 598W, and 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 124W, on Learning and Skills Council, what the Learning and Skills Council's core administration costs were in 2001–02; and why different figures were provided in each answer. [35822]

Bill Rammell: The LSC's core administration costs for 2001–02 were 3.4 per cent. The figures quoted in the answer of 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 598W, were taken from the LSC's Annual Accounts for

2001–02 which include costs incurred in the last seven months 2000–01 for the setting up of the LSC. This gives an overall administration spend of 4.6 per cent. of total expenditure. The answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 124W, provided administration costs solely for the 12 months of 2001–02 which give an actual figure of 3.4 per cent.

Nursery Places

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the cost of providing a nursery place for every child of two years and above in *(a)* England and *(b)* the most deprived (i) quartile and (ii) decile of electoral wards. [37174]

Beverley Hughes: The Government do not fund free nursery education places for children aged two and there are currently no plans to do so. However, local authorities are fully funded to meet their statutory responsibilities to deliver a free part-time place for three and four-year-olds through their Education Formula Spending Share (EFSS)—their main education budget. Overall resources are determined by means of a national formula, taking into account local factors including deprivation, ethnicity and area costs. From April 2006 funding for the free entitlement is being consolidated within the new Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) arrangements. This will place a ring-fence around education spending while maintaining flexibility for local authorities to determine the distribution of funding in the light of local needs and circumstances.

Office for Fair Access

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to publish the work of the Office for Fair Access; and what steps she is taking to monitor its progress. [37129]

Bill Rammell: The Office for Fair Access has made excellent progress in approving access agreements for higher education institutions. Details of its work have been published in its annual report in July 2005 and strategic plan in December 2005, copies of which are being placed in the Library. We use these, and periodic discussions with Sir Martin Harris, to review progress.

Synthetic Phonics

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what estimate she has made of the number of schools in Morecambe and Lunesdale which teach children to read using synthetic phonics. [37291]

Jacqui Smith: We do not have figures on the number of schools using synthetics phonics in the teaching of reading. However, the use of synthetic phonics is a key part of the approach to teaching reading advocated by the Primary National Strategy, as well as being available in commercial phonics packages, and is therefore widespread.

The interim report of Jim Rose's independent review into the teaching of early reading has given valuable advice on the way in which the teaching of synthetic phonics should develop in future. We will implement the approach that he has suggested, drawing on his interim report and the final report due early in 2006, in our renewal of the framework for literacy teaching.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Commercial Waste

14. Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to promote the recycling of commercial waste. [37705]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government have a target to reduce the amount of commercial and industrial waste going to landfill by 15 per cent. between 1998 and this year.

On the evidence of progress to 2002 we expect now to have met this target.

Common Agricultural Policy

17. Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions she has had with EU counterparts on reform of the Common Agricultural Policy. [37709]

Jim Knight: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has brokered a deal on major reform of the CAP sugar regime, discussed the Government's vision for fundamental CAP reform published earlier this month and chaired EU ministerial discussions on agricultural trade liberalisation in the context of the WTO negotiations.

Supermarkets Code of Practice

18. Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions she has had with colleagues in the Department for Trade and Industry on the Supermarkets Code of Practice. [37711]

Jim Knight: I have had informal discussions about the Code with my hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Employment and Consumer Affairs (Mr. Sutcliffe), and will be continuing these.

Bovine Tuberculosis

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many cattle were slaughtered in the last recorded month as a result of bovine tuberculosis. [37632]

Mr. Bradshaw: 1,831 reactor cattle and 340 direct contact (2,171) cattle were slaughtered as a result of bovine tuberculosis in October 2005.

Christmas Trees

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the environmental impact of *(a)* artificial and *(b)* natural Christmas trees; and if she will make a statement. [37156]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department has not carried out any comparative life-cycle assessments in this field.

Dog Registration Scheme

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent

discussions she has had with *(a)* the Canine Crisis Council and *(b)* other organisations about a proposal for a dog registration scheme; what her policy is on a dog registration scheme; and if she will make a statement. [36856]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department has not held any recent discussions with organisations on this issue. However, the Government fully supports a voluntary dog registration scheme.

Environmental Crimes

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will increase the penalties for environmental crimes; and if she will make a statement. [37339]

Mr. Morley: The Government has been increasing the penalties available for environmental crimes, for example through the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005. How to improve further the impact of environmental enforcement and sanctions is being examined under the Government's cross departmental Review of Enforcement in Environmental Regulation.

The environmental enforcement review, led by Defra, is drawing together evidence to better define obstacles to effective enforcement before reaching conclusions about possible solutions in summer 2006. It will draw on contributions from all parties to the enforcement process, including enforcers, business, the wider community, and the courts, who determine penalties in specific criminal cases. The Government will then consider whether further measures are needed.

An examination of the sanctioning tools related to a wide range of regulators, including those in the environmental field is being carried out by the Better Regulation Executive Penalties Review, which was launched with a discussion document on 7 December. It will report in autumn 2006.

Both reviews will contribute to the pursuit of better regulation, and share the aim of making enforcement more proportionate. Serious offences should be met by tough sanctions which will really change damaging behaviour for the better, and ensure a level playing field for law-abiding businesses.

Exmoor National Park

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the budget for Exmoor National Park was in each year since 2000–01. [37249]

Jim Knight: The annual National Park Grant allocation for Exmoor National Park Authority since 2000–01 is as follows:

	£ million
2000–01	2.369
2001–02	2.583
2002–03	2.935
2003–04	3.519
2004–05	3.291
2005–06	3.616

GM Crops

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the impact on organic food of the growing of GM crops. [37268]

Mr. Morley: We will issue a consultation paper next year setting out proposals for managing the co-existence of GM and non-GM production. This will also discuss whether special arrangements should apply in the case of co-existence between GM and organic crops.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions her Department has had on the locations for growing GM maize in England. [37269]

Mr. Morley: The Department has not had any recent discussions on the locations for growing GM maize in England. No GM maize suitable for UK conditions is currently authorised for cultivation, and we do not anticipate that any GM maize will be grown in England for the next few years.

GM maize has been grown in England in the past for research purposes. The last trials were completed in 2002. The locations of the trial sites are available on the DEFRA website:

http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/gm/fse/location/index.htm

We expect to publish a consultation paper on proposals for co-existence in the cultivation of GM and non-GM crops next year.

Government Decontamination Service

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received on the establishment of the Government Decontamination Service; and if she will make a statement. [37154]

Mr. Morley: The project team responsible for setting up the Government Decontamination Service consulted widely and by several means to seek the views of its stakeholders. Representations were received from central Government, local authorities and emergency planners, emergency services' representatives, specialist suppliers who might provide the decontamination services required, and a range of public and private sector bodies responsible for assets or infrastructure of national importance.

The clearest messages from those representations were that the GDS should concentrate its resources on its core functions: the establishment of a contractual framework of specialist suppliers that could provide the decontamination services required, which has now been done, and the provision of advice and guidance on decontamination, which is a key ongoing function of the service.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many staff are employed in the Government Decontamination Service; and what the total annual salary costs of the service are. [37155]

Mr. Morley: The Government Decontamination Service (GDS) was set up as an executive agency of Defra on 1 October 2005. The service is currently

recruiting staff to bring it up to complement. When fully staffed, the GDS will employ 26 people. The projected annual staff costs (including employers pension and national insurance contributions) is approximately £1.02 million.

Greenhouse Gas Emissions

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what action the Government are taking to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. [36996]

Mr. Morley: The Government set out its policy on reducing emissions of the six greenhouse gases covered under the Kyoto protocol in its publication "climate change: The UK programme" (CM 4913) in 2000. We have introduced a set of flexible measures covering a range of different sectors—including energy supply, transport, agriculture, business and households.

The Government are currently carrying out a review of the UK climate change programme which is looking at how existing policies are performing and the range of policies which might be put in place in the future to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions. The Government are aiming to publish a revised UK climate change programme early next year.

Habitats Directive

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what guidance is being prepared for those organisations responsible for implementing in the UK the provisions of the habitats directive. [37571]

Jim Knight: Guidance on the application of the habitats directive for planning authorities was contained in DEFRA circular 01/2005 of 16 August 2005 biodiversity and geological conservation—statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system. The circular compliments the expression of national planning policy in the co-published planning policy statement 9, biodiversity and geological conservation (PPS9) and the accompanying good practice guide, which is currently under preparation.

DEFRA policy guidance on coastal squeeze implications for flood management—requirements of the European birds and habitats directives was published by my department on 21 September 2005 and there are also a set of habitats regulations guidance notes which have been published by English Nature.

The Department is currently involved in developing guidance on the implications of the habitats directive for developers undertaking offshore windfarm development and a protocol for maintenance dredging in European marine sites. The need for any further guidance is being kept under review.

Home Energy Efficiency

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what funding is made available by her Department to provide homes with central heating; and if she will make a statement. [37991]

Mr. Morley: The Government's main tool for tackling fuel poverty in the private sector in England is the Warm Front Scheme. The Scheme provides a range of heating and insulation measures to householders in receipt of certain benefits.

In the pre-Budget report, it was announced that an additional £300 million would be made available to tackle fuel poverty across the UK. In England, this means that an additional £250 million will be made available both to boost the Warm Front Scheme and extend its ability to provide central heating, and to provide £300 towards the cost of a central heating system for all other pensioners. This means that total funding for the Scheme in the 2005–08 period will be over £800 million.

Pet Food

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent research she has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the effect of feeding pets processed pet foods rather than natural foods. [36857]

Mr. Bradshaw: No research has been commissioned by DEFRA in this area.

Poultry

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how her Department plans to assess the percentage of poultry owners that fulfil the requirement to register their flocks under the Avian Influenza (Preventive Measures) Regulations 2005. [38015]

Mr. Bradshaw: This percentage will be estimated in two complementary ways: firstly by the usual activities of the enforcement authorities and secondly, by cross-validation of the entries in the GB poultry register against a consolidated dataset which has been created from ten existing partial data sets about poultry which Government holds.

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs on what basis a flock size of 50 birds was chosen as the level at which poultry owners must register their birds under the Avian Influenza (Preventive Measures) Regulations 2005; and whether there are plans to require owners of less than 50 birds to register birds. [38030]

Mr. Bradshaw: The decision to restrict the requirement to register to commercial flocks of 50 or more birds was based on advice from an expert group which considered that only flocks of this size would be likely to play a significant role in the spread of Avian Influenza. From a logistical point of view it was seen as a priority to focus on gathering information from these larger flocks. Once this has been achieved, it will be possible for owners of smaller flocks to register on a voluntary basis should they so wish. We could also revise the mandatory requirement to include smaller flocks at a later date, should experts and others consider that this would confer sufficient added benefits to justify the costs.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether it is permissible for poultry dealers to buy in birds from various individuals and locations and subsequently hold a sale of those birds on one site. [34990]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* Sales by a single poultry dealer are not classed as a bird gathering and are not therefore covered by the precautionary measures introduced to reduce the risks of gatherings.

Research and Development

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much the Government have spent on the research and development of *(a)* energy conservation and *(b)* energy efficiency measures in each year since 1980; and what further sums are planned to be spent. [36589]

Mr. Morley *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* The Government does not have information on spending on these programmes over the period 1980–2005, nor on the detailed split between energy efficiency and energy conservation. Over the period 2002–2005, the UK spent approximately £15 million per year on RD&D into demand-side energy-efficient technology; about £12 millon from UK public bodies and £2.8 million from the European Commission framework programmes.

Rural Communities

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to sustain rural communities. [37631]

Jim Knight: In its rural strategy 2004, the Government announced an ambitious and targeted set of policy priorities for rural communities and for enhancing our natural environment, together with radical reforms for their delivery in the most customer-focussed, effective and efficient way, all firmly within a sustainable development framework.

Since the general election in May we have reinforced those priorities through actions such as the establishment of the Affordable Rural Housing Commission, the announcement of a new rural social and community funding programme and the introduction of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Bill. The Bill seeks, among other things, to establish both the Commission for Rural Communities—an expert advisor, advocate and watchdog for rural communities—and Natural England—a new integrated agency to conserve and enhance the natural environment.

Rural Housing

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what funding will be given to national parks to assist with providing rural housing to encourage young people to stay in their areas. [37251]

Jim Knight: The National Park Authorities have a duty to seek to foster the social and economic well-being of local communities. However no specific amounts are ring-fenced within the National Park Grant. ODPM does not make any allocation to National Parks specifically for housing.

Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the estimated unit cost of compliance with the Waste Electrical and Electronic Equipment Directive is for a television set. [37343]

Malcolm Wicks: I have been asked to reply.

This will vary according to the size and weight of TV and the proximity of treatment centres.

Waterways

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she expects to receive a representation from British Waterways on an agreed future licence fee structure for boat owners on waterways. [37275]

Jim Knight: This is an operational matter for British Waterways. Last year, British Waterways consulted publicly about proposed changes to its licence fee structure. In the light of the responses, it has produced a further consultation paper setting out revised proposals. The closing date for responses is 16 January 2006. I expect British Waterways to let me know in due course how it intends to proceed.

World Water Forum (Mexico City)

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) who from her Department will attend the World Water Forum in Mexico City in March 2006; and what her Department's role will be at the forum; [37497]

(2) if she will make a statement on the World Water Forum being held in Mexico City in March 2006. [37498]

Mr. Morley: Defra officials will attend the forum as part of the UK delegation and are continuing to work closely with DfID who are the lead Department on preparations for this event.

HEALTH

Blindness

Mr. Bacon: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to ensure that *(a)* parents understand the importance of eye examinations for children and *(b)* young people and adults have regular eye examinations. [30897]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Free sight tests are available under the national health service to large parts of the population including children, those aged 16 to 18 in full-time education, people on benefits, those people at particular risk of developing eye disease, and people who are registered blind or partially sighted or who have a complex spectacle prescription. Sight tests allow the

opportunity to review all aspects of eye health, including investigations for signs of disease. Those at risk of specific eye disease, for example diabetic retinopathy, may be asked to attend regular screening.

Information about the extensive arrangements for providing help with NHS optical services and other health costs are publicised in leaflet HC11 "Are you entitled to help with health costs?" Posters are also available for display in optical practices and hospital out-patient departments.

The number of NHS sight tests undertaken continues to increase. In 2004–05, there were 10.1 million NHS sight tests, an increase of 3 per cent. on 2003–04.

We have also promoted a system of child health and development checks. The programme of home visiting and community development makes an important contribution to many areas of health education and fosters the early detection of problems, including those associated with eye sight, in young, pre-school children.

Contagious Diseases

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 6 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1222W, on contagious diseases, whether her Department plans to issue new regulations under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984. [37651]

Caroline Flint: The Department has no current plans to issue new regulations under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act.

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 6 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1222W, on contagious diseases, how many applications have been *(a)* made and *(b)* granted under sections 37 and 38 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 and the Public Health (Infectious Diseases) Regulations 1988 in each year since 1988. [37652]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* The Department does not collect this information.

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 6 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1222W, on contagious diseases, whether an individual who had contracted avian influenza could be removed to, and detained in, hospital under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 or associated regulations. [37653]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 14 December 2005]:* In principle, regulations could be made under the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 to make the powers in sections 37 and 38 of the Act available for avian influenza that was known to pass from one human to another. However, the Department has no current plans to do so. The H5N1 strain of avian influenza currently circulating in South East Asia and elsewhere is a disease which mainly affects birds. It has been contracted by some people through close contact with poultry, but is unlikely to be passed from one human to another.

Continence Services

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to respond to the findings of the Royal College of Physician's Clinical Effectiveness and Evaluation Unit in its audit of continence services for older people. [34828]

Mr. Byrne: Primary care trusts are responsible within their areas for providing quality services to their patients. This includes delivering the standards on continence care for older people, as set out in the national service framework for older people.

The Healthcare Commission has responsibility for assessing progress towards achieving these standards.

Dr. Ann David

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will require a re-examination of the standard and conduct of work performed by Dr. Ann David during her employment in the West Midlands prior to her employment in Essex; and if she will make a statement. [32006]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* The strategic health authority and national health service trust concerned have undertaken a review of Dr. David's work, from the period she was employed in the West Midlands. It is their opinion that the review did not raise any concerns regarding Dr. David's work during her employment with them. Should further concerns arise or further evidence come to light it is for the trust to decide what, if any, further review may be necessary.

Emergency Beds

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the baseline is for her Department's public service agreement target to reduce emergency bed days by 5 per cent. by 2008; when the target was set; and what progress has been made towards meeting the target. [35200]

Mr. Byrne: The baseline year for the Department's target to reduce emergency bed days by 5 per cent. by 2008 is 2003–04. The target was agreed with HM Treasury as part of the 2004 spending review. The latest available data, for 2004–05, shows a 2 per cent. reduction in emergency bed days from the baseline year. Latest progress against public service agreement targets can be found in the Autumn Performance Report 2005, available on the Department's website at:
www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/12/42/52/04124252.pdf

Epilepsy

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what action her Department has taken to reduce sudden death by epilepsy since the publication of the Government's Action Plan on Epilepsy in 2003; what assessment she has made of the progress that has been made in reducing the levels of sudden death by epilepsy since the publication of the Action Plan; and what guidance she has given to practitioners to ensure patients with epilepsy are fully informed about the risks of sudden death from the condition. [35355]

Mr. Byrne: Although the specific cause of sudden death by epilepsy (SUDEP) is unknown, the risks are considered greater for patients whose epilepsy is poorly controlled. Action to reduce SUDEP has therefore concentrated on improving epilepsy is poorly controlled. Action to reduce SUDEP has therefore concentrated on improving epilepsy services in general, raising awareness of SUDEP, and the introduction of new more effective drugs to control seizures.

As part of the "Action Plan on Epilepsy" the Modernisation Agency ran "Action on Neurology" in 2004–05 at eight pilot sites. These included:

delivering high quality epilepsy service without the need for patients to travel far by the use of electronic and paper patient-held records.

improving communications between primary, secondary and tertiary care by developing a network of healthcare professionals to deliver a coordinated service.

developing general practitioner services for people with epilepsy and headaches and a primary care triage system to improve access and efficiency.

The national service framework for long-term conditions was published in March 2005. This focuses on improving neurological services across the country for a range of conditions including epilepsy.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) has published guidance on the clinical and cost effectiveness of new epilepsy drugs in adults (March 2004) and children (April 2004).

We have commissioned NICE to produce clinical guidelines for the diagnosis, management and treatment of epilepsy. This guidance, published in October 2004, specifically covers the importance of informing patients and their families of the risks of sudden death in epilepsy. In addition, we have made a grant of almost £290,000 to the National Society for Epilepsy to improve support and information for people with epilepsy and their families.

HIV/AIDS

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment her Department has made of the merits of different means of providing anti-retroviral drugs to HIV/AIDS sufferers. [37628]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 14 December 2005]:* Primary care trusts are responsible for providing HIV prevention, treatment and care services which meet the needs of their local populations. To support them in this role, the Department has published best practice guidance, "Effective Commissioning of Sexual Health and HIV Services" (2003). This includes advice on commissioning treatment services for people with HIV and AIDS.

Hospital Facilities

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what proportion of NHS in-patient beds *(a)* are in mixed sex sleeping areas and *(b)* share (i) mixed sex washing facilities and (ii) mixed sex toilet facilities. [35193]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Nationally, 97 per cent. of national health service trusts report that they are fully compliant with the standards that we have set for the provision of single-sex accommodation. Information on the location of in-patient beds within each trust, and their adjacency to toilet and washing facilities, is not collected.

The small number of trusts who have yet to meet our standards are undertaking building works which will bring them to full compliance.

Immunisation

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether her Department piloted the introduction of the five-in-one vaccine; what plans she has to review the take-up of MMR following the introduction of the five-in-one vaccine; and if she will make a statement; [33540]

(2) what targets have been set for the take-up of childhood immunisation; what assessment she has made of the effect of the introduction of the five-in-one vaccine on the achievement of that target; and if she will make a statement. [33542]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 1 December 2005]:* Before being licensed, all medicines including vaccines are thoroughly tested to ensure that they are safe, of a high quality and are efficacious (effective). The introduction of Pediacel was recommended by joint committee on vaccination and immunisation after careful consideration all of the available data and research, including experience of the use of a similar vaccine (Pentacel) in Canada.

Information on the uptake of routine childhood immunisations in the United Kingdom is routinely collected by the Health Protection Agency through the COVER programme (Cover of Vaccination Evaluated Rapidly). Coverage of diphtheria, tetanus, polio, pertussis, Hib and Meningitis C at one, two and five years of age, and measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) at two and five years, is published quarterly in CDR weekly on the Health Protection Agency's website at www.hpa.org.uk/cdr/default.htm.

Only children born after July or August 2004 would have been offered Pediacel exclusively rather than for completion of a primary course already started. Information on coverage at one year of age for this cohort has not yet been evaluated through the routine COVER programme. This data will begin to come through the routine COVER programme data collection from December this year and will be published.

We are, therefore, unable to comment on whether there has been a change in uptake due to the introduction of Pediacel, including MMR.

Influenza Vaccine

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the likelihood of developing a DNA vaccine for use in the event of an influenza pandemic. [28696]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We are currently in discussions with vaccine manufacturers regarding the development of a vaccine against pandemic flu. Officials have had discussions with a manufacturer that is working on

DNA vaccines, including their potential for use during a pandemic. However, it is likely to be some years before a DNA flu vaccine could be available.

Kent and Canterbury Hospital

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the future of the urology unit at the Kent and Canterbury hospital. [37886]

Caroline Flint: This is a local matter. It is for local national health service organisations to determine how best to use their resources to plan and develop services to meet the needs of their local community. However, the Kent and Medway strategic health authority has advised that it is anticipated that an announcement on the review of urology services at Kent and Canterbury hospital will be made following a meeting to be held on 19 December 2005.

Mental Health

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many adolescent mental health beds there are in Milton Keynes. [35267]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not hold the information in the format requested.

Departmental figures for 2004–05 show that there are no beds classed as "mental illness: children: short stay" or "mental illness: children: long stay" at either Milton Keynes general hospital or the Milton Keynes primary care trust. These categories include adolescents.

NHS Dentistry

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists have left the NHS to work in private practice in each year since 1997. [26575]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The number of dentists who have left the general dental service (GDS) and personal dental service (PDS) in England as at 30 September each year is shown in the following table.

	Leavers
1995	910
1996	821
1997	947
1998	972
1999	1,037
2000	1,206
2001	1,207
2002	1,352
2003	1,236
2004	1,224
2005	1,097

A dentist is assumed to have left the national health service if they had an open GDS or PDS contract in September of the previous year but no GDS or PDS contract in September of the specified year.

The dental practice board does not record the reasons for joining or leaving the NHS. The figures given will include dentists who have retired from practice and dentists who have moved to private practice.

Palliative Care

Patrick Hall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) when the Hospice at Home service will be brought into line with the Payment by Results scheme for palliative care; and if she will make a statement; [36171]

(2) what assessment she has made of the likely impact of Payment by Results on statutory funding for services for palliative care commissioned from voluntary providers; and if she will make a statement. [36194]

Mr. Byrne: Work to develop healthcare resource groups for specialist palliative care, which will inform the implementation of Payment by Results, is ongoing. Part of this work will include consideration of the funding implications of introducing Payment by Results in specialist palliative care.

Healthcare resource groups are not being developed for Hospice at Home services. However, consideration is being given to the development of healthcare resource groups for community care services other than in palliative care and once this work, together with consideration of the results of the "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" consultation, is complete, we will be able to give this issue further consideration.

Patrick Hall: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what public funding for palliative care was allocated for 2005–06; and what the total annual funding will be when the Government have met the Labour manifesto commitment to double spending on palliative care; [36174]

(2) if she will ensure that additional funding for palliative care promised in the Labour manifesto covers *(a)* full cost recovery and *(b)* Payment by Results. [36193]

Mr. Byrne: Primary care trusts are responsible within the national health service for commissioning and funding services for their resident populations, including palliative care. This would include meeting any costs associated with full cost recovery, recommended in the HM Treasury's "Cross Cutting Review on the Role of the Voluntary Sector in Service Delivery" or the implementation of Payment by Results. The Department does not routinely collect data on the amount of funding allocated locally for palliative care services, although, as pledged in the NHS Cancer Plan 2000, an additional £50 million per annum was allocated to primary care trusts in 2005–06 for specialist palliative care.

The details of delivering our manifesto commitment are being discussed with a range of key stakeholders. Alongside this, the views of the public, service users and staff on end of life care was one of the issues covered in the "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" consultation. We will take account of what people have said in this consultation in the way we discharge our manifesto commitment.

Primary Care Trust Commissioning (Oxfordshire)

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her answer of 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 405W, on primary care trust commissioning (Oxfordshire), whether discussions

regarding the proposal to put primary care trust commissioning out to tender was initiated by Thames Valley strategic health authority. [36898]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 13 December 2005]:* Thames Valley strategic health authority (SHA) sought advice from the Department about the inclusion of this proposal as part of its 15 October reconfiguration submission. We advised that it should not be explored as part of the forthcoming reconfiguration exercise, as it is for the new organisations, not current ones to decide how best to manage their responsibilities after reconfiguration. This was confirmed in a letter to Thames Valley SHA on 30 November, which set out the options and conditions for consultation on the reconfiguration proposals.

Royal Liverpool University Hospital

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the proposals are for the development of services at the Royal Liverpool university hospital under the private finance initiative; [36401]

(2) what consultations her Department plans to hold on the future of services at the Royal Liverpool university hospital. [36402]

Mr. Byrne: The strategic outline case (SOC) for the development of the Royal Liverpool university hospital was approved in July 2004.

The SOC proposal was for all of the current services to be re-provided in a new build of the Royal Liverpool university hospital on the existing site expanding eastwards. Cheshire and Merseyside strategic health authority report that the exact service configuration will need to be agreed before the Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen university hospitals national health service trust can develop a public sector comparator to allow it to test affordability and value for money within the outline business case (OBC).

Once the location of the proposed new hospital and the configuration of services have been identified the local health community will need to undergo a formal consultation exercise as part of the OBC process, prior to consideration by the Department.

Turnaround Teams

Mr. Truswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health into which NHS organisations in West Yorkshire her Department intends to send turnaround teams. [35439]

Mr. Byrne: It is planned that there is an assessment with the West Yorkshire strategic health authority of the financial position of the Mid Yorkshire Hospitals National Health Service Trust.

Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many cases of variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) have been notified in each year since the disease was first recognised; and how many of these resulted in *(a)* deaths from definite vCJD and *(b)* deaths from probable vCJD. [35111]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is shown in the table.

Case reports and deaths from variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) from 1995 to date

	vCJD cases reported	*Deaths*	
		Definite	*Probable*
1995	8	3	0
1996	9	9	1
1997	13	10	0
1998	20	16	2
1999	16	15	0
2000	29	24	4
2001	21	13	7
2002	15	5	12
2003	16	9	9
2004	6	3	6
2005[1]	6	2	3
Total	159	109	44

[1] To 5 December 2005.

Note:
There is no correlation between reports and deaths in the columns in the table for any one year as reporting, diagnosis and death in any one case may not occur in the same year.

Source:
National Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease Surveillance Unit (NCJDSU), Edinburgh.

Wheelchairs

Dr. Blackman-Woods: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time is for NHS patients in England for a bespoke powered wheelchair. [35437]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Assets Recovery Agency

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the value is of assets *(a)* realised and *(b)* frozen by the Assets Recovery Agency which have been derived from (i) corrupt activities overseas and (ii) the theft of foreign states' assets. [35400]

Paul Goggins: The Assets Recovery Agency has not yet undertaken any work in freezing and recovering the proceeds of corruption committed overseas. The imminent coming into force of secondary legislation under the Proceeds of Crime Act will provide more powers for the UK to deal with requests from foreign States about assets in this country derived from all criminal activity, including corruption.

Cannabis

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what change there has been in the number of *(a)* arrests and *(b)* prosecutions for (i) dealing and (ii) possession since the reclassification of cannabis as a class C drug. [34878]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* The available information is included in the "Drug Offenders in England and Wales" annual publications.

Table 1: Persons dealt with for cannabis offences in England and Wales—2003

	Dealing offences	*Possession offences*
Cautions	590	38,130
Convictions	2,970	39,360

Table 2: Persons dealt with for cannabis offences in England and Wales, 2004[1]

	Dealing offences	*Possession offences*
Formal warnings[2]	n/a	27,520
Cautions	570	22,530
Convictions	2,500	22,960

[1] Due to the re-classification of cannabis from class B to class C and the introduction of police formal warnings, data for 2004 should not be directly compared to those of previous years.
[2] Formal warnings are only given for cannabis possession offences. Data relates to April–December 2004.

Change Up Programme

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the establishment of the agency to drive forward the implementation of change up. [26666]

Paul Goggins: In March this year, my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary announced a further £70 million for change up and his intention to set up the Capacity Builders Agency to take this programme of investment forward. This is in addition to the initial £80 million investment in the change up programme from 2004–2006.

Change up is a capacity building framework for the voluntary and community sector, which has a ten year vision that by 2014 the needs of frontline voluntary and community organisations will be met by nationwide support which is structured for maximum efficiency, offers provision which is accessible to all, reflects and promotes diversity and is sustainably funded.

The Capacity Builders Agency will build on the good work to date and will manage the change up framework at arms-length from Government. It will take ownership of fund management, ensure the programme is joined up and co-ordinated, mainstream diversity issues into the design and delivery of activities within change up and ensure real time action learning and longer term evaluation.

On 16 November, my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary announced the agency's new top team. The new chair is Chris Pond, the chief executive of the National Council for One Parent Families and formerly MP for Gravesham (1997–2005) and Parliamentary under Secretary of State at the Department of Work and Pensions. Simon Hebditch has been named chief executive of the agency.

Simon is currently executive director of external affairs for the Charities Aid Foundation (CAF). The chair and chief executive will be joined by a board consisting of: Caryl Agard, David Baxter, Margaret Bolton, David Harbourne, Roger Singleton and Margaret Talbot. Work is also continuing on the location, shape and function of the agency. A programme board which comprises representation from central and local Government and the sector meets every six weeks to drive forward the establishment of the Capacity Builders Agency.

Closed Religious Orders

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what he expects the effect of the Charities Bill will be on the charitable status of closed religious orders; how many such orders qualify for charitable status; if he will place in the Library a list of those orders which qualify for charitable status; and if he will make a statement. [36697]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* Entirely closed religious orders are not now charitable. The Charities Bill, if enacted in its current form, will not change this position.

Countryside Alliance Protests (Parliament Square)

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were arrested under the Prevention of Terrorism Acts during investigations of offences alleged to have been committed at, immediately after, or in connection with the Countryside Alliance protests in Parliament Square on 15 September 2004. [35714]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The police have advised that no-one has been arrested under the Terrorism Act 2000 as the result of investigations linked to the Countryside Alliance protest on 15 September 2004.

Cyclists

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many pedal cyclists have been convicted of offences relating to contravention of road traffic acts in each of the last five years. [37442]

Paul Goggins: Data from the court proceedings database held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform is given in the following table. It shows the number of offenders found guilty at the magistrates court for offences connected with pedal cycles, England and Wales, 2000–04. Court statistics for 2005 will be available in autumn 2006.

Number of offenders found guilty at magistrates courts for offences connected with pedal cycles, England and Wales, 2000–04[1]

Offence description	*Principal statute*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Riding to common danger	Highway Act 1835 S.78; Metropolitan Police Act 1839 S.54(5)	1	1	—	1	2	4
Being towed	Road Traffic Act 1988 S.26	—	—	2	—	—	1
Neglect of traffic directions	Road Traffic Act 1985 SS.35 & 36	60	47	34	16	31	30
More than one person carried	Road Traffic Act 1988 S.24	7	7	2	4	5	4

Number of offenders found guilty at magistrates courts for offences connected with pedal cycles, England and Wales, 2000–04[1]

Offence description	*Principal statute*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Riding on footpath	Highways Act 1835 S.72 (as amended by Local Government Act 1888 S.85(1), Statute Law Revision (No2) Act 1888, Highways Act 1959 Sch 25, Criminal Justice Act 1967 Sch 3 and Criminal Justice Act 1982 SS.39 & 46 & Sch.3); Metropolitan Police Act 1839 S.54(7) and byelaws	323	171	112	79	82	92
Offences in relation to pedestrian crossings	Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 S.25(5)	4	—	—	1	2	—
Failing to obey signal	Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 S.28(3)	41	5	8	7	4	5
No brakes—failure to comply with the	Pedal Cycles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1983	16	10	11	10	11	16
Reckless and dangerous driving by pedal cyclist	Road Traffic Act 1988 S.28	29	23	19	18	18	32
Careless driving by pedal cyclist	Road Traffic Act 1988 S.29	105	84	60	54	59	73
Pedal cyclist driving under the influence of drink or drugs	Road Traffic Act 1988 S.30	76	58	38	38	43	40
Promoting unauthorised cycle race on public highway	Road Traffic Act 1988 S.31	1	—	—	—	—	1
Offences under	Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984 S.17(4); Motorways Traffic (England and Wales) Regulations 1982 Reg. 15	5	8	3	2	—	1
Taking or riding a pedal cycle without consent etc.	Theft Act 1968 S. 129(5) or byelaw	176	179	157	138	160	183
Rider of a cycle failing to give name and address	Road Traffic Act 1988 S.168*(b)*	—	2	2	1	1	—
Lighting offences	Road Traffic Act 1988 S.81 and Road Vehicle Lighting Regulations 1989	396	229	149	141	166	141
Other offences	Various acts	22	12	14	3	6	42
		1,265	837	611	513	590	666

[1] These data are on the principal offence basis

Departmental Estate

David Davis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the total cost was of relocating the Home Office. [31796]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The relocation of the Home Office was carried out through a Private Finance Initiative (PFI) project the capital costs of which were met by Annes Gate Property plc. My Department pays a combined charge for the accommodation, facilities and other services provided under the PFI contract. For the financial year 2005–06 the amount is expected to be £32.7 million. In addition £12.6 million was spent between January 2002-April 2005 on technical assurance for the project, clearing the surplus buildings, relocating ICT equipment and associated activities.

Departmental Guidance (Evidence/Documentary Access)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his policy is with regard to *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in his Department giving evidence to the (i) Scottish Parliament, (ii) National Assembly for Wales and (iii) Northern Ireland Assembly committees; and to what categories of document he gives (A) full access, (B) restricted access and (C) no access to the (1) Scottish Parliament, (2) National Assembly for Wales, (3) Northern Ireland Assembly and (4) House of Commons select committees. [37382]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Requests for the attendance of Ministers or officials to give evidence to the devolved legislatures and for the provision of information to the assemblies, will be considered on a case-by-case basis. This consideration will reflect: the principles set out in the Cabinet Office guidance "Departmental Evidence and Responses to Select Committees" (July 2005); the policy outlined in the Department for Constitutional Affairs Devolution guidance note No. 12 "Attendance of UK Ministers and Officials at Committees of the devolved legislatures"; and the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act. The principles underlying the provision of information to House of Commons Select Committees are set out in the "Departmental Evidence and Response to Select Committees", particularly section 4B and 4C.

Departmental Publications

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many publications were issued by his Department in each of the last five years. [33645]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The number of publications issued each year by the Home Office Communication Directorate and the Research, Development and Statistics Directorate, which is now part of the Communications and Development Unit, since 2001 are listed as follows:

Financial year (1 April to 31 March)	*Total number of publications issued by CD and RDS*
2001–02	[1]417
2002–03	584
2003–04	656
2004–05	[2]841
2004-To date (30 November 2005)	404

[1] No figure available from RDS for this year.

[2] The number increases during 2004–05 mainly as a result of a new working structure introduced in November 2004. At this time, to improve efficiency, the Home Office set up a new system of working with the Central Office of Information.

Notes:
Figures are provided for the period from 1 April 2001. All figures include Command Papers produced through Parliamentary Section.

This new system was publicised around the Home Office and many areas that had previously made their own arrangements for publications started to use the COI. This led to an increase in the number of recorded publications. Before this time, it would only be possible to identify all Home Office publications at a disproportionate cost.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department who the Director of Performance and Finance is in his Department; what specialist finance qualifications he or she holds; and what the details are of his or her career to date. [26311]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The position of director of performance and finance in the Home Office is currently filled on a temporary basis, pending appointment of a permanent successor to the previous director, who left in October. This post reports to the director-general, financial and commercial, Helen Kilpatrick, who is CCAB qualified and has more than 20 years experience of financial management.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff in his Department have been relocated into London and the South East in each of the last five years for which records are available. [31744]

Mr. Charles Clarke: There is no policy of inward relocation into London and the South East, and insofar as centralised records can be checked, no such relocation has in fact taken place over the past five years. Of the moves involving 10 or more staff, for HO Core and Immigration and Nationality Staff from 1 January 2000 to 2004 the majority are moves within the same city or area.

Aside from the move to the new headquarters building at Marsham Street which involved staff already in the London area there have been no major moves in 2005 within the core Home Office. Figures for relocations are not available for HMPS or the United Kingdom Passport Service.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff were employed by non-departmental public bodies and agencies for which he has responsibility in 2004–05 in *(a)* total and *(b)* each (i) nation and (ii) region of the UK and *(c)* London. [35946]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The latest available centrally-held information is: Total Executive NDPB staff numbers by Department as at 31 March 2005 are recorded in Table two of Public Bodies 2005, a copy of which is in the House Libraries, and which is available online at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/the_future_of_the_civil_service/agencies_and_public_bodies/publications/pdf/public-bodies/publicbodies2005.pdf. The number of staff in individual executive agencies as at 1 April 2004, including a regional analysis, is available in Civil Service Statistics 2004 which was published in February 2005, a copy of which is in House Libraries. It is also available online at:http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_of_the_civil_service/statistics/contents_for_civil_service_statistics_2004_report/number_of_civil_servants/index.asp. However the NDPB data is not detailed by region and this could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Underspending

Helen Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his Department's underspend was in 2004–05 *(a)* in cash terms and *(b)* as a percentage of departmental budget. [19249]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The following table provides the information requested. Please note that *(a)* provisional outturn has been used as final accounts have not been completed and *(b)* near cash excludes non cash costs but makes no adjustment for timing differences.

2004–05 DEL

£000

	Resource	*Capital*
Budget as per spring supplementary 2004–05	12,366,249	1,195,779
Provisional outturn as published in Cm6639 "Public expenditure 2004–05 Provisional Outturn"	12,029,460	991,944
Underspend	336,789	203,835
Of which: Near cash	361,313	203,835
Underspend as percentage of budget	2.72%	17.05%

Driving (Drugs)

Mr. David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people in England and Wales have been convicted of driving under the influence of drugs in 2005. [35040]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* Court statistics for 2005 will be available autumn 2006.

Environmental Sustainability

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what he has identified as the most significant sustainable development impacts in relation to the operation of his Department's estate pursuant to the Framework for Sustainable Development on the Government Estate. [16195]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Department's sustainable development impacts vary according to the nature of the business carried out by its constituent areas. The key impacts in relation to the main Home Office and its agencies have been identified as follows: energy consumption; water consumption; waste generation; vehicle emissions as a result of commuting (sites outside London only); procurement of goods and services; employment of staff; estates management and construction. Additionally, biodiversity is an impact for the National Offender Management Service estate and Immigration Removal Centres.

Iran

Mr. Love: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what consideration he has given to the inclusion of the People's Mojahedin Organisation of

Iran in the list of proscribed organisations under the Terrorism Acts; whether this list will be reviewed regularly; and if he will make a statement. [34563]

Mr. Charles Clarke: We review continually organisations for proscription and deproscription. We do not however comment upon which groups are being considered.

Khat Use (Somali Community)

Kerry McCarthy: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Government will publish its report on khat use within the Somali community. [35314]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* The Government published its report on khat use in the Somali community on 24 November 2005. It is available on the Home Office website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/notes/november_summaries.html. A summary of the Findings of the research is available at the same site in Somali translation.

Maladministration

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many payments for maladministration have been made by *(a)* his Department, *(b)* its agencies, *(c)* its non-departmental public bodies and *(d)* other bodies for which his Department has responsibility in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [32248]

Mr. Charles Clarke: It is the policy of the Home Department, its agencies, non-departmental public bodies and, where appropriate, its sponsored organisations to make financial redress in accordance with the guidance set out in Chapter 18.7 and Annexes 18.1 and 18.2 of Government Accounting. However, the information you requested is not held centrally by the Department and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

National Minimum Wage

Ms Katy Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many employees in his Department were affected by the rise in the national minimum wage on 1 October. [28972]

Mr. Charles Clarke: None.

The minimum rates for the Department already exceeded the new national minimum wage on 1 October.

Organised Crime

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what representations he has received from police forces in the United Kingdom requesting that the European Union develops an EU-level strategy for tackling organised crime. [35096]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* We have not received any representations from UK police forces requesting that the European Union develop an EU wide strategy for tackling organised crime.

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department on what *(a)* legal and *(b)* constitutional basis the European Commission is entitled to develop and implement a strategy on tackling organised crime at a European Union level. [35281]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* The European Council of 4/5 November 2004 invited the Commission (and the Council) to contribute to developing a strategy on tackling organised crime at the EU level under the auspices of the Hague programme. This programme includes subject areas such as immigration policy which fall within Title IV of the treaty establishing the European Community and police and judicial co-operation which fall within Title VI of the treaty of European Union. The Council therefore has an interest in working together with the Commission to develop this strategy.

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the European Commission's document Developing a Strategic Concept on Tackling Organised Crime would involve the formulation of criminal offences at an EU level. [35530]

Paul Goggins *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* As my Explanatory Memorandum of 25 July sets out, the document is a Communication from the Commission to the Council and the European Parliament. While implementing some elements of the Commission's strategic concept will require negotiation, scrutiny and potentially legislation, for example the Framework Decision on Fight Against Organised Crime, the Communication itself does not.

Sexually Explicit Print Media

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent assessment he has made of the availability to children of newspapers and magazines in retail stores that contain sexually explicit material. [34795]

Paul Goggins: I am aware that there is concern about the placement of certain magazines and newspapers that contain sexually explicit material in retail stores and their possible availability to children.

A combination of legislative and self-regulatory measures exist to protect the public: the Obscene Publications Act 1959 and the Indecent Displays (Control) Act 1981 are designed to protect children and others from exposure to inappropriate material. In addition, a voluntary code of practice, issued by the National Federation of Retail Newsagents (NFRN) encourages retailers to display pornographic magazines on the top shelf and not to sell them to people under 18.

However, I have asked my officials to raise this matter with colleagues from other Departments, the NFRN and others to ensure that the interests of children are properly safeguarded in this respect.

Sick Leave

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of his Department's employees who are within one year of the official retirement age are on extended sick leave. [32597]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Staff who are 59 and above on extended sick leave are detailed in the table.

	Staff on extended sick leave
Home Office	22
Prison Service	82
FSS	0
UKPS	4

Note:
1. Adelphi sickness figures commencing 1 January to 8 December 2005.
2. For HMPS and HO greater then or equal to two calendar months.
3. For UKPS greater then or equal to 26 days.
4. FSS ceased to be HO Agency on 5 December 2005. Its included because status change postdates question. No staff in category reported.

Social Enterprises (Milton Keynes)

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how much Government funding social enterprises in Milton Keynes have received in the last three financial years. [35269]

Alun Michael: I have been asked to reply.

An estimate of Government funding to social enterprises delivered via the South East of England Development Agency over the last three years in Milton Keynes is £112,000. On a broader level, such is the diverse nature of social enterprises that significantly more funds have been made available. A further £40,000 has been put into the Wolverton social enterprise project and Growth Areas Funding has been made available to social enterprises in Milton Keynes; for example £375,000 for refurbishment of Acorn House part of the Milton Keynes Community Foundation and £300,000 towards the Milton Keynes Economic and Learning Partnership's "Vision Building". Milton Keynes will receive a professionally trained adviser for social enterprises supplied via money from the Home Office. Other funding streams going into Milton Keynes may also be considered to benefit social enterprises either directly or indirectly.

Speed Cameras

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether there are plans to introduce a test for slip effect in respect of mobile speed guns. [33681]

Paul Goggins: There are no plans to introduce such a test. To ensure accuracy, all equipment already undergoes very rigorous laboratory and field testing prior to the grant of type approval. The code of practice for the Operational Use of Road Policing Enforcement Technology issued by the Association of Chief Police Officers includes guidance on the avoidance of any potential problems arising from slippage.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to his answer of 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 328W, on speed cameras, how many *(a)* convictions and *(b)* fixed penalty notices there were for speeding offences in each year from 1994 to 2004. [37015]

Paul Goggins: Available information on court convictions and fixed penalty notices issued for the offence of speeding detected by camera from 1997 to 2003 (latest available) is given in the table. 2004 data will not be available until March 2006.

Convictions and fixed penalty data for speeding offences detected by cameras[1], England and Wales, 1997 to 2003

Number

	Type of action	
	Court proceedings (Findings of guilt[2])	*Fixed penalty (Number of tickets[3])*
1997	20,800	288,600
1998	25,700	338,800
1999	32,600	423,000
2000	32,000	599,200[4]
2001	40,800	877,500
2002	46,700	1,135,400
2003	61,900	1,657,000

[1] Offences under the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984 and The Motor Vehicles (Speed Limits on Motorways) Regulations 1973.
[2] Includes cases where fixed penalty notices were originally issued but not paid and subsequently referred to court.
[3] Only covers tickets paid where there is no further action.
[4] Following publication of 2000 data, Northamptonshire police force revised their 2000 figures for the number of fixed penalty notices issued for speeding offences from 70,300 to 34,800 (a decrease of 35,500). In consequence, national data has been revised.

Victims of Rape

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what guidance on dealing with victims of rape has been given to police forces in England and Wales; and if he will make a statement. [34802]

Paul Goggins: Guidance on investigating serious sexual offences was produced in 2005 on behalf of the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) by the National Centre for policing excellence. National police training on serious sexual offences is now being developed, based around the guidance. Furthermore national service guidelines for developing sexual assault referral centres (SARCs) were produced in October 2005, jointly developed by Department of Health and the Home Office.

HOUSE OF COMMONS COMMISSION

Parliamentary Process (Initiatives)

Mr. Harper: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission if he will make a statement on the findings of user research commissioned by the Commission to inform future initiatives on involving citizens in the political process and informing them of the work of Parliament. [36779]

Nick Harvey: In December 2004 the House of Commons Commission asked the Group on Information for the Public to commission research into users' experiences of the parliamentary website. The findings of the qualitative research identified scope for improvement in several respects, and have closely informed the proposals for a radical redesign of the site.

In March 2005 the House of Commons Commission confirmed that it wished to fund the production and distribution of a guide on voting to be sent to all new voters on or around their eighteenth birthday. Officials commissioned qualitative research to inform the selection of material to appear in the guide. Research will be undertaken to ensure the effectiveness of the draft guide before its production and further research will be undertaken once the guide has been issued to assess its impact.

Further user research is currently under way to measure the potential interest in a new visitor centre, and to identify the expectations and requirements of those who might visit. The Parliamentary Education Unit has also recently commissioned research into users' experiences of its work.

The House partly funds some projects run by the Hansard Society. The "Connecting Communities" project completed in early 2005 aimed to build stronger links between Parliament and members of the public through a series of structured visits to Parliament supported by an educational pack. The findings of this project informed the planning of a number of House services, and were reflected in the Modernisation Committee's report on Connecting Parliament with the Public. The project also led to a booklet entitled "Your Parliament", a valuable addition to the House's publicly-available information sources. A second project, "Enhancing Engagement", built on this programme and developed practical proposals to bring Parliament closer to the public, especially those least engaged in the political process. Further research by the Hansard Society to inform future developments has recently been commissioned.

Public Gallery

Andrew Stunell: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission what measures will be taken to remedy the loss of visibility from the Public Gallery of the southern portion of the Chamber as a result of the erection of the permanent screen; and if he will make a statement. [36881]

Nick Harvey: In July 2004 the House of Commons Commission agreed that a permanent screen should be installed in front of the front row of the Public Gallery. In the course of subsequent detailed planning for erection of the screen, it became clear that it would have to be located some 40 centimetres in front of the line of the existing gallery front panel so that it would be aligned with the stone window mullion and wall panelling on the side walls as well as being aligned with the ceiling decorative ribbing. This resulted in the need to install a horizontal timber shelf to connect the new glass screen to the front panel, thus reducing the proportion of Members' seats which are visible from the Public Gallery.

Following representations from the hon. Member, a wide-angle shot of the Chamber from the southern end will be shown on one of the three monitors already provided on each side of the Public Gallery. As a result, those in the Public Gallery will for the first time have a view of that portion of the Chamber hitherto outside their line of sight.

Serjeant at Arms' Residence

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the hon. Member for North Devon, representing the House of Commons Commission which company is used to clean the Serjeant at Arms' residence; and how many people are employed for this purpose. [37728]

Nick Harvey: Apart from the exterior of the windows, which are cleaned by MITIE as part of the cleaning contract for the Parliament Street block, the Serjeant at Arms makes his own arrangements for cleaning.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Anti-retroviral Drugs

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment his Department has made of the role of charities in the distribution of anti-retroviral drugs in developing countries. [37629]

Mr. Thomas: The role of charities in anti-retroviral treatment (ART) provision reflects the strength of charities in health services more generally, including as a health provider and in improving demand. DFID has funded two reviews recently, suggesting that charities and other civil society organisations make up a large proportion of the service provision in health in many countries. They are also often the provider of choice of the poor even if they have to pay. Charities have a particular role in fragile states or states emerging from conflict. Many charities working in the field of HIV and AIDS are able to reach marginalised groups that Governments do not, such as intravenous drug users. They have also shown ability in reducing the stigma and discrimination associated with AIDS.

DFID recognises that increased delivery of health services and drugs, including anti-retroviral treatment, needs to be matched by investments in poor and vulnerable people's ability to demand services and hold service providers to account. Charities and other civil society organisations have a role in promoting an open debate about treatment and care, and in increasing the accountability of Governments. DFID also recognise that these organisations have an important role to play in advocacy and in giving communities a greater voice in ensuring the delivery of quality services. They are also critical for communicating information about services to communities, which increase people's access, ensure people understand the requirements of treatment (treatment literacy) and the importance of adhering to drug regimes.

While recognising the primary role of Government in ensuring that health services are provided to people, DFID is exploring ways to better support charities and other civil society groups. In 2000, we supported the Christian Health Association of Nigeria (CHAN), an organisation focused on co-ordinating the network of Christian voluntary health services in the country, and giving people access to health care that was previously unobtainable. DFID supported CHAN to improve CHAN's organisational effectiveness, resulting in the

establishment of CHAN Pharm to procure and distribute drugs including anti-retroviral treatment (ART).

In Malawi, where DFID is a major funder of the health sector, the Ministry of Health is developing contracts with mission hospitals and other charities to provide essential health services free at point of delivery. This will include the provision of HIV counselling and testing and the provision of anti-retroviral therapy. Already, the Government uses the Christian Health Association of Malawi (CHAM) facilities to provide ART free of charge.

Chronic Back Pain

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps are being taken in his Department to help civil servants with chronic back pain. [33873]

Mr. Thomas: DFID has an ongoing assessment process in place to identify the risk of musculoskeletal disorders and provides information, instruction and training to staff on workstation ergonomics and manual handling.

DFID offers staff a range of equipment including appropriate ergonomic seating, ergonomic keyboards and adjustable work stations and we work with our occupational health team to educate employees on good workstation ergonomics. The Department also provides on-site fitness and wellbeing centres and subsidised health club membership.

HIV/AIDS

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what work his Department has undertaken to increase the capacity of countries with an antenatal prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS of one per cent. or more to take full advantage of the flexibilities in the trade related aspects of intellectual property agreement; and if he will make a statement; [35694]

(2) what work the informal advisory group on access to medicine has undertaken to increase the capacity of countries with an antenatal prevalence rate of HIV/AIDS of one per cent. or more to take full advantage of the flexibilities in the trade related aspects of intellectual property agreement; and if he will make a statement. [35693]

Mr. Thomas: DFID's work on trade related intellectual property rights (TRIPS) to ensure increased access for countries with high prevalence rates of HIV/AIDS, is one pillar of a broader UK strategy to increase access to essential medicines to developing countries that includes direct assistance to developing countries; work with the private sector; and support of research and development efforts. DFID works with the Department for Trade and Industry (DTI), the Patent Office and other Departments, as appropriate, through the Cross Whitehall Working Group on access to medicines.

Developing countries and non-governmental organisations have expressed concerns that the World Trade Organisation TRIPS agreement, which provides wider international patent protection, would affect negatively the capacity of developing countries to procure cheap generic medicines.

DFID and other Whitehall departments have been working closely with the EU and the World Trade Organisation (WTO) member states to ensure that developing countries are given the necessary flexibilities in the WTO TRIPS agreement to safeguard their pressing public health needs. This has now been achieved with the recent agreement in the WTO to amend TRIPS to allow countries without manufacturing capacity to issue compulsory licenses to import generic copies of patented medicines, and the decision by the European Union to implement legislation transposing this agreement into European law.

We have been funding several programmes in developing countries, specifically around, or incorporating activities, related to TRIPS flexibilities. This is one of the main aims of the UK Government's global strategy to improve access to essential medicines, as outlined in the 2004 paper: "Increasing Access to Essential Medicines in the Developing World: Government Policy and Plan".

We have been providing support to the World Health Organisation's Commission on Intellectual Property Rights, Innovation and Public Health (CIPIH), with the secondment of an official to lead the secretariat of the Commission (three-year project: £240,000). The CIPIH has been appointed to produce an analysis of intellectual property rights, innovation, and public health, including analysis of TRIPS flexibilities. It will report in the first half of 2006.

We have been funding legal research and assistance on how to implement the flexibilities, with for instance the publication of the UNCTAD-International Centre for Trade and Sustainable Development's resource book on TRIPS and development (part of a three-year £1.2 million project), this year.

DFID also supports country-focused work on the issue. In Ghana, we support an access to medicines initiative (ATMI) through the Ghana National drugs programme that includes work on TRIPS flexibilities. DFID commissioned a series of studies that looked at access to medicines in under-served markets, including country case studies in Kenya and Malawi. A study on China and India investigates the effects of changing intellectual property legislation on the pharmaceutical industry in these countries, and in a recent update, the consequences of the alignment with TRIPS obligations in 2005.

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what role his Department plays in the UN AIDS programme. [36199]

Mr. Thomas: DFID is a strong supporter of the UN's HIV and AIDS programme working with the Joint United Nations Programme for HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS). The UNAIDS' mandate is

"to be the advocate for global action on the HIV and AIDS epidemic".

UNAIDS is a co-sponsored programme comprising a Secretariat, the World Bank, the World Health Organisation (WHO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Education,

Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR),the UN Office for Drugs and Crime (UNODC) and the World Food Programme (WFP).

The UK, led by DFID, is an active constituent member, with San Marino, Italy and Ireland, of the UNAIDS' Programme Co-ordinating Board (PCB). We currently occupy the board seat for our constituency, and have played a key role in important decisions taken at the PCB, including the adoption in June 2005 of the new policy paper "Intensifying HIV Prevention". DFID also has institutional partnerships, which includes core funding with all co-sponsors including the UNAIDS Secretariat, (except the UNODC).

Core funding to the UNAIDS Secretariat in this financial year is £16 million, to support the unified work plan involving all co-sponsors.

Media Monitoring

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much his Department has spent on media monitoring activities in each of the last eight financial years. [35631]

Mr. Thomas: Information on DFID's expenditure on media monitoring services is only available for the last two financial years.

The figures are as follows:

	£
2003–04	125,800
2004–05	109,650
2005–06 (to November 2005)	99,810

These figures are for press cuttings services for the entire department and annual subscriptions to the media monitoring unit.

South Asia Earthquake

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how his Department ensures that UK aid allocated to Kashmir after the recent earthquake is applied to the *(a)* people and *(b)* purposes intended. [36169]

Mr. Thomas: UK assistance for the Pakistan earthquake is divided between immediate humanitarian assistance and long-term reconstruction. My Department has pledged £58 million for humanitarian assistance and works with appropriate UN agencies, the Red Cross and a number of trusted non-governmental organisations to deliver much needed supplies and services quickly and efficiently to those most in need.

DFID has deployed humanitarian advisors to Pakistan to monitor our support and ensure it is used effectively. This supplements our standard accounting procedures that require all of DFID's partners to account for and report fully on programmes using DFID funds.

My department has pledged a further £70 million for long-term relief and reconstruction. The detail as to how this money will be spent is being worked on with the Government of Pakistan to ensure proper accountability, transparency and value for money.

Sugar Regime

Derek Conway: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what bilateral assistance the Government will provide to those Caribbean nations most affected by the impact of the EU's proposed reforms of the sugar regime. [36492]

Mr. Thomas: DFID's £10.3 million annual bilateral programme to the Caribbean finances programmes in Guyana (£4.5 million a year) and Jamaica (£2.5 million a year), two of the most affected countries in the Caribbean, and support for regional objectives and institutions (£3.3 million a year), that benefits all six affected Caribbean Sugar Protocol countries.

Funding from the regional programme is being made available to assist all these countries prepare their sugar action plans to set out how they adjust to the fall in European sugar price. These plans will enable them to benefit from the European Commission's (EC) forthcoming Transitional Assistance and attract possible investors from the private sector.

In addition, Jamaica, Guyana and Belize benefit from UK financed debt relief. Under the UK bilateral Commonwealth Debt Initiative, Belize received £1.45 million and Jamaica £6.24 million in 2005. For Guyana, the UK will pay approximately $450,000 as its share (10 per cent.) of Guyana's debt service on loans from the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) until all of its $260 million of IDA and International Monetary Fund debts are cancelled in 2006 under the recently agreed G8 proposal.

The UK provides approximately £8 million a year to the four most affected countries (Belize, Guyana, Jamaica and St Kitts) through its contributions to multilateral agencies such as the EC.

Tsunami

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what collaboration there has been between the Government and the Commonwealth in support of countries affected by the tsunami. [37674]

Mr. Thomas: The Commonwealth Secretariat has, on behalf of Commonwealth countries, sent a relief co-ordinator and specialist doctors to the Maldives, co-ordinating directly with the affected Governments.

The Commonwealth countries of Sri Lanka, India and the Maldives, which were affected by the tsunami, have received UK Government assistance.

DFID seeks to co-ordinate its activities with all donors, including Commonwealth countries, as the best way to ensure that there is no overlap and activities meet identified needs.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

MPs (Outside Appointments)

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Leader of the House if he will list the former hon. Members who left Parliament in 2005 who have since been appointed to public bodies by his Department, broken down by party; and who was responsible for making each appointment. [36688]

Mr. Hoon: None. The Office of the Leader of the House of Commons is not responsible for making appointments to any public bodies.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Arms Movement Certificates

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland which body is responsible for the issuing of arms movement certificates; how many have been issued; and what criteria are applied in deciding whether such a certificate should be issued. [30784]

Mr. Woodward: The Independent International Commission on Decommissioning (IICD) issue "arms movement certificates", as described in the decommissioning scheme within the meaning of section 1 of the Northern Ireland Arms Decommissioning Act of 1997, in connection with the decommissioning process.

Until such time as the IICD are satisfied that their mandate has been fulfilled and, as their report of 26 September 2005 stated, the arms of loyalist paramilitary groups, as well as other paramilitary organisations, remain to be addressed, it would not be appropriate for them to release the numbers of arms movement certificates or any date involved during the decommissioning process. It would not therefore be appropriate to comment at this time.

Belfast Hospitals (Security)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the security firms employed at each hospital in Belfast. [37585]

Mr. Woodward: Each hospital in Belfast delivers security by means of in-house staff employed on Health and Personal Social Services (HPSS) contracts. Hospitals, which employ external security firms to undertake specific functions, are listed as follows:

Greenpark Hospital Trust engages G4S Cash Services (UK) Ltd (previously Securicor) for cash movement.

Ulster Community Hospital Trust engages J.M. Securities for wheel clamping.

Business Rates

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 372W on business rates, what consultation his Department carried out with *(a)* businesses in Northern Ireland and *(b)* Invest NI on the impact of the Government's Northern Ireland business rates proposals, prior to their announcement. [36523]

Angela E. Smith: The decision to phase out industrial derating, as part of the review of rating policy, was subject to a full and rigorous public consultation process initiated by the NI Executive in May 2002.

Four political parties, 13 district councils, three Assembly Committees and a range of business organisations responded to that consultation and most of these commented upon the issue of industrial derating. In addition two of the Assembly Committees, Finance and Personnel Committee and Enterprise, Trade and Investment, which were in favour of removing the exemption, took evidence on the issue and this was duly submitted.

Further consultations took place in 2003 on the Government's proposals and on the draft legislation, which included a regulatory impact assessment.

The Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment was involved from an early stage. Invest NI was consulted and submitted evidence.

Civil Service

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how the Northern Ireland Department of Finance and Personnel applied the public interest test to Derry City council's application under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 for release of the Equality Impact Assessment for the Northern Ireland Civil Service e-HR programme. [36175]

Angela E. Smith: In applying the public interest test, the Department decided in conformity with Section 22 of the Freedom of Information Act, not to disclose the EQIA because it intends to publish the EQIA, and expects to do so within the next three months in line with the arrangements set out in the Department's equality scheme. In addition, the draft EQIA remains a working document and to release it now would inhibit the development of the draft and the orderly administration of the process.

Community Relations Council

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much the Northern Ireland Community Relations Council awarded in *(a)* core funding and *(b)* project funding to (i) the Irish School of Ecumenics, (ii) the Northern Ireland Inter Faith Forum, (iii) Roman Catholic groups and (iv) mainstream evangelical organisations in each of the last 15 years. [36213]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested for 1990–91 to 1997–98 is not available.

£

	Irish school of ecumenics		NI interfaith forum		Catholic groups		Evangelical organisations	
	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)	(a)	(b)
2005–06	45,000	nil	nil	nil	nil	nil	44,000	54,843
2004–05	45,000	6,850	nil	nil	nil	nil	44,000	28,721
2003–04	45,000	nil	nil	3,450	nil	20,385	50,750	33,665
2002–03	45,000	2,201	nil	123,590	nil	nil	43,2 11	95,9860
2001–02	45,000	3,790	nil	nil	nil	nil	37,632	12,475
2000–01	nil	3,800	nil	nil	nil	nil	37,627	36,275
1999–2000	nil	1,700	nil	34,600	nil	2,200	35,244	98,683
1998–99	nil	69,000	nil	15,000	nil	35,714	35,890	141,216

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much the Community Relations Council has awarded to Evangelical Contribution on Northern Ireland in *(a)* core funding and *(b)* project funding in each of the last 15 years. [36260]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested for the years 1990–91 to 1997–98 is not available.

£

	Core	Project
2005–06	44,000	11,000
2004–05	44,000	nil
2003–04	50,750	6,750
2002–03	43,211	302,875
2001–02	37,632	3,575
2000–01	37,627	17,800
1999–2000	35,244	36,000
1998–99	35,890	44,000

Disability

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland whether a Minister in his Department is planned to be nominated to take responsibility for liaison with the Office for Disability Issues; and if he will make a statement. [37087]

Angela E. Smith: There are no plans to nominate a Minister in Northern Ireland to liaise with the Office for Disability Issues. Officials in the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister will liaise with ODI officials as appropriate. Ministers in Northern Ireland will be involved as necessary taking into account the work of the Interdepartmental Group on Promoting Social Inclusion for Disabled People in Northern Ireland.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the initial activity undertaken by his Department in response to those recommendations in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit report "Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People" where lead responsibility was assigned to all Government Departments. [37088]

Angela E. Smith: The Prime Minister's Strategy Unit report "Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People" only applies to Government Departments in England, and to Wales and Scotland where the recommendation relates to reserved rather than devolved matters. However, in reporting progress against priorities, it will include progress in Northern Ireland in line with the objectives set in the "Improving the Life Chances" report.

While "Improving the Life Chances" is a GB strategy, work is being progressed in Northern Ireland by the Promoting Social Inclusion Inderdepartmental Working Group on Disability. In November 2004, the then Minister with responsibility for disability issues in Northern Ireland, established the Group. It is chaired by the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister (OFMDFM) and is made up of representatives from voluntary, community and statutory organisations alongside trade unions, the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland and all Northern Ireland Departments. The Minister asked the Group to produce recommendations on what Government can do to promote greater inclusion of people with disabilities in the economic and social life of Northern Ireland and is due to report during 2006.

This work in Northern Ireland will take account of "Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People". OFMDFM officials are liaising with officials in the recently formed Office for Disability Issues to ensure co-ordination of actions.

Free School Meals

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many children *(a)* are entitled to and *(b)* receive free school meals in each education board in Northern Ireland. [37606]

Angela E. Smith: At October 2004, the number of schoolchildren entitled to, and in receipt of, free school meals in each Education and Library Board area was as follows:

Number

	Children entitled to free school meals	Children in receipt of free school meals
Belfast	15,280	12,533
Western	15,219	8,131
North Eastern	10,055	6,640
South Eastern	8,823	11,639
Southern	13,767	13,786
Northern Ireland total	63,144	52,729

Note:

1. Figures relate to year one to year seven pupils in primary schools and pupils at post-primary schools. Figures for pupils at special schools entitled to free school meals are not collected.

The Department continues, through the Education and Library Boards, to take steps to encourage eligible pupils to take up their entitlement.

Pensioner Households

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what his latest estimate is of the number of pensioner households in Northern Ireland. [37609]

Mr. Hanson: There were 188,058 pensioner households based on the latest estimate in the 2001 census.

Playing Fields

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many schools in Northern Ireland have sold playing fields in each of the last 15 years, broken down by constituency. [36553]

Angela E. Smith: Only two playing fields have been sold in the last 15 years, both belonged to the Belfast Education and Library Board:

1991—Laburnum Playing Fields-East Belfast constituency and;

1995—The site of a former post-primary school, Forthbridge High School-North Belfast constituency.

Power Cuts

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many power cuts resulting from adverse weather conditions there were in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years. [36548]

Angela E. Smith: The number of power failures on Northern Ireland Electricity's network resulting from adverse weather conditions in each of the last 10 years is shown in the following table.

	Number of power failures
1995	976
1996	485
1997	771
1998	4,671
1999	933
2000	874
2001	1,590
2002	1,180
2003	1,087
2004	853

Restorative Justice Schemes

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland why he did not consult the Northern Ireland Policing Board on the draft guidelines on community-based restorative justice schemes. [35854]

Mr. Hanson: The draft guidelines for community-based restorative justice schemes have been formulated by a working group comprising criminal justice agencies including the PSNI. I have now made the draft guidelines for community-based restorative justice schemes available publicly, and welcome the representations of the Policing Board as key stakeholders.

Roads Maintenance

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was spent by the Department for Regional Development Roads Service on roads maintenance in *(a)* Limavady and *(b)* Coleraine borough council area in the 2004–05 financial year. [37883]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin, dated 15 December 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding how much was spent by the Department for Regional Development Roads Service on roads maintenance in *(a)* Limavady and *(b)* Coleraine Borough Council areas in the 2004–05 financial year. I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

I can confirm that the roads maintenance expenditure in the Limavady Borough Council area during the 2004–05 financial year amounted to £3,156,000. In the Coleraine Borough Council area, the roads maintenance expenditure amounted to £3,960,000 for the same period.

I hope this information is useful.

Sales (Under-age Children)

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people in Northern Ireland have been *(a)* prosecuted for and *(b)* convicted of selling tobacco to underage children in each of the last five years. [36337]

Mr. Hanson: The enforcement of the Children and Young Persons (Protection from Tobacco) (Northern Ireland) Order 1991 is the responsibility of district councils. Statistical information on prosecutions by district councils and other third parties is not held centrally. Information should however become available with the rollout of the next phase of the Causeway case management system, anticipated in early 2007.

Schools (Abuse Claims)

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many complaints of *(a)* physical abuse and *(b)* sexual abuse against (i) teachers and (ii) priests were received by schools in the maintained sector in each year for which figures are available. [36313]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Education does not collect this information from schools. However schools are required to keep a Record of Child Abuse Complaints and this must be made available to the Education and Training Inspectorate during an inspection.

Where a complaint is made about a member of staff and is pursued either as a formal referral to the investigating agencies or under the school's disciplinary procedures, a short summary must be entered by the Principal on a Record of Child Abuse Complaints. The summary must include:

The date and brief details of the nature of the complaints;

By whom and against whom the complaint is made;

If the complaint was formally referred, to whom it was referred and the date of referral; and

If the complaint was dealt with under the school's disciplinary procedure.

The school's Record of Child Abuse Complaints must be made available to the Board of Governors at least annually.

Secondary Teachers

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many secondary school teachers in Northern Ireland *(a)* teach the subject they undertook a degree in and *(b)* teach a subject different from their degree qualification, broken down by subject. [36311]

Angela E. Smith: As the Department of Education is not the employer of teachers, the information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. However, following the establishment of the General Teaching Council for Northern Ireland information can be collated by the Council which will include teacher qualifications and posts held. It is expected that a detailed analysis of every teacher registered with the Council will be available by the end of 2006.

Sex Offenders

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what precautions are in place to ensure that someone who has been convicted of a sex offence in the Irish Republic and travels to Northern Ireland is immediately placed on the Sex Offenders' Register in *(a)* the Province and *(b)* Great Britain. [36494]

Mr. Hanson: The Sexual Offences Act 2004 provides the police with a power to apply for an order from the court which makes a convicted sex offender from another jurisdiction who travels to the United Kingdom subject to the notification requirements of the Act. This means that while convicted sex offenders are not automatically added to the sex offender register (as it is commonly referred to), they cannot escape the notification requirements of the Act should they come to reside in Northern Ireland or Great Britain.

As part of the work programme for the intergovernmental agreement on criminal justice cooperation agreed with the Republic of Ireland in the summer, a registered sex offenders' advisory group is being established to look at information exchange on sex offenders in both jurisdictions. This will further strengthen the exchange of information between the Police Service of Northern Ireland and An Garda Siochana.

Sexual Assaults

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many sexual assaults have been reported to the police in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years; and how many people have been prosecuted. [36558]

Mr. Hanson: I am committed to supporting victims of sexual assaults in ways which help cases to be brought to court and prosecutions of offenders secured. This includes special measures in the courts to facilitate the way in which victims and witnesses who might otherwise feel intimidated give evidence.

Table 1 provides the number of offences of rape, attempted rape and other sexual assaults recorded by the police. Data is provided for 1998–99 onwards. The reason for this is that the Home Office introduced revised counting rules for recording crime in April 1998 and figures produced since then belong to a different statistical series and are not comparable with those produced prior to April 1998.

The number of prosecutions for these offences are provided in Table 2 and cover the calendar years 1994 to 2003. Data beyond 2003 will become available in early 2006.

It should be noted that statistics in Table 1 are offence based whilst figures in Table 2 are based on the number of persons prosecuted.

Table 1: Offences of rape, attempted rape and other sexual assaults recorded by the police

Financial year	*Rape*	*Attempted rape*	*Indecent assault*
1998–99	284	40	878
1999–2000	279	32	714
2000–01	209	23	663
2001–02	252	40	677
2002–03	317	40	633
2003–04	354	41	834
2004–05	347	33	746

Source:
Central Statistics Unit, PSNI

Table 2: Prosecutions for rape, attempted rape and other sexual assaults

	Rape	*Attempted rape*[1]	*Other sexual assaults*[2]	*Total*
1994	39	6	148	193
1995	65	13	163	241
1996	59	10	194	263
1997	54	7	153	214
1998	45	3	113	161
1999	30	6	86	122
2000	20	6	111	137
2001	28	6	111	145
2002	25	5	90	120
2003	26	5	109	140

[1] Includes aiding and abetting rape and assault with intent to rape.
[2] Includes indecent assault on female, indecent assault on male, indecent assault on female child and indecent assault on male child.

Source:
Statistics and Research Branch, Northern Ireland Office

Shared Future

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when the first triennial action plan for Shared Future will be published; and if he will make a statement. [35322]

Angela E. Smith: The Triennial Action Plan will be published before March 2006. This will give further impetus to A Shared Future, the policy and strategic framework for good relations in Northern Ireland.

Sinn Fein (Assembly Expenses)

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many staff Sinn Fein claim for under Northern Ireland Assembly expenses. [36533]

Mr. Hain: Taking account of MLA allowances and support provided under the Financial Assistance to Political Parties scheme, in the financial year 2004–05, Sinn Fein received support for 25 staff.

Sports Council

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the response of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 750W, on the Sports Council, how many individuals have received funding from the Sports Council in each of the last five years. [36357]

Mr. Hanson: Under the Recreation and Youth Service (Northern Ireland Order) 1986 the Sports Council for Northern Ireland (SCNI) is statutorily responsible for the development of sport in NI including the distribution of public funding to individual sports.

Under the talented athlete programme they make funding available to individuals for talent development. The following table provides details of how many individuals have received funding under this programme in each of the last five years:

	Individual awards
	55
2000–01	78
2001–02	59
2002–03	30
2003–04	103
2004–05(present)	66
Total	391

Terrorism

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of whether there is a Republican Christmas terror threat in London. [36500]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I have been asked to reply.

Northern Ireland related terrorism continues to pose a threat and dissident republican groups who have rejected the Good Friday agreement of April 1998 still aspire to mount attacks in Great Britain. The Government will never hesitate to issue a warning if it is the best way to protect any community or venue facing a specific and credible threat. Advice would be issued immediately if the public needed to take specific action. Public safety is our absolute priority.

Tourism

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what *(a)* joint ventures, *(b)* discussions and *(c)* liaison there has been between the Northern Ireland Tourist Board and the Scottish Tourist Board in targeting visitors from the United States of America. [36488]

Angela E. Smith: Many informal links exist but the Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) has no plans to have a formalised structure with VisitScotland. However, officials from the NITB meet on a regular basis throughout the year with a number of other UK tourism officials and this would involve colleagues from VisitScotland.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to promote the annual 12th of July demonstrations as a tourist attraction. [36542]

Angela E. Smith: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) recognises the value of celebrations and festivals as drivers for tourism. Research confirms that events are an effective tool for changing perceptions and attracting visitors.

NITB featured the 12th of July festivities in its 2005 calendar of events for visitors, and has recently met the Orange Order on a number of occasions to identify what actions are required to enable the festivities to be promoted to tourists.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he is taking to promote the River Bann as a tourist attraction. [36545]

Angela E. Smith: The Northern Ireland Tourist Board has supported the local authorities of Ards, Armagh, Banbridge, Craigavon, Newry and Mourne, Down and North Down to establish a regional tourism partnership. This public/private sector partnership has produced a tourism strategy and action plan for the region which looks at regional development, marketing and visitor servicing priorities. The plan identifies activity tourism and natural assets as key regional strengths and the partnership includes details of the River Bann in its promotional materials. In addition the NITB website acts as an information point and electronic sign post to relevant information. The River Bann features on www.discovernorthernireland.com on three separate pages in the angling section. Each reference provides angling details for the Upper Bann and relevant contact details.

The Department for Culture, Arts and Leisure which owns the fishing rights on a stretch of the Upper Bann promotes the Public Angling Estate through its angling guides and angling website at www.dcal-fishingni.gov.uk Provided for the public in general this website targets tourist anglers providing them with travel and accommodation provider links. It enables tourist anglers to plan and arrange a fishing break in Northern Ireland from the comfort of their own home.

The Department also promotes the Public Angling Estate and angling in general within Northern Ireland by attending major angling game fairs and exhibitions throughout the island of Ireland, England and Europe.

US Visa Applications

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland (1) what advice the Northern Ireland Office gave to the US consulate in Belfast in connection with the visa application for Rita O'Hare; [36534]

(2) how many US visa applications the United States consulate in Belfast has asked him about in each of the last 10 years. [36566]

Mr. Hain: My Department has not given any advice to the United States consulate in respect of a visa application for Rita O'Hare. Decisions on applications for visas are solely a matter for the US Administration.

SCOTLAND

Departmental Costs

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the *(a)* salary bill was and *(b)* administrative costs were for his Department in (i) Scotland and (ii) London in 2004–05. [35880]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office does not separately identify the administration costs arising in Scotland and London. However, the total administration costs of the Scotland Office in 2004–05 were £4,028,412, of which £2,201,361 related to salary costs.

High-speed Rail Link

Mark Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will support the proposals for a high-speed rail link between Edinburgh and Glasgow. [38180]

David Cairns: Development of the railway infrastructure in Scotland is the responsibility of Scottish Executive Ministers.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Crown Prosecution Service

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General what guidance he issues to members of the public wishing to make a complaint about the Crown Prosecution Service; and if he will make a statement. [37373]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) publishes a complaints leaflet, which sets out how members of the public can make a complaint about the service. The leaflet is published on the CPS website (www.cps.gov.uk) and hard copies are also available on request. I have placed a copy of the leaflet in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General how many staff employed by the Crown Prosecution Service were suspended from duty in *(a)* Southend, *(b)* Essex, *(c)* Hertfordshire and *(d)* the Metropolitan police area of London, broken down by grade in each of the last 15 years for which figures are available; and what the reasons were in each case in which proceedings are complete. [37375]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service has figures of staff suspensions available from June 2000 to date. Prior to this date, details of suspensions were not recorded centrally. The following numbers of staff were suspended from duty during this period.

		Number
(a) Southend	—	0
(b) Essex	Grade 7 equivalent	1
(c) Hertfordshire	HEO equivalent	1
(d) Metropolitan Police area of London	C2 Prosecutor level	2
	Legal Trainee	1
	EO equivalent	1
	AO equivalents	4
	AA equivalents	2

The key issue in all suspension decisions is whether the continued presence of the member of staff concerned would:

be contrary to the public or departmental interest;

prejudice any investigation, for example, where there is a possibility of someone destroying evidence;

have an adverse effect on the work of the office, for example, where harassment of colleagues is alleged and may intensify once an investigation is started.

In each of the 12 cases, the decision to suspend would have been based on one or more of the above criteria.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General what the procedure is for complaining about the *(a)* actions and *(b)* decisions of the Crown Prosecution Service; and if he will make a statement. [37376]

The Solicitor-General: The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) operates a three tiered approach to the management of complaints. This approach is designed to enable complaints to be resolved at a local level wherever possible but it also provides complainants with the option of raising concerns with the Director of Public Prosecutions's Private Office, if they remain dissatisfied with the responses received from their local Chief Crown Prosecutor.

This procedure is outlined in the CPS complaints leaflet; I have placed a copy of the leaflet in the House of Commons Library and it also available on the CPS website (www.cps.gov.uk).

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General what the rates of pay are of *(a)* lawyers and *(b)* other staff employed by the Crown Prosecution Service, broken down by grade in (i) Southend, (ii) Essex, (iii) the Metropolitan Police area of London and (iv) England and Wales. [37509]

The Solicitor-General: The rates of pay of lawyers is listed, and other staff employed by the Crown Prosecution Service, broken down by grade in (i) Southend, (ii) Essex, (ii) the Metropolitan Police area of London and (iv) England and Wales.

Question *(a)* payscales for lawyers in: (i) Southend, (ii) Essex, (iii) the Metropolitan Police area of London are identical and are as follows:

£

Payband	*Salary range from:*
C1	26,954 to 32,159
C2	31,880 to 53,667
D	45,389 to 59,033
E	56,814 to 65,565

Question *(a)* payscales lawyers employed (iv) England and Wales are as follows:

England and Wales (National)

Payband	£ *Salary range from:*
C1	25,648 to 30,819
C2	30,318 to 47,685
D	41,970 to 53,601
E	53,332 to 63,104

London (also including Bedfordshire, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Thames Valley, South East)

Payband	£ *Salary range from:*
C1	26,954 to 32,159
C2	31,880 to 53,667
D	45,389 to 59,033
E	56,814 to 65,565

Question *(b)* Payscales for other staff employed by the Crown prosecution service in: (i) Southend, (ii) Essex, (iii) Metropolitan Police area of London are identical and are as follows:

Payband	£ *Salary range from:*
A1	12,947 to 15,653
A2	15,904 to 18,727
B1	19,441 to 25,262
B2	25,134 to 29,734
B3	31,190 to 37,434
D	43,328 to 59,033
E	56,814 to 65,565

Question *(b)* payscales for other staff employed by the Crown prosecution service (iv) England and Wales are as follows:

England and Wales (National)

Payband	£ *Salary range from:*
A1	12,192 to 14,553
A2	14,654 to 17,412
B1	18,425 to 23,822
B2	24,478 to 28,278
B3	29,608 to 35,837
D	40,744 to 53,601
E	53,332 to 63,104

London also including (Bedfordshire, Hampshire, Hertfordshire, Kent, Surrey, Sussex, Thames Valley, South East)

Payband	£ *Salary range from:*
A1	12,947 to 15,653
A2	15,904 to 18,727
B1	19,441 to 25,262
B2	25,134 to 29,734
B3	31,190 to 37,434
D	43,328 to 59,033
E	56,814 to 65,565

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Business Start-ups

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to increase the number of business start-ups in the *(a)* Hartlepool constituency and *(b)* Tees Valley sub-region. [37170]

Alun Michael: The Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) aims to create the best possible environment for business success in the UK. Each year the Department invests over £400 million nationally in grants, loans and subsidised consultancy to assist business growth and stimulate business start-ups. The Department is committed to reducing burdens on business, and to this end has recently published a draft plan for cutting red tape in DTI policy areas, the DTI draft simplification plan. The DTI is also involved in establishing the Task Force on Women's Enterprise, which will be launched in spring 2006.

Specific responsibility for economic development in the North East of England falls to Regional Development Agency ONE NorthEast. The agency administers a number of business support schemes on behalf of the DTI, and is responsible for the extensive business support services available through the regional Business Link network. ONE NorthEast is working with regional partners to create a single regional business support network that is easy to access and easy to use. The agency is also developing and delivering a significant programme aimed at bringing about a lasting cultural change in attitudes towards entrepreneurial activity in the North East of England, including raising aspirations of the region's young people, and under-represented groups.

Public funding is also being used to establish of business incubator units, business start-up advice and tailored local business support measures.

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many business start-ups took place in *(a)* Hartlepool, *(b)* the Tees Valley sub-region and *(c)* the North East region in the last 12 months. [37171]

Alun Michael: In 2004 (the latest year for which figures are available) there were 120 new VAT registrations in Hartlepool, 910 in Tees Valley and 4290 in North East England. Full statistical information on VAT registrations, broken down to local authority area, is available from the Small Business Service website at www.sbs.gov.uk.

Carbon Sequestration

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on his plans to promote the use of carbon sequestration technology. [37698]

Malcolm Wicks: "The Carbon Abatement Technologies Strategy for Fossil Fuel Use" which I announced on 14 June this year sets out the Government's policy and views for the future support

for carbon sequestration technologies. Copies of the strategy are available in the House of Commons Library and at:

http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/coal/cfft/cct/pub/catreportlinked.pdf.

In addition to the strategy I also announced £25 million for a demonstration of Carbon Abatement Technologies, which could include carbon sequestration. In his pre-budget statement this month, the Chancellor announced a further £10 million for this demonstration scheme, bringing the total for Government funding to £35 million.

Coal Mining

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much *(a)* deep mined and *(b)* opencast coal was produced in the UK in (i) the most recent 12 months for which figures are available and (ii) 1995; and what forecast he has made of production in 2015. [37865]

Malcolm Wicks: Over the 12-month period to September 2005 UK deep mined coal production was 9.6 million tonnes and UK surface mined coal production was 11.3 million tonnes.

In 1995, UK deep mined coal production was 35.2 million tonnes and UK surface mined coal production was 16.4 million tonnes.

This Department does not produce regular forecasts for UK coal production. A study commissioned by DTI in 2004 as part of its work on the large combustion plant directive entitled "UK Coal Production Outlook: 2004–16". The report projected that the UK's total coal production could be sustained within a band of 21–29 million tonnes in 2010 and 15–21 million tonnes in 2016.

The outturn figures for the 12 months to September 2005 suggest that the lower figures in these projections may be between 2 and 3 million tonnes too high.

Disability

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) whether a Minister in his Department is planned to be nominated to take responsibility for liaison with the office for disability issues; and if he will make a statement; [37061]

(2) if he will make a statement on the initial activity undertaken by his Department in response to those recommendations in the Prime Minister's strategy unit report, improving the life chances of disabled people, where lead responsibility was assigned to all Government Departments. [37062]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I am the DTFs representative on the cross-departmental ministerial group charged with taking forward the recommendations of the strategy unit report "improving the life chances of disabled people", and accordingly have responsibility for liaison with the office for disability issues.

DTI is also represented on the cross-departmental senior officials' group, which contributes to the work on establishment of the office for disability issues and oversees the other workstreams that are taking forward the improving life chances agenda.

The DTI supports the recommendations in the strategy unit report and the aims of the office for disability issues; and contributes to implementing recommendations within its area of responsibility. The establishment of the office for disability issues is an important step towards achieving equality for disabled people and its work will complement that taken forward by proposed Commission for Equality and Human Rights, for which DTI has the lead.

Energy

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the UK's priorities were for the EU-OPEC ministerial meeting of 2 December. [34933]

Malcolm Wicks: At the EU-OPEC energy dialogue meeting on 2 December the UK was acting in its capacity as president of the EU Council of Ministers.

The EU sees this dialogue as part of a broader approach to developing the EU's relationship with major energy suppliers. This approach was one of the conclusions reached at the informal EU Heads of State meeting at Hampton Court on 27 of October that looked at the challenges of globalisation.

The overall aim of the dialogue is to promote oil market stability and improve mutual understanding. At the 2 December meeting we agreed that the dialogue would be taken forward in a number of specific areas. There will be:

A joint study on the refining sector in EU and OPEC countries;

Joint research and a workshop on the impact of financial markets;

An experts meeting on energy technologies with a focus on carbon capture and storage, and possible the establishment of an EU-OPEC technology centre;

An experts meeting on the impact of energy policies on both demand and supply.

The next EU-OPEC ministerial meeting will be held in June in Brussels.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the latest estimates are for the percentage of electricity used in the UK produced from *(a)* coal, *(b)* nuclear power, *(c)* gas and *(d)* each other source; and what forecasts he has made for the percentages in (i) 10 and (ii) 20 years' time. [37862]

Malcolm Wicks: The available information on electricity supplied in the UK is shown in the following table. It is based on information published in the Digest of United Kingdom Energy Statistics 2005 and energy projections published in November 2004.

Percentage

	2004	*2010*	*2020*
Gas	40	41	58
Coal	33	25½	16½
Nuclear	19	18½	7
Imports	2½	2½	2
Oil	1	½	½

Percentage

	2004	*2010*	*2020*
Hydro	1	1½	1
Other Renewables	2½	10	14
Other Fuels	1	½	1

Other renewables include biofuels, wind, wave, solar photovoltaics and non-biodegradable wastes. Other fuels include coke oven gas, blast furnace gas and waste products from chemical processes.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the adequacy of the supply of resources needed to provide the amount of electricity required in the UK over the next 10 years. [37863]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government's assessment of the adequacy of generating capacity and the availability of supplies of electricity and fuels used for electricity generation in the medium term is set out in the Report of the Joint Energy Security of Supply working group, available on the DTI website at http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/jess/jessreport5.pdf and in the Secretary of State's report to Parliament, available from the DTI website at http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/publications/policy/sec_supply_first_report.pdf

Both reports draw heavily on National Grid's Seven Year Statement, available from the National Grid website at http://wwwnationalgrid.com/uk/library/documents/sys05/default.asp.

Gas Prices

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the availability of gas supplies *(a)* in the UK and *(b)* from abroad; and if he will make a statement on the impact on British industry of the recent increases in prices for gas. [37864]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government's assessment of the availability of gas supplies from UK sources is set out in the Secretary of State's report to Parliament which is published on the Department's website at http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/publications/policy/sec_supply_first_report.pdf—see chapter 4, page 14.

The Government are committed to working with others to provide an appropriate framework for international trade in gas, and to developing partnerships with gas producing and transit countries. Decisions as to the amount of gas to be imported, from which sources and through which supply routes and import points, are for individual market participants.

There is a general concern that changes in other governments' national rules are potentially diverting cargoes of liquefied natural gas away from Great Britain, and that gas supplies via the interconnector from continental Europe have not fully responded to recent strong price signals; Ofgem and the Government are pursuing these issues urgently with the European Commission, including through a letter from my right hon. Friends the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry and the Chancellor of the Exchequer to Commissioner Kroes. The Government's Energy Review, due to report in 2006, will look at the reliability of energy supplies in the medium and long term.

I, as well as DTI and Ofgem officials, have met representatives of industry on numerous occasions to discuss the impact of gas price rises and ways of mitigating that.

New Businesses

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the rate of new business development per 10,000 population *(a)* was in 2004–05 and *(b)* is in 2005–06 in (i) England, (ii) the West Midlands and (iii) Stoke-on-Trent. [37718]

Alun Michael: According to Barclays Bank's latest survey of business creation, which includes non-VAT registered firms, there were 425,100 business start-ups in England in 2004, representing 105 new businesses per 10,000 resident adults[1]. A further 277,500 businesses started up in England in the first nine months of 2005.

Barclays data show that there were 36,100 business start-ups in the West Midlands Government Office Region in 2004, representing 85 new businesses per 10,000 resident adults[1]. A further 24,300 businesses started up in the first nine months of 2005. Barclays data show there were 1,100 business start-ups in Stoke-on-Trent unitary authority in 2004, representing 57 new businesses per 10,000 resident adults[1]. A further 700 businesses started up in the first nine months of 2005.

DTI figures based solely on VAT registrations for England, West Midlands Government Office Region and Stoke-on-Trent unitary authority are shown in the following table for 2004. Data for 2005 will be available in Autumn 2006.

[1] Based on mid-year 2004 population estimates published by the Office for National Statistics.

VAT registrations, number and rate

	VAT registrations 2004	*VAT registrations per 10,000 resident adults[1], 2004*
England	158,535	39
West Midlands	14,855	35
Stoke-on-Trent	535	28

[1] Based on mid-year 2004 population estimates published by the Office for National Statistics.

Source:

Business Start-ups and Closures: VAT Registrations and De-registrations 1994–2004, Small Business Service, available at http://www.sbs.gov.uk/vats

VAT registrations do not capture all start-up activity. Businesses are unlikely to be registered if they fall below the compulsory VAT threshold. Only 1.8 million out of 4.3 million enterprises were registered for VAT at the start of 2004.

Nuclear Power

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research has been undertaken by his Department on the cost-effectiveness of nuclear power in reducing carbon dioxide emissions compared with other measures; and if he will make a statement. [37693]

Malcolm Wicks: The 2003 Energy White Paper published the results of extensive modelling of the costs of different options for reducing carbon dioxide emissions over the period to 2050. The analysis is available at:

http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/whitepaper/phase2.pdf.

The Department is also aware of other recent studies providing estimates of the costs of nuclear energy, notably those by the Royal Academy of Engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Chicago.

In November 2005 my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced that there would be a review of energy policy which would report in summer 2006. This will involve further analysis of the costs of different options, including nuclear energy, for meeting the Government's long-term targets for reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

Jo Swinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research his Department has commissioned on the cost-effectiveness of nuclear power in reducing carbon dioxide emissions compared with other measures; and if he will make a statement. [37700]

Malcolm Wicks: The 2003 Energy White Paper published the results of extensive modelling of the costs of different options for reducing carbon dioxide emissions over the period to 2050. The analysis is available at:

http://www.dti.gov.uk/energy/whitepaper/phase2.pdf.

The Department is also aware of other recent studies providing estimates of the costs of nuclear energy, notably those by the Royal Academy of Engineering, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and the University of Chicago.

In November 2005 my right hon. Friend the Prime Minister announced that there would be a review of energy policy which would report in summer 2006. This will involve further analysis of the costs of different options, including nuclear energy, for meeting the Government's long-term targets for reducing carbon dioxide emissions.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proposals have been made by the Nuclear Decommissioning Agency for the demolition of nuclear power stations; when he received the proposals; what the anticipated costs were; and when he will make a decision on the proposals. [37712]

Malcolm Wicks: The Nuclear Decommissioning Authority has set out in its draft Strategy proposals for the decommissioning and clean-up of its sites. The draft Strategy sets out the scope, schedule, and cost of work at each site over its lifetime—and includes proposals for its fleet of Magnox power stations. The draft Strategy is available at: www.nda.gov.uk I expect to receive the NDA's proposed Strategy before Christmas. It will go to the Scottish Ministers at the same time. The Scottish Ministers and I will then have until 31 March 2006 to consider and approve the NDA's proposed Strategy.

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions have taken place in the Joint Research/Atomic Questions Working Party of the EU in respect of the draft council decision concerning the approval of the accession of the European Atomic Energy Community to a framework agreement for International Collaboration on research and development of generation IV nuclear energy systems (GIF); what decisions have been taken; and what financial commitment has been made by the United Kingdom in support of the GIF. [35653]

Malcolm Wicks: In 2005 EURATOM's accession to GIF has been discussed in the Joint Research/Atomic Questions Working party on the following dates:

25 May 2005—under the Luxembourg presidency

13 June 2005—under the Luxembourg presidency

26 September2005—under the UK presidency

At the September 2005meeting the presidency stated that as there was a clear qualified majority in favour of EURATOM's accession to the GIF it would be sent as an "I" point to Coreper and an "A" point to a future Council (i.e. to be agreed without discussion).

Council Secretariat has subsequently sent the finalised version of the draft Council Decision to all delegations to give them the opportunity to register any opposition.

DTI has allocated £10 million, £5 million in 2006–07 and £5 million in 2007–08, to support UK involvement in international research on advanced nuclear energy systems. Much of this is expected to fund UK research on Generation IV systems for potential international deployment from around 2030; the exact amount will depend on the mix of research proposals that are submitted. The initiative will support UK skills needed to keep open the nuclear energy option and our capability to keep abreast of international developments and inform UK policy development.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions have taken place between the Nuclear Installations Inspectorate and the Environment Agency on the licensing of newly-built nuclear power stations. [36809]

Malcolm Wicks: HSEfs Nuclear Installations Inspectorate and the Environment Agency maintain a regular dialogue on various matters of mutual interest. Since the 2003 Energy White Paper, Nil and the EA have not engaged in any formal discussions about licensing new nuclear power stations. Recently, Nil and EA have had informal and very preliminary discussions about the regulatory strategy that might be appropriate for the licensing and authorization of new nuclear power stations, in the event of any applications to build new stations. Nil and EA share the view that a coordinated regulatory approach to any potential new nuclear build would be essential.

Post Offices

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many rural post offices have closed in the last 12 months. [37630]

Barry Gardiner: I am advised by Post Office Ltd. that total net rural post office closures for the financial year 2004–05 were 144. Of these closures, 97 were in England, 22 in Scotland, 18 in Wales and 7 in Northern Ireland.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1555W, on post offices, what the timetable is for submitting formal notification to the European Commission for subsidies to support the rural post office network for the five years after March 2008; and if he will make a statement. [37493]

Barry Gardiner: Decisions concerning the future of the rural post office network have yet to be taken. Only when Government have had time to consider (a) the findings of the Post Office Ltd report on their trials of new, innovative and cost-effective ways of delivering post office services to rural communities and (b) ongoing analysis of the needs of stakeholders and the public, will it be possible to take well-informed decisions about the future of the rural network. If required, a state aid notification will be made at that time.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1555W, on post offices, whether the Government will be publishing the Post Office Ltd.'s report of their pilot programme, trialling new and innovative ways of delivering postal services to rural communities; and if he will make a statement. [37494]

Barry Gardiner: The Report is due to be presented to Government by the end of December 2005. Consideration will be given to its findings which will help inform the future options for the network on which a public consultation will be held in the new year. A decision on publication will be taken in due course.

Renewable Energy

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much in energy a producer will receive for 1 Megawatt-hour (MWh) of power under the trading of Renewable Energy Certificates (REC). [35263]

Malcolm Wicks: I assume the hon. Member is referring to Renewable Obligation Certificates (ROCs).

For each megawatt hour of eligible renewable energy generated, Ofgem issues a tradable certificate called a ROC to the accredited generating station. The generator can then sell their ROCs to suppliers with, or without, the electricity. This enables renewable generators to receive a premium price for their electricity. The market determines the price of a ROC.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Renewable Energy Certificate programme is on target to meet the 2010 goals set for it. [35264]

Malcolm Wicks: I assume the hon. Member is referring to Renewable Obligation Certificates.

The Government have a target of 10 per cent. of electricity from Renewable Obligation eligible sources of renewable energy. In 2004, 3.1 per cent. of the UK's electricity supply came from Renewable Obligation eligible sources of renewable energy. This rises to 3.6 per cent. from all sources of renewable energy.

The Government recognise that the renewables target is ambitious, but we are doing all we can to get as close as we can to it.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to encourage energy providers to take advantage of the Renewable Energy Certificates programme to help provide renewable energy. [35265]

Malcolm Wicks: I assume the hon. Member is referring to Renewable Obligation Certificates.

The Government recently consulted on the review of the Renewables Obligation, which considered a number of limited amendments to improve the effectiveness of the Obligation. The consultation period closed on 9 December, with most changes likely to come into force on 1 April 2006.

The large majority of respondents considered that the Obligation has provided a positive stimulus for investment in renewable technologies, particularly lower cost technologies, such as onshore wind and landfill gas. Most considered that the Obligation is largely working as anticipated and would deliver a significant expansion in renewable energy generation over the coming years.

Wheel Clamping

Stephen Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what research his Department has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the conduct of private wheel clamping firms in England and Wales. [30659]

Paul Goggins: I have been asked to reply.

Since the legal requirement date of 3 May 2005 for vehicle immobiliser (wheel-clampers) operatives to obtain an SIA licence, the Home Office has not commissioned any research on the conduct of private wheel clamping firms in England and Wales.

In July 2002, the Home Office carried out a limited consultation exercise on the specific issue of the practice of towing away vehicles from private land and charging a release fee. The consultation asked three main questions: the scale of any problems currently posed by the towing away of vehicles; the extent to which the practice might grow as an alternative to wheel-clamping when SIA regulation came into force; and how the problem should be addressed.

The responses confirmed anecdotal evidence that there were problems arising out of the practice of towing away, giving rise to widespread public complaint. It was predicted that these problems would increase as operators sought to evade the licensing requirements attached to vehicle immobilising. It was recommended that the problem should be dealt with by extending the licensing remit of the SIA to include this form of activity. This was completed earlier this year.

TRANSPORT

Correspondence

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Walsall North sent on 2 November 2005 to the Department for the Environment, Food and

Rural Affairs and transferred to the Department for Trade and Industry on 11 November and to his Department on 6 December. [37861]

Dr. Ladyman: I wrote to the hon. Member on Tuesday 13 December.

Integrated Kent Franchise

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what plans he has to change services on the Bexhill to London Victoria line following the award of the Integrated Kent Franchise. [36902]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 13 December 2005]:* I refer the hon. Member to my answer of Tuesday 6 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1119W.

Railways

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he plans to make of the performance of Arriva Trains Wales on the Wales and Borders network in advance of the performance review due in 2008. [36897]

Derek Twigg: The Arriva Trains Wales Franchise Agreement sets out targets for performance. The agreement includes annual milestones which are monitored to determine whether Arriva Trains Wales will achieve their targets. Both are discussed at monthly and quarterly meetings between the Department and the train operator, and are the subject of correspondence with them throughout the year.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 6 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1117W, on Buckshaw Village (railway station), when work will begin on the new railway station at Buckshaw Village; how long the project is estimated to take; and when the station will be ready to be opened. [37506]

Derek Twigg: This is a project that is being led by Lancashire county council with Network Rail. The Council has yet to finalise the detailed project plan which would provide dates for key milestones, but they have told the Department that the station is expected to be operational by 2008 providing the funding is in place.

Renewable Transport Fuel Obligation

Mr. Allen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with Cabinet colleagues on the merits of a carbon and sustainability assurance scheme as part of the renewable transport fuel obligation; and if he will make a statement. [37699]

Dr. Ladyman: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport and I meet our ministerial colleagues, to discuss a range of departmental policies, regularly.

The renewable transport fuel obligation will be designed to encourage the production and use of biofuels with the best carbon savings and from the most sustainable sources.

This issue was explored at some length in the feasibility study which we published on 10 November. A copy of the study is available in the House Library and on the Department's website at http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_roads/documents/divisionhomepage/610328.hcsp.

We will be consulting stakeholders shortly on how we might best incorporate carbon and sustainability criteria into the obligation, as well as on other detailed design issues.

Speed Cameras

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many prosecutions for motor speeding offences caught by speed cameras have been discontinued due to a lack of sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction since 2003. [33685]

Paul Goggins: I have been asked to reply.

This information is not collected centrally.

Transport Commissioners

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment his Department has made of the Transport Commissioners' ability to carry out their role within their existing regulatory powers; and what plans his Department has to amend these powers. [37868]

Dr. Ladyman: We are about to publish a consultation paper on proposals for modernising and streamlining the operator licensing system and I plan to make a statement shortly.

TREASURY

0870 Numbers

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1902W, on 0870 numbers, what contractual arrangements Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs has for the provision of the non-profit making 0870 lines. [37639]

John Healey: HMRC has contracts with two companies covering the provision of non-geographic (0870) numbers.

The former Inland Revenue currently have a contract in place with Cable and Wireless Ltd. for the provision of 0870 numbers.

In the former HM Customs and Excise, the contract for the provision of 0870 numbers is with Fujitsu Services.

Administrative Savings

Mr. Maude: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what administrative savings have been made by his Department in each of the last eight years. [34952]

John Healey: The Treasury's underspends against its administration costs limits are set out in table 4 of the Public Expenditure Outturn White Paper for each of the relevant years, copies of which have been placed in the Library of the House. (PEOWPs for the years 2001–02 to 2004–05 are also available at:

http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/economic_data_and_tools/finance_spending_statistics/pes_publications/pespub_index.cfm).

The Treasury's targets for efficiency gains as part of Spending Review 2004 are set out in the department's efficiency technical note, available at http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/F8E/39/F8E390F4-BCDC-D4B3-1C4802BDA23FF16F.pdf. Progress against those targets was reported in Annex C of the 2005 departmental report http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/media/99E/44/deptreport2005.pdf and will be updated in the 2005 autumn performance report, due to be published on the Treasury's website later this month.

Average Wage

Joan Walley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average wage in *(a)* England, *(b)* the West Midlands and *(c)* Stoke-on-Trent was in the latest year for which figures are available. [37740]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 15 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question what the average wage in *(a)* England *(b)* the West Midlands and *(c)* Stoke on Trent was in the last year for which figures are available. (37740)

Currently average earnings are estimated from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings (ASHE), and are provided for full time employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey period was not affected by absence. This is the standard definition used for ASHE. The ASHE does not collect data on the self employed and people who do unpaid work.

The attached table shows the Average Gross Weekly Earnings for full time employees by local authority by place of work for England, West Midlands and Stoke on Trent for 2005. These statistics are also available on the National Statistics website at: http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk = 13101.

The ASHE, carried out in April of each year, is the most comprehensive source of earnings information in the United Kingdom. It is a one per cent sample of all employees who are members of pay-as-you-earn (PAYE) schemes.

Gross weekly pay for full-time employee jobs[1] by place of work

£

	Full-time employees—2005	
	Median	*Mean*
England	436	526
West Midlands	403	476
Stoke on Trent UA	346	417

[1] Employees on adult rates whose pay for the survey pay-period was not affected by absence.

Source:

Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings, Office for National Statistics.

Biofuels (Tax Revenue)

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the tax revenue from the sale of *(a)* liquefied petroleum gas, *(b)* bioethanol/petrol blends, *(c)* biodiesel blended from straight vegetable oil and *(d)* standard unleaded petrol has been in each of the last five years. [37854]

John Healey: Historical duty revenue figures by fuel type can be found on page 3 of the HM Revenue and Customs Hydrocarbon Oils Bulletin, a copy of which can be found on the HMRC website at: http://www.uktradeinfo.com/index.cfm?task = statbulltwo

Full year revenue figures for liquefied petroleum gas are not available for any of the last five years. Also, duty revenue figures by type of biodiesel blend are not available.

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what estimate he has made of the revenue which will be generated annually as a result of the increase in excise duty on straight vegetable oil; [37855]

(2) what criteria biodiesel produced from straight vegetable oil does not satisfy in the amended Hydrocarbon Oil Duties Act 1979. [37856]

John Healey: There has been no increase in excise duty on road fuels, including biofuels, since October 2003. Fuel produced from vegetable oil is eligible for the rate of duty for biodiesel (currently 27.10 pence per litre) if it meets the legal definition of biodiesel for tax purposes set out in section 2AA of the Hydrocarbon Oil Duties Act 1979. In other cases it is liable to duty at 47.10 pence per litre, as has been the case since Royal Assent to the Finance Act 2002.

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he plans to reduce the biofuels duty levy. [37939]

John Healey: The Chancellor announces changes to taxation policy in the context of the Budget.

Budget Reports

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 517W, if he will publish the implied business investment deflator and the implied gross domestic product deflator, for each quarter and for each year since quarter 1, 1980. [37504]

John Healey: The relevant figures are provided in the following tables.

Annual figures

	Implied deflators	
	Business investment	*GDP*
1980	0.66	0.38
1981	0.72	0.42
1982	0.75	0.45
1983	0.78	0.48
1984	0.80	0.50
1985	0.83	0.53
1986	0.86	0.55
1987	0.90	0.58
1988	0.93	0.61
1989	1.00	0.66
1990	1.04	0.71
1991	1.05	0.75
1992	1.02	0.78
1993	1.04	0.80
1994	1.07	0.82
1995	1.11	0.84
1996	1.13	0.87
1997	1.10	0.89
1998	1.08	0.92
1999	1.06	0.94
2000	1.04	0.95

Annual figures

	Implied deflators	
	Business investment	*GDP*
2001	1.02	0.97
2002	1.00	1.00
2003	0.99	1.03
2004	0.99	1.05

Source:
HMT calculations based on ONS data.

Quarterly figures

		Implied deflators	
		Business investment	*GDP*
1980	Q1	0.62	0.36
1980	Q2	0.65	0.37
1980	Q3	0.67	0.39
1980	Q4	0.70	0.40
1981	Q1	0.71	0.41
1981	Q2	0.72	0.42
1981	Q3	0.72	0.42
1981	Q4	0.73	0.44
1982	Q1	0.73	0.44
1982	Q2	0.75	0.45
1982	Q3	0.75	0.46
1982	Q4	0.75	0.47
1983	Q1	0.77	0.47
1983	Q2	0.77	0.47
1983	Q3	0.78	0.48
1983	Q4	0.78	0.49
1984	Q1	0.77	0.49
1984	Q2	0.81	0.50
1984	Q3	0.80	0.50
1984	Q4	0.80	0.51
1985	Q1	0.80	0.52
1985	Q2	0.83	0.53
1985	Q3	0.83	0.53
1985	Q4	0.84	0.54
1986	Q1	0.85	0.54
1986	Q2	0.87	0.54
1986	Q3	0.86	0.55
1986	Q4	0.88	0.55
1987	Q1	0.89	0.56
1987	Q2	0.90	0.57
1987	Q3	0.90	0.58
1987	Q4	0.91	0.59
1988	Q1	0.91	0.59
1988	Q2	0.92	0.60
1988	Q3	0.94	0.62
1988	Q4	0.95	0.63
1989	Q1	0.97	0.64
1989	Q2	0.99	0.65
1989	Q3	1.01	0.66
1989	Q4	1.03	0.68
1990	Q1	1.03	0.69
1990	Q2	1.04	0.70
1990	Q3	1.05	0.72
1990	Q4	1.05	0.72
1991	Q1	1.05	0.74
1991	Q2	1.05	0.75
1991	Q3	1.03	0.76
1991	Q4	1.05	0.77
1992	Q1	1.03	0.78
1992	Q2	1.03	0.79
1992	Q3	1.01	0.78
1992	Q4	1.03	0.79
1993	Q1	1.03	0.80
1993	Q2	1.03	0.80
1993	Q3	1.05	0.81
1993	Q4	1.05	0.81
1994	Q1	1.05	0.81
1994	Q2	1.06	0.81
1994	Q3	1.07	0.81
1994	Q4	1.09	0.82
1995	Q1	1.10	0.83
1995	Q2	1.11	0.83
1995	Q3	1.12	0.84
1995	Q4	1.13	0.85
1996	Q1	1.13	0.85
1996	Q2	1.13	0.87
1996	Q3	1.13	0.87
1996	Q4	1.11	0.87
1997	Q1	1.10	0.88
1997	Q2	1.10	0.89
1997	Q3	1.10	0.90
1997	Q4	1.10	0.90
1998	Q1	1.10	0.91
1998	Q2	1.08	0.91
1998	Q3	1.07	0.92
1998	Q4	1.06	0.93
1999	Q1	1.06	0.93
1999	Q2	1.07	0.94
1999	Q3	1.07	0.94
1999	Q4	1.06	0.94
2000	Q1	1.05	0.94
2000	Q2	1.05	0.94
2000	Q3	1.04	0.95
2000	Q4	1.03	0.96
2001	Q1	1.03	0.96
2001	Q2	1.02	0.97
2001	Q3	1.02	0.97
2001	Q4	1.01	0.98
2002	Q1	1.00	0.99
2002	Q2	1.00	1.00
2002	Q3	1.00	1.00
2002	Q4	1.00	1.01
2003	Q1	0.99	1.02
2003	Q2	0.99	1.03
2003	Q3	0.99	1.03
2003	Q4	0.99	1.04
2004	Q1	1.00	1.04
2004	Q2	0.99	1.04
2004	Q3	0.99	1.05
2004	Q4	0.99	1.06
2005	Q1	0.99	1.07
2005	Q2	0.99	1.07
2005	Q3	1.00	1.08

Source:
HMT calculations based on ONS data.

Building/Refurbishment Projects

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what *(a)* building and *(b)* refurbishment projects are planned by his Department in *(i)* 2005–06 and *(ii)* 2006–07; and what the expected costs are of each project. [37403]

John Healey: The Treasury has no building or refurbishment projects planned.

Catering/Entertainment Contracts

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the total value is of *(a)* catering and *(b)* entertainment contracts let by his Department; and what value of such contracts has been let in each nation and region of the UK, including London. [37461]

John Healey: The Treasury did not let any catering or entertainment contracts during 2004–05.

Consumer Debt

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average level of consumer debt was in *(a)* Staffordshire and *(b)* England in the last period for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement. [37831]

John Healey: Figures from the Bank of England showed that the level of unsecured consumer debt in the UK in October 2005 was £191,406 million, of which £56,334 million is credit card debt and £135,072 million other. Official regional and average data are not available. The growth in unsecured lending is now at its lowest in over 10 years.

Contracts

Mr. Weir: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the value was of *(a)* public opinion research and *(b)* public relations contracts awarded by his Department in 2004–05 in *(i)* each *(A)* nation and *(B)* region of the UK and *(ii)* London. [35894]

John Healey: The Treasury awarded contracts for public opinion research with a total value of £30,000 in 2004–05. The expenditure was for the whole of the UK. No public relations contracts were awarded in 2004–05.

Cooking Oil (Duty)

John Hemming: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer for what reason Inland Revenue decided to charge fuel duty on recovered cooking oil. [38196]

John Healey: Fuel produced from vegetable oil is eligible for the rate of duty for biodiesel (currently 27.10 pence per litre) if it meets the legal definition of biodiesel for tax purposes set out in section 2AA of the Hydrocarbon Oil Duties Act 1979. In other cases it is liable to duty at 47.10 pence per litre, as has been the case since Royal Assent to the Finance Act 2002. Before that date biodiesel was liable to the same rate of duty as ultra-low sulphur diesel.

Correspondence/Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many *(a)* letters from hon. Members, *(b)* letters from members of the public and *(c)* parliamentary questions from *(i)* hon. Members and *(ii)* Lords were dealt with by his Department in each year since 1995; in respect of what percentage his Department took *(A)* more than one month and *(B)* more than three months to provide a substantive answer; and if he will make a statement. [37404]

John Healey: The Cabinet Office publishes a report to Parliament each year on the performance of departments in replying to correspondence from Members of both Houses of Parliament. The report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005, *Official Report*, columns 137–140WS. The reports for earlier years are available in the Library of the House.

Since 1999, the Treasury has dealt with the following number of letters from members of the public (figures for earlier years are not available):

	Letters	*Answered within 15-day target*
1999	8,650	37
2000	7,400	36
2001	9,600	74
2002	7,850	79
2003	6,120	70
2004	5,900	80

The breakdown requested of the length of time taken to reply to correspondence is not available.

The number of written parliamentary questions answered by Treasury Ministers in both Houses since the 1995–96 session is given in the following table:

Session	*House of Commons*	*House of Lords*
1995–96	1,851	Not available
1996–97	657	29
1997–98	4,554	282
1998–99	2,097	156
1999–00	2,857	274
2000–01	5,888	293
2001–02	3,693	239
2002–03	3,099	248
2003–04	1,377	106
2004–05 (As at 15 December 2005)	2,307	116

Information relating to the number of questions which took longer than one month and three months to answer is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. However, Treasury Ministers attach importance to answering parliamentary questions promptly wherever possible. In the 2004–05 session, 83 per cent. of House of Commons questions were answered substantively by the accepted deadlines, as were 96 per cent. of House of Lords questions.

Death Statistics

Angela Browning: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of people died *(a)* in hospital, *(b)* in a hospice, *(c)* at home and *(d)* in residential or nursing care in each of the last five years. [37973]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 15 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question asking what percentage of people died *(a)* in hospital, *(b)* in a hospice, *(c)* at home and *(d)* in residential or nursing care in each of the last five years. (37973)

The most recent year for which information on deaths is available is 2004. Figures are given in the table below for all deaths from 2000 to 2004.

Percentage of all deaths by place of death in England and Wales, 2000 to 2004[1]

	Place of death	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
(a)	Hospital[2]	54	55	56	57	57
(b)	Hospice[3]	4	4	4	4	5
(c)	Own home	19	19	18	18	18
(d)	Residential or nursing Home[4]	18	18	17	17	16
	Other places	5	4	4	4	4
	All places	100	100	100	100	100

[1] Figures are for deaths occurring in each calendar year.
[2] NHS and non-NHS general hospitals.
[3] NHS and non-NHS hospices.
[4] NHS nursing home, Non-NHS nursing home, private residential home and local authority residential home.

Department Staff

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how many staff are employed by his Department in each *(a)* region and *(b)* nation of the UK; and if he will make a statement. [35926]

John Healey: The information requested is published in Table D of the Civil Service Statistics. These are available in the Library, and online at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_of_the_civil_service/statistics/civil_service_statistics/index.asp

Departmental Consultants

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many civil servants in each grade have left his Department in each of the last three years to join consultancy firms; and which firm each joined. [37365]

John Healey: The Treasury does not collect information from staff on prospective new employers when they leave the department. Therefore, data on the number of civil servants in each grade that have left the Treasury to join consultancy firms is not available.

Disability

Danny Alexander: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether a Minister in his Department is planned to be nominated to take responsibility for liaison with the office for disability issues; and if he will make a statement. [37071]

John Healey: The Minister for disabled people has overall responsibility for the office for disability issues (ODI) and lead responsibility, in collaboration with colleagues across Government, for advancing the Government's 20-year strategy to improve outcomes for disabled people. Treasury Ministers will continue to engage with the Minister for disabled people on disability issues.

Domestic Central Heating

Chris Huhne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the number of households that will be provided with *(a)* central heating and *(b)* insulation in each year of his plans as announced in the Pre-Budget Report. [37055]

John Healey: The Government announced an additional £300 million to provide free central heating installations to pensioner households on pension credit who do not already have such systems. These funds will be delivered through the warm front programme and funding will be available from this current financial year. Warm front has assisted over one million homes and already installed over 50,000 central heating systems. This additional funding will help deliver a significant number of more central heating systems to pensioners on pension credit who do not have them.

Insulation for pensioner households on pension credit will be provided by energy suppliers as part of their obligations under the Energy Efficiency Commitment. Under the current structure of EEC, suppliers are required to achieve energy savings targets and for this phase of the EEC (2005–08) of the EEC 130 TWh of savings have to be achieved. The suppliers have indicated that they will be able to provide insulation to any pensioners on pension credit.

Excise Duties (Receipts)

Chris Huhne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the receipts from *(a)* vehicle excise duty, *(b)* air passenger duty, *(c)* fuel duty and *(d)* VAT on fuel as a percentage of gross domestic product in each year since 1996–97; and if he will estimate future receipts consistent with the forecasts in the Pre-Budget Report. [37117]

John Healey: Projected UK gross domestic product, and receipts from vehicle excise, air passenger and fuel duties, were set out in the financial statement and Budget Report and in the Pre-Budget Report, every year since 1997. Copies of these can be found in the Library of the House. The latest estimates were published in the 2005 Pre-Budget Report. These estimates will be updated when the 2006 financial statement and Budget Report is published.

HM Revenue and Customs do not collect VAT receipts on the basis of individual goods so no estimate of VAT on fuel as a percentage of gross domestic product is available.

Gifts

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the gifts received by *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in his Department in each of the last two years for which information is available; what the approximate value of each was; and how many were (i) accepted and (ii) returned. [37407]

John Healey: Guidance for Ministers on the acceptance of gifts is set out in the ministerial code. An annual list of gifts received by Ministers valued at more than £140 is published. The annual list provides details of the gift received, its value, the donor and whether the gift was retained by the department, purchased by the

Minister or marked for disposal. Information for June 2001-March 2005 is in the Libraries of the House. Information for 2005–06 will be published as soon as it is available after the end of the financial year.

For officials, the Treasury's gifts' policy states that officials should refuse or return gifts worth more than £25, if such a course of action does not harm good working relations. Gifts valued at over £25 should be handed over to the department for disposal or the recipient can purchase them.

Illegal Meat Imports

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many seizures of illegal meat imports were made in the last month for which records are available. [37633]

Dawn Primarolo: HM Revenue and Customs made 2,496 seizures of products of animal origin in September 2005. Of these seizures, 1,333 contained meat.

Legal Aid

Jim Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will place in the Library the reply given to the Law Society's letter to him of 31 August about the future of legal aid. [37427]

Mr. Des Browne: I have done so.

Local Authority Grants

Chris Huhne: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will estimate the Government's total grants to local authorities as a percentage of gross domestic product in each financial year since 1978–79. [37054]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the national statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 15 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your recent question requesting an estimate of the Government's total grants to local authorities as a percentage of gross domestic product in each financial year since 1978–79. (37054)

I have provided some estimates from the National Accounts for non-financial transfers between central government and local government. The economic sectors of the National Accounts have a broad definition, for example central government is broader than the Government, and local government includes entities such as schools, police authorities etc as well as local councils. The National Accounts are compiled on an accruals basis and include imputed amounts, so should not be confused with cash payments.

The transactions can be sub-divided into current transfers and capital transfers.

Current Transfers

These include:

Revenue Support Grant;

redistribution of national non-domestic rates which is classified as a central government tax;

specific grants such as those for mandatory student awards and rent allowances; and

an imputed payment in respect of the cost of pension increase payments.

Capital Transfers

These mainly consist of grants paid by central government to local government to finance capital expenditure. They also include payments from development corporations and some one-off payments, such as commutation grants and amounts for repayment of over-hanging debt following Large Scale Voluntary Transfers of housing. As with the current transfers, the National Accounts include some imputed payments

The table below shows the separate current and capital transfer series and the total. It also shows total GDP and the total transfers as a percentage of GDP. All these data are at market prices and are not seasonally adjusted.

In 1978/79 total transfers from central government to local government were equivalent to 6.1 per cent. of GDP. In 2004/05 this percentage was 8.7 per cent.

Total transfers from central Government to local government, as a percentage of GDP, from 1978–79 to 2004–05

Market price, not seasonally adjusted (£ million)

Financial year	*Current transfers*	*Capital transfers*	*Total*	*Gross domestic product*	*Total as a percentage of GDP*
1978–79	10,347	227	10,574	172,637	6.1
1979–80	11,822	267	12,089	207,608	5.8
1980–81	14,602	270	14,872	236,503	6.3
1981–82	15,748	291	16,039	259,486	6.2
1982–83	16,423	294	16,717	283,459	5.9
1983–84	20,149	268	20,417	308,331	6.6
1984–85	20,382	780	21,162	330,869	6.4
1985–86	20,911	675	21,586	362,803	5.9
1986–87	22,690	861	23,551	388,131	6.1
1987–88	24,440	935	25,375	431,246	5.9
1988–89	24,758	949	25,707	479,934	5.4
1989–90	25,800	2,197	27,997	525,138	5.3
1990–91	41,190	2,084	43,274	563,715	7.7
1991–92	51,696	2,584	54,280	594,901	9.1
1992–93	56,513	7,863	64,376	615,087	10.5
1993–94	56,134	2,975	59,109	652,820	9.1
1994–95	58,645	2,559	61,204	689,767	8.9
1995–96	58,727	4,580	63,307	729,808	8.7
1996–97	59,860	2,654	62,514	773,146	8.1
1997–98	59,763	2,747	62,510	824,044	7.6
1998–99	61,211	2,785	63,996	870,464	7.4
1999–2000	64,627	3,050	67,677	921,762	7.3
2000–01	67,958	3,921	71,879	965,041	7.4
2001–02	72,488	4,537	77,025	1,006,523	7.7
2002–03	79,333	7,933	87,266	1,062,954	8.2

Total transfers from central Government to local government, as a percentage of GDP, from 1978–79 to 2004–05

Market price, not seasonally adjusted (£ million)

Financial year	*Current transfers*	*Capital transfers*	*Total*	*Gross domestic product*	*Total as a percentage of GDP*
2003–04	86,465	7,114	93,579	1,121,029	8.3
2004–05	93,713	8,649	102,362	1,175,666	8.7

National Insurance

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the surplus or deficit in the National Insurance Fund is; what proportion of UK gross domestic product that figure represents; and what the projected figures are in each case for *(a)* 2010, *(b)* 2020, *(c)* 2030, *(d)* 2040 and *(e)* 2050. [34864]

Dawn Primarolo: The latest information on the excess of receipts over payments and closing balance can be found on page 10 of the National Insurance Fund Account 2003–04 (published 10 January 2005). The National Insurance Fund covers Great Britain only.

Similar information for Northern Ireland can be found on page 10 of the Northern Ireland National Fund Account 2003–04 (published 9 February 2005).

UK Gross Domestic Product figures up to 2010–11 can be obtained from the HM Treasury website: http://www.hmtreasury.gov.uk./economic_data_and_tools/gdp_deflators/data_gdp_fig.cfm

Projections of the excess of receipts over payments to 2060 for Great Britain can be found in tables 15.1 and 15.7 of the Government Actuary's Quinquennial Review of the National Insurance Fund. The Quinquennial Review is on the Government Actuary's Department's website: http://www.gad.gov.uk/Publications/docs/QR5-FullReport.pdf

As stated in the review, these results should be regarded as giving only a broad indication of the possible future progression of the fund balance, bearing in mind the significant uncertainties involved in such a projection.

Similar information on long-term projections for Northern Ireland is not available.

Official Travel Costs

Peter Luff: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his answer of 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 345W, what the cost of the travel of the two officials from his Department who accompanied him on his return from Israel was. [34580]

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Mid-Worcestershire (Peter Luff) of 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 345W, on official travel costs, for what reasons two officials from his Department accompanied him on his return from his trip to Israel; and if he will make a statement. [36057]

John Healey: The officials accompanied the Chancellor to conduct Treasury business at a total cost of £3,015.

Overseas Visits

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list all official overseas visits undertaken by officials in his Department, broken down by Directorate, in each year since May 2001; what the cost in cash and real terms was; how many official engagements and meetings were underaken on each visit; how many officials took part in each visit, broken down by grades; and if he will make a statement. [37408]

John Healey: The Treasury's total spending on overseas travel and subsistence (including ministerial travel costs) in 2004–05 was £1,657,000. In relation to the earlier years, I refer to the answer given on 24 January 2005 by the then Financial Secretary (Mr. Timms) to the hon. member for Tatton (Mr. Osborne), 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 156W. Non-financial data on officials' visits are not recorded centrally so the further analysis requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost. All travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the "ministerial code", the "civil service management code" and the "code of conduct for special advisers".

PILOT

Jim Cousins: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether the joint task force with the UK offshore oil and gas industry (PILOT) has discussed issues of taxation. [37431]

John Healey: The joint Government and oil and gas industry task force (PILOT), chaired by Minister of State for Energy, Malcolm Wicks, does not discuss the quantum or structure of taxation. PILOT recognises that taxation is a matter for the Chancellor of the Exchequer.

Red Diesel

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer why duty on red diesel was not frozen in the recent pre-Budget report. [37809]

John Healey: The Chancellor increased duty on rebated gas oil in the pre-Budget report in order to help reduce the incentives for oils fraud.

Regional Aid

Andrew George: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much regional aid he plans to make available to Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly from 2007 to 2013; and through what funding streams funds will be disbursed. [38026]

Mr. Des Browne: The Government set out in the 2004 Spending Review its spending plans for the years up to 2007–08, including on regional development. The Comprehensive Spending Review will decide spending plans for 2008–09 till 2010–11.

Andrew George: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the likely effects on the economy of Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly of his proposal to repatriate regional convergence funding from the European Union. [38027]

Mr. Des Browne: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer the Economic Secretary to the Treasury gave to the hon. Member for Truro and St. Austell on 8 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 984.

The Government are presently in discussions with its EU partners and the Commission on the future of structural funds in the 2007–13 financial perspective. It is not possible to say how particular regions will be affected by a final outcome of the negotiations.

Southend

Mr. Amess: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what steps he has taken to promote the long-term economy of Southend; and if he will make a statement. [37406]

John Healey: The Government are committed to promoting the long-term economic performance of all areas of the UK. In England the Government have taken steps to promote economic growth at the national, regional and local level. At the local level, schemes such as the local authority business growth incentives and business improvement districts make resources available for areas such as Southend to promote economic growth in their locality. In addition, the East of England Development Agency (EEDA) and Thames Gateway Funding are contributing to the long-term economic development of Southend. For instance, EEDA is contributing £2 million to the renaissance of industrial estates in Southend.

Sustainability Symposia (Harlow)

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the representatives from his Department and public bodies for which his Department is responsible who attended the Harlow North Sustainability Symposia on 6 June. [37445]

John Healey: No representatives of HM Treasury attended this event.

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) how many applications for tax credits were received via the internet in each of the last five years; [25249]

(2) how many claims for tax credit were made over the e-portal in *(a)* 2003–04, *(b)* 2004–05 and *(c)* 2005–06 to date; and if he will make a statement. [35698]

Dawn Primarolo: The option of using the internet for submitting tax credits claims only became available during August 2002. The following table provides figures for claims submitted since then.

	Numbers of claims
12 August 2002 to 5 April 2003	427,000
6 April 2003 to 5 April 2004	545,000
6 April 2004 to 5 April 2005	547,000
6 April 2005 to 30 October 2005	438,000

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer why the new limits on the in-year recovery of tax credit overpayments cannot be introduced earlier than November 2006. [36838]

Dawn Primarolo: November 2006 is the earliest date that the new limits on the in-year recovery of tax credit overpayments can be introduced, due to the analysis and testing required to achieve the IT change.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many cases of fraud have been detected in Coventry South in relation to tax credit claims in each of the last five years. [37052]

Dawn Primarolo: Disaggregated information by Parliamentary constituency is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 19 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1699W, on tax credits, which problems the Government recognises as being faced by carers moving into work; and if he will *(a)* list the interested parties whom Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs has consulted on the practicalities of extending tax credit support to this group and *(b)* summarise the representations they have made. [37326]

Dawn Primarolo: We recognise that informal carers of adults can have constraints on their ability to work because of their caring responsibilities. HMRC has consulted on the practicalities of extending tax credit support for this group, with other Government Departments and with a number of representative bodies outside Government. There has been a range of representations, with a particular interest in whether there may be a case for reducing the working tax credit working hours requirement for informal carers of adults to at least 16 hours a week.

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many families in the Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency he expects to benefit from the reform to the tax credit system announced in the Pre-Budget Report. [37738]

Dawn Primarolo: The information is not available in the format requested. Combined, the various measures will achieve a balance between providing more certainty of tax credit award for families, while maintaining flexibility to respond to falls in their income and changes in circumstances.

Tax Returns

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what reduction in costs there was as a result of filing self-assessments electronically in *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003 and *(c)* 2004. [36282]

Dawn Primarolo: Taxpayers have been able to complete their self-assessment returns electronically since 2000. Online filing reduces costs for both taxpayers and for HMRC, but estimates of the reduction of these

costs are not available. Greater online filing and use of online services more generally, will enable HMRC to make savings in the long-term. These savings will contribute to the efficiency savings HMRC has committed to deliver.

Taxis

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been spent by his Department on taxi travel in the 2005–06 financial year; and what proportion of such travel was undertaken in each nation and region of the UK, including London. [37462]

John Healey: In the first eight months of 2005–06, the Treasury spent £86,000 on taxi travel and courier services. The Treasury has a combined contract for taxi and courier services and it is not feasible to disaggregate the courier element. An analysis of the travel by nation and region could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

VAT (Gravestones)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will exempt the cost of gravestones from VAT. [37729]

Dawn Primarolo: Under our agreements with our European partners, we are not able to extend our existing VAT zero rates or introduce an exemption from VAT for gravestones.

Wanless Report

Steve Webb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what plans he has to revisit *(a)* the research for and *(b)* the conclusions of the Wanless report relating to increased NHS spending, with particular reference to the four years after 2008. [37989]

Mr. Des Browne: The Government accepted the recommendations made by Derek Wanless for health spending up until 2007–08. All public expenditure from 2008–09, including health spending, will be decided as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review that I announced in July 2005. No decision has been made to revisit the Wanless Report.

WALES

Administrative Savings

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what administrative savings have been made by his Department in each of the last eight years. [34943]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office was created on 1 July 1999 and since this time all information relating to gross and net controlled administration costs, is published each year on its departmental annual report. These publications are available via the Wales Office website: www.walesoffice.gov.uk and from the Libraries of the House.

Anti-poverty Strategies

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will meet *(a)* the Secretary of State for International Development and *(b)* the Welsh Assembly Government to discuss Wales' contribution to anti-poverty strategies and policies in developing countries. [38012]

Mr. Hain: I have regular meetings with Cabinet colleagues and the First Minister on a range of issues, including Wales' role in the international community.

The Assembly is in the process of developing an international development strategy to focus on Wales' role in helping strengthen capacity in the developing world, particularly in Africa. This will include an evaluation of the role that Wales can play in the delivery of the Millennium Development Goals. It is expected that a framework document will be published in the next few weeks. In addition, the Department for International Development has set up a cross-departmental working group to co-ordinate an African capacity building programme. Welsh Assembly officials are also involved in this.

Carers' Commissioner

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with the Welsh Assembly Government concerning the recent proposal for a carers' commissioner in Wales. [37910]

Mr. Hain: I understand that the Welsh Assembly Government have noted this suggestion and have sought the views of its Carers Strategy Review Panel.

Carers Special Grant

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with the *(a)* Welsh Assembly Government and *(b)* Secretary of State for Health on distribution of the carers special grant in England and Wales. [37911]

Mr. Hain: The distribution of the carers special grant is devolved to the Welsh Assembly Government. I understand that the Assembly's intention to transfer these grant resources into the local authority revenue support grant settlement was announced in January 2000 and that the decision that the transfer should take place from 2006–07 was taken following advice from the Assembly's Carers Strategy Review Panel. It is my understanding that the distribution of the carer's grant between local authorities is based on the older adults personal social services formula.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what the *(a)* salary bill was and *(b)* administrative costs were for his Department in (i) Wales and (ii) London in 2004–05. [35879]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office was established on 1 July 1999.

Statistically data relating to salaries and administrative costing can be found in the Wales Office Annual Departmental Report 2005.

This publication is available on the Wales Office website: www.walesoffice.gov.uk and from the Libraries of the House.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much was paid by his Department in 2004–05 in rent for properties in *(a)* total, *(b)* Wales and *(c)* London. [36009]

Mr. Hain: During the financial year 2004–05, the Wales Office spent the following amounts on rent:

(a) Total rent payable, exclusive of VAT was £118,054 and £20,659 for VAT.

(b) The Wales rent costing is £118,054, with £20,659 for VAT.

(c) None. The Wales Office owns Gwydyr House in Whitehall London.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what the total value is of *(a)* catering and *(b)* entertainment contracts let by his Department; and what value of such contracts has been let in each nation and region of the United Kingdom, including London. [37471]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office has not let any catering and entertainment contracts.

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales which spending programmes by his Department where the corresponding functions in Scotland are devolved are classified as non-identifiable in the Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses; and what the allocated expenditure on each is for the 2005–06 financial year. [37507]

Mr. Hain: All expenditure for the Wales Office is identifiable in the Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses.

Departmental Staff

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many staff in his Department have been relocated into London and the South East in each of the last five years for which records are available. [31735]

Mr. Hain: None.

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what initiatives are being taken in his Department to help civil servants with chronic back pain. [34976]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office does not have any staff that have identified themselves as having chronic back pain.

However, Wales Office staff are supported during times of illness. They can access occupational health and welfare services to assist them in managing such conditions.

Energy Efficiency

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what assessment his Department has made of the potential for energy efficiency improvements to reduce energy demand in Wales over the next *(a)* five, *(b)* 10, *(c)* 20 and *(d)* 50 years; and if he will make a statement. [33524]

Nick Ainger: The "Energy Saving Wales Action Plan" sets out the Assembly Government's priorities and plans in respect of energy efficiency in Wales. This is available on the Assembly's website.

The Government's recently announced energy review will focus on policy measures to help deliver objectives, including those on energy efficiency, beyond 2010.

Mental Health

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what steps are taken by his Department to support staff with mental ill-health. [36270]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office does not have any staff that have identified themselves as having mental ill-health.

However, Wales Office staff are supported during times of illness. They can access occupational health and welfare services to assist them in managing such conditions.

Olympics

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what areas of *(a)* employment, *(b)* manufacture and *(c)* sports development in Wales he expects will benefit from the London 2012 Olympic Games. [35832]

Mr. Hain: The Government are committed to ensuring that the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games maximise the potential for job creation, training and business growth, leaving a lasting social and economic, as well as physical, legacy for the whole of the UK. This is reflected in the "Procurement Principles" published in September which will form the basis of the draft procurement strategy to be adopted by the Olympic Delivery Authority.

Wales is putting in place a regional working group, involving the Welsh Development Agency, Wales Tourist Board and appropriate representatives from the Welsh Assembly Government. This group will develop plans to maximise business and development opportunities for Wales.

I believe that hosting the Olympic and Paralympic Games, and events associated with those Games, will inspire the next generation of sportsmen and sportswomen, providing a massive boost to participation at all levels.

Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many prosecutions were brought by the Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority in each year since 1980. [37005]

Nick Ainger: The Pembrokeshire Coast National Park Authority was established as a separate body with effect from 1 April 1996.

Prosecutions since then have been as follows:

	Public rights of way	*Planning*
1996	0	0
1997	0	0
1998	0	0
1999	0	0
2000	0	2
2001	0	1
2002	0	1
2003	0	0
2004	0	3
2005	1	3

Previously, National Park functions were exercised by Dyfed county council. While definitive records are not available, it is believed that there were no prosecutions in relation to Public Rights of Way between 1980 and 1996. In relation to Planning matters, there was one prosecution in 1993 and three in 1994. Information about the period prior to 1990 is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Police Forces (Merger)

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with *(a)* the Home Secretary, *(b)* Welsh chief constables and *(c)* chairs of police authorities on the proposed mergers of police forces in Wales; and if he will make a statement. [37626]

Mr. Hain: I have held discussions with a wide range of stakeholders, including my right hon. Friend the Home Secretary, the four Welsh chief constables and four police authority chairs.

I see no realistic alternative to a single force for Wales if the objectives set out in the report by Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary are to be achieved. However, decisions will not be made until we have final recommendations from the police service. These are due to be submitted on 23 December.

Public Relations

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what the value was of *(a)* public opinion research and *(b)* public relations contracts issued by his Department in 2004–05. [36010]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office did not carry out any public opinion research or issue any public relations contracts in 2004–05.

Rates

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much was paid by his Department in rates in 2004–05, broken down by local authority; and how much was paid in rates in 2004–05 in London. [36003]

Mr. Hain: During financial year 2004–05 the Wales Office paid rates to Cardiff city council amounting to £33,222 and £48,222 to the City of Westminster.

Renewable Energy

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will ensure that the decorative lights on departmental Christmas trees are powered by electricity from renewable sources of power. [35768]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office was established from 1 July 1999. I refer the hon. Member to the answer previously given on 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 742W, to the hon. Member for Ceredigion (Mark Williams).

Taxis

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much has been spent by his Department on taxi travel in the 2005–06 financial year; and what proportion of such travel was undertaken in each nation and region of the United Kingdom, including London. [37472]

Mr. Hain: Since the beginning of financial year 2005–06, the year to date spend for taxi travel undertaken by the Wales Office is £2,457.

To provide spending by nation or region would be at a disproportionate cost.

Winter Deaths

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with his colleagues in *(a)* the Cabinet and *(b)* the National Assembly for Wales regarding the excess winter deaths of those aged over 65 years in Wales. [33916]

Mr. Hain: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer I gave to the Member for Wellingborough on 6 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1178W.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefits Take-up

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of pensioners in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* England, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Scotland are (i) entitled to and (ii) receiving one or more of pension credit, council tax benefit and housing benefit; and if he will make a statement. [34738]

Mr. Timms: The information is not available in the format requested.

The latest available information on the numbers entitled to income related benefits is in "Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take Up in 2002/2003", a copy of which is in the Library.

The numbers receiving these benefits are in the following tables.

Housing benefit (HB) and council tax benefit (CTB) recipients aged 60 and over and pension credit (PC) recipients by country: May 2005

	HB		CTB		PC	
	Caseload	Population (percentage)	Caseload	Population (percentage)	Caseload	Population (percentage)
Great Britain	1,518,100	12.4	2,444,500	19.9	2,680,200	21.8
England	1,264,500	12.0	2,029,700	19.3	2,242,500	21.3
Wales	73,300	10.7	136,800	20.0	158,300	23.1
Scotland	180,300	16.4	278,000	25.3	279,000	25.4
Unknown[1]	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	400	n/a

Housing benefit (HB) and council tax benefit (CTB) recipients aged 60 and over also in receipt of pension credit (PC) by country: May 2005

	HB[2] and PC		CTB[2] and PC	
	Caseload	Population (percentage)	Caseload	Population (percentage)
Great Britain	1,237,500	10.1	1,972,100	16.1
England	1,026,400	9.8	1,634,600	15.6
Wales	62,800	9.2	117,300	17.2
Scotland	148,400	13.5	220,200	20.1

n/a = Not applicable.

[1] "Unknown" relates to cases allocated an incorrect postcode, which cannot be assigned to a country or region.

[2] Figures may include a small number of men aged 60–64 in receipt of income-based Jobseekers Allowance.

Notes:

1. The data refers to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
2. Case loads have been rounded to the nearest hundred and expressed in thousands and percentages have been given to 1 decimal place.
3. For HB/CTB, figures for any non-responding authorities have been estimated.
4 Housing benefit figures exclude any extended payment cases.
5. Council tax benefit totals exclude any second adult rebate cases.
6. Pension credit replaced MIG on the 6 October 2003 and extended IS entitlement to customers aged 60+.
7. Countries are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.
8. Population percentages have been calculated using 2004 ONS mid-year population estimates.
9 "Aged 60 and over" is defined as benefit units where the claimant and/or partner are aged 60 and over. Therefore figures will contain some claimants aged under 60 where there is a partner aged over 60 years.
10. Percentages of the population are based on the population aged 60+.

Sources:

1. Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management information System Quarterly 100 per cent. caseload stock-count taken in May 2005.
2. DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS).
3. Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-2004 population estimates.

Child Maintenance

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Tamworth constituency receive maintenance allowance via the Child Support Agency under the *(a)* old and *(b)* new scheme. [29291]

Mr. Plaskitt: This information is not available at the geographical level requested.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people are employed in the Child Support Agency self-employed team; and how many cases they are currently working on. [23230]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 31 October 2005]:* The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty, dated 15 December 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions; how many people are employed in the Child Support Agency self-employed team; and how many cases they are currently working on.

In answer to your first question, our staff work on cases involving parents who are self-employed as part of our overall operation. We do not record centrally, the number of staff working specifically on these type of cases.

In September 2005, there were around 63,000 cases using the Agency's collection service and a further 10,000 cases using the maintenance direct arrangements, in which the non-resident parent was recorded as self-employed at the point they received an initial assessment or calculation.

There are also some applications involving self-employed non-resident parents for which the Agency has yet to calculate maintenance.

I apologise for the delay in replying but I hope you find this reply helpful.

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what amount of arrears was written off by the Child Support Agency in each year from 1997 to 2005 in *(a)* England, *(b)* Northamptonshire and *(c)* Wellingborough. [26779]

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what amount of arrears was written off by the Child Support Agency in *(a)* England, *(b)* the Tees Valley and *(c)* Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency in each year since 1997. [29917]

Mr. Plaskitt: This information is not available. The Child Support Agency does not have the power to write off any debt owed.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on what date a hard copy of the Child Support Agency (CSA) Standards Committee report was published; and on what date the report was placed on the CSA's website. [29988]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty, dated 15 December 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency, the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on what date a hard copy of the Child Support Agency (CSA) Standards Committee report was published; and on what date the report was placed on the CSA's website.

The Child Support Agency (CSA) Standards Committee report was published on the CSA website on Monday 8 August 2005. No hard copy was published.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many changes of circumstance have been reported by non-resident parents on the *(a)* old and *(b)* new Child Support Agency scheme in each month of the last three years. [30066]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information requested is not available.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many Scottish claims were awaiting processing under the new Child Support Agency scheme calculation in each month since June 2003. [31137]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information can not be broken down to the geographical level requested.

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether it is the Government's policy for the Child Support Agency to give priority in a financial settlement to the children of a new partnership where the father is not the biological parent over the children of his original marriage. [34241]

Mr. Plaskitt *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* The Government aim to balance the needs of both sets of children. It recognises the additional responsibilities of a non-resident parent caring for their own child or a stepchild in their current family in the rules used to work out child maintenance.

For example, normally in the new scheme (introduced in March 2003) the non-resident parent's net weekly income is reduced by 15 per cent. where they care for one such child, 20 per cent. for two and 25 per cent. for three children or more. These are the same percentages used to work out the amount of child support the non-resident parent should pay.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what criteria the Child Support Agency uses when selecting cases pre-dating 3 March 2003 for recalculation of child maintenance liability; [36955]

(2) when he expects the Child Support Agency to have recalculated child maintenance liability for all cases predating 3 March 2003. [36961]

Mr. Plaskitt: Some old scheme cases linked to a new application will be converted to the new scheme.

The Child Support Agency's chief executive, Stephen Geraghty, is currently undertaking a root and branch review of the Agency. He will report to Ministers and we will make announcements shortly.

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether there are circumstances under which the Child Support Agency contacts birth parents asking for information about children who were adopted. [37979]

Mr. Plaskitt: There are no circumstances where the Child Support Agency will need to contact the birth parents in relation to that child. Once a legal adoption has been completed, the adoptive parents take on the legal liability for the financial support of the child.

Child Support Maintenance

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he takes to monitor the proportion of parents with care on income support or income-based jobseekers allowance who are receiving child support maintenance for their children; and if he will make a statement. [30566]

Mr. Plaskitt: The proportion of parents with care on income support or income-based jobseeker's allowance who are receiving child support maintenance for their children is reported and monitored through the CSA Quarterly Statistical Summary which was first published on the Department's website on 27 October. A copy of this table is available in the Library.

CSA

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many formal complaints his Department has received regarding the Child Support Agency from people in *(a)* Gravesham and *(b)* England since 1997. [19807]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information requested can not be broken down to the geographical level requested.

Data Protection Act

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many enforcement notices have been placed on the Department by the Information Commissioner with regard to the Data Protection Act 1998 since it came into force. [38021]

Mrs. McGuire: None.

European Funding

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the basis was for the allocation of European expenditure to Scotland in 2003–04 in the Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis, comprising payments under European social fund (ESF), payments in advance under the ESF, and payments under European regional development funds. [36016]

Mr. Plaskitt: The allocation within the departmental expenditure limit, (DEL) over country and region, which includes ESF payments, is based on DWP staff numbers in those areas.

Stakeholder Pensions

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans he has to seek the extension of the amount of tax relief given to stakeholder pensions; and what products he plans to introduce alongside the stakeholder pension range. [32695]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 29 November 2005]:* There are no current plans to seek the extension of the amount of tax relief given to stakeholder pensions or to introduce new products alongside the stakeholder range.

Winter Fuel Payment

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioners *(a)* are eligible for and *(b)* have claimed the winter fuel allowance in Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency. [36986]

Mr. Timms: It is not possible to provide an estimate of the number of people who are eligible for a winter fuel payment. So far this winter, 1,877 claim forms have been issued to people in the Middlesborough South and East Cleveland constituency and of these 1,212 have been returned and processed. The majority of payments are made automatically without the need to claim. Last winter 18,920 winter fuel payments were made in the Middlesborough South and East Cleveland constituency.

Jobcentre Plus

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many abortive telephone calls were made to Jobcentre Plus by claimants in each month since December 2004, broken down by local call centre. [35066]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 15 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning how many abortive telephone calls were made to Jobcentre Plus by claimants in each month since December 2004, broken down by local call centre. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

When a customer calls they are placed into a queue either until the call is answered or they choose to abandon the call. I have assumed that abandoned calls is what is meant by "abortive" telephone calls. I have, therefore, placed in the House of Commons Library information on the numbers of abandoned contact centre calls made by customers.

I hope this is helpful.

Number of abandoned calls to each Jobcentre Plus contact centre December 2004 To November 2005

	December	January	February	March	April	May
			Number of weeks in month			
First contact inbound telephony	Five	Four	Four	Five	Four	Four
Chelmsford	1,122	1,148	1,434	2,064	1,144	1,019
Colchester	1,162	1,175	1,283	2,418	895	1,296
Derby	1,512	1,190	5,136	9,065	21,250	12,009
Grimsby	1,596	5,896	815	3,837	1,936	676
Halifax	2,529	6,917	2,930	6,805	3,475	2,092
Lincoln	1,471	2,910	2,263	1,787	2,208	2,823
Lowestoft	3,572	5,628	4,452	12,423	13,133	10,217
Sheffield	[2]	233	815	819	3,337	8,376
Blackburn	672	483	318	962	601	597
Bootle	1,504	1,259	891	1,188	8,158	5,081
Chorlton	1,959	2,555	1,681	2,927	3,161	[2]
Coventry	671	465	881	7,073	6,054	9,952
Garston	4,576	2,557	695	4,525	3,144	2,754
Telford	142	2,092	1,710	3,110	1,201	1,001
Marton Mere	979	3,109	1,102	1,606	883	919
Aberdeen	876	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]
Aldershot	510	212	207	297	777	374
Banbury	134	620	2,483	2,056	1,747	1,129
Dundee	3,602	5,517	5,395	7,239	5,139	4,399
Gateshead	771	648	227	234	312	818
Hastings	5,801	13,775	3,291	7,278	3,099	12,291
Middlesbrough	3,836	841	465	1,384	2,367	2,225
Milton Keynes	109	621	1,951	1,813	1,728	972
Newcastle	594	548	644	1,285	4,329	9,104
Newport	715	301	117	[2]	[2]	[2]
Paisley	1,679	2,213	2,924	9,505	3,343	1,176
Portsmouth	812	358	427	469	827	559
Provan	2,256	2,390	1,052	3,898	616	1,105
Bridgend	3,594	858	251	226	340	244
Cwmbran	635	513	450	432	327	227
Harrow	298	431	384	695	356	196
Ilford	2,565	2,228	2,029	2,145	1,778	327
Kennington Park	1,994	1,537	1,449	4,139	2,846	423
Pembroke Dock	7,857	9,533	2,446	3,713	4,655	3,391
Poole	320	880	799	2,419	2,205	523
Taunton	209	269	251	457	353	326
Torquay	403	228	426	1,271	2,699	2,436
Directorate total	63,037	82,138	54,074	111,564	110,243	101,057

First contact inbound telephony	June	July	August	September	October	November[1]
	Number of weeks in month					
	Five	Four	Four	Five	Four	Four
Chelmsford	2,912	2,878	1,819	2,452	864	416
Colchester	3,500	3,385	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]
Derby	7,621	18,317	27,967	26,712	6,063	2,898
Grimsby	1,944	4,057	6,066	5,188	8,283	1,554
Halifax	7,707	9,057	5,550	6,198	3,327	1,103
Lincoln	3,749	4,521	8,619	13,647	4,362	479
Lowestoft	23,925	15,432	14,110	22,246	978	1,844
Sheffield	14,463	15,297	14,323	6,078	146	78
Blackburn	656	631	5,066	8,884	4,047	1,994
Bootle	6,168	10,321	7,561	4,925	1,091	500
Chorlton	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]
Coventry	16,132	16,823	17,813	22,036	11,292	1,482
Garston	7,023	20,420	13,512	16,971	5,585	1,459
Telford	1,398	5,434	9,589	7,005	4,767	548
Marton Mere	1,995	5,618	4,342	3,256	1,449	1,190
Aberdeen	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]
Aldershot	333	20	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]
Banbury	2,126	5,010	5,160	2,305	1,635	556
Dundee	7,528	5,585	14,365	22,314	11,922	4,756
Gateshead	1,068	1,111	540	[2]	[2]	[2]
Hastings	19,662	16,413	20,872	30,925	4,054	786
Middlesbrough	2,743	4,389	6,205	4,624	1,558	898
Milton Keynes	2,224	4,033	3,314	[2]	[2]	[2]
Newcastle	8,280	3,963	3,926	14,163	5,501	2,674
Newport	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]
Paisley	3,374	2,532	2,893	5,029	3,793	896
Portsmouth	759	1,462	1,293	479	[2]	[2]
Provan	3,597	4,332	4,902	6,110	1,399	[2]
Bridgend	1,046	10,896	6,158	11,440	2,830	1,728
Cwmbran	725	215	403	1,286	400	511
Harrow	189	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]
Ilford	40	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]	[2]
Kennington Park	3,218	5,058	3,496	3,866	[2]	[2]
Pembroke Dock	5,748	8,346	12,169	22,311	4,153	2,286
Poole	1,163	3,945	11,010	11,310	1,310	1,388
Taunton	2,507	5,789	5,943	1,968	5,816	1,740
Torquay	3,177	6,396	12,936	13,136	1,916	1,447
Directorate total	168,700	221,686	251,922	296,864	98,541	35,206

[1] Data is for the three weeks of four that have passed so far.
[2] No longer take first contact benefit calls.

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Written Answers to Questions

Monday 19 December 2005

CHURCH COMMISSIONERS

Carbon Footprint

Norman Baker: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners what steps the Commissioners are taking to minimise their carbon footprint. [38093]

Sir Stuart Bell: The Commissioners welcomed the General Synod report 'Sharing God's planet' which requested that church bodies improve their environmental achievements by 2008. Their main aims are to develop a new 'Green Guide' for parsonage building standards and improve our approach to sustainability in our land management plans.

Fund-raising

Hugh Bayley: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners what advice the Church Commissioners give to church bodies on raising funds through public appeals. [38094]

Sir Stuart Bell: Guidance on fundraising for repairs and maintenance is available from the Council for the Care of Churches and its "churchcare" website (www.churchare.co.uk). It is hoped shortly to expand the site to include guidance on the wider use and development of church buildings.

VAT Relief

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, representing the Church Commissioners what discussions the Commissioners have had with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on the scope of extending VAT relief to the cost of church car parks. [39157]

Sir Stuart Bell: The scope of VAT relief covers repairs to church buildings and not ongoing costs. In consequence the Commissioners have had no discussions with the Chancellor of the Exchequer on such an extension.

CABINET OFFICE

Advice to Ministers/Permanent Secretaries

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in what month his Office expects to make an announcement on advice to Ministers and Permanent Secretaries. [36623]

Mr. Jim Murphy: This Government have done much to strengthen the system for handling of Ministers' financial interests, including the requirement to provide Permanent Secretaries with a list of their interests on appointment to each new office and the facility to seek external advice if needed. Careful consideration is being given to the recommendation by the Committee on Standards in Public Life and an announcement will be made in due course.

Civil Servants

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many civil servants worked from home for at least one day a week in the last year for which figures are available. [38018]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The Cabinet Office does not centrally monitor the number of staff who work from home. However, within the newly launched 10 point plan "Delivering a Diverse Civil Service" there is senior leadership commitment to work life balance and all senior civil service (SCS) and feeder grade posts should be available on a flexible working pattern basis unless robust and objective justification is provided.

Departmental Research

Bob Spink: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what research projects commissioned by his Department are being undertaken; and what the publication arrangements are in each case. [32992]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The information requested regarding research projects commissioned for the Cabinet Office is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Downing Street (Refurbishment)

Norman Baker: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) of 6 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 302W, on Downing street (refurbishment), when he expects officials to have concluded their consideration of options. [38835]

Mr. Jim Murphy: I have nothing further to add to the reply given by my right hon. Friend, the then Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster (Mr. Hutton), on 6 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 302W.

Government Departments

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster what the cost was of re-structuring central Government Departments in each year since 1997. [37932]

Mr. Jim Murphy: This information is not collected centrally. Departmental costs and other expenditure are accounted for in departmental annual reports and National Audit Office (NAO) audits of departmental accounts.

TRANSPORT

A5

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the average speed travelled by private cars was on the A5 between the A405 and the A40 in *(a)* 1999–2000 and *(b)* 2004–05. [37521]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not available.

Administrative Savings

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what administrative savings have been made by his Department in each of the last eight years. [34948]

Ms Buck: I refer the hon. Member to the information on gross and net controlled administration costs for this Department published annually in the Public Expenditure White Papers for the years since it was formed in 2002–03.

Agency Staff

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many staff were employed by non-departmental public bodies and agencies for which he has responsibility in 2004–05 in *(a)* total and *(b)* each (i) nation and (ii) region of the UK and *(c)* London. [35963]

Ms Buck: Total Executive NDPB staff numbers by Departments at 31 March 2005 are recorded in table 2 of Public Bodies 2005, a copy of which is in the House Libraries and which is available online at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/the_future_of_the_civil_service/agencies_and_public_bodies/publications/pdf/publicbodies/publicbodies2005.pdf.

The Department does not hold NDPB data broken down by region of the UK.

The number of staff in individual Executive agencies as at 1 April 2004, including a regional analysis, is available in Civil Service Statistics 2004 which was published in February 2005, a copy of which is in House Libraries. It is also available online at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_of_the_civil_service/statistics/contents_for_civil_service_statistics_2004_report/number_of_civil_servants/index.asp.

Air Bags (Motor Vehicles)

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether his Department collects statistics on the number of car accidents where safety air bags are inflated. [38730]

Dr. Ladyman: Statistics are not collected on the number of injury car accidents where safety airbags are inflated.

The Department funds the co-operative crash injury study (CCIS) to investigate why car occupants are injured in traffic collisions and to use this information to design countermeasures to reduce the number of casualties in the future. CCIS is an in-depth study that involves specialist teams examining over 1,300 cars per year after they have been involved in police reported injury crashes and correlating the injuries suffered by the vehicle occupants to their causes. The vehicle investigation involves a thorough evaluation of all the cars' safety features, including seat belts and airbag systems. The effectiveness of the airbags once they have deployed is evaluated through this work. CCIS is a representative sample of all the car occupant injury crashes that occur in Great Britain and can be used to predict the number of airbags that are inflated or deployed per year in such accidents. Non-injury crashes where airbags deploy are not routinely investigated.

Air Fares

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the average real terms price of air fares within the UK was in each year since 1975; and what forecast he has made of average price of airfares over the next 25 years. [38188]

Ms Buck: There is no series giving past data in UK air fares. The national air traffic forecasts published in 2000 assumed a 1 per cent. annual decline in air fares over the period 1998 to 2020. This was revised prior to the Air Transport White Paper to a 2 per cent. per annum decline for the period up to 2030.

Air Passengers

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many passengers arrived by air to the UK from *(a)* Vietnam, *(b)* Laos, *(c)* Cambodia, *(d)* Burma, *(e)* Thailand and *(f)* Indonesia in each of the last five years. [36437]

Ms Buck: The following table shows estimated number of passengers arrived by air to the UK from Vietnam, Thailand and Indonesia in each of the last five years. Reliable data for Laos, Cambodia and Burma are not available but are likely to be less than 15,000 per year.

The International Passenger Survey (IPS). Number of arrivals in the UK by country of overseas airport used

Thousand

	Vietnam	*Thailand*	*Indonesia*
2000	21	410	85
2001	17	420	77
2002	19	463	63
2003	17	443	30
2004	17	532	38

Aircraft Landing Rights

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what requirement there is on operators of foreign registered aircraft to indicate to United Kingdom authorities the purpose of the flight for an aircraft seeking landing rights at a UK civilian airport. [36050]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 8 December 2005]:* Not all foreign operated flights into the UK require prior permission from the Secretary of State for Transport. Those stopping for non-traffic purposes (e.g. to refuel) and privately operated flights do not require prior permission. Where operators of foreign registered aircraft are required to seek permission to land from the Secretary of State in order to comply with Article 138 of the Air Navigation Order 2005, it is apparent from their applications whether the purpose of the flight is to carry passengers or cargo. Flights carrying dangerous goods or munitions of war are required to seek specific authorisation from the Civil Aviation Authority.

Airline Safety

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions he has had with the Civil Aviation Authority on commercial airline safety. [38240]

Ms Buck: The Secretary of State and the chairman of the Civil Aviation Authority meet regularly to discuss matters of current interest, including any matters relevant to commercial airline safety. Officials within the Department also have regular meetings with the chairman and with the Authority's group director for safety regulation and there is day-to-day contact as necessary on a range of safety matters.

Airport Expansion (Northamptonshire)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the merits of expansion of airport capacity in Northamptonshire. [36632]

Ms Buck: The "Future Air Transport" White Paper published in December 2003 sets out a 30-year strategic framework for the development of airport capacity in the UK. The preceding studies and consultations led us to conclude that while a number of airports in the Midlands and the South East serve the Northamptonshire market, there is little demand for a commercial airport located within the county. There is however, nothing to prevent proposals for such an airport being brought forward for consideration through the planning system.

Alternative Automobile Fuels

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what funding the Government have allocated to developing *(a)* electric and *(b)* non-petrol fuelled automobiles in each of the last five years. [37953]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government's primary form of support for alternatively fuelled vehicles, including electric vehicles, is through duty incentives which are set out in the Alternative Fuels Framework published in the Chancellor of the Exchequer's 2003 pre-Budget report.

Since 2002 the Department for Transport has also provided grant funding towards the research and development of innovative vehicles with improved environmental performance. The grants are technology and fuel neutral so a breakdown of funding by technology or fuel type is not available. Actual spend for the years since the grants were launched are listed as follows:

Financial Year	*Actual spend (£ million)*
2004–05	4.701
2003–04	3.076
2002–03	0.590

Up to £5 million has been allocated for this financial year (2005–06) but it is unlikely that actual spend will reflect this allocation due to the suspension of the programme for part of this year while State Aid clearance was sought from the European Commission.

Aviation Pollution

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what economic modelling has been undertaken to assess the impact of Government policy on emissions trading on tackling climate change pollution from aviation. [38173]

Ms Buck: Analytical and modelling work has been undertaken by consultants for the European Commission looking at the feasibility and impact of emissions trading, emissions charges, and fuel taxation. The Department has not undertaken economic modelling since any scheme would be EU wide.

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what economic modelling he has undertaken of the impact of *(a)* different oil prices, *(b)* emissions trading, *(c)* an emissions charge and *(d)* an increase in air passenger duty on the growth of aviation greenhouse gas emissions. [38190]

Ms Buck: Our forecasts for aviation and climate change, and the assumptions underlying them, are set out in "Aviation and Global Warming", published by the Department for Transport in January 2004. The "best case" scenario emissions forecasts assumed the introduction of economic instruments to tackle climate change, resulting in improved fuel efficiency. We have not undertaken analysis to consider these specific scenarios.

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what economic modelling he has undertaken to assess the impact of participation in *(a)* the existing and *(b)* an aviation-only EU emissions trading scheme on forecast growth in aviation emissions of greenhouse gases. [38192]

Ms Buck: At present, it is too early to provide a reliable estimate of the impact emissions trading will have on forecasts of emissions from aviation. This will depend on a number of factors including the overall number of allowances and the detailed design for the inclusion of aviation into the EU ETS. These factors have yet to be specified and will be subject to discussion with other member states' governments.

Bus Services

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to increase the proportion of total journeys taken by bus. [37173]

Ms Buck: The Department is undertaking a number of actions to increase the proportion of bus journeys:

We are working with local authorities to produce integrated and ambitious local transport plans.

We are also working with them to develop local demand management schemes where appropriate, supported by funding from the Transport Innovation Fund.

Alongside this, we will provide £8 billion of local transport capital funding over the next five years for local authorities to upgrade and improve their transport infrastructure.

Overall, central and local government provide over £1.6 billion annually to support bus services.

We will be introducing free concessionary fares for older and disabled people.

We have allocated £20 million to fund 43 Kickstart schemes.

We have introduced regulations to allow local authorities to enforce bus lanes and improve their effectiveness.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent steps have been taken to improve bus transport. [37954]

Ms Buck: Within the context of delivering our long-term strategy for improving bus services across the country, the most recent steps taken by the Government include:

Providing local authorities in England with the resources that allowed them to spend around £200 million in 2004–05 on bus-related infrastructure improvements.

Announcing the introduction of free concessionary fares for older and disabled people from April 2006.

Announcing the allocation of the first tranche of Transport Innovation Fund money to seven local authorities to support their development of demand management schemes.

Allocating £20 million to fund 43 Kickstart schemes.

Introducing regulations to allow local authorities to enforce bus lanes and improve their effectiveness.

In 2004–05, central and local government also provided around £1.6 billion to support local bus services.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people the bus network is capable of transporting at any one time. [38467]

Ms Buck: Information is not available in the form requested. However, details of the bus and coach stock by size of vehicle are given in annex A table 8 of the "Public Transport Statistics Bulletin GB: 2005 Edition", a copy of which is placed in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his estimate is of the value of second-hand buses purchased in the UK in each year since 1997. [38641]

Ms Buck: The information requested is not available.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the turnover of the bus industry in each year since 1997. [38805]

Ms Buck: The information is not available in the form requested.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many passengers were carried by the bus industry in each year since 1997. [38807]

Ms Buck: Information about bus passenger journeys can be obtained from Table C of the "Public Transport Statistics Bulletin GB: 2005 Edition", a copy of which is placed in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what estimate he has made of the number of *(a)* new and *(b)* second-hand buses purchased in each year since 1997; [38809]

(2) what estimate he has made of new buses purchased in the UK in each year since 1997. [38806]

Ms Buck: Information about the number of buses registered for the first time can be obtained from Table 12 of the "Vehicle Licensing Statistics: 2004", a copy of which is placed in the House of Commons Library. There is no information available for purchases or changes of registration for second-hand buses.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people were employed by the bus industry in each year since 1997. [38824]

Ms Buck: Information about staff numbers in the bus industry can be obtained from Annex A Table 6 of the "Public Transport Statistics Bulletin GB: 2005 Edition", a copy of which is placed in the House of Commons Library.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of the public transport bus fleet is *(a)* double decker, *(b)* flexi-bus and *(c)* other. [38900]

Ms Buck: 36 per cent. of public transport buses are double-deckers. 1 per cent. are flexi-buses or bendy buses and the remaining 63 per cent. are single-deck buses.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions he has had with *(a)* Lancashire county council and *(b)* district councils in Lancashire on the operation of the concessionary bus scheme. [37730]

Ms Buck: None. The statutory entitlement to free off-peak local bus travel in England for people 60 and over and disabled people will come into effect on 1 April 2006. The Department for Transport has issued guidance to local authorities on implementation but it is for individual concessionary travel authorities, to design and operate their local concessionary fares scheme.

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many pensioners in *(a)* Worcestershire, *(b)* Redditch and *(c)* Worcester will qualify for free off-peak local bus travel. [39123]

Ms Buck: Estimates of the numbers of those aged 60 or over who will be eligible for free off-peak local bus travel are shown in the following table.

£000

Authority	*Population aged 60 and over*
Worcestershire	126.1
Redditch	14.0
Worcester	18.2

Civil Aviation Authority

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with the Civil Aviation Authority on its decision to increase its charges, with particular reference to pilots' services. [36915]

Ms Buck: I met the CAA to discuss their scheme of charges as a whole on 5 October, in the context of the adjournment debate which took place on 11 October.

Civil Servants

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many and what proportion of each civil service grade in his Department is located in each

(a) region and *(b)* nation of the UK; what the average salary is for each grade; and if he will make a statement. [35930]

Ms Buck: My hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Secretary at the Cabinet Office (Mr. Murphy) will write to the hon. Member with details for the civil service of the percentage of staff in post by region and grade responsibility and the median salary of staff in post by region and grade responsibility as at 1 April 2004. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library.

Concessionary Fares

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people have qualified for concessionary fares on the *(a)* rail and *(b)* bus network in each year since 1997. [38466]

Ms Buck: It is not known how many people qualify for concessionary fares on *(a)* the national rail network.

For *(b)* buses, those who currently qualify for schemes run by local authorities in England include residents aged 60 and over, as well as an unknown number of disabled people. Until April 2003, the qualifying age for men was 65. The following table shows the resident older population in England qualifying for concessionary fares in each year since 1997.

Mid year	*Resident eligible population in England (thousand)*
1997	8,914
1998	8,950
1999	8,975
2000	9,011
2001	9,055
2002	9,111
2003	10,385
2004	10,505

Departmental Consultants

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many secondees there have been to his Department from consultancy firms, including the big four accountancy firms, in each of the last three years; and what areas of the Department they have worked in. [37360]

Ms Buck: In the last three years there have been the following inward secondments from consultancy firms:

	DVLA	*DfT(c) (Transport Finance)*
2003	1	—
2004	7	1
2005	7	1

Departmental Costs

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the *(a)* salary bill was and *(b)* administrative costs were for his Department in (i) each (A) nation and (B) region of the UK and (ii) London in 2004–05. [35865]

Ms Buck: The Department for Transport is subject to an administrative budget control system, overseen by the Treasury, which relates to Whitehall Departments only. Figures for estimated administration costs, including paybill, for the Department for Transport in 2004–05 are set out in Appendix A of its Annual Report 2005 (Cm 6527), which is available in the Library of the House. Final outturn figures for total administration costs are contained in the Department's Resource Accounts 2004–05 (HC 476). No separate regional breakdown of these figures is available.

Departmental Staff

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many staff are employed by his Department in each *(a)* region and *(b)* nation of the UK; and if he will make a statement. [35929]

Ms Buck: The figures requested by the hon. Member are contained in Table D of Civil Service Statistics which is available in the Library of the House.

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps are taken by his Department to support staff with mental ill-health. [36274]

Ms Buck: The Department has a number of support mechanisms in place to help staff with any form of mental ill health. These include:

Access to independent Employee Assistance Providers or Counselling services who offer confidential specialist knowledge and expertise.

Referral to the Occupational Health Adviser to seek advice on the condition and measures to assist the individual.

A departmental stress policy is in place and guidance is available to all staff.

Rehabilitation and risk assessment arrangements for individuals returning to work following ill health.

The Employee Assistance Provider/Counselling service also provides advice and guidance to the Department.

If staff are absent due to a mental health problem any help provided is on an individual case by case basis.

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what initiatives are being taken in his Department to help civil servants with chronic back pain. [34984]

Ms Buck: The Department is committed to providing support to staff with chronic back problems and has various strategies in place to help staff. These include:

Early referral to the Occupational Health Adviser to seek advice on the condition and measures to assist the individual.

An independent assessment to identify if a work activity has caused the condition, or is aggravating a pre-existing condition.

Implementation of reasonable adjustments to the working environment or work activities to help reduce or eliminate the condition.

Where appropriate a rehabilitation programme will be agreed to assist the individual's return to work.

Access to independent employee assistance providers or counselling services who offer confidential specialist knowledge and expertise

The employee assistance provider/counselling service also provides advice and guidance to the Department.

Early identification of possible health problems can be an effective means of improving sick absence rates.

Disability

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether a Minister in his Department is planned to be nominated to take responsibility for liaison with the Office for Disability Issues; and if he will make a statement. [37063]

Ms Buck: Anne McGuire, the Minister for Disabled People, has overall responsibility for the Office for Disability Issues (ODI). The Minister for Disabled People chairs a cross-Government steering group which includes ministerial representatives from the Department of Health, Department for Education and Skills, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Department for Transport, and Department of Trade and Industry. I am the Minister in this Department who has been nominated to take responsibility for liaison with the ODI.

Docklands Light Railway

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many trains per hour will run on the Docklands Light Railway by 2012; and what the passenger capacity per hour will be. [37036]

Ms Buck: Capacity on the core routes of the DLR network will be increased by 50 per cent. with the introduction of longer trains from 2009. Frequencies on the DLR will also be increased to serve the Olympics in 2012, including services on the planned Stratford International Extension which will link a number of Olympics venues. It is anticipated that with committed capacity enhancements and extensions which are planned to be in place by 2010 that approximately 90,000 passengers could be carried per hour on the entire DLR network during the Olympics.

Drink Driving

Mr. Scott: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many road deaths were attributable to drink driving in the last year for which figures are available; and in how many of those cases the driver was above the drink drive limit by a factor of two or more. [38669]

Dr. Ladyman: The estimated number of fatalities from accidents in Great Britain involving illegal alcohol levels for 2003 is 580. The number of fatalities in accidents where a driver or rider had an illegal alcohol level is estimated from coroners' and procurators' fiscal data which becomes available a year later than the main road accident data. As a result, the estimates for 2004 are provisional. The provisional estimate of deaths in drink drive accidents in Great Britain in 2004 is 590. Information is not available on the number of casualties resulting from accidents involving drivers with blood alcohol levels in excess of the drink drive limit by a factor of two or more.

Driving Licences

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many registered provisional driving licence holders there have been in the UK in each year since 1997, broken down by category. [38652]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested can be found in the following table:

	With motorcycle	*Without motorcycle*
1997	358,009	4,600,085
1998	330,825	4,675,719
1999	393,366	4,880,572
2000	413,824	5,079,817
2001	405,580	5,162,910
2002	417,426	5,363,537
2003	442,847	5,690,181
2004	449,369	5,773,971

The figures provided are for GB and do not include Northern Ireland.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many registered driving licence holders there have been in the UK in each year since 1997, broken down by category. [38653]

Dr. Ladyman: The total numbers of substantive licence holders for the requested periods are as follows:

	Substantive licence holders
1997	32,329,228
1998	32,532,217
1999	32,668,988
2000	32,746,422
2001	32,940,330
2002	33,189,863
2003	33,771,687
2004	34,268,993

DVLA does not collate statistics on categories of entitlement for the time periods requested. Instead, snapshot information is gathered at specific points in time. The last such snapshot was taken in May 2002 and showed the following entitlement holdings:

	Category	*Entitlement holders*
Motorcycles	A	1,845,291
	A1	7,280
	A2	51,159
Tricycles	B1	159,393
Private/Light Goods	B	33,111,394
	BE	113,645
Medium/Large Goods Vehicle	C	629,497
	CE	1,030,043
	C1	20,662
	C1E	26,173
Bus	D	322,451
	DE	319,223
Minibus	D1	23,871
	D1E	717
Tractor	F	72,188
Road Roller	G	468,938
Tracked Vehicle	H	397,180
Mowing Machine	K	1,356

	Category	Entitlement holders
Electrically Propelled Vehicle	L	5,450
Duty Exempt Vehicle	N	177,203
Moped	P	23,982,819

Note:
The figures provided are for GB and do not include Northern Ireland.

Eddington Review

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what meetings he has attended in the past eight months where the Eddington Review was discussed; and what work his Department has carried out as part of the review. [37871]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* Sir Rod Eddington was asked by the Chancellor and the Secretary of State for Transport to provide advice on the long term links between transport, productivity, growth and stability. His work is being supported by a joint team from the Department for Transport and HM Treasury. The Secretary of State has regular meetings with Sir Rod and his team, and their work is also discussed in the context of other meetings.

Fatal Road Traffic Accidents

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many fatal road traffic accidents occurred in Stroud constituency in each year since 1994. [38281]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of fatal personal injury road accidents in Stroud constituency from 1994 is given in the table.

Fatal accidents

	Number
1994	5
1995	14
1996	10
1997	6
1998	8
1999	8
2000	6
2001	12
2002	3
2003	7
2004	5

The accidents in the table are those which occurred within the 2004 boundary of Stroud constituency.

Haulage Industry

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the turnover of the haulage industry was in each year since 1997. [38649]

Dr. Ladyman: Estimates are as follows:

Annual turnover of the UK road haulage industry[1]

	£ billion
1997	18.4
1998	18.5
1999	20.4
2000	21.1
2001	21.7
2002	21.4
2003	21.7

[1] Businesses engaged in transporting goods by road for hire and reward. The turnover of operators who carry goods in the course of their trade or business, but whose main economic activity is not road haulage, is excluded.
Source:
Annual Business Inquiry (Office for National Statistics)

Helicopter Contracts

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether there will be changes in manning levels at *(a)* Stornoway and *(b)* Sumburgh bases following changes in the helicopter contracts and type of helicopter used there; and whether TUPE regulations will apply following changes of helicopter contractor at these bases. [37968]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* No reduction in staff at either of the Maritime and Coastguard Agency bases at Stornoway or Sumburgh Search and Rescue Helicopter flights, as a result of the change in helicopter contract, is anticipated. TUPE does apply to the staff at both bases.

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the new S92 search and rescue helicopter to be based at the Stornoway and Sumburgh bases will have the same capabilities as the S61 helicopter. [37974]

Dr. Ladyman *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* The Sikorsky S92 offers an enhanced capability over the Sikorsky S61 in terms of speed and endurance. The S92 also offers safety enhancements over the S61 and increased effectiveness in the search and rescue role.

Incentive Packages

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the value is of *(a)* pay supplements, *(b)* bonuses and *(c)* other incentive packages that are payable in his Department on the basis of geographic location; how many people are in receipt of each payment; and what the total cost to his Department of each payment was in 2004–05. [35931]

Ms Buck: Within the Department for Transport, staff are paid either a London or national rate of pay, with those within the London Pay area receiving a higher rate. Regional supplements, bonuses and other incentive packages are not paid based on geographic location.

Lighthouses

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the pension fund provision of the General Lighthouse Fund is subject to external audit. [37219]

Dr. Ladyman: Pension provision is an integral part of the General Lighthouse Fund (the fund). The report and accounts of the fund for each year are examined and

certified by the Comptroller and Auditor General. Copies of the fund accounts are placed in the Library of the House.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the percentage change in revenue collected in lights dues in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* the Isle of Man, *(c)* England and Wales, *(d)* Northern Ireland, *(e)* the Republic of Ireland and *(f)* the British Isles as a whole has been since 1 May 1997. [37220]

Dr. Ladyman: The percentage change in revenue collected in lights dues since 1 April 1997 to 31 March 2005 is as follows:

	Percentage
Scotland	(2.3)
Isle of Man	(39.5)
England and Wales	18.0
Northern Ireland	(17.0)
Republic of Ireland	8.4
Total	15.0

Note:
Figures in parenthesis represent a reduction over the period.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the names are of the Lights Commissioners for *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* the Isle of Man, *(c)* England and Wales, *(d)* Northern Ireland and *(e)* the Republic of Ireland; and what remuneration each receives. [37221]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is published in the Report and Accounts 2003/2004 of the General Lighthouse Fund. Copies have been placed in the Library of the House.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many port calls attracted light dues in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* the Isle of Man, *(c)* England and Wales, *(d)* Northern Ireland and *(e)* the Republic of Ireland in each of the last 10 financial years. [37222]

Dr. Ladyman: A light dues payment is required when a merchant vessel begins or finishes a voyage in a UK or Irish port. A certificate is issued that allows further voyages into Irish and UK ports for a rolling month. The maximum number of payments is seven in one year.

The number of certificates issued is given in the following table. The information is not held in this format before 2000–01.

Certificates issued	*Scotland*	*Isle of Man*	*England and Wales*	*Northern Ireland*	*Republic of Ireland*	*Total*
2000–01	3,310	36	19,651	582	1,941	25,520
2001–02	3,205	37	19,297	638	1,832	25,009
2002–03	3,196	65	18,882	574	1,846	24,563
2003–04	2,766	59	18,947	576	1,941	24,289
2004–05	2,966	56	18,256	577	1,704	23,559

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the decision-making process is for the raising or lowering of light dues. [37257]

Dr. Ladyman: Light dues rates are reviewed annually and determined following consideration of the expenditure proposals of the three General Lighthouse Authorities and the overall liabilities of the General Lighthouse Fund. The Lights Advisory Committee, representing light dues payers, plays an active role in this process.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport who the members are of the *(a)* Lights Advisory Committee and *(b)* the Lights Finance Committee; and how the appointments for each were made. [37258]

Dr. Ladyman: The Lights Advisory Committee is a group, convened by the UK Chamber of Shipping, comprising payers of light dues. It includes shipowners from all parts of the British Isles and most sectors of the shipping industry and representatives of the fishing industry. Port operators and cargo interests who are affected by light dues are also represented.

The Lights Finance Committee meets annually to evaluate the income and expenditure of the General Lighthouse Fund. It is chaired by a Department of Transport official, and also comprises representatives of the following organisations:

Trinity House Lighthouse Service

Northern Lighthouse Board

Commissioners of Irish Lights

Department of Communication, Marine and Natural Resources (Dublin)

Lights Advisory Committee

GLF Investment Managers (currently HSBC Investments and Morgan Stanley Quilter)

There is no formal appointment process for the Lights Advisory Committee or the Lights Finance Committee.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the holiday homes maintained by *(a)* Trinity House, *(b)* the Northern Lighthouse Board and *(c)* the Commissioners of Irish Lights. [37259]

Dr. Ladyman: Trinity House Lighthouse Service does not maintain any holiday homes. 30 former lighthouse keepers' cottages have been leased to Trinitas Services Limited, a subsidiary company of The Corporation of Trinity House. The cottages are maintained under a commercial contract with Rural Retreats, a holiday letting company specialising in unusual high quality properties. Profits from this venture are passed to the General Lighthouse Fund.

The following table lists the properties maintained as holiday homes by the Northern Lighthouse Board (NLB) and the Commissioners of Irish Lights (CIL).

	Number
Northern Lighthouse Board	
Covesea Lossiemouth, Morayshire	[1]2
Mull of Galloway, Dumfries and Galloway	[1]3
Mull of Kintyre, Argyll	[1]2
Stoer Head, Sutherland	[1]2
Commissioners of Irish Lights	
Inishowen, Donegal	[2]2
Castletownbere, Cork	[2]1
Youghal, Cork	[2]1

[1] Cottage.
[2] House.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the Pension Fund arrangements are of *(a)* Trinity House, *(b)* the Northern Lighthouse Board and *(c)* the Commissioners of Irish Lights; and what recent financial advice he has sought regarding the arrangements for each. [37260]

Dr. Ladyman: The pension arrangements for the three General Lighthouse Authorities are determined by the Secretary of State under Section 214 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995. The Secretary of State has determined that the rules of the Principal Civil Service Pension Scheme shall apply.

We are working with the General Lighthouse Authorities on revising the structure of the three pension schemes to determine the most effective approach to meeting future pension liabilities.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how the reserves of the General Lighthouse Fund are invested. [37261]

Dr. Ladyman: The Secretary of State for Transport is responsible for the administration of the General Lighthouse Fund (the fund) under Section 211 of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995. Two investment houses have been appointed, HSBC Investments and Morgan Stanley Quilter, to manage the fund's investments, which include the fund's reserves. In addition to the investment portfolio, Morgan Stanley Quilter also manages the fund's cash reserve. All light dues income is paid into the cash reserve.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the statutory basis was for the payment to the Commissioners for Irish Lights of an Irish subsidy for navigational aids in the waters of the Republic of Ireland. [37262]

Dr. Ladyman: Section 211(2) of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 requires the Secretary of State to meet the expenses incurred by the Commissioners of Irish Lights, as a General Lighthouse Authority, in respect of discharging their functions in the Republic of Ireland. Section 211 (3)*(a)* provides that light dues collected in Ireland are paid into the General Lighthouse Fund.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the statutory basis is for the collection of light dues. [37263]

Dr. Ladyman: Section 205(2) of the Merchant Shipping Act 1995 empowers the General Lighthouse Authorities to collect light dues. These are paid into the General Lighthouse Fund. The Secretary of State is empowered to set the amount under Section 205(5) of the Act.

Local Transport Plans (Tyne and Wear)

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library *(a)* the annual reports of the Tyne and Wear authorities on progress with their local transport plan and *(b)* their submissions for 2006 to 2011. [37680]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* The Tyne and Wear local transport plan and its most recent progress report are both available electronically via www.newcastle.gov.uk/ltp.nsf/a/home?opendocument.

I am arranging for hard copies to be placed in the Library.

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from *(a)* Newcastle city council and *(b)* Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport (i) Authority and (ii) Executive for support for a new park and ride scheme for the city of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. [37681]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* In July 2005 the Department received from Nexus, on behalf of the Tyne and Wear Passenger Transport Authority, a Local Transport Plan major scheme funding bid for Phase 1 of the Orpheus Bus Improvement Corridor Programme. This includes a park and ride site in the Follingsby area of Gateshead. I understand that the proposed park and ride scheme is intended to cater for journeys to Gateshead town centre and Newcastle city centre.

Advice on priorities for major transport schemes (including this one) is currently being sought from the region and I propose to consider this advice before taking decisions on funding for this, and other, schemes in the north east.

London Olympics

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 565W, on the London Olympics, which transport schemes are funded through Olympic budgets. [37022]

Ms Buck: The transport plans for the 2012 games were set out in the candidature file prepared by London 2012. These plans include the following transport schemes funded through Olympic budgets:

- The Games-Time Olympic Javelin service
- Capacity improvements to the North London line
- Additional stopping services on the Great Eastern Mainline at Stratford
- Temporary capacity enhancements at London rail termini
- Signal alterations and station enhancements at West Ham station
- Contribution towards Stratford Regional station upgrade
- Extended opening hours on London Underground
- Security and resilience measures on London Underground
- Temporary service enhancements on the Docklands Light Railway
- Station capacity enhancements on Docklands Light Railway
- Security and resilience measures on Docklands Light Railway
- Olympic Park and Ride schemes
- Cycling and Pedestrian facilities, including extensions and connections to the London cycle network
- Olympic family transportation.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 565W, on the London Olympics, how the Olympic transport plan will encourage 100 per cent. spectator use of public transport, walking and cycling. [37023]

Ms Buck: The Department for Transport and London 2012 continues to aim for 100 per cent. spectator use of public transport, walking and cycling

during the 2012 Olympics. Temporary parking restrictions will be operated in the vicinity of Olympic events, enforced through fines. It will not, therefore, be possible for most members of the public to travel to the games using private cars, although there will be a limited number of parking spaces for those with mobility requirements.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 565W, on the London Olympics, which vehicles producing no emissions will be used for *(a)* spectator and *(b)* Olympic family transport. [37024]

Ms Buck: Vehicles that will be used specifically for Olympic transport have not yet been purchased. In the case of the vehicles to be used for Olympic family transport, we would not anticipate these vehicles being purchased until two to three years before the Olympics. Given the pace of technological development in this field, it is not possible at this time to predict precisely which vehicles will be used. When the vehicles are purchased, we will aim to ensure that the cleanest vehicles possible are used.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 565W, on the London Olympics, what assessment he has made of whether the number of parking spaces available in connection with park-and-ride schemes at *(a)* the main northern side near the M11 and M25 junction, *(b)* the southern side near the Dartford river crossing, *(c)* at the Ebbsfleet station and *(d)* Windsor racecourse will meet demand at the 2012 Olympics. [37025]

Ms Buck: The Olympic candidature file prepared by London 2012 included plans for 6,000 cars at the Northern park and ride site, 6,000 at the Southern site, 9,000 at Ebbsfleet and 10,000 at Eton. These were based on the best information on spectator numbers available at that time.

The Olympic Transport Authority is in the process of carrying out a review of the anticipated demand at the planned park and ride sites. Should it be determined that the anticipated demand is not in line with the planned capacity, the plans will be adjusted to take this into account.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what *(a)* decisions, *(b)* agreements and *(c)* procedures have resulted from the liaison between project teams on Crossrail and the Olympic games on the coordination of construction programmes. [37027]

Ms Buck: During the Olympic bid process Cross London Rail Links Limited and the London Development Agency agreed to cooperate in the delivery of the two projects. This will now be developed into detailed governance arrangements to ensure that both projects can be delivered successfully.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) pursuant to his answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 564W, on the London Olympics, which part of the Construction Code specifies how Crossrail construction activities will be carried out; and if he will place a copy of the Construction Code in the Library; [37033]

(2) pursuant to his answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 564W, on the London Olympics, what other mechanisms, besides the Construction Code, are being developed to ensure the construction impacts of Crossrail are suitably controlled, with particular reference to the 2012 Olympics. [37028]

Ms Buck: The current draft of the Construction Code, is available on the Crossrail Bill documents website: http://billdocuments.crossrail.co.uk and copies have been placed in the House Libraries. The code will continue to be developed in consultation with local authorities and other stakeholders throughout the Crossrail Bill's passage through Parliament.

The Construction Code forms part of a wider suite of controls known as the Environmental Minimum Requirements (EMR's) which also includes a planning memorandum, environmental memorandum and excavated materials handling strategy. The EMR's in combination with the controls in the Crossrail Bill and existing legislation will provide a comprehensive mechanism for controlling construction throughout the route.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 565W, on the London Olympics, what percentage of the £2.375 billion public sector funding package will be used specifically for developing or improving transport in London; and what percentage of the £2.375 billion public sector funding package will be generated from *(a)* London council tax and *(b)* the London Development Agency. [37035]

Ms Buck: Of the £2.375 billion public sector funding package made available for the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games, £542 million (23 per cent.) has been assigned for Olympic specific transport schemes. London council tax will contribute up to £625 million (26 per cent.) to the £2.375 billion public sector funding package and the LDA will contribute £250 million (11 per cent.).

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 565W, on the London Olympics, what estimate he has made of the effect in terms of *(a)* capacity, *(b)* cost of operation and *(c)* administrative organisation of converting the North London Line to Docklands Light Railway. [37037]

Ms Buck: The operation and development of the Docklands light Railway is the responsibility of Transport for London (TfL).

Subject to the approval of applications which are currently before the Secretary of State, the planned frequency of the Docklands Light Railway extension between Stratford International and Canning Town prior to the Olympics is some 10 trains per hour, per direction in the peak and six trains off peak. This would mean a passenger capacity of 5,000 per hour, per direction in the peak and 3,000 per hour, per direction off peak. During the Olympics however the frequency of services on this part of the DLR will be increased

substantially to accommodate anticipated spectator demand. The converted part of the North London Line to DLR operation will have the capability of up to 30 trains per hour.

It is anticipated that the cost of operation will be met by revenue.

TfL have indicated that they would expect the new extension to be operated within the existing franchise arrangements which currently govern the operation of the Docklands Light Railway.

London Underground (Security)

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what additional security measures have been instituted on the London Underground system following the terrorist attacks of 7 and 21 July. [37178]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 13 December 2005]:* We do not reveal the detail of security measures. London Underground Ltd. applied pre-agreed enhanced security measures after the attacks on 7 July together with further additional measures after consulting with the Department.

In addition, British Transport police (BTP) have stepped up their activity. Public vigilance remains very important. BTP, Metropolitan police and Transport For London (TfL) have also initiated a new poster campaign to engage the public in being alert to possible terrorist activity.

M2

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 12th December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1619W, if he will list the dates between 1 September and 1 December during which roadworks on the M2 between junctions 5 and 6 have been disrupted by *(a)* fog, *(b)* frost and *(c)* rain; and on which occasions between 1 September and 1 December work has been suspended between junctions 5 and 6 of the M2 on the advice of Kent police arising from fog, frost or rain. [38055]

Dr. Ladyman: Between 1 September and 1 December 2005, road works on the M2 between junctions 5 and 6 have been disrupted by *(a)* fog on 21 November, *(b)* frost on 25 November, 26 November, 28 November and 29 November, *(c)* rain on 19 October, 24 October, and 6 November. In addition, a combination of low temperatures, bad visibility and damp, delayed works on 31 October and 2 November.

The Highways Agency suspended these roadworks for technical reasons, where environmental conditions would have had an adverse impact on safe and effective operational delivery. No work has been suspended on the advice of Kent police.

Media Analysis

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) for what purpose his Department commissions analysis of print media; and how the results of such research are used; [35883]

(2) if he will make a statement on his Department's policy on the use of broadcast and print media analysis; [35884]

(3) if he will place copies in the Library of broadcast media reports undertaken for his Department since 2002; [35885]

(4) how much has been paid to Millward Brown for print media analysis undertaken for his Department in each year since 2002; [35886]

(5) whether his Department has *(a)* undertaken and *(b)* commissioned any research into (i) broadcast and (ii) print media reporting in relation to the hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington since 5 May 2005. [36011]

Ms Buck: The Department was formed in May 2002.

In common with other public and private sector organisations we do undertake research to understand the effectiveness of our communications.

The Department has bought media research services from Millward Brown at a total cost of £254,250.40 since the creation of DfT to date. This is broken down for each year as follows:

	£
May 2002 to March 2003	33,518.40
April 2003 to March 2004	62,792.80
April 2004 to March 2005	93,279.20
April 2005 to November 2005	64,660.00

This research independently analyses transport coverage in the national print media only. We also commissioned a one-off examination of regional print media coverage of transport issues.

I can confirm that the Department has not undertaken or commissioned any research into media reporting in relation to the hon. Member for Carshalton and Wallington since 5 May. Media reporting of public statements and comments made by the hon. Member would have only been categorised by the media analysis company as a comment by a shadow Minister/ Opposition politician.

The reports are available on the Department's website at: http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_foi/documents/divisionhomepage/041073.hcsp

Media Monitoring

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much his Department and its predecessors have spent on media monitoring activities in each of the last eight financial years. [35634]

Ms Buck: It is common practice for organisations in both the public and private sector to undertake media monitoring activities. This is to both understand the effectiveness of their communications but also to ensure that they are aware of media coverage of issues relating to their activities.

The Department for Transport pays for two media monitoring services. As with other Government Departments, the Department pay a subscription for the Cabinet Office's Media Monitoring Unit. The DfT also

commissions a press cuttings company to provide a daily set of cuttings of national print media coverage of transport issues.

Since the Department was formed in May 2002, the following costs have been incurred on these two services in each of the completed financial years:

£

	MMU	National press cuttings
2002–03	40,097.18	169,976.63
2003–04	41,227.50	164,341.13
2004–05	49,000.00	155,693.86

Ministerial Training

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what briefing and training Ministers joining the Department in May had in advance of *(a)* making decisions and *(b)* answering oral questions; and what assessment he has made of the level of preparation and training. [27941]

Ms Buck: My hon. Friends and I received full and comprehensive briefing from senior Officials in the Department, on all policy areas involving the Department for Transport, immediately after our appointment in May 2005.

Ministerial Travel

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the travel costs are for each Minister in his Department in each month since June, broken down by mode of transport. [25635]

Ms Buck: Ministers use a variety of public transport services when undertaking departmental business. Detailed information about the mode of transport used by Ministers on departmental business is not held centrally and cannot be obtained without incurring disproportionate cost.

However, the following table shows the travel costs incurred by each Minister in the period from June to November 2005. These figures include costs incurred in connection with the UK's presidency of the EU this year.

£

Minister	June	July	August	September	October	November	Total
Alistair Darling	3,586	203	34	1,277	5,074	1,001	11,175
Stephen Ladyman	3,642	1,456	1,163	1,011	1,439	8,008	16,719
Derek Twigg	895	0	0	764	211	995	2,865
Karen Buck	284	235	0	221	168	161	1,069
Grand total	8,407	1,894	1,197	3,273	6,892	10,165	31,828

All ministerial travel is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in the Ministerial Code and Travel by Ministers, copies of which are available in the Libraries of the House.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on how many occasions he has used public transport over the past 12 months. [26518]

Ms Buck: The Secretary of State regularly travels by public transport in connection with his official duties. Details of individual journeys are not recorded.

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on how many occasions since 7 July 2005 he has used the London Underground in connection with his official duties. [35026]

Ms Buck: The Secretary of State regularly travels by public transport, including London Underground, in connection with his official duties. The Secretary of State has used London Underground a number of times since 7 July, but details of individual journeys are not recorded.

Motorway Accidents

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* deaths and *(b)* serious injuries of people of each age between 17 and 45 years there were on motorways in each of the last 10 years. [38273]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of fatal and serious injuries of people aged between 17 and 45 in personal injury road accidents on motorways between 1995 and 2004 is given in the table.

Number of killed and serious casualties aged between 17 and 45 on motorways[1]: 1995 to 2004

	Severity of casualty	
Year of accident	Fatal	Serious
1995	110	891
1996	106	884
1997	118	929
1998	115	881
1999	133	938
2000	125	923
2001	120	949
2002	128	830
2003	138	832
2004	112	770

[1] Motorways including A(M) roads.

Navigational Aids Services

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment was made of the merits of concentrating navigational aids services at the existing Swansea depot as an alternative to constructing a new facility at Dun Laoghaire in the Irish Republic. [37224]

Dr. Ladyman: The Commissioners of Irish Lights new single base operation at Dun Laoghaire is needed to ensure it can play its part more effectively in the integrated aids to navigation service for the British Isles. The General Lighthouse Authorities will continue to share use of ship and buoy yard facilities where it is economically cost effective to do so.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what reason the Irish Government gave for refusing to agree to a reform of the Irish subsidy component of the light dues system for funding navigational aids in Irish Republic territorial waters. [37256]

Dr. Ladyman: The Irish Government have agreed to renegotiate the 1985 Agreement that sets out the funding arrangements for the Commissioners of Irish Lights. We have a statutory responsibility to fund Irish Lights and cannot withdraw from the arrangements in place. Options are being considered that include a more equitable split in cost sharing between the UK and Ireland. We will continue to press the Irish Government to meet the full costs of provision of their aids to navigation.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether the final decision to go ahead with the Dun Laoghaire depot has been made; and if he will make a statement. [37289]

Dr. Ladyman: In April 2005, approval was given for the redevelopment of the Commissioners of Irish Lights' (CIL) Dun Laoghaire depot. The existing HQ offices in the centre of Dublin will be sold and depot and offices co-located in a new complex to be built on the existing depot site. Co-location to a modern building will streamline the organisation and bring major efficiency gains to CIL's operations, resulting in annual cost savings of £1.4m. Construction work is expected to commence in January 2006.

Parking Offences

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what powers parking attendants have to issue penalty charge notices to disabled person badge holders who have parked in loading bays. [37874]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* Parking attendants have powers under the Road Traffic Act 1991 to issue a penalty charge notice where they believe a vehicle has contravened parking regulations. If a Traffic Regulation Order excludes disabled persons' badge holders from parking in loading bays, it would be an offence for which a penalty charge notice may be issued.

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what advice he has issued to local authorities regarding disabled person badge holders parking in loading bays. [37875]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* General advice in the form of Departmental Circulars has been issued to local authorities on the Blue Badge Scheme. Specific advice on the parking concessions provided under the Scheme is contained in an explanatory leaflet which is made available to local authorities and badge holders themselves. This includes advice that badge holders are not permitted to park in places reserved for specific users, including loading bays.

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list local authorities that have continued to issue penalty charge notices after notification that notices issued for similar offences were invalid. [37976]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* This information is not collected centrally. Local authorities are responsible for ensuring that penalty charge notices conform to statutory requirements.

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what checks are made by *(a)* the Department and *(b)* the National Parking Adjudication Service on the technical aspects of applications by local authorities for decriminalised parking powers. [37980]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* To take on decriminalised parking enforcement (DPE) powers a local authority has to affirm in its application to the Secretary of State that it will comply with the requirements of Local Authority Circular 1/95—"Guidance on Decriminalised Parking Enforcement outside London" as amended. A copy of the circular has been placed in the House Library. The requirements cover a wide range of procedural, operational and other aspects of enforcement, including the need to show that NPAS is content with the relevant local authority's application.

Pedicabs

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 568W, on pedicabs, what the outcome was of his discussions with representatives of Transport for London on 4 October on the regulation of pedicabs. [37026]

Ms Buck: Following the meeting with them on 4 October TfL officials are taking forward proposals for the introduction of a licensing system for pedicabs in London.

Penalty Charge Notices

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many penalty charge notices have been issued using incorrectly-worded pre-printed forms since decriminalisation of parking enforcement began; by which local authorities they were issued; and if he will make a statement. [37526]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 13 December 2005]:* This information is not collected centrally. Local authorities are responsible for ensuring that penalty charge notices conform to statutory requirements.

Pier and Harbour Order

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the requests *(a)* sought from and *(b)* granted by his Department for ministerial permission and approvals under the Pier and Harbour Order (Bembridge Harbour) Confirmation Act 1963 in each year since 1997. [38160]

Dr. Ladyman: Responsibility for navigational consents under local legislation has rested with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs since October 2004. Prior to that date and since 1997 the Department has no record of any permissions sought or approvals given under the 1963 Act.

Predictive Diallers

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many calls were made from call centres in his Department in 2004–05 using predictive diallers; how many such calls resulted in contact being made with the recipient without a Government agent available to talk to them; and what assessment he has made of the likely impact of Ofcom's policy on silent calls on the use of predictive diallers in departmental call centres. [28166]

Ms Buck: The Department for Transport does not use predictive diallers when making calls to members of the public.

Private Members' Bill

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list those Private Members' Bills introduced under *(a)* Standing Order No. 14(6), *(b)* Standing Order No. 23 and *(c)* Standing Order No. 57 which were (i) supported and (ii) opposed by his Department in each Session since 1997–98. [36250]

Ms Buck: The Department was formed on 29 May 2002.

The Department supported the Aviation (Offences) Act 2003 and the Marine Safety Act 2003 both of which were introduced under Standing Order No. 14(6).

Public Appointments

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will list the former hon. Members who left Parliament in 2005 who have since been appointed to public bodies by his Department, broken down by party; and who was responsible for making each appointment. [36691]

Ms Buck: Information about the political activity of appointees is recorded and publicised in accordance with the independent Commissioner for Public Appointments' Code of Practice. This shows that no former hon. Members who left Parliament in 2005 have since been appointed to public bodies sponsored by the Department.

Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which spending programmes by his Department where the corresponding functions in Scotland are devolved are classified as non-identifiable in the Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses; and what the allocated expenditure on each is for the 2005–06 financial year. [37491]

Ms Buck: The following table sets out the Department's spending programmes which are classified as non-identifiable in the Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses and where corresponding functions in Scotland are devolved, and the 2005–06 allocated expenditure for these programmes.

DfT programme	*2005–06 allocated expenditure (£ million)*
Powershift and cleaner vehicles programmes	20
Transport research: sustainable development	2
Transport Technology Standards Research Development	6
Transport Analysis and Economics Research	6
Transport Technology Consultancies	0

Public Relations

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the value was of *(a)* public opinion research and *(b)* public relations contracts awarded by his Department in 2004–05 in (i) each (A) nation and (B) region of the UK and (ii) London. [35962]

Ms Buck: For details of how much the Department for Transport spent on public opinion research in 2004–05, I refer the hon. .Member to my answer of 5 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 2857W, which lists the research and the costs.

For details of how much the Department for Transport spent on public relations contracts in 2004–05 I refer the hon. Member to a reply to the hon. Member for Banff and Buchan (Mr. Salmond) on 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 146W, which lists the spend on public relations contracts.

Breaking these figures down between nation, region of the UK and London could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Public Transport (Disabled Access)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to improve access to public transport for disabled people in Stroud. [38280]

Ms Buck: We have introduced "accessibility planning" into the local transport planning process to encourage local authorities and other agencies to assess more systematically whether people can access transport services in their areas. This process covers all forms of transport from buses, coaches and taxis to cycling and walking networks. Making provision for disabled people is a condition against which the resulting Local Transport Plans (LTPs) are assessed.

At a local level, Gloucestershire county council have installed raised kerbs at bus stops in Stroud to make it easier for disabled people to get on an off buses.

At a national level there has been significant progress in making public transport accessible to disabled people through regulations made under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995). We made the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations (RVAR) in 1998 and many of the trains calling at Stroud station comply with these.

More generally, disabled people in Stroud as elsewhere in the country will also benefit from the provisions in the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA 2005). We have already laid regulations which will, from 4 December 2006, lift the transport exemption in Part 3 of the DDA 1995 for land-based public

transport, vehicle hire, breakdown services and vehicles used on leisure and tourism transport services. We will also be consulting shortly on draft regulations to set an "end date" of no later than 1 January 2020 for when all trains will have to meet RVAR and to apply those regulations to older trains when they are refurbished.

Railways

Mrs. Riordan: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library a copy of the Review of Northern Rail Services. [36018]

Derek Twigg: The review began earlier this year and recommendations are due early in 2006. A copy of the final report will be placed in the House Library once completed.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport which railway stations in *(a)* Southend, *(b)* Essex, *(c)* Hertfordshire, *(d)* Greater London and *(e)* England and Wales do not meet the standards required by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995; and if he will make a statement. [37517]

Ms Buck: Compliance with Part 3 of the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 is a matter for station operators. Where disabled people would find it impossible or unreasonably difficult to access a station, then the station operator is under a duty to take reasonable steps to remove or alter physically the obstacle(s), find a way to overcome them, or provide the service by a reasonable alternative means. What is considered reasonable will depend on the circumstances of each case and that is something which ultimately only the courts can determine.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what percentage of railway stations have wheelchair access, broken down by *(a)* county and *(b)* London borough. [37955]

Ms Buck: The Department does not hold this information.

The rail industry has, however, improved the availability and quality of station information and this has enabled the train operating companies to keep it up to date. Disabled people can get station information at nationalrail.co.uk or by telephone through the National Rail Enquiry Service on 08457 484950.

Disabled people can get information about the accessibility of the stations they wish to use at nationalrail.co.uk

Rates

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much was paid by his Department in rates to Coventry local authority in 2004–05. [36237]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 13 December 2005]:* The Department paid £1,753.96 in rates in 2004–05 to Coventry local authority.

Road Fuel

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his estimate is of the value of road fuel sales to the road transport sector in each financial year since 1997–98, broken down by *(a)* petrol, *(b)* diesel and *(c)* biofuel sales. [38657]

Dr. Ladyman: Historic data on fuel duty rates, fuel sales and on the total amount of duty paid on those sales is available at http://www.uktradeinfo.com.

Total sales of petrol, diesel and biofuels in each of the years in question were as follows (all figures are in millions of litres).

Litres (millions)

	Petrol	*Diesel*	*Biofuels*
1997–98	29,959	18,134	0
1998–99	29,137	18,407	0
1999–2000	28,640	18,295	0
2000–01	27,532	18,493	0
2001–02	28,229	19,113	0
2002–03	27,837	20,102	5
2003–04	27,407	21,230	22
2004–05	26,540	22,395	35

The total amount of duty paid on those fuel sales was as follows (all figures in millions of pounds):

£ million

	Petrol	*Diesel (not including biodiesel)*	*Biofuels*
1997–98	12,144	7,101	0
1998–99	13,131	8,197	0
1999–2000	13,667	8,639	0
2000–01	13,397	9,006	0
2001–02	12,960	8,760	0
2002–03	12,756	9,211	1
2003–04	12,713	9,842	6
2004–05	12,500	10,539	9

Data on the total value of road fuel sales is not readily available.

Road Humps (Kettering)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment the Department has made of road humps in Kettering borough against the regulations the Department has set. [36631]

Ms Buck: The Highways (Road Humps) Regulations 1999 give local authorities powers to construct road humps without the consent of the Secretary of State as long as they meet the requirements of the regulations.

The Department does not assess road humps against the regulations. It is the responsibility of local highway authorities to ensure that road humps comply with the regulations.

Further advice on the design and implementation of road humps is given in the Department's Traffic Advisory Leaflets (TALs). TAL 2/05 "Traffic Calming Bibliography", lists those relevant to road humps, and a copy is already available in the Library of the House.

Road Improvement Costs

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the *(a)* expected cost when first submitted for approval and *(b)* most recently-estimated or final cost is of each road scheme (i) in the Targeted Programme of

Improvements and (ii) submitted for funding through the Local Transport Plan process in each year since 1999–2000 and *(b)* from 2005–06. [37568]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when *(a)* road schemes that have entered the Targeted Programme of Improvements since April 2003 will be re-appraised and *(b)* the relevant cost estimates will be updated. [37569]

Dr. Ladyman: The following road schemes have entered the Targeted Programme of Improvements (TPI) since April 2003 and are shown until their next key event. Scheme appraisals, including estimates, are reviewed in advance of these key events. Estimates are kept under constant review.

Scheme	*Date of next economic re-appraisal*	*Key event*
A14 Ellington—Fen Ditton Improvement	2005–06	Preferred Route Announcement
A57/A628 Mottram in Longdendale, Hollingworth and Tintwistle Bypass	2005–06	Publish Draft Orders and Environmental Statement
A45/A46 Tollbar End Improvement	2005–06	Publish Draft Orders and Environmental Statement
M1 Junction 6a to 10 Widening	2005–06	Works Price Reviewed/Confirmed
M1 Junction 10 to 13 Widening	2005–06	Preferred Route Announcement
A1 Morpeth to Felton Dualling	2006–07	Publish Draft Orders and Environmental Statement
A1 Adderstone to Belford Dualling	2005–06	Tender Invitation
A1/A19/A1068 Seaton Burn Junction Improvement	Cost estimate confirmed September 2005	
A19/A184 Testos Grade Separated Junction	2005–06	ECI Contract Awarded
A5-M1 Link (Dunstable Northern Bypass).	2006–07	Publish Draft Orders and Environmental Statement
A421 Bedford to M1 Junction 13	2005–06	ECI Contract Awarded
M40 Junction 15 (Longbridge)	2005–06	Publish Draft Orders and Environmental Statement
A596 High and Low Newton Bypass	2005–06	Works Price Reviewed/Confirmed
M20 Junction 10A	Cost estimate to be reviewed April 2006	
A27 Southerham to Beddingham Improvement	2006–07	Works Price Reviewed/Confirmed
M1 J21–30 (early improvements) (contract 1)	2005–06	Environmental Statement Published
M1 J21–30 DBFO (contract 2)	2006–07	Publish Draft Orders and Environmental Statement
M25 J1b-3 Widening	2006–07	Publish Draft Orders and Environmental Statement
M25 J5–7 Widening	2005–06	Confirm Investment Decision
M25 J16–23 Widening	2005–06	Publish Draft Orders and Environmental Statement
M25 J23–27 Widening	2005–06	Confirm Investment Decision
M25 J27–30 Widening	2005–06	Confirm Investment Decision
A453 Widening (M1 J24 to A52 Nottingham)	2005–06	ECI Contract Awarded—programme under review
M25 Junction 28/A12 Brook Street Interchange	2005–06	ECI Contract Awarded
M27 J11 to J12 Climbing Lanes	2005–06	ECI Contract Awarded
M27 J3 to J4 Widening	2005–06	ECI Contract Awarded
M1 J30 to J31 Widening	2006–07	ECI Contract Awarded
M1 J31 to J32 Widening	2005–06	ECI Contract Awarded
M1 J32 to J34S Widening	2005–06	ECI Contract Awarded
M1 J34N to J37 Widening	2006–07	ECI Contract Awarded
M1 J37 to J39 Widening	2006–07	ECI Contract Awarded
M1 J39 to J42 Widening	Cost estimate to be reviewed May 2006	
M1 J31 to J32 Northbound Collector/Distributor	Cost estimate to be reviewed July 2006	
M62 J25 to J27 Widening	2007–08	ECI Contract Awarded
M62 J27 to J28 Widening	2007–08	ECI Contract Awarded

The following schemes, which have entered the TPI since April 2003, are to be progressed subject to regional priorities:

A21 Tonbridge to Pembury

A21 Kippings Cross to Lamberhurst Bypass

A23 Handcross to Warninglid Widening

A30 Carland Cross to Chiverton Cross

A30 Temple to Higher Carblake Improvement.

Roads

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many parking bays there were in *(a)* 1999–2000 and *(b)* 2004–05; and how many such bays were subject to parking controls. [38566]

Ms Buck: This information is not collected centrally.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his Department's projected spending on road building is in each of the next five years, broken down by category of road; and how many miles of each category of road he expects to be built over that period. [38448]

Dr. Ladyman: We have made indicative budget allocations of £379 million in 2006–07 and £578 million in 2007–08 for major trunk road schemes on motorways and trunk roads categorised as of national importance. In 2006–07 through to 2007–08 we expect to complete two national schemes, which collectively will deliver approximately 6.3 miles of road improvements to the network, and to have started works on eleven others. Expenditure on these roads beyond 2007–08 will be reviewed as part of the next Spending Review and announcements about spending levels beyond 2007–08 will be made after the conclusion of that review.

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Future expenditure on motorways and trunk roads categorised as of regional importance, and on roads which are the responsibility of Local Highway Authorities, will be reviewed in the light of the regions' advice on their priorities for major transport schemes within indicative Regional Funding Allocations, which we published in July 2004. The regions' advice is expected in January 2006. However, the Highways Agency is currently working to indicative budget allocations of £262 million in 2006–07 and £328 million in 2007–08 for major trunk road schemes on motorways and trunk roads categorised as of regional importance. In 2006–07 through to 2007–08 the Highways Agency expects to complete 17 regional schemes, which collectively will deliver approximately 58 miles of road improvements to the network, and to have started works on nine others.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many miles of roads for which his Department is responsible were closed for repairs in each year since 1997. [38449]

Dr. Ladyman: The information is not available in the form requested. The Highways Agency is charged with making motorway and trunk road lanes available to traffic. Their records show that over the last six years they have kept an average of 98.8 per cent. of those lanes free from roadworks.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many miles of new roads for which his Department is responsible have been built in each year since 1997, broken down by category of road. [38452]

Dr. Ladyman: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 27 June 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1263–66W, for the information up to June 2005. The schemes completed on the trunk road network in England, since June 2005, and their approximate lengths are shown in the following tables:

All-purpose trunk road	*Scheme description*	*Date of completion*	*Length (miles)*
A5	Weeford to Fazeley Improvement	October 2005	3.1
A47	Thorney Bypass	December 2005	3.3
		Total	6.4

Motorway	*Scheme description*	*Date of completion*	*Length (miles)*
A1(M)	Wetherby to Walshford	August 2005	3.7
M5	J17-J18A Northbound Climbing Lane (Hallen Hill)	October 2005	1.4
M4	J18 Eastbound Diverge	November 2005	1.5
M25	J12-J15 Widening	December 2005	6.9
		Total	13.5

Ships (Piracy)

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many UK registered ships have *(a)* reported and *(b)* been subjected to (i) acts and (ii) attempted acts of piracy in each of the last four financial years. [38297]

Dr. Ladyman: The Government do not collate piracy statistics according to financial year but on a calendar year basis, similar to that of the IMO and International Maritime Bureau. The answer to parts *(a)* and *(b)* are essentially the same, as UK ships only report piracy incidents to the UK if they have been involved in an incident. The number of UK registered ships that have reported and been subjected to an act or attempted act of piracy for the last four calendar years is as follows:

Piracy attack

	Actual	*Attempted*	*Total*
2005[1]	3	1	4
2004	1	6	7
2003	4	2	6
2002	2	0	2

[1] January to September.

This data is taken from the International Maritime Bureau's quarterly piracy and armed robbery reports against ships. These figures tend to provide a more accurate record than those provided by the IMO. The figures include ships attacked both on the high seas (true piracy) and ships attacked within territorial waters, classed as maritime robbery.

South Hampshire Rapid Transport Scheme

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his written statement of 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 16–17WS, on the South Hampshire Rapid Transport Scheme, what discussions his Department *(a)* has held and *(b)* plans to hold with Hampshire county council and Portsmouth city council to discuss alternative transportation strategies. [36156]

Derek Twigg: I wrote to Hampshire county council and Portsmouth county council last week offering discussions on transport improvements in the South Hampshire area, in the light of the Government's decision not to reinstate the South Hampshire Rapid Transit scheme. The Department stands ready to work with South Hampshire in exploring good value alternative transport proposals.

The Department has also offered to meet the South Hampshire authorities to discuss whether a package of measures in the Solent area can be developed for the next round of Transport Innovation Fund pump-priming funding in 2006.

Speeding Fines

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the administration costs were of imposing speeding fines in each year since 1997. [38456]

Dr. Ladyman: All Partnership audit certificates for 2004–05, which show a breakdown of expenditure by partner, are posted on the Department's website at:

http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_control/documents/contentservertemplate/dft_index.hcst?n=14972&l=2

Sunset Clauses

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his policy is in respect of the use of sunset clauses in legislation. [37515]

Ms Buck: The appropriateness of a sunset clause for the whole or part of any proposed legislation is considered on a case by case basis. It is also addressed when a regulatory impact assessment relating to legislation is being prepared.

Transport Expenditure

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the transport spending per person by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* all public bodies on (i) light rail, (ii) heavy rail, (iii) bus and (iv) roads has been in (A) Yorkshire and Humber and (B) London in each year since 1997; and what estimates have been made for each year to 2010. [37870]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* This information is not held centrally. However, details on overall transport spend per head of population for the two regions, based on certain assumptions as to how this should be attributed, can be found in chapter 8 of the Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses 2005—published by HM Treasury, and available on their website at http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk/economic_data_and_tools/finance_spending_statistics/pes_publications/pespub_index.cfm

Tyne and Wear (Financial Bids)

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will place in the Library the submissions made by Tyne and Wear authorities for local transport plan support for *(a)* 2005–06 and *(b)* 2006–07. [34377]

Ms Buck: The provisional second local transport plan for Tyne and Wear (which seeks funding support for 2006–07) and the annual progress report submitted in 2004 on the first local transport plan (which seeks funding support for 2005–06) are being placed in the Library.

Ultra-light Rail Systems

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the relative costs of ultra light rail compared with *(a)* guided busways and *(b)* conventional train systems. [34004]

Derek Twigg: The cost of any scheme will vary significantly according to local circumstances and so direct comparison of this nature is difficult. No 'ultra light rail' systems have been constructed and there is little evidence on which to estimate its likely costs.

Vehicle Registration

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* cars, *(b)* commercial vans and *(c)* lorries were registered to use roads in the UK in each year since 1997. [38821]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested can be found in the following table:

	(a) Cars	*(b) Vans*	*(c) Lorries*
1997	21,681,000	2,317,000	414,000
1998	22,115,000	2,362,000	412,000
1999	22,785,000	2,427,000	415,000
2000	23,196,000	2,469,000	418,000
2001	23,899,000	2,544,000	422,000
2002	24,543,000	2,622,000	425,000
2003	24,985,000	2,730,000	426,000
2004	25,754,000	2,900,000	434,000

The figures provided are for Great Britain and do not include Northern Ireland.

Vehicle Servicing

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what his estimate is of the turnover in the servicing of *(a)* commercial and *(b)* private vehicles in each year since 1997. [38654]

Dr. Ladyman: Information is not available by type of vehicle, or specifically for servicing. Estimates for the maintenance and repair, including servicing, of all vehicles are as follows:

Annual turnover: maintenance and repair of motor vehicles[1]

	£ billion
1997	8.0
1998	9.0
1999	11.1
2000	11.2
2001	11.9
2002	12.0
2003	12.4

[1] Figures show the turnover of UK businesses engaged in the maintenance and repair of motor vehicles, including servicing.
Source:
Annual Business Inquiry (Office for National Statistics)

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

"Full Pint" Legislation

Tom Levitt: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action his Department *(a)* has taken and *(b)* intends to take in respect of 'full pint' legislation following the completion of the consultation process on simplifying the food orders. [37492]

Mr. Sutcliffe: It remains our aim to publish for consultation in the new year an Order consolidating and simplifying the weights and measures provisions relating to food. This will take into account the earlier consultations on the 'full pint' issue, and incorporate our conclusions. However, the timing of the draft Order will depend on the progress of discussions between the community institutions on the Commission's proposals on specified quantities.

Asbestos

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what recent research he has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the risks to the public of the presence of asbestos in textured coatings. [28357]

Mrs. McGuire: I have been asked to reply.

There are no risks to the public from asbestos in textured coatings where the material is undisturbed and in good condition.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) has recently published research commissioned from the Health and Safety Laboratory on levels of asbestos fibres released during licensed-work to remove textured decorative coatings in domestic premises. As part of the current Health and Safety Commission (HSE) consultation on proposed changes to the UK regulations governing work with asbestos (Proposals for revised Asbestos Regulations and an Approved Code of Practice (CD 205)), HSE has commissioned further research on asbestos exposures arising from work on textured coatings, will consider the risks to the public from such work, and will evaluate this and other available research.

The published HSL research and HSC consultation document are available on HSE's website.

Atomic Energy Authority

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the allocation of expenditure on the UK Atomic Energy Authority in his Department's Public Expenditure Statistical Analysis is made on the basis of who benefits from the service. [35858]

Barry Gardiner: UKAEA expenditure is allocated to statistical regions based on expenditure by nuclear site for which it is responsible.

Bio-energy Capital Grant Scheme

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry in respect of how many of the projects for large scale electricity generators of greater than 20 MWe for which grants were awarded under the bio-energy capital grant scheme draw-down of the grants have begun; what sums have so far been paid out for such projects; and to whom. [33982]

Malcolm Wicks: Of the three projects in this category £2,975,000 has been paid to Sembcorp for the Teesside project. On the E.ON project at Lockerbie, the grant has been accepted and work is under way, but no grant payments have yet been made; and the Peninsula Power WINBEG Project has yet to accept its grant offer.

Business Start-ups

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many business start-ups have taken place in *(a)* Tamworth constituency and *(b)* the West Midlands in the last 12 months; and what steps he is taking to increase the number in each case. [37835]

Alun Michael: There is no statistical information available which can accurately record the total number of business start-ups as such. New VAT registrations can be used as a proxy for business start-ups, and these show that in 2004 there were 225 new registrations in the Tamworth district council area and 14,855 in the West Midlands. The Tamworth constituency covers a greater area than that of Tamworth district council but it has not been possible to quantify the number of start-up or VAT registrations at a constituency level as records are not maintained by constituency area.

The Department of Trade and Industry sponsors the regional development agencies (RDAs) which are charged with the responsibility for the economic development of their regions and to work with partners to increase the sustainability of businesses and foster business start-ups. Advantage West Midlands supports a range of regional-level schemes and programmes that support start-ups including Mustard which exists to give new and young business start-ups the right kind of help when they need it the most. It is an initiative offering practical, hands-on expertise to high growth-potential new and young business start-ups in the West Midlands. Mustard is a unique private/public sector collaboration managed by Birmingham Chamber of Commerce and Industry and delivered by the region's Business Links and leading private sector consultancies.

Advantage West Midlands has also established a suite of regional funds available to start-ups including the Early Growth Fund, the Growth Fund and Advantage Business Angels and created a searchable database of all public and private sector sources of finance in the region—www.westmidlandsfinance.com.

The region's three high technology corridors are sites providing more incubation space for high value start-ups. For example, the Wolverhampton to Telford corridor has just completed work on the £5.5 million e-Innovation Centre in Telford, providing start-up premises and grow-on space for companies involved in high-technology businesses such as e-commerce and e-engineering.

To create an enterprise culture in Tamworth and the West Midlands region in general, Advantage West Midlands has established the West Midlands Enterprise Board. One of the targets the Enterprise Board has set itself is increasing the number of self employed people in the region by 35,000 by 2010. To help achieve this, it has recommended reforming the business support network. The new reformed network will include in-depth, specialist support to a wide range of start-ups across the region and ensure that the various initiatives which are already in place to stimulate entrepreneurship and start up activity are effectively brought together to provide cohesive packages of support. Under the current business support regime Business Link Staffordshire has assisted 1,816 start-ups in the county during the period 1 January 2005 to 15 December 2005.

Carbon Capture

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what criteria were used to decide that £25 million was the appropriate amount for the initial investment in carbon capture and sequestration. [36408]

Malcolm Wicks: The £25 million was assigned in the Carbon Abatement Technology Strategy to provide capital grant support for the demonstration of a Capture Ready Plant or Carbon Dioxide Storage. The precise amount needed to support such projects depends on what industry brings forward, but £25 million is a significant contribution and would help leverage additional funds from other sources.

My right hon. Friend the Chancellor of the Exchequer recently announced an additional £10 million in his pre-Budget statement, which increases the amount to £35 million.

Coal Mining

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will instigate a review of the policies related to the production of coal in the UK; and whether he has made a recent assessment of the potential for further coal production in the UK. [37866]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* The current Energy Review will consider the role of coal in delivering our energy policy goals.

An assessment of the potential for further coal production in the UK was made in 1999. There are no present plans to commission a further assessment.

Competitiveness Council

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what proposals on energy issues were put before the EU Competitiveness Council on 28–29 November in respect of the consideration of the EU's Seventh Framework Programme. [35652]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* The Commission's proposal for the Seventh Framework Programme (FP7) includes energy research as one of nine thematic priorities. The EURATOM programme for nuclear research and training also includes a number of relevant activities. The Competitiveness Council on 28 November considered a UK Presidency compromise text of the FP7 Proposal and member states agreed to a Partial General Approach, which excludes budgetary aspects pending the outcome of the negotiations on the EU budget.

Deceased Optional Risk Offer Scheme

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what payments have been made in each quartile under the Deceased Optional Risk offer scheme since payments began. [37935]

Malcolm Wicks: As at 11 December 2005, 904 payments of £1,200 to widows and 2,539 payments of £1,000 to ex-miners' families had been made under the Deceased Optional Risk Offer scheme since it became operational on 1 September. This scheme is intended to quickly compensate those claimants where there is no evidence of Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease. Under the full scheme, the average payment in equivalent circumstances is £822. Claimants' representatives will be able to advise for each claim on the eligibility for and merits of a DOROS payment.

EU-China Textiles Agreement

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the likely effects of the EU-China textiles agreement on numbers of jobs in *(a)* the EU, *(b)* China and *(c)* the UK; and if he will make a statement. [16844]

Ian Pearson: The textiles agreement between the European Commission and the Chinese Ministry of Commerce concluded in June and subsequently revised in September limits imports into the EU from China of 10 textiles and clothing products until the end of 2007. This agreement provided a level of stability for trade in these products and avoided the uncertainty of the alternative of a succession of product-by-product safeguard investigations. I have made no assessment on the effects on jobs in the EU, China or the UK.

EU-Vietnam Trade Dispute

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the trade dispute between the EU and Vietnam. [36670]

Ian Pearson *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* I am not aware of any trade dispute between the EU and Vietnam. However, the European Commission is investigating the alleged dumping of Vietnamese (and Chinese) footwear. The European Commission has yet to produce the preliminary findings of its investigation.

Gas Prices

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make it his policy to cap wholesale gas prices; and what discussions he has had with UK industry on the effect of unregulated gas price increases on business. [37936]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government's approach to security of energy supply is to let the market work so that price signals reflect supply and demand conditions and thereby encourage restraint on the demand side and additional provision on the supply side as necessary. A cap on wholesale prices would be wholly contrary to that approach and would be likely to have an extremely damaging impact on the market's ability to balance supply and demand in the short-term and on investor confidence in the longer-term.

I, as well as DTI and Ofgem officials, have had numerous meetings with industry representatives to discuss the impact of high gas prices and ways of mitigating that impact.

Gas Supply

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether there is sufficient gas supply to meet the demand of UK industry for the next 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [37937]

Malcolm Wicks: The Government's approach to security of gas supply is to foster a market-based regulatory framework which incentivises market participants to ensure that supply and demand balance. Both supply and demand can be affected by various different factors on a day-to-day basis, such as the weather, prices both in the UK and overseas, market conditions in supplier and transit countries affecting the availability and price of imported gas, technical issues at production and import facilities, etc. On an annual basis, however, if investment in currently planned import projects goes ahead as expected, there should be sufficient capacity to deliver gas to meet UK demand until at least 2020.

Liquefied Gas Pipeline

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with *(a)* Cadw and *(b)* the Countryside Council for

Wales in relation to the proposed Tywi Route for the liquefied gas pipeline from Milford Haven to Herefordshire. [35595]

Malcolm Wicks: The Department has attended a meeting with key parties on the proposed pipeline from Milford Haven to Aberdulais. It has also attended several meetings on proposed pipeline from Filindre to Tirley at which the proposed route was discussed. I understand the CCW attended all the meetings but not the CADW.

Over-indebtedness

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action he has taken as a result of his tackling over-indebtedness action plan of 2004; what further research and monitoring he carried out further to Annex D of the action plan; and what the results were. [38298]

Mr. Sutcliffe: Actions taken as a result of the tackling over-indebtedness action plan of 2004 are set out in "Tackling Over-indebtedness—Annual Report 2005" published in August 2005 (available in the Libraries of the House and on the DTI website: http://www.dti.gov.uk/ccp/topicsl/overindebtedness.htm#report2005). Research carried out further to the 2004 plan is summarised in Annex C of the 2005 annual report. Monitoring of progress against the action plan is included in the annual report, with additional monitoring of the high level factors which influence levels of over-indebtedness reviewed on a quarterly basis (and published on the DTI website: http://www.dti.gov.uk/ccp/topicsl/overindebtedness.htm#monitorql05). The results of these exercises are set out in the documents referred to and enclosed references.

Post Office

Mr. Rob Wilson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry for what reasons the Postal Services Act 2000 does not require the Post Office to compensate for the cost of the postage when a package is lost. [38110]

Barry Gardiner: Section 89 of the Postal Services Act 2000 enables universal service providers (currently only Royal Mail) to make schemes setting out the terms and conditions for their provision of universal postal services. These schemes include provision for compensation payments for loss etc. Postcomm, the independent regulator, is responsible for enforcing such schemes (including on compensation) through the licensing regime also created by the Act.

The powers required for Royal Mail to make such schemes were already in place under previous postal services legislation before the creation of the 2000 Act. Rather than introduce new arrangements, when adequate mechanisms already existed, the Postal Services Act 2000 merely mirrored previous arrangements updating them only to take into account the new framework and references for postal services envisaged by the 2000 Act (i.e. the potential for more universal service providers in addition to Royal Mail and the licensing regime).

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many rural post offices closed in the last 12 months. [38696]

Barry Gardiner: I am advised by Post Office Ltd. that total net rural post office closures for the financial year 2004–05 were 144.

Regional Development Agencies

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the written statement of 8 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1245WS, on regional development agencies, who the *(a)* new and *(b)* reappointed members of the South-west Regional Development Agency are. [38138]

Alun Michael: The written statement lists Kelvyn Derrick, Nigel Costley and Jonathon Porritt as fresh appointments, as their appointments followed an open competition, in accordance with the requirements set down in the Commissioner for Public Appointments Code of Practice. Kelvyn Derrick has been appointed for the first time. Nigel Costley and Jonathon Porritt were already serving as SWRDA Board members.

The chairman, Juliet Williams and board members Judith Reynolds, Harry Studholme and Eric Thomas have all been re-appointed for a second term.

Rogue Dialling

Mr. Binley: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make representations to British Telecom on not holding consumers responsible for telephone charges due to rogue dialling; if he will introduce legislation to protect consumers from the effects of rogue dialling; and if he will ask the Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information to re-open an investigation of the role of premium media communication and other companies in rogue dialling. [33181]

Alun Michael: The Independent Committee for the Supervision of Standards of Telephone Information Services (ICSTIS) has put in place a prior permission scheme for Premium Rate diallers. This makes it possible to assess the dialler software to be used for proposed services, and if appropriate to prohibit their release. The independent regulator for electronic communications, the Office of Communications (Ofcom), is currently consulting on extending this scheme to enable ICSTIS to take action against any rogue dialler irrespective of the telephone number or call charge used. Implementing a recommendation from Ofcom's Report into the Regulation of Premium Rate Services, this Department has just increased the maximum fine for breaches of the ICSTIS Code, and ICSTIS intends to review its sanctions policy early in 2006. ICSTIS has also put in place a key recommendation from the report to slow the money-flow to those that abuse the premium rate services charging mechanism. This obliges telecoms companies not to make payments to premium rate service providers for at least 30 days after calls have been made. This gives ICSTIS more time to identify breaches of its Code and enables ICSTIS to direct telecoms companies to withhold funds pending the outcome of investigations.

As ICSTIS has not had any complaints since May, Premium Media Communications may have withdrawn from the UK dialler market. However ICSTIS plans to write to this company shortly to give it notice of the withdrawal of its licence to operate diallers. This means that no phone company can give Premium Media Communications premium rate numbers for dialler services.

The Office of the Telecommunications Ombudsman (Otelo) is the appropriate body to make representations to BT on consumer disputes about telephone charges due to rogue dialling, and regularly contacts BT about specific cases.

Royal Mail

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he is expecting the Royal Mail to publish details of its employee share scheme. [35771]

Barry Gardiner: The Chairman of Royal Mail has said that he is keen to introduce such a scheme as this would give employees a stake in the business and help create the structural changes that are needed to enable the Royal Mail to compete in a liberalised market.

To date Royal Mail has not presented details of any such scheme to the Government for their consideration. Whether or not Royal Mail intend to publish proposals for such a scheme is a matter for them and I have therefore referred my hon. Friend's question to the chairman of Royal Mail and asked that he reply to my hon. Friend directly.

Stonehenge Visitor Centre

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the Stonehenge Visitor Centre project. [38084]

Mr. Lammy: I have been asked to reply.

It is inappropriate for me to comment on the detail of English Heritage's Visitor Centre plans which are now subject to appeal. The present visitor facilities fail to meet the quality visitors expect and are inappropriate to the setting. English Heritage wants to address this and they have my support.

Toucan Telecom

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions he has had with Ofcom on complaints about telephone sales by representatives of Toucan Telecom. [37735]

Alun Michael: It is the responsibility of the regulator, the Office of Communications (Ofcom) to deal with such complaints. Accordingly, my officials have asked the Chief Executive of Ofcom to reply directly to the hon. Member and to send me a copy of his letter. Copies of the chief executive's letter will be placed in the Libraries of the Houses.

Trade Liberalisation

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what his policy is on trade liberalisation affecting developing countries; and if he will make a statement. [37500]

Ian Pearson: The Government believe that it is for developing countries to make their own decisions on the timing, pace, sequencing and product coverage of any trade liberalisation in line with their own national development plans and poverty reduction strategies.

UK Oil Supplies

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which countries import oil from the UK's surplus; and what proportion was imported by each country in 2004–05. [36850]

Malcolm Wicks: The table shows exports of UK crude oil split by country of destination (from which it may be transhipped elsewhere) for 2004.

Total crude oil exports from the UK in 2004 were 59½ million tonnes, with four countries (the USA, the Netherlands, Germany and France) accounting for 81 per cent. of UK crude oil exports.

Exports of UK crude oil 2004

Destination country	*Tonnes (million)*	*Percentage of total exports*
Canada	2.9	5
France	8.5	14
Germany	9.5	16
Italy	2.2	4
Netherlands	12.3	21
Portugal	0.6	1
Republic of Ireland	0.7	1
Spain	0.8	1
Sweden	1.0	2
USA	17.8	30
Other	3.2	5
Total exports	59.6	100

Source:
Digest of UK Energy Statistics 2005 Annex F table F.4 (internet only).

Working Time Directive

Mr. Brady: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the Government expressed the view that the opt-out from the Working Time directive *(a)* should be regarded as an exception and *(b)* should eventually be made redundant at the last meeting of the Employment, Social Policy, Health and Consumer Affairs Council; and if he will make a statement. [38020]

Mr. Sutcliffe *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* At the Employment Council on 8 December, the Government expressed the view that the opt-out was an essential part of the Directive and that a choice to work longer hours must continue to be made available to workers. The Government did not agree that the opt-out should be phased out. Although some member states continue to believe that it should be severely limited or removed, this view did not gain majority support in the Employment Council.

DEFENCE

Armed Forces

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many armed forces personnel have been *(a)* injured and *(b)* killed whilst performing temporary firefighting duties in each of the last 10 years. [37962]

Mr. Ingram: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many members of the armed forces are serving abroad, broken down by location. [30407]

Mr. Ingram: Data collected manually from operational records show that as at 7 December 2005 the number of armed forces personnel deployed and in country on that day were:

Country	*Service personnel*[1]
Iraq	7,930
Bosnia	770
Kosovo	190
Afghanistan	950
Qatar	460
USA	30
Bahrain	410
South Atlantic	1,200
Diego Garcia	40
Cyprus	3,350
Gibraltar	550
Congo	10
Georgia	10
Liberia	[2]—
Sierra Leone	10
Sudan	[2]—

[1] Due to the rounding method used, figures may not always equal the sum of the parts. When rounding to the nearest 10, numbers ending in five are rounded to the nearest 20 to prevent systematic bias.
[2] Denotes less than 10.

Mr. Arbuthnot: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many British armed forces personnel are deployed on *(a)* expeditionary operations abroad, broken down by country, and *(b)* in Northern Ireland. [35329]

Mr. Ingram: Data collected manually from operational records show that as at 7 December 2005 the number of armed forces personnel deployed and in country on that day were as follows.

Country	*Number of*[1] *service personnel*
Iraq	7,930
Bosnia	770
Kosovo	190
Afghanistan	950
Qatar	460
USA	30
Bahrain	410
South Atlantic	1,200
Diego Garcia	40
Cyprus	3,350
Gibraltar	550
Congo	10
Georgia	10
Liberia	[2]—
Sierra Leone	10
Sudan	[2]—

[1] Due to the rounding methods used, figures may not always equal the sum of the parts. When rounding to the nearest 10, numbers ending in five have been rounded to the nearest 20 to prevent systematic bias.
[2] Indicates less than 10.

As at 30 November 2005 there were 9,790 service personnel in Northern Ireland. This figure includes 3,150 members of the Royal Irish Regiment.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many recruits to the UK armed forces since 1997 were from Coventry South; and if he will make a statement. [37888]

Mr. Touhig: This information is not held centrally and cannot be collated without incurring disproportionate cost.

Army Prosecuting Authority

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to his answer of 24 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 2201–2W, on the Army Prosecuting Authority, (1) what the reasons were for the delay in carrying out further investigations in the case concerned; [36128]

(2) if he will make a statement on the case in which investigations have now been completed. [36064]

Mr. Ingram: As the case referred to is subject to legal proceedings it would be not be appropriate for me to comment further.

Army Uniforms

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what representations he has received on the quality of army uniforms in each of the last three years. [38264]

Mr. Ingram: I and my ministerial colleagues have received a number of representations, either direct or through Parliament, regarding the provision of garments and clothing during the last three years. These letters have been related, in particular, to the contract award for Cut and Sew Garments and have included representations on the quality of army uniforms. Delivery of garments under the Cut and Sew contract continues to meet quality standards.

Atomic Weapons Establishment

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the balance sheet value of the Atomic Weapons Establishment was on 31 March; what the *(a)* carrying charge and *(b)* applicable depreciation for that establishment is in the 2005–06 financial year; and if he will make a statement. [37636]

John Reid: As at 31 March 2005, the Gross Book Value of the Atomic Weapons Establishment (AWE) Balance Sheet was £599.8 million and the associated carrying depreciation was £86.7 million, resulting in a Net Book Value of £513.1 million. The projected in year depreciation to 31 March 2006, is £26.2 million.

Ballykelly Army Camp

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what plans he has for the Ballykelly Army Camp. [37843]

Mr. Ingram: Ballykelly is one of the no more than 14 core sites listed in the Joint Declaration as locations where the regular garrison might be based after the end of Operation Banner. There is no change in this position.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what will happen to the proceeds raised by the disposal of former married quarters at Ballykelly, Co. Londonderry. [37844]

Mr. Ingram: The proceeds of the sale of the former married quarters at Ballykelly, Co. Londonderry will come to the defence budget in common with all receipts from the disposal of surplus defence property.

Cadets (Funding)

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the units of *(a)* Army cadets, *(b)* Royal Marine cadets, *(c)* Royal Navy cadets and *(d)* Air Training Corps cadets in the Isle of Wight and Hampshire; and what grant was paid to each unit by his Department in (i) 1997, (ii) 2001 and (iii) 2005. [38161]

Mr. Touhig: Cadet force units in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight are as follows:

Army Cadet Force units

The Hampshire and Isle of Wight Army cadet force is classified as one unit, made up of several sub-units, following the Army structure of troops and platoons constituting Companies.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight ACF Headquarters, Winchester

Unit	*Affiliation*
HQ Corps & Drums Pl	R. Hampshires

A Company Headquarters, Aldershot

Unit	*Affiliation*
1 (Aldershot) Pl	PARA
2 (Farnborough) Pl	RHA
3 (Alton) Pl	REME
4 (Fleet/Crookham) Tp	RE
5 (Cove) Tp	RE
6 (Borden) Pl	REME
7 (Old Basing) Pl	PARA
8 (Yateley) Tp	RE
9 (Liphook) Pl	REME

B Company Headquarters, Portsmouth

Unit	*Affiliation*
2 (Perrone Rd) Pl	REME
3 (Hayling Island) Pl	PWRR
4 (Leigh Park) Pl	PWRR
5 (Cosham Tudor) Pl	PWRR
6 (Cowplain) Pl	PWRR
7 (Purbrook Park) Pl	PWRR
8 (Gosport) Pl	PWRR
9 (Browndown) Pl	PWRR
10 (Connaught) PL	PWRR

C Company Headquarters, Newport, Isle of Wight

Unit	*Affiliation*
1 (Newport) Tp	RLC
2 (Ryde) Tp	RLC
3 (Sandown) Tp	RLC
4 (Freshwater) Tp	RLC
5 (Bembridge) Tp	RLC
6 (East Cowes) Tp	RLC
7 (Ventnor) Tp	RLC

X Company Headquarters, Fordingbridge

Unit	*Affiliation*
1 (Blackfield) Tp	RLC
2 (Brockenhurst) Tp	RLC
3 (Fordingbridge) Pl	PWRR
4 (Hythe) Tp	RLC
5 (Lymington) Pl	PWRR
6 (New Milton) Pl	PWRR
8 (Homefield School) Pl	PWRR
9 (Totton) Tp	RLC

Y Company Headquarters, Southampton

Unit	*Affiliation*
1 (Park Gate) Pl	PWRR
3 (Swaythling) Pl	RE
4 (Bishop's Waltham) Tp	RLC
5 (Itchen) Tp	RLC
7 (Millbrook) Tp	RE
8 (Fairoak) Tp	RLC
9 (Fareham) Pl	PWRR

Z Company, Headquarters, Winchester

Unit	*Affiliation*
1 (Andover) Pl	PWRR
3 (Basingstoke) Pl	PWRR
4 (Overton) Pl	PWRR
5 (Winchester) Pl	PWRR
6 (Kings School) Pl	RGJ
7 (Worthy Down) Pl Band & Corps of Drums	AGC
9 (Middle Wallop) Flt	AAC
10 (Romsey) Pl	PWRR
11 (Eastleigh) Pl	PWRR

Royal Marine and Royal Navy Cadet units, (Voluntary Cadet Corps—VCC)

There is one Royal Marine Cadet (VCC) unit—based at HMS Excellent (Whale Island).

There are three Royal Navy Cadet (VCC) units—all based in the Portsmouth/Gosport area, at HMS Sultan, HMS Collingwood, and Fort Blockhouse (ex-HMS Dolphin)

Sea Cadet Corps units

Hampshire

Gosport—TS Hornet

Portsmouth—TS Alamein

Romsey—TS Hampshire

Southampton—TS Southampton

Winchester—TS Itchen

Isle of Wight

Cowes—TS Osborne

Ryde—TS Royal George

Air Training Corps Cadets Squadrons

413 (Aldershot) Sqn

424 (Southampton) Sqn

424/1 (Testwood) Sqn

443 (Basingstoke) Sqn

457 (Farnborough) Sqn

1024 (Isle of Wight) Sqn

1024/1 (Sandown) Sqn

1098 (Gosport) Sqn

1105 (Winchester) Sqn

1189 (Portsmouth) Sqn

1213 (Andover) Sqn

1216 (Eastleigh) Sqn

1308 (New Forest) Sqn

1350 (Fareham)Sqn

1350/1 (Porchester) Sqn

1391 (Romsey) Sqn

1927 (Petersfield) Sqn

2260 (Waterlooville) Sqn

2327 (Havant) Sqn

2407 (Yateley & Eversley) Sqn

2407/1 (Fleet) Sqn

2412 (Bordon & District) Sqn

2412/1 (Alton) Sqn

2428 (Hedge End) Sqn

2495 (Hythe) Sqn

2515 (Ringwood & Fordingbridge) Sqn

The department provides funding to the individual services to support their respective cadet forces, which is administered through the cadet force headquarters. Each unit does not receive a specific grant, but benefits from the support of its national organisation and parent service, depending on need, unit contingent size and activity undertaken.

Compensation Claims (Kenya)

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many claims for compensation were lodged in Kenya against members of the UK armed services in the last two years; and what each claim was for. [36937]

Mr. Ingram: No claims were lodged in Kenya against members of the United Kingdom armed services in the last two years.

Courts Martial

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the oral answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 21–30, on courts martial, what the cost was of *(a)* the investigation and *(b)* the court martial proceedings in relation to the serving or former members of the Parachute Regiment accused of murdering an Iraqi citizen. [27060]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 10 November 2005]:* The costs for the investigation in relation to the serving and former members of the Parachute Regiment accused of murdering an Iraqi citizen are not available as a separate figure. General costs relating to the running of courts martial such as staff and utilities are not held centrally. The more direct costs related to this court-martial, such as legal fees and travel and subsistence are not yet fully available as some legal bills are yet to be presented. These are not expected to exceed £5 million.

Defence Budget

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the defence budget was in each year since 1997. [29394]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* Defence spending plans are set as part of the Government's Spending Review process. The outcome is published in Treasury White Papers on the conclusion of each Spending Review round and in the annual Government Expenditure Plan for Defence. Drawn from these documents, the planned defence budget was as follows:

	Budget (£ billion)
1997–98	21.8
1998–99	22.2
1999–00	22.3
2000–01	23.0
2001–02	23.6
2002–03	29.3
2003–04	30.9
2004–05	29.7
2005–06	30.9
2006–07	32.1
2007–08	33.5

The Government accounting framework has changed progressively over this period due to the introduction of full Resource Accounting and Budgeting (RAB). The terms in which the budgets were set are therefore not directly comparable.

In-year adjustments to the budget (for example, to cover the cost of operations) are set out through the estimates process, approved by Parliament.

Defence Systems and Equipment Exhibition

Mr. Moore: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the types of equipment exhibited at the Defence Systems and Equipment International 2005 exhibition which are banned for direct export under British law. [32639]

Malcolm Wicks: I have been asked to reply.

The DTI is not responsible for authorising displays at this exhibition, and the question should be referred to the organiser, who worked closely with the Ministry of Defence.

The DTI's role is limited to the issue of export licences where these are required, e.g. for the re-export of goods on display after the exhibition, or the promotion of trade in controlled or restricted goods between third countries. On that basis, we are not aware that any of the goods specified were exhibited at DSEI2005. Beyond that, export licences are not required for the exhibition of such goods in the UK. Firearms licences may however be required from the Home Office.

The Government's 1997 ban on the export and transhipment through the UK of torture goods relates to portable devices designed or modified for riot control purposes or self-protection to administer an electric shock, including electric-shock batons, electric-shock shields, stun guns, and tasers, and specially designed components for such devices, and leg-irons, gang-chains, shackles (excluding normal handcuffs). Since 1998, the import, export, transfer and manufacture of all forms of anti-personnel landmines has also been banned.

Departmental Staff

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many staff are employed by his Department in each *(a)* region and *(b)* nation of the UK; and if he will make a statement. [35887]

Mr. Touhig: The number of staff employed by the Ministry Of Defence by region and nation of the UK can be found in United Kingdom Defence Statistics 2005 Table 2.3: Service and Civilian Personnel by Government Office Region, at 1 April each year (see www.dasa.mod.uk).

Service data is published quarterly in TSP10; the most recent publication shows the numbers of Service personnel at 1 July 2005. Copies of TSP 10 are held in the Library of the House and also available on www.dasa.mod.uk.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many personnel will be relocated from RAF Innsworth to RAF High Wycombe in the restructuring of RAF headquarters. [37000]

Mr. Ingram: As recruitment to the new organisation is not due to conclude until next summer and as the RAF Personnel Management Agency are not due to relocate until 2008, it is too early to state how many posts will be filled by personnel relocating from RAF Innsworth to RAF High Wycombe.

Departmental Telephone Lines

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 10 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 705W, on departmental telephone lines, if he will list the organisations which hold the records on 0870 numbers used by his Department and the revenue received from them. [37949]

Mr. Touhig: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Disability

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether a Minister in his Department is planned to be nominated to take responsibility for liaison with the Office for Disability Issues; and if he will make a statement. [37059]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence is not a key Department in taking forward the recommendations of the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit Report "Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People" with the Office for Disability Issues, and is not, therefore, a member of the cross-government ministerial steering group. We are, however, kept fully aware of the work of the steering group and will be involved as necessary. I am the lead Minister for equality and diversity issues generally within the Department.

Equipment Exports (Libya/China)

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his policy is on exporting defence equipment to *(a)* Libya and *(b)* China. [36746]

Dr. Howells: I have been asked to reply.

The Government continues to implement fully the EU arms embargo on exports to China, as set out by my hon. Friend the then Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, the late Derek Fatchett, in his reply to a question by the hon. Member for Gedling (Vernon Coaker) on 3 June 1998 *Official Report*, columns 240W-241W. In addition, all export licence applications for Libya and China are rigorously assessed on a case by case basis against the consolidated EU and national arms export licensing criteria, taking account of the circumstances prevailing at the time and other announced Government policies. The criteria clearly set out, among other considerations, our commitment to assess the risk that exports might be diverted under undesirable conditions, used for internal repression, external aggression, to abuse human rights, or the risk of reverse engineering or unintended technology transfer.

Falklands/South Georgia

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* Army, *(b)* Navy and *(c)* RAF personnel are serving in (i) the Falklands and (ii) South Georgia. [37161]

Mr. Ingram: There are approximately 390 Army, 340 Navy and 680 Royal Air Force personnel serving in the Falklands. The numbers of armed forces personnel serving in the Falklands and South Georgia will vary throughout the year as a result of individual posting plots and unit movements.

There are no armed forces personnel based permanently on South Georgia.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many people sit on the *(a)* South Georgia Council and *(b)* Falklands Island Council. [37162]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I have been asked to reply.

The Falkland Islands Legislative Council has eight elected members and four ex officio members (who have no vote). Three of the legislative councillors form the executive council, which also has five ex officio members and is chaired by the Governor.

South Georgia has no permanent population and has no legislative council.

Future Joint Combat Aircraft

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what missile systems were to be fitted to the Future Joint Combat Aircraft when first designed; what the current position is; and if he will make a statement. [38186]

Mr. Ingram: The Joint Combat Aircraft (JCA) will enter UK service with a potent air-to-ground and air-to-air capability provided by Paveway IV precision guided bombs, and ASRAAM and AMRAAM air-to-air missiles. Future requirements are kept under review as part of the aircraft's ongoing capability development: among the weapons under consideration for integration at a later date are Storm Shadow and Brimstone. Our missile system requirements have not changed from when the Joint Strike Fighter was selected to meet our JCA requirement.

HMS Sheffield

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 17 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1409W, on HMS Sheffield, what his timetable is for *(a)* the completion of the departmental review and *(b)* the publication of the findings; and if he will make a statement. [32367]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence review is still continuing but I hope to be in a position to write to the hon. Member in the new year to advise him of the timetable for its completion. At that time, it should also be possible to provide an indication as to when any documents relating to the Board of Inquiry into the loss of HMS Sheffield may be made public.

Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what arrangements his Department has made to facilitate the financial assistance offered by the US-based Intrepid Fallen Heroes Fund to the families of British personnel lost on operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. [36458]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 14 December 2005]:* Since June 2003, the Intrepid/Anheusar Busch Fallen Heroes Fund (Intrepid Foundation) has, very generously, been supporting the widows and children of US and UK Service personnel killed while serving on operations in Iraq and Afghanistan. Support ceased in June 2005 when the Intrepid Foundation decided to concentrate its activities in support of limbless US Service personnel. This decision was taken in light of the recent US Congress decision to significantly enhance the support given to families of personnel killed while on operations.

The Ministry of Defence has a liaison officer in place who regularly communicates with the Intrepid Foundation in New York and facilitates payments through the appropriate single Service casualty organisation. The Intrepid Foundation has paid $10,000 to each widow and $5,000 to each child of a Service person who has died. Where an unmarried partner is involved, the Foundation has paid $5,000 to each child. Forty-eight families have so far benefited from the Intrepid Foundation with payments ranging from $5,000 to $25,000. There are four outstanding cases that the Fund and the Ministry of Defence continue to work on.

When the scheme ceased in June this year the Chief of the Defence Staff wrote to the Chairman of the Intrepid Foundation thanking him personally for his support. I would like to take this opportunity to add my own personal thanks for their very generous and unstinting support.

Iraq/Afghanistan

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether the identities of the killers of the six Royal Military Police who died at Al Majarr Al Kabir in Iraq on 24 June 2003 are known by the British authorities. [30738]

Mr. Ingram: The identities of individuals suspected of being involved in the incident in which the six Royal Military Policemen died in Al Majarr Al Kabir on 24 June 2003 are known to the British authorities.

Jurisdiction for this case lies with the central criminal court of Iraq and they are responsible for issuing any arrest warrants. Case papers, which take account of the Royal Military Police investigation, including the identity of key suspects, have been lodged with the court. The Ministry of Defence will continue to provide whatever support it can.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the potential impact of the US mid-term elections in November 2006 on the programme and timetable for withdrawal of coalition forces from Iraq and Afghanistan. [38259]

Mr. Ingram: Withdrawal of coalition forces from Iraq and Afghanistan is a matter for the individual troop contributing nations. Withdrawal of UK forces does not depend on particular dates or timetables but on achieving certain conditions.

Married Quarters

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer to the right hon. and learned Member for Devizes (Mr. Ancram) of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 98W, on married quarters, what the cost to his Department of the empty married quarters properties was in the last year for which figures are available; what plans his Department has for reducing this number; and if he will make a statement. [37767]

Mr. Touhig: The Married Quarters estate in Great Britain comprises some 49,000 properties of which approximately 7,900 can be empty at any one time. The figure of 7,900 fluctuates throughout the year and the

cost cannot readily be identified. However, the nominal rental cost of that number of properties would be around £22 million. In practice, the vast majority of properties remain empty for considerably less than a year.

The number of vacant properties is kept under constant review and they are managed either for continued use, or for disposal where it can be demonstrated that there is no identified longer-term need. The level of empty properties has historically been higher than social housing norms largely because the Ministry of Defence queues houses for families, not families for houses. A number of studies into future basing requirements is currently under way and some of the empty homes are being held against future decisions or are earmarked for work to improve their condition.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer to the right hon. and learned Member for Devizes (Mr. Ancram) of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 98W, on married quarters, where the married quarters in England which have been empty for longest are located; and if he will make a statement. [37768]

Mr. Touhig: This information will take a little time to obtain from the database. I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer to the right hon. and learn d Member for Devizes (Mr. Ancram) of 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2054W, on married quarters, how many properties in the married quarters estate he expects to be classified as empty in each of the next three financial years; and if he will make a statement. [37769]

Mr. Touhig: It is not possible to predict accurately the number of married quarters that will be empty in each of the next three financial years. Approximately 7,900 properties can be empty at any one time and that number fluctuates depending upon demand.

The following table gives details of those properties in Great Britain that have been identified for disposal and those which are currently empty.

	Properties identified for disposal	*Currently empty pending disposal*
2006-07	568	269
2007-08	149	31
2008-09	221	34

Properties in the married quarters estate that are leased from Annington Homes are prepared for disposal in sufficient numbers to meet the minimum number criteria laid down in the 1996 Sale Agreement. Typically this means either 10 per cent. of a site or 20 properties (whichever is the lesser) have to be available for disposal at any time. Consequently, empty properties are retained until sufficient numbers at a site become available. Married quarters which are owned by the Ministry of Defence can be disposed of more easily upon vacant possession.

Medical Provision (Gulf)

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what medical provision is available in the Gulf for British forces; and whether it is provided exclusively by British medical personnel. [37265]

Mr. Touhig: Medical support to any deployed operation is absolutely vital, and British forces in the Gulf have access to a wide range of high quality medical care, the majority of which is provided by UK Defence Medical Services.

Specifically, there are three levels of Medical Treatment Facility (MTF) available to the British forces in the Gulf. These are:

Role 1—Primary health care, specialised first aid, triage, resuscitation and stabilisation.

In addition to the organic role 1 facilities within the deployed elements, there is also a facility at Basra air station with additional strategic, tactical and immediate response teams components deployed.

Health care providers also give basic occupational medicine and preventative medical advice including:

primary dental care;

basic laboratory testing;

initial stress management.

Role 2—Reception and triage of casualties, and resuscitation and treatment of shock to a higher level than role 1 MTFs.

May include damage control surgery and a short term holding facility for casualties until they can be returned to duty or evacuated. Can be enhanced to include primary surgery (PS), intensive care unit (ICU), and medium and low dependency nursing care beds (MLDs). May also cover:

preventative medicine; operational stress management, psychiatry or psychology;

diagnostic imaging and tele-medicine;

patient evacuation co-ordination;

GeneralMedicine;

Genito-urinary medicine.

There are role 2 facilities at Al Amarah and Al Muthanna; the latter has Australian medical personnel supporting UK personnel.

Role 3—Deployed hospitalisation and associated support elements including PS, ICU, MLDs, diagnostic support and mission tailored clinical specialities for emergency medical care.

The holding capacity allows for beds for the sick and injured, diagnosis and treatment of patients who may return to duty within the Joint Operations Area (JOA), within the constraints of the Theatre Holding Policy. Role 3 facilities reinforce those of roles 2 and control or give ready-access to Medical Evacuation (MEDEVAC) assets. These may include:

Specialist surgery (neuro-surgery, maxillo-facial, burns);

Advanced and specialist diagnostic capabilities to support clinical specialists (CT scan, arthroscopy, sophisticated laboratory tests);

Major medical, nursing specialities (internal medicine, neurology, intensive care, ophthalmology);

Primary dental care.

The MOD has a role 3 field hospital at Shaibah logistics base, which is currently supported by a Czech surgical team. This has the additional capability of a theatre dental team, a mental health team, two aeromedical evacuation liaison officers (AELO), and a detachment of 84 Medical Supply Squadron.

Other deployed facilities include:

Environmental health technicians, deployed throughout the area of responsibility;

AELO/primary health care nurse based in Baghdad;

Medical admin primary health care/aeromed evacuation co-ord in Muharraq and Seeb;

Primary health care nurse/AELO in Al Udeid.

Other troop contributing nations provide facilities which, if necessary, our troops can access. Similarly, other nations can access our facilities.

Meteorological Office

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the temperature has been at midday at each of the Met Office's observation stations in the UK on each day in *(a)* November, *(b)* December, *(c)* January, *(d)* February and *(e)* March since 1985. [35246]

Mr. Touhig: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what assessment he has made of the cause of the fire that disrupted services at the Exeter headquarters of the Meteorological Office on 26 October; what damage was caused by the fire; what was the cost of damage to the property; and what estimate he has made of the commercial loss resulting from the fire. [28439]

Mr. Touhig: The incident of 26 October occurred due to a catastrophic failure of the static bypass switch serving the Uninterruptible Power Supply (UPS) for Computer Hall Two. The UPS system remained offline until 22 November in order that remedial activities could be carried out. During this time Computer Hall Two's power was supplied by use of the site's standby generators. The incident is still the subject of an investigation by the Met Office's insurer, and it would therefore be inappropriate to speculate further.

Neither the building fabric nor its interior were damaged.

The Exeter headquarters of the Met Office is designed so that key operational systems are duplicated between two independent Computer Halls. Thus the temporary loss of one Computer Hall does not result in the loss of all services. The Met Office also has well rehearsed plans for dealing with business continuity incidents. These plans were invoked on the 26 October to ensure that alternative arrangements were made for those Services that might have been impacted. The Met Office is not aware of any commercial loss as a result of the incident.

Military Training (Falklands)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on military training in the Falklands. [37164]

Mr. Ingram: The Falkland Islands provide an excellent training environment. Joint armed forces training exercises of varying size and duration are conducted throughout the year, including flying training, live fire exercises, command post exercises and ground defence training. The training conducted on the Falkland Islands makes a valuable contribution to the operational capability of our armed forces and, because it is a visible sign of the UK's commitment to their security, attracts wide support from the local population.

Ministerial Travel

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions since 7 July he has used the London Underground in connection with his official duties. [35025]

John Reid: Once. Defence Ministers use public transport wherever possible and practical to complete their journey. All ministerial travel on official business is undertaken in accordance with the rules set out in Travel by Ministers.

Mount Pleasant Airfield

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many aircraft and of what type are based at Mount Pleasant airfield. [37163]

Mr. Ingram: The following aircraft types and numbers are currently based at Mount Pleasant airfield:

Type of aircraft	*Number currently based at Mount Pleasant*
Fixed wing	
Tornado F3	4
Hercules C-130	1
VC10	1
Rotary wing	
Chinook	1
Sea King	2

Additionally, British International operate two Sikorski S-61 helicopters under contract in support of military tasks.

Opinion Research/Public Relations

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the value was of *(a)* public opinion research and *(b)* public relations contracts awarded by his Department in 2004–05 in (i) each (A) nation and (B) region of the UK and (ii) London. [35891]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence placed one contract for a corporate level public opinion poll in Financial Year 2004–05. This research was undertaken at national level and cost £41,736 (inc VAT). Details of other surveys that may have been conducted by the Ministry of Defence and its agencies are not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The MOD does not record expenditure on public relations in the form requested, and this information also could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Parliamentary Questions

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects to make a substantive reply to the questions tabled by the hon. Member for New Forest, East for Named Day Answer on 22 November 2005, on war-disabled UK veterans who live in former UK colonies, references *(a)* 29624, *(b)* 29625, *(c)* 29626, *(d)* 29627 and *(e)* 29628. [36304]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* I replied to the hon. Member today.

Porton Down

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which employees of Porton Down visited South Africa in the period from 1975 until the collapse of the apartheid regime; for what purposes; and if he will make a statement. [31254]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 23 November 2005]:* In January and March 1992, at the request of the Mozambican Government, the Ministry of Defence sent a total of three employees from, what was then, the Chemical Defence Establishment at Porton Down to Mozambique as part of two missions to investigate allegations of the use of chemical weapons. In order to fulfil these verification missions the individuals were required to transit through South Africa to reach the area under investigation in Mozambique. The investigation team which visited the site of the alleged use of chemical weapons was a combined UK and UN team.

PowderJect (Vaccines)

Mr. Gerald Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether his Department has received supplies of vaccines originating from PowderJect. [34035]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence has received supplies of Tetanus, Influenza, Yellow Fever and Smallpox vaccines originating from PowderJect or from Chiron Evans/Evans vaccines, companies which were acquired by PowderJect.

Public Appointments

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will list the former hon. Members who left Parliament in 2005 who have since been appointed to public bodies by his Department, broken down by party; and who was responsible for making each appointment. [36680]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence has not appointed any former hon. Members who left Parliament in 2005 to its public bodies.

Recruitment Trends

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on recruitment trends for the UK armed forces. [36696]

Mr. Touhig: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 12 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1679, to the hon. Member for Windsor (Adam Afriyie).

Royal Air Force

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence where the Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency will be relocated when RAF Innsworth is vacated; and when the relocation is due to take place. [36927]

Mr. Ingram: A study into the options for the relocation of the Armed Forces Personnel Administration Agency from RAF Innsworth in 2008 is being conducted. The final outcome is not expected to be known until around July 2006.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he expects RAF Innsworth will cease to operate as part of RAF Headquarters. [370001]

Mr. Ingram: We expect that RAF Innsworth will cease to support Headquarters Personnel and Training Command following the move of the Personnel Management Agency to RAF Headquarters planned for 2008.

Royal Ordnance (Chorley)

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when he last met representatives of Royal Ordnance (RO) to discuss Chorley RO factory. [36786]

Mr. Ingram: The Secretary of State has not met representatives of Royal Ordnance—now BAE Systems Land Systems—to discuss rationalisation of their factory at Chorley.

Space

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the military use of space. [37922]

Mr. Ingram: The focus of the United Kingdom Government's space policy is on civil and scientific uses. However, we also derive important security benefits from its military use. Like many countries, the UK uses satellites for a wide range of military functions such as secure communications, meteorological predictions and in the effective monitoring of various arms control treaties. This military use of space is distinct from the deployment of weapons in space. The UK Government has no plans to deploy weapons in space.

As one of the Depository States (along with the US and Russia), the UK Government continues to fully support the 1967 Outer Space Treaty, which places important constraints on the use of space, including prohibiting the deployment of weapons of mass destruction in space and military activity on the moon and other celestial bodies.

The main forum for discussing the military use of space is the Conference on Disarmament in Geneva. We have taken part in informal discussions on the possibility of a further treaty banning weapons in space, although no international consensus has been reached on the need for such a treaty. Notwithstanding this, we continue to support the annual resolution on the Prevention of an Arms Race in Outer Space (PAROS) at the UN.

TA

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent discussions his Department has had with *(a)* the Treasury about the tax treatment and income of and *(b)* the Department for Trade and Industry about the employment terms and conditions of territorial army personnel with a view to encouraging recruitment and retention. [38151]

Mr. Touhig: None.

Ty Gwyn Centre

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future of the Ty Gwyn centre for treating ex-service personnel suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder; and what other facilities offering similar services are available. [26028]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 8 November 2005]:* MOD officials are in discussion with officials from the Department of Health and the Devolved Administrations about the provision of services for former service personnel suffering from mental illness resulting from their service. They have not yet had the opportunity to discuss in detail the question of the closure of Ty Gwyn, which was one of a number of facilities with the capability for treating ex-service personnel suffering from PTSD. However, the question of whether its closure leaves any gaps in the capability for treating ex-service personnel suffering from PTSD is one of the subjects for discussion at a meeting planned for 19 December.

Type-45 Destroyers

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what his timetable is for ordering hulls 7 and 8 of the Type-45 destroyers. [38183]

Mr. Ingram: Formal approval and a subsequent order for ships 7 and 8 will be sought at the appropriate time, taking into account the relative value for money and affordability of the ships.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the original estimated cost of each Type-45 destroyer was; and what the current estimated cost is. [38184]

Mr. Ingram: The estimated unit production cost of each Type 45 at Main Gate was £582 million. The latest estimated unit production cost, as at 31 March 2005 and as reported in the National Audit Office Major Projects Report 2005, is £561.6 million. The unit production cost excludes development costs, which is amortised over the entire class of warships, and cost of capital.

Uniform Contracts

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many battle dress uniforms for the new cut and sew contracts have been produced in *(a)* China, *(b)* the UK and *(c)* other countries, broken down by country; and how many have been tested. [36771]

Mr. Ingram: The number of items of combat (battle dress) clothing delivered under the cut and sewn contract as at 8 December 2005 are as follows:

Country of production	*Quantity delivered*
China	449,064
UK	30,647
Lithuania	12,493
Germany	12,337

Combat clothing is among the items listed as Category 1 items within the terms of the contract. As at 8 December, 389 Category 1 garments had been tested by Ministry of Defence personnel. The bulk of these were combat clothing items.

Garments are checked against the contractual specification, which includes certain tolerances to allow for the bulk manufacturing process. Only one fault outside of these tolerances has so far been identified. Checks carried out by MOD are risk-based random checks, with 100 per cent. checks carried out where necessary. This checking is, however, just one element of a comprehensive quality assurance process starting with the prime contractor and its sub-contractors and ending with technical personnel in the MOD Project Team.

Veterans' Medals

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what recent discussions he has had with *(a)* the Arctic Veterans Association and *(b)* other organisations about the proposal for an Emblem to be worn on (i) the Atlantic Star and (ii) 1939 to 1945 Star medals; what decision he has reached on the proposal; and if he will make a statement. [36855]

Mr. Touhig: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State has had no formal discussions with the Arctic Veterans Association or other organisations to discuss proposals for the new Arctic Emblem to be worn on the ribbon of existing campaign medals. Last month he did meet an Arctic veteran, Commander (Cdr) W. E. Grenfell RN (retired) to discuss the design of the new Emblem, first announced by the Prime Minister on 7 March, during which Cdr Grenfell submitted his own design for consideration. He asked for confirmation that it could be authorised for wear on a medal ribbon. My right hon. Friend made it clear that he could not endorse this proposal.

There are no plans to approach the HD Committee for permission to wear the Arctic Emblem on the ribbon of an existing wartime campaign medal. This would, effectively, give the Emblem the same status as a clasp and the Committee has made it clear on numerous occasions that it will not consider any more medals or clasps for second world war service.

War-disabled UK Veterans

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) if he will make a statement on the financial help available to war-disabled UK veterans, or their widowed spouses, who live in former UK colonies; [29624]

(2) what discretion he has to make ex gratia payments to deserving cases of war-disabled UK veterans, or their spouses, living abroad in straitened circumstances; [29626]

(3) what estimate he has made of the number of Second World War-disabled UK veterans, or their spouses, who live in former UK colonies which have failed to pay war-disablement pensions since achieving independence; and if he will make a statement; [29627]

(4) what the criteria are for awarding supplementation payments to war-disabled UK veterans, or their spouses, who live in former UK colonies. [29625]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 22 November 2005]:* Regardless of their country of residence personnel who served in the British armed forces, or their widows, may be entitled to receive payments under the United Kingdom war pension scheme in respect of injury or death due to service.

The provision of the scheme extends to those members who served in military units based in the United Kingdom or Isle of Man. Responsibility for pension provision of British Europeans who served with locally raised colonial forces is the responsibility of the Government of the territory in which they were raised, under arrangements made when they gained their independence.

No estimate has been made of the number of Second World War disabled UK veterans, or their spouses, who live in former British colonies which have failed to pay war disablement pensions since achieving independence.

War disabled veterans who served in units raised in certain former colonial territories can have their overseas war pension supplemented, where the responsible Government has failed to maintain payment, if they can be certified as an overseas officer in respect of the overseas territory in which they enlisted. The responsibility for certifying them as an overseas officer rests with the Overseas Pensions Departments of the Department for International Development and, in broad terms, an overseas officer is one who was not born in the overseas territory and not normally resident there at the time of his service.

In certain circumstances, where no overseas Government pension has been awarded, awards may be made on a statutory basis under the Personal Injuries Scheme and extra statutory awards can be made via Treasury authority given in 1946.

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what remedy is available for war-disabled UK veterans, or their spouses, living in former UK colonies, for the adverse effect on war pension claims caused by loss of paperwork or failure to reply by the relevant agency. [29628]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 22 November 2005]:* Where administrative failure results in financial loss there are provisions under special payment arrangements to make ex gratia payments.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Asylum Seekers

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many of those detained under *(a)* the Terrorism Act 2000 and *(b)* the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001 (i) were seeking asylum at the time of their detention and (ii) have subsequently claimed asylum. [31457]

Mr. McNulty: Between 11 September 2001 and 8 November 2005, Police and Home Office records show that a total of 963 people were detained under the Terrorism Act 2000 and the Anti-terrorism, Crime and Security Act 2001. Many have since been released. Of the 232 identified in Home Office records as having applied for asylum, 214 had claimed asylum prior to arrest, and 18 subsequently.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many asylum seeking families have *(a)* applied for and *(b)* been awarded indefinite leave to remain since 24 October 2003 under the family asylum amnesty; and how many are awaiting the outcome of applications made under the scheme. [36170]

Mr. McNulty: Information on the Family Indefinite Leave to Remain (ILR) Exercise is published in quarterly web pages and in the annual statistical bulletin Asylum Statistics United Kingdom. Copies of these publications and others relating to general immigration to the UK are available from the Library of the House and from the Home Office Research Development and Statistics Directorate website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html.

Bail Hostel (Aldridge)

Mr. Shepherd: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps *(a)* the West Midlands probation service and *(b)* the National Offender Management Service have taken to identify an alternative site for the Bail Hostel located in Stonnall road, Aldridge, since the High Court ruling in 1996. [36226]

Fiona Mactaggart: The information is as follows.

(a) NPS West Midlands do wish to provide a larger approved premises in the Walsall area. However, this would rely on both the local authority agreeing a suitable location and adequate funding being available.

(b) The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) has not identified an alternative site for this specific approved premises and currently there are no funds allocated for its replacement. There is a NOMS instigated review and scoping exercise currently being undertaken to ascertain the level of development required across the approved premises estate. Once complete this information will be used to inform a national strategy for approved premises development including, if appropriate, Stonnall road.

British Citizenship

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 19 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 1032W, on British citizenship, how many of the 760,886 applicants who were not

refused British citizenship on character grounds had *(a)* been found guilty of a criminal offence by a court in the United Kingdom and *(b)* sentenced to a custodial sentence by a court in the United Kingdom. [33504]

Mr. McNulty: This information is not readily available, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many applications for British naturalisation there were from people resident in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [36485]

Mr. McNulty: The numbers of applications for naturalisation as a British citizen from people resident in Northern Ireland for the last five years is as follows.

	Number
2001	97
2002	165
2003	190
2004	166
2005	250

This information is provisional management information and may be subject to change.

Cheque Fraud

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with the British Bankers' Association about methods to reduce cheque fraud. [37053]

Paul Goggins: The Government take fraud seriously. Ministers and officials meet regularly with representatives from the police, retail and banking sectors, including the BBA, to discuss ways of combating fraud, including cheque fraud.

On 27 October the Attorney General announced terms of reference for a wide ranging cross-Government review of fraud. The review will engage a range of key stakeholders, including the banking industry, and consider the prevention, detection, investigation and prosecution/punishment of fraud.

Child Deaths (Custody)

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many child deaths in custody there have been in each year since 1990. [37323]

Fiona Mactaggart: Figures for deaths in custody of young people below the age of 18 are given in the following table:

Deaths in custody of young people under 18

	Number of deaths
1990	3
1991	1
1992	1
1993	1
1994	2
1995	1
1996	1
1997	0
1998	3
1999	2
2000	3
2001	3
2002	2
2003	0
2004	2
2005	2
Total	27

Citygate Public Affairs Ltd

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what meetings his Department has held with Citygate Public Affairs Ltd. since July. [36750]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Department does not maintain a central list of such contacts. Ministers and civil servants, including special advisers meet many people as part of the process of policy development and business delivery. All such contacts are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Ministerial Code, Civil Service Code, Code of Conduct for Special Advisers and Guidance for civil servants on contacts with lobbyists and people outside Government.

Correspondence

Mr. Winnick: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Walsall North of 1 November regarding a constituent, reference M26613/5. [36228]

Mr. McNulty *[holding answer 8 December 2005]:* I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 7 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1357W.

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when his Department will reply to the letters from the hon. Member for Warley of *(a)* 27 October regarding Mr. Munye, Jordan Close, Smethwick, *(b)* 13 September regarding Mrs. McBride, Wigon Road, Smethwick, *(c)* 5 October regarding Mr. Dalvir Singh, Tollgate Shopping Centre, Smethwick and *(d)* 16 November regarding Mr. Mohammed Hasan, 25 Beacon Close, Smethwick. [37565]

Mr. McNulty: The information requested is as follows:

(a) The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to the right hon. Member for Warley about Mr. Munye on 14 December 2005.

(b) The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to the right hon. Member for Warley about Mrs. McBride on 7 December 2005.

(c) The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to the right hon. Member for Warley about Mr. Singh on 13 December 2005.

(d) The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to the right hon. Member for Warley about Mr. Hasan on 14 December 2005.

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when his Department will reply to the letter of 15 September from the right hon. Member

for Warley regarding *(a)* Mr. Rolando March, Priory Close, Smethwick and *(b)* Mr. Tvala, Melbourne Road, Smethwick. [37566]

Mr. McNulty: The information requested is as follows:

(a) The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to the right hon. Member for Warley about Mr. March on 13 December 2005.

(b) The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to the right hon. Member for Warley about Mr. Tvala on 13 December 2005.

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when his Department will reply to the letter of 14 September from the right hon. Member for Warley regarding *(a)* Mr. Kushnau, Woodlands Street, Smethwick and *(b)* Mr. Mahmoud, High Road, Smethwick. [37567]

Mr. McNulty: The information requested is as follows:

(a) Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to the right hon. Member for Warley about Mr. Kushnau on 14 December 2005.

(b) Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to the right hon. Member for Warley about Mr. Mahmoud on 12 December 2005.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter of 4 October 2005 from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, regarding Neville Harding, reference H353358. [37671]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood about Mr. Harding on 14 December 2005.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letter of 25 October from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood, regarding Claudia Velvalee Love James, reference J1018480. [37672]

Mr. McNulty: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate wrote to the right hon. Member for Warley (Mr. Spellar) about Ms James on 14 December 2005.

Criminal Records Bureau

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the national targets are for the Criminal Records Bureau; and what the performance of its offices in South Devon has been against those targets. [36891]

Andy Burnham: The Criminal Records Bureau's (CRB) Published Service Standards are to issue 93 per cent. of Standard Disclosures within two weeks and 90 per cent. of Enhanced Disclosures within four weeks.

The CRB is a national service operating from its headquarters in Liverpool. However, Enhanced Disclosure applications are referred by the CRB to relevant police forces for them to perform a check of their local records. South Devon falls within the remit of Devon and Cornwall constabulary and, in line with the other forces in England and Wales, operates to a two week service level agreement with the CRB to complete this work.

Over the last four weeks the Disclosure Unit within Devon and Cornwall constabulary averaged 7.26 days for the work referred to them by the CRB.

Custodial Sentences (Mothers)

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what offences custodial sentences were imposed on mothers in the last 12 months for which information is available; and how many mothers serving custodial sentences *(a)* have and *(b)* do not have their child with them in prison. [35808]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information on the number of mothers sentenced to custodial sentences, and the offences for which they were sentenced, is not centrally available. During the period 29 November 2004 to 28 November 2005 the number of women who had a child with them in a Mother and Baby Unit (MBU) in a prison ranged between 38 and 66 per week and averaged 44 per week. Figures on the number of women prisoners who have children resident in the community are not available centrally.

Deportation

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he takes if a deportee is discovered to have suffered an unfair trial, torture or ill treatment, in contravention of the UK's agreement with the receiving country. [31155]

Mr. McNulty: We firmly believe that Governments are entering into these agreements in good faith, and are confident that they will abide by the terms of any assurances given. Any contravention of a bilateral international agreement between Her Majesty's Government and another Government would be a matter of considerable concern.

If there were an allegation suggesting that the terms of an agreement had not been honoured, we would seek an immediate report of the circumstances from the authorities of the receiving state, and would request immediate access to the individual concerned.

Action thereafter would depend on the nature of the breach, and on the remedial action, if any, taken by the authorities in the country concerned; it could include a request for an independent inquiry, and/or a request for the receiving state to take remedial action. Failure to comply with formal political commitments in a Memorandum of Understanding or similar political instrument can seriously damage relations between the signatory states, and the standing of the state concerned in the international community generally.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list those countries where there are substantial grounds to believe that a person deported would be subject to torture with which the UK *(a)* has signed a memorandum of understanding and *(b)* is in the process of negotiating a memorandum of understanding allowing the deportation of individuals

who are citizens of that state, including those who pose a threat to national security and public order; and if he will make a statement. [33710]

Mr. McNulty: The Government have signed Memorandums of Understanding with Jordan and with Libya to facilitate the deportation of particular individuals consistent with our international human rights obligations, in particular those in the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). We are discussing similar arrangements with Algeria and the Lebanon. We have said we will make public the names of the other countries to which we are talking when the time is right.

Detention Centres (Medical Services)

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department for what reasons his Department is responsible for the provision of medical services in detention centres for asylum seekers; and what the arrangements are for liaison with *(a)* the NHS and *(b)* the local primary care trust on such services. [36141]

Mr. McNulty: The provision of primary health care services in contracted-out immigration removal centres is an integral part of the contractual arrangements for the management and operation of those centres, for which the Home Office immigration and nationality directorate (IND) has overall responsibility.

There is regular liaison between IND and Department of Health officials over issues that will affect removal centres collectively, and removal centres and primary care trusts are being encouraged to work together to develop local protocols to improve the interface between health care services within the centres and the local NHS.

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which companies have been contracted to provide medical services to each detention centre for asylum seekers in England. [36148]

Mr. McNulty: Three of the nine immigration removal centres in England are directly managed, being operated by the Prison Service on behalf of the Immigration and Nationality Directorate. Primary health care services at the centres concerned (Dover, Haslar and Lindholme) are therefore provided under normal Prison Service arrangements.

The six privately run removal centres are operated under separate contracts. The operators are: Global Solutions Ltd. at Campsfield, Oakington, Tinsley House and Yarl's Wood, Serco at Colnbrook; and UKDS Ltd. at Harmondsworth.

Removal centre contracts include requirements to provide specified primary health care services to detained persons. It is for the individual contractors to decide how to deliver their contractual obligations for the provision of primary health care services, whether through "in-house" delivery, via a health care sub-contractor, or a mix of both approaches.

DNA Database

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether there is provision to remove from the National DNA Database details of a DNA sample of a minor who has never been charged or cautioned. [35616]

Andy Burnham: Yes. Section 64 of the Police and Criminal Evidence Act (PACE) 1984, as amended, enables the police to retain DNA samples (and profiles) taken from individuals arrested for, informed they will be reported for or charged with a recordable offence and detained in a police station. The police may retain the sample even when the individual has not been convicted of the offence for which the sample was taken. The decision whether to retain or remove a sample is an operational one for the chief constable of the police force which took it. There is no distinction in PACE between samples taken from an adult or a minor.

EU Maritime Border Guard Corps

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what discussions he has had with his EU counterparts on the creation of an EU maritime border guard corps to tackle illegal immigration in the Mediterranean. [35749]

Mr. McNulty: The European Commission's Communication of 30 November 2005 on Priority Actions for Responding to the Challenges of Migration notes that the EU Border Management Agency (Frontex) will be requested to launch in 2006 a feasibility study on reinforcing monitoring and surveillance of the Mediterranean Sea, and on a Mediterranean Coastal Patrols Network involving EU member states and North African countries.

The Government support the launch of such a feasibility study, given the need, identified in the Hague Programme, for EU member states to co-operate more closely to combat illegal immigration flows and to prevent humanitarian tragedies occurring in the Mediterranean. A Mediterranean Coastal Patrols Network would not be an EU maritime border guard corps. It would facilitate contact and coordination between member states' sea border surveillance authorities and search and rescue services and proper links with North African countries.

Fraud Trials (Juries)

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what progress has been made in developing the Government's proposals in relation to the use of juries in fraud trials. [36236]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Government's policy remains that certain very serious and complex fraud cases ought not to be tried by a jury and that trial by judge alone, as provided for by section 43 of the Criminal Justice Act 2003, represents the best way forward. However, we have offered to discuss alternatives to jury trial with the Opposition parties, if they have concrete proposals to bring forward.

HM Prison Brixton

Mr. Lilley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) what the cost was over the last 12 months of additional *(a)* overtime and *(b)* staff needed to replace officers suspended at HM Prison Brixton; [29253]

(2) how many prison officers are suspended on full pay *(a)* in the prison service and *(b)* at HM Prison Brixton; [29254]

(3) what the cost was over the past 12 months of salaries paid to officers at HM Prison Brixton who had been suspended; [29255]

(4) what the cost of salaries paid to prison officers suspended on full pay in the prison service was in the last 12 months. [29256]

Fiona Mactaggart: Staff are required to work additional hours to ensure that a deliverable regime is maintained and major services to prisoners are not affected by any staff shortages. Staff are repaid for working these additional hours by time off in lieu. No overtime has been paid for the specific reason of replacing suspended staff.

Information on the number of prison officers suspended across the service is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. It is therefore not possible to provide the total cost to the service of salaries paid to prison officers, suspended on full pay, over the past 12 months. Currently five officers are suspended on full pay from Brixton prison. In the period 1 November 2004 to date, nine officers have been suspended on full pay from duty at Brixton. The total cost of the salaries paid to these officers in that period is £168,000.

Leave to Remain

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 24 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2317W, on leave to remain, what percentage of postal applications was processed in *(a)* 20 and *(b)* 70 working days in the last year for which figures are available. [35821]

Mr. McNulty: Applications under the provisions of the European Community Association Agreements (ECAA) fall into the category of non-charged casework. The published service standards for this category are 25 per cent. of postal applications to be processed in 20 working days and 30 per cent. in 70 working days.

The average time taken from the date of receipt until the date of decision for European Community Association Agreement (ECAA) applications during the period 1 August to 31 October 2005 was 331 days. This information is provisional management information.

National Lottery

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many businesses were prosecuted for selling lottery tickets and scratch cards to under 16s in Tamworth constituency in the last five years. [35672]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information taken from the court proceedings database held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform shows that between 2000 and 2004, there were no prosecutions of businesses at the magistrates courts in the Staffordshire police force area under S13a National Lottery etc. Act 1993. It is not possible to identify those prosecutions in the Tamworth constituency, as the data is not collected at this level of detail.

Court statistics for 2005 will be available autumn 2006.

The lottery operator is required to ensure sufficient controls are in place to prevent sales to under 16s. Examples include test purchasing programmes and retailer training and education. It will also remove the lottery terminal if a retailer is found to have made repeat sales to people under 16.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his Department's target is for the time taken to answer written parliamentary questions. [36397]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Department's target for responses to ordinary written questions is five sitting days.

Ministers give serious attention and make every effort to answer questions substantively and in accordance with the performance guidelines set.

The Cabinet Office, on an annual basis, publishes a report to Parliament on the performance of Departments in replying to Members/Peers correspondence. The Report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005, *Official Report*, columns 137–140WS. Reports for earlier years are available in the Library of the House.

Passport Applications

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* new and *(b)* renewed UK passport applications were processed at the Belfast passport office in (i) 2003 and (ii) 2004. [36484]

Andy Burnham: The number of new passport applications and passport renewal applications processed by the United Kingdom Passport Service at the Belfast office are as follows:

	New	*Renewal*
2003	90,406	120,999
2004	94,521	181,561

Police Numbers

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the ratio of police officers to inhabitants in *(a)* each London borough and *(b)* each county has been in each year since 1997. [27128]

Hazel Blears: The deployment of officers to the London Borough Operational Command Units is an operational matter for the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis (Sir Ian Blair). Information on the number of officers to population for each London borough is only available from March 2003 and is set out in the table.

Information on the number of police officers to 100,000 population for each police force area in England and Wales can be found in Home Office

statistical bulletins on police service strength for each year from March 1998. Copies of these are in the House of Commons Library.

Metropolitan Police—London Borough police officer numbers to population

London Borough Operational Command Unit	Number of officers to 100,000 population		
	March 2003	March 2004	March 2005
Barking and Dagenham	219	229	253
Barnet	166	169	173
Bexley	144	154	175
Brent	235	251	254
Bromley	141	155	164
Camden	362	384	404
City of Westminster	862	859	728
Croydon	188	196	206
Ealing	216	226	225
Enfield	178	191	205
Greenwich	281	2	271
Hackney	331	364	378
Hammersmith and Fulham	310	298	302
Haringey	292	303	304
Harrow	145	157	162
Havering	151	153	171
Hillingdon	189	196	201
Hounslow	220	218	239
Islington	354	376	379
Kensington and Chelsea	332	348	322
Kingston-upon-Thames	184	183	198
Lambeth	363	346	367
Lewisham	229	246	260
Merton	161	176	184
Newham	283	308	312
Redbridge	164	180	187
Richmond-upon-Thames	164	164	160
Southwark	342	346	351
Sutton	148	155	163
Tower Hamlets	349	368	368
Waltham Forest	222	239	246
Wandsworth	214	227	212

Prison Population

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the future prison population; and what plans he has to meet these projections. [34164]

Fiona Mactaggart: The most recent prison population projections are in the Home Office Statistical Bulletin 10/05 "Updated and Revised Prison Population Projections, 2005–2011, England and Wales"—July 2005. Figures for 10 scenarios can be found in this document. The scenarios range from 'High' to 'Low'. Projected total prison population figures (end of June) for 'High' and 'Low' scenarios for the relevant financial years are presented in the following table.

The National Offender Management Service (NOMS) keeps under review the demand on prison places and the capacity of prisons to accommodate those prisoners sent to them by the courts. The operational capacity of the prison estate is being increased by bringing accommodation back into use and through additional places being built at existing prisons.

Projected prison population[1]

	High	Low
2005	76,600	76,110
2006	79,490	76,060
2007	84,260	76,670
2008	87,870	77,310
2009	89,400	77,080
2010	91,500	77,380
2011	90,780	76,520

[1] End of June figures.

Prisons

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) when telephone charge rates for BT telephones in prisons were last reviewed; [33508]

(2) for what reasons the cost of telephone calls from BT telephones in prisons differs from the cost charged to those using BT telephones elsewhere. [33509]

Fiona Mactaggart: The cost of prisoners' telephone calls is reviewed quarterly. Call rates are no longer linked to public payphone rates, they are agreed under the terms of the contract with BT which allows the Prison Service to set appropriate charges, taking account of the pattern of calls, as well as maintenance costs. The minimum charge, which is lower than that for public phones, reflects the fact that prisoners' calls tend to be of short duration.

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 1 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 762W, on prisons, what plans he has to conduct a further survey of the prevalence of blood-borne viruses in prisoners, with particular reference to viruses transmitted sexually. [36345]

Fiona Mactaggart: We have no such plans.

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects to announce his decision on the contestability bid for the three prisons on the Isle of Sheppey; and if he will make a statement. [37858]

Fiona Mactaggart: An announcement about the performance improvement test of three prisons on the Isle of Sheppey will be made as soon as possible.

Probation Officers

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many probation officers were employed in *(a)* Southend, *(b)* Essex, *(c)* Hertfordshire and *(d)* the Metropolitan area of London in each of the last 15 years for which figures are available. [37546]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information is not available for the full period requested. Data collected prior to 1 April 2003 is unreliable, and is not directly comparable with the more accurate figures collected since that time. The figures presented in the table show full-time equivalent (FTE) figures at the close of each quarter from 1 July 2003 to 30 June 2005. Please also note that the data for quarter one 2003–04 cannot be separated to show probation officers only, and is not included in the table as a result.

Staffing information is collected by probation area, and is not collected centrally in sufficient detail to allow figures for Southend to be presented separately. The staffing figures are provided for the Essex, London, and Hertfordshire Probation Areas only.

Essex Probation Area

					2004–05			2005–06
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
Senior Probation Officer	31.2	31.8	30.9	30.4	29.4	32.6	33.1	32.1
Senior Practitioner	11.0	12.0	12.0	12.0	13.0	12.0	13.0	13.0
Probation Officer	63.8	67.4	74.6	74.4	70.5	75.5	74.1	69.9
Trainee Probation Officer	29.0	36.0	43.0	42.0	40.0	39.0	43.0	42.0
Probation Officer Total	135.0	147.2	160.5	158.8	152.9	159.1	163.2	157.0

London probation area

	2004–05				2005–06			
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
Senior Probation Officer	207.3	222.0	197.0	2053	196.1	1883	1743	171.4
Senior Practitioner	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Probation Officer	588.4	618.5	665.5	6593	678.5	647.1	660.3	648.7
Trainee Probation Officer	204.0	229.0	244.0	243.0	216.0	247.0	236.0	247.0
Probation Officer Total	999.7	1069.5	1106.5	1107.8	1090.6	1082.4	1070.5	1067.1

Hertfordshire probation area

					2004–05			2005–06
	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
Senior Probation Officer	11.0	11.0	12.0	10.0	11.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Senior Practitioner	11.0	13.0	11.0	11.0	12.0	12.0	12.0	12.0
Probation Officer	41.7	41.9	49.0	51.0	49.7	49.7	53.1	49.1
Trainee Probation Officer	28.0	23.0	25.0	24.0	24.0	24.0	18.0	16.0
Probation Officer Total	91.7	88.9	97.0	96.0	96.7	95.7	93.1	87.1

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people have been employed in the Probation Service in *(a)* Southend, *(b)* Essex, *(c)* the Metropolitan Police area of London and *(d)* Hertfordshire, broken down by grade, since 1995. [37551]

Fiona Mactaggart: Information is not available for the full period requested. Data collected prior to 1 April 2003 is unreliable, and is not directly comparable with the more accurate figures collected since that time. The figures presented in the table show full time equivalent (FTE) figures at the close of each quarter from 1 April 2003 to 30 June 2005.

Staffing information is collected by probation area, and is not collected centrally in sufficient detail to allow figures for Southend to be presented separately. The staffing figures are provided for the Essex, London, and Hertfordshire probation areas only.

Essex probation area

		2003–04			2004–05			2005–06
Staff in post by grade	Q1[1]	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q1
Senior Probation Officer	—	312	31.8	30.9	30.4	29.4	32.6	33.1	32.1
Senior Practitioner	—	11.0	12.0	12.0	12.0	13.0	12.0	13.0	13.0
Probation Officer	—	63.8	67.4	74.6	74.4	70.5	75.5	74.1	69.9
Trainee Probation Officer	—	29.0	36.0	43.0	42.0	40.0	39.0	43.0	42.0
Probation Services Officer	—	175.9	173.7	168.5	177.5	175.1	185.6	189.9	167.9
Psychologists	—	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0	1.0
Other Operational Staff	—	2.8	1.3	1.7	1.7	1.7	12	12	12
Operational Staff Total	316.0	314.7	323.2	331.7	339.0	330.7	347.0	355.3	327.1
Deputy Chief Officers/Director	—	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
AGO and Equivalent	—	1.6	1.6	1.6	3.6	1.6	8.6	8.6	8.6
Area/District Manager	—	1.0	1.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Section or Function Head	—	13.7	132	142	152	152	14.6	14.6	15.4
Support Staff—Admin	—	52.7	53.1	48.6	50.4	52.5	53.4	60.8	917
Support Staff—Other	—	0.0	1.0	3.0	6.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other Specialist Worker	—	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	6.5	9.1	9.9	9.9
Support Staff Total	69.4	69.0	69.9	67.4	75.7	75.8	85.7	93.9	125.6
Total Staff	385.4	383.7	393.1	399.1	414.7	406.5	432.6	449.2	452.7

London probation area

Staff in post by grade	2003–04 Q1[1]	Q2	Q3	Q4	2004–05 Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2005–06 Q1
Senior Probation Officer	—	2,073	222.0	197.0	205.5	196.1	188.3	1743	171.4
Senior Practitioner	—	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Probation Officer	—	588.4	618.5	665.5	659.3	678.5	647.1	6603	648.7
Trainee Probation Officer	—	204.0	229.0	244.0	243.0	216.0	247.0	236.0	247.0
Probation Services Officer	—	617.0	665.5	704.5	695.3	686.3	6742	7073	722.6
Psychologists	—	6.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	7.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Other Operational Staff	—	0.0	55.0	67.0	18.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Operational Staff Total	14,86.5	16,22.7	17,97.0	1885.0	1828.1	1785.9	1760.6	1781.9	1793.7
Deputy Chief Officers/Director	—	8.0	6.0	9.0	9.0	10.0	10.0	9.0	9.0
AGO and Equivalent	—	37.0	34.0	35.0	53.0	53.0	49.1	56.0	60.0
Area/District Manager	—	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Section or Function Head	—	0.0	10.0	2.0	5.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	10.0
Support Staff—Admin	—	568.5	646.0	586.0	561.1	593.6	577.4	529.0	520.4
Support Staff—Other	—	1.8	9.0	8.0	9.0	7.0	02	1.4	1.4
Other Specialist Worker	—	0.0	8.0	13.0	14.0	9.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Support Staff Total	684.0	615.3	7ao	653.0	651.1	672.6	637.7	595.4	600.8
Total Staff	2170.5	2238.0	2510.0	2538.0	24792	2458.5	2398.3	2377.3	2394.5

Hertfordshire probation area

Staff in post by grade	2003–04 Q1[1]	Q2	Q3	Q4	2004–05 Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	2005–06 Q1
Senior Probation Officer	—	11.0	11.0	12.0	10.0	11.0	10.0	10.0	10.0
Senior Practitioner	—	11.0	13.0	11.0	11.0	12.0	12.0	12.0	12.0
Probation Officer	—	417	41.9	49.0	51.0	49.7	497	53.1	49.1
Trainee Probation Officer	—	28.0	23.0	25.0	24.0	24.0	24.0	18.0	16.0
Probation Services Officer	—	55.8	54.0	523	533	58.1	582	61.9	64.4
Psychologists	—	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Other Operational Staff	—	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0 J	0.0	0.0
Operational Staff Total	84.4	147.5	142.9	149.3	149.3	154.8	153.9	155.0	151.5
Deputy Chief Officers/Director	—	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
AGO and Equivalent	—	3.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0	4.0
Area/District Manager	—	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Section or Function Head	—	6.6	6.6	7.6	7.6	9.6	9.6	9.6	9.6
Support Staff —Admin	—	17.4	16.6	13.8	12.8	12.8	12.8	12.8	12.8
Support Staff—Other	—	40.1	427	40.6	39.0	40.0	40.0	35.8	34.4
Other Specialist Worker	—	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0
Support Staff Total	68.4	67.1	69.9	66.0	63.4	66.4	66.4	622	60.8
Total Staff	152.8	214.6	212.7	215.3	212.7	221.2	220.3	2172	212.3

[1] Data for quarter is not available by grade, so has been provided as totals only.

Returned Detainees

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent discussions he has had with foreign Governments on returning to secure detention in those countries of their nationals held in British prisons. [34105]

Fiona Mactaggart: The United Kingdom is a signatory to two multi-party prisoner transfer agreements: the Council of Europe Convention on the Transfer of Sentenced Persons, and the Commonwealth Scheme for the Transfer of Convicted Offenders. In addition, the Government have concluded bilateral prisoner transfer agreements with 18 countries. The UK has prisoner transfer agreements with a total of 97 countries and territories and is in regular contact with the Governments concerned about the transfer of individual prisoners.

Prisoner transfer under these agreements is voluntary; the consent of both states involved, and of the prisoner concerned, is required before repatriation can take place. In 2004, 107 prisoners were transferred from prisons in England and Wales to other countries to continue serving their sentences.

Secure Establishments

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* assaults and *(b)* violent offences there have been in (i) home office youth establishments, (ii) local authority secure accommodation and (iii) secure training centres in each of the last three years. [33689]

Fiona Mactaggart: Full-year information is available only for the most recent year, 2004. The relevant data relates to incidents of assault. 'Violent offences' are not treated as a separate category. In Prison Service young offender institutions, 1,223 assaults were recorded in 2004 and in secure training centres 1,128 were recorded. Currently no information is collected centrally about assaults in local authority secure children's homes.

Ms Keeble: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how often the Home Office monitors review videos of *(a)* movement of children around and *(b)* restraint of children in secure training centres. [35059]

Fiona Mactaggart: The primary function of CCTV systems at secure training centres is to allow the operators to maintain the security of the premises, prevent crime and, if a crime were committed, to assist

with the investigation of the crime. The systems are also designed to give confidence to trainees, staff and visitors that they are in a secure environment.

The systems are not intended as a means of assisting the Youth Justice Board's performance monitors to monitor the contractors' performance. However, the monitors do, on occasion, make use of the systems for that purpose. For example, if a monitor has concerns that an incident report is unclear, or if the report raises doubts whether the incident has been handled correctly, he or she may decide to view the footage of the incident. Or if a young person makes a complaint about an incident at the centre, the monitor may choose to view the relevant footage to enable him or her to consider the complaint.

Sentencing Policy

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures he has put in place to monitor the effectiveness of sentencing policy. [36599]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Home Office routinely monitors the effectiveness of sentencing in reducing re-offending through examining reconviction data. Records from the Police National Computer are used to ascertain whether sampled cohorts of offenders have been convicted of further offences during the two year period (one year for juvenile offenders) either following the imposition of sentence (in the case of community sentences or fines) or following release from prison (in the case of custodial sentences).

For the purposes of measuring performance against Public Service Agreement (PSA) targets to reduce re-offending of adults and juveniles by 5 per cent. by 2006 from a 2000 baseline, the Home Office publishes annual statistics on reconviction rates (for adults and juveniles separately—see http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/onlinepubs1.html) showing rates for a variety of sentences. The statistics show both actual reconviction rates and predicted reconviction rates.

Sex Offenders

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the performance indicators are for the monitoring of sex offenders for each police authority area in England and Wales. [36883]

Fiona Mactaggart: The Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) have been in place since 2001 and have already made a significant contribution to public protection. Under the MAPPA, the police, probation and prison services, supported by additional agencies including housing, health and social services, combine forces to manage the risk to the public posed by sexual and violent offenders. Those "critical few" offenders that pose the highest risk are referred to a Multi-Agency Public Protection Panel (MAPPP), where their cases are regularly scrutinised by senior representatives of local agencies.

From next year police and probation areas have been asked to produce business plans which will aid the monitoring and development of the MAPPA locally. Each area is already obliged to produce an annual report to highlight the work undertaken within the MAPPA to protect local communities. The annual reports published in October showed that only a very small proportion of offenders managed at the highest levels in the community were charged with a serious further offence (SFO), indicating a robust level of management.

The Association of Chief Police Officers are currently developing a public protection manual to provide central guidance to police forces in managing not only sex offenders in the community but covering all areas of public protection. This is due in 2006.

Skilled Migrants

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many *(a)* teachers, *(b)* IT specialists and *(c)* engineers from (i) Sierra Leone, (ii) Malawi, (iii) Tanzania, (iv) Ghana, (v) Zambia, (vi) Africa, (vii) South Asia and (viii) other Asian countries have been admitted to the United Kingdom under the terms of (A) the work permits system and (B) the highly skilled migrants programme in each year since 1997; [36945]

(2) how many nurses from *(a)* Sierra Leone, *(b)* Malawi, *(c)* Tanzania, *(d)* Ghana, *(e)* Zambia and *(f)* Africa have been admitted to the United Kingdom under the terms of the work permit system in each year since 1997; [36946]

(3) how many general practitioners from *(a)* Sierra Leone, *(b)* Malawi, *(c)* Tanzania, *(d)* Ghana, *(e)* Zambia and *(f)* Africa were admitted to the United Kingdom under the terms of the (i) Highly Skilled Migrant Programme and (ii) Work Permit Scheme in each year since 2002. [36947]

Mr. McNulty: The requested information is not available.

Video Games

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment has been made of the effectiveness of controls on the sale of violent video games; and what recent discussions he has had regarding *(a)* controls and *(b)* penalties for those who provide access to them for underage children. [37959]

James Purnell: I have been asked to reply.

The penalties for supplying a grossly violent video game to a child who does not meet the age requirement are up to six months in prison and/or a fine of up to £5,000; these are among the toughest penalties in Europe. We have been working with industry trade associations to ensure that retail staff are aware of these penalties, and are continuing to explore with them ways of increasing parental awareness of the contents of video games and the classification system.

Women Prisoners

Dr. Vis: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the women who have taken their own lives in prisons since 1975 in cases where all proceedings are complete. [33100]

Fiona Mactaggart: As publishing such details can cause distress to the families of those bereaved by a self-inflicted death in prison, I will write to the hon. Member with the information available.

Youth Crime

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what recent discussions he has had with the *(a)* Secretary of State for Wales, *(b)* Secretary of State for Scotland, *(c)* Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, *(d)* First Secretary of the National Assembly for Wales Government, *(e)* First Minister of the Scottish Executive and *(f)* Mayor of London on youth crime; and if he will make a statement. [32806]

Fiona Mactaggart: There are no records of recent meetings between the Secretary of State for the Home Department and any of the individuals listed in the question for the specific purpose of discussing youth crime.

Officials from the Home Office and the Youth Justice Board are in regular contact with the devolved and other administrations listed in the question on a range of issues, including youth crime and have recently had a number of meetings with them about youth justice legislation.

SCOTLAND

Departmental Estate

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much was paid by his Department in 2004–05 in rent for properties in *(a)* total, *(b)* Scotland and *(c)* London. [36007]

David Cairns: The costs for the buildings rented by the Scotland Office in 2004–05 are as follows:

£

Building	*Scotland*	*London*	*Total*
Dover House	—	12,338	12,338
Melville Crescent, Edinburgh	135,250	—	135,250
Total	135,250	12,338	147,588

The Office pays a reduced rent for Dover House and consequently an adjustment is made in the resource accounts of the Office to reflect this; the latest net book value of the building is £1.09 million.

In addition, the Office has a small amount of accommodation in Meridian Court, Glasgow and Frederick Street, Edinburgh. These premises are shared with other Departments. The Office pays an agreed share of the overall running costs of each building which includes such items as rent, rates, utilities, cleaning and security and a separate record is not held of the rental element of the costs. The costs of the agreed share in 2004–05 for Meridian Court was £21,797 and for Frederick Street was £7,107.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the total value is of *(a)* catering and *(b)* entertainment contracts let by his Department; and what value of such contracts has been let in each nation and region of the UK, including London. [37473]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office does not hold any catering or entertainment contracts.

Departmental Research

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what research projects commissioned by his Department are being undertaken; and what the publication arrangements are in each case. [32998]

David Cairns: None.

Departmental Staff (Chronic Back Pain)

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what initiatives are being taken in his Department to help civil servants with chronic back pain. [34985]

David Cairns: All the staff in the Scotland Office are on loan from the Scottish Executive or the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA). Both the DCA and the Executive can arrange for provision of practical and timely support for employees with chronic back pain or other health problems, including mental health.

Disability

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland whether a Minister in his Department is planned to be nominated to take responsibility for liaison with the Office for Disability Issues; and if he will make a statement. [37085]

David Cairns: Overall responsibility for the Office for Disability Issues (ODI) comes within the remit of the Department for Work and Pensions. I will liaise with ODI for this Office's interest.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland if he will make a statement on the initial activity undertaken by his Department in response to those recommendations in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit Report Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People where lead responsibility was assigned to all Government Departments. [37086]

David Cairns: Policy responsibility for the recommendations of the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit Report lies with other Government Departments. Scotland Office officials attended the Scottish consultation on the Office for Disability Issues and will continue to keep a watching brief in relation to Scotland.

Public Relations

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what the value was of *(a)* public opinion research and *(b)* public relations contracts issued by his Department in 2004–05. [36008]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office did not award any contracts for public opinion research or public relations in 2004–05.

Rates

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much was paid by his Department in rates in 2004–05, broken down by local authority; and how much was paid in rates in 2004–05 in London. [36002]

David Cairns: The payments for rates for the Scotland Office in 2004–05 were:

£

Name and address	*Local authority*	*Cost*
Dover House, Whitehall, London, SW1A 2AU	City of Westminster	131,100
1 Melville Crescent, Edinburgh, EH3 7HW	City of Edinburgh	48,118

In addition, the Office has a small amount of accommodation in Meridian Court, Glasgow and Frederick Street, Edinburgh. These premises are shared with other Departments. The Office pays an agreed share of the overall running costs of each building which includes such items as rent, rates, utilities, cleaning and security and a separate record is not held of the rates element of the costs. The costs of the agreed share in 2004–05 for Meridian Court was £21,797 and for Frederick Street was £7,107.

Taxis

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much has been spent by his Department on taxi travel in the 2005–06 financial year; and what proportion of such travel was undertaken in each nation and region of the UK, including London. [37474]

David Cairns: The Scotland Office does not record the costs of taxi travel by region. Expenditure on taxi travel for the current financial year, to the end of November 2005, is £5,713.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Agricultural Products (Designation)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what agricultural products she plans to designate as sensitive in the forthcoming World Trade Organisation negotiations. [36626]

Mr. Bradshaw: The issue of sensitive products is a key aspect of the negotiations on agricultural market access. The principle that WTO Members may designate "an appropriate number" of sensitive products was established under the July 2004 Framework Agreement. However, the number and treatment of sensitive products have yet to be agreed under the negotiations. When these issues are agreed, it will be for the EU as a whole, rather than for individual EU member states, to designate the sensitive products. The UK's position in these EU discussions will be guided both by our firm support for the Doha Development Agenda mandate to secure substantial improvements in agricultural market access, and by the position of key UK stakeholders.

Animal Disposal

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many calls have been made to the Animal Health Divisional Office requesting collection of dead sheep in each year since 2002. [37906]

Mr. Bradshaw: Since 2002, the number of recorded calls made to Animal Health Divisional Offices are as follows:

	Great Britain	*Northern Ireland*	*Total*
2002	[1]225	195	420
2003	4,063	918	4,981
2004	5,615	603	6,218
2005 (to 1 December 2005)	8,834	1,501	10,335
Total	18,737	3,217	21,954

[1] GB only started receiving information from AHDOs in October of 2002.

Animal Fairs

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether it is her intention that there will be a full public consultation on animal fairs in relation to the Animal Welfare Bill; and when a regulatory impact assessment for the Bill will be published. [38189]

Mr. Bradshaw: A Regulatory Impact Assessment for the Animal Welfare Bill was published on 14 October 2005. This includes information on our plans for consultation about pet fairs.

Animal Feed

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much *(a)* feed barley and *(b)* feed wheat was produced in the United Kingdom in each year since 2001–02. [37250]

Jim Knight: Estimates of the quantity of wheat and barley used for animal feed in the UK are given in the following table:

United Kingdom feed use of wheat and barley

Thousand tonnes

	2001–02	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Total wheat	6,159	6,891	6,491	6,862	6,807
Of which home grown	5,690	6,677	6,314	6,849	6,759
Total barley	3,885	3,285	3,494	3,137	3,021
Of which home grown	3,794	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a

For confidentiality reasons home grown barley figures are not available from 2002–03.

Excludes exports of UK produced wheat and barley. Information on the end use of exports is not available and therefore the quantity of exports subsequently used for animal feed is not known.

Animal TB

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the number of *(a)* cats and *(b)* ferrets identified with Type 13 TB in (i) England and (ii) Sussex. [38736]

Mr. Bradshaw: Bovine TB does affect both cats and ferrets. The incidence seems low, but TB in these species is not notifiable. So far this year in Great Britain, the Veterinary Laboratory Agency has diagnosed nine cases of bovine TB in cats, and one case in a ferret. Of these, spoligotype 13 has been isolated from one cat, and the ferret. Both of these animals came from the East Sussex area.

The disclosure of TB lesions will become officially notifiable in farmed and pet mammals when the new TB (England) Order comes into force on 20 February 2006.

Bovine TB

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many badgers have been identified as infected with tuberculosis following the implementation of testing of badgers involved in road traffic accidents; and if she will remove the protected status of badgers in infected areas. [38475]

Mr. Bradshaw: From the beginning of 2002 until the end of 2004, 1,876 badgers were cultured for bovine TB as part of the seven counties road traffic accident survey. 324 badgers were found to be positive.

Protected status does not prohibit the culling of badgers in appropriate circumstances, so its removal is not a consideration at this time.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment the Government have made of the welfare implications for cattle placed under tuberculosis restriction. [38476]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1968 makes it an offence to cause or allow unnecessary pain or distress to livestock. And the Welfare of Farmed Animals (England) Regulations 2000 set out general welfare, inspection, housing and feeding rules for all farm animals. Enforcement action is taken against farmers who do not comply with this legislation.

The State Veterinary Service (SVS) enforces the legislation. Its staff conducts regular farm inspections to check compliance.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps the Government are taking to halt *(a)* the geographic spread of tuberculosis in cattle and *(b)* the decline in the number of ground nesting birds in areas affected by tuberculosis. [38477]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government will introduce statutory pre-movement testing of cattle in England from 20 February 2006. This will reduce the risk of spreading TB to areas of the country where the incidence is low. It will also help to reduce the spread of TB between herds in high risk areas.

Evidence is being gathered about the effect of badgers on ground nesting birds. This is being done through a DEFRA-funded project investigating the ecological consequences of badger removal. Some of this work has been conducted in treatment areas of the randomised badger culling trial. The project also involves an exhaustive literature review and experimental field research using artificial bird nests. The results from the project will be presented to DEFRA in March 2007.

Mr. Steen: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the cost of tuberculosis testing for bovine tuberculosis was in each of the last three years; and what the costs of culling animals affected by tuberculosis were in each year. [38478]

Mr. Bradshaw: Summary of GB TB expenditure for periods 2002–03 to 2004–05.

£ million

Activity	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Cattle Testing	24.7	33.2	36.4
Compensation	31.9	34.4	35.0
Culling Trial	6.6	7.3	7.2
Other Research	6.5	7.0	5.7
VLA	4.1	5.3	4.9
HQ/Overheads	0.7	1.0	1.3
Total	74.5	88.2	90.5

TB expenditure in 2003–04 increased by 18.4 per cent. on 2002–03.

TB expenditure for 2004–05 shows increase of 2.6 per cent. on 2003–04.

Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to encourage more countries to sign the international agreement on the conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels. [36089]

Jim Knight: The United Kingdom, as a contracting party to the agreement on the conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP) and as the current chair of the Advisory Committee, strongly supports the ACAP secretariat in its efforts to encourage more non-party range states to sign up to the agreement.

To reinforce those efforts, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office approached several countries last year, including Japan, Korea, Brazil, Peru and Chile, encouraging them to join ACAP. Peru have since ratified the Agreement.

Correspondence

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when she will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Brent East, dated 9 December 2004, regarding Ms Rosanna Kelly. [37742]

Mr. Bradshaw: I apologise for failing to reply to the hon. Member. This was due to an administrative error. I have commissioned an urgent reply.

Departmental Consultants

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many secondees there have been to her Department from

consultancy firms, including the Big Four accountancy firms, in each of the last three years; and what areas of the Department they have worked in. [37359]

Jim Knight: In the last three years there have been no recorded secondments to DEFRA from the Big Four accountancy firms.

DEFRA has though seconded a large number of individuals from a wide variety of other organisations but establishing which of these organisations may have a consultancy strand would be possible only at disproportionate cost.

The term 'secondee' refers to a person 'borrowed' from an organisation outside the civil service for a period of between three months and three years (exceptionally five years), without affecting employment status. During the secondment period the 'secondee' remains an employee of the parent organisation but is expected to abide by the DEFRA Staff Handbook and the Official Secrets Act. Secondees are expected to undertake the full range of duties attached to the post. At the end of the secondment the 'secondee' returns to the parent organisation.

Departmental Property

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much was paid by her Department in rent for properties in *(a)* total, *(b)* each (i) region and (ii) nation of the UK and *(c)* London in 2004–05. [35953]

Jim Knight: The amount of rent paid by DEFRA in 2004–05 is given in the following table:

		£ million
(a)	*Total*	*22.66*
(b) (i)	East Midlands	0.09
	East of England	2.65
	London	12.97
	North East	1.09
	North West	0.18
	South East	3.68
	South West	1.30
	West Midlands	0.27
	Yorkshire and Humber	0.24
(b) (ii)	England	22.47
	Scotland	0.10
	Wales	0.09

Departmental Staff

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many staff are employed by her Department in each *(a)* region and *(b)* nation of the UK; and if she will make a statement. [35917]

Jim Knight: The figures requested are published in civil service statistics. Table D covers permanent staff numbers on a full-time equivalent basis in each Department and agency. Civil service statistics are available in the Library and at the following address on the Cabinet Office statistics website: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management of the civil service/statistics/civil service statistics/index.asp

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what initiatives are being taken in her Department to help civil servants with chronic back pain. [34977]

Jim Knight: The Department and its executive agencies have various mechanisms in place to assist staff with back disorders and put preventative measures into place.

Workstation assessments procedures are in place for all VDU users, and staff are encouraged to report all work-related back pain via accident/ill health reporting procedures.

These are followed up as appropriate, with use of specialist assessments for advice on adjustments and specialist accessories/new furniture, or by referral to occupational health service providers.

Guidance and Information is available on intranets—with links to Health and Safety Executive campaigns and brochures related to back disorders and other MSDs.

There are also online training packages which encompass advice and best practice in relation to ergonomics, posture etc. to reduce upper limb and back pain.

Manual handling courses are advised and/or arranged for any 'at risk' staff and many sites have onsite fitness centres. Many roadshows and promotional events are arranged throughout the year.

Departmental Transport

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to her answers of 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 507W and 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 301W, on departmental transport, why the departmental building in Merrow, Guildford does not yet have a Travel Plan; when the joint Travel Plan will be published; whether car parking by staff and contractors outside the departmental buildings in Merrow has been identified as a significant impact; and if her Department will issue instructions to its staff and contractors not to park in residential roads around the departmental building, with particular reference to Down road, Daryngton drive, Carroll avenue, Gateways, Broadwater rise and Pitt Farm road. [36954]

Jim Knight: The Department in Merrow did have a Travel Plan, which was made redundant by the increase in numbers of contractors over the last 12 months necessitating a full re-write of the plan.

The revised Travel Plan will be made available to site users by the end of December and will have been prepared by the Department and IBM.

Car parking by staff and contractors outside the departmental buildings in Merrow has been identified as a significant impact.

Staff and contractors who are unable to park on-site, are requested to avoid parking in Down road, Daryngton drive, Carroll avenue, Gateways. Broadwater rise and Pitt Farm road. A site wide notice to all staff and contractors to reiterate this request will be issued on 15 December 2005.

Digital Mapping

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many farmers in the South West submitted incorrect data for digital mapping in each year between 2002 and 2004. [36129]

Jim Knight: The Rural Payments Agency is responsible for the administration of digital mapping in England. The RPA developed the RLR between 2002 and 2004 predominantly using land parcels previously claimed for subsidy purposes, notably data received with Area Aid Applications. In some cases this included data from on the spot inspections and any information the applicant provided in the form of mapping requests. The following table shows the number of applicants in the South West where an overclaim was found as a result of an inspection.

	Number
2002	386
2003	349
2004	378

Direct Mail

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) if she will take steps to reduce the amount of paper used in direct mail by encouraging the use of cleared mailing lists; [36124]

(2) if she will assess the effects on the environment of a *(a)* 5 per cent. and *(b)* 10 per cent. reduction in direct mail; [36125]

(3) when she last met representatives of the direct mail industry to discuss waste paper. [37239]

Mr. Bradshaw: In July 2003 the Government signed a voluntary producer responsibility agreement with the Direct Marketing Association (DMA), a trade body representing 890 corporate members of the direct mail industry, to increase the recycling of direct mail to 70 per cent. by 2013 (the level of direct mail recycling was about 13 per cent. in 2002). The first target of 30 per cent. is due to be met by the end of 2005.

As part of the agreement, the DMA have also agreed to reduce waste by improving the targeting of direct mail and by publicising the use of suppression files such as the Mailing Preference Service which allows people to opt out of receiving addressed direct mail.

The signing of the agreement in July 2003 was the last meeting between my officials and the DMA. However, we have had ongoing correspondence with the DMA who have produced an interim report on their progress in relation to the objectives set out in the agreement. We are currently awaiting the publication of the first formal report which will detail whether they have achieved the 2005 recycling target of 30 per cent. I would expect my officials to hold a progress meeting shortly after the publication of this report in the new year.

I do not intend to conduct a quantitative analysis of the environmental benefits of reducing direct mail at this time. However a 5 per cent. and 10 per cent. reduction in direct mail will equate to a saving of 271 million and 542 million items of direct mail per year respectively, (based on the current estimate of 5.4 billion items of direct mail being distributed annually). The Government take the view that direct mail is a legitimate method of marketing goods and services and have no plans to introduce legislation prohibiting or restricting the distribution of such mail, although they will continue to encourage and support the use of a voluntary opt-out service.

Entry Level Scheme

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs for what reasons she decided to adopt the regional route in determining entry level scheme payments. [37912]

Jim Knight: I assume that the hon. Member is referring to the Entry Level Stewardship strand of Environmental Stewardship. The regional route and the historic route has not been part of the process in determining Entry Level Stewardship payments.

Entry Level Stewardship has a national payment rate of £30 per hectare, per year. However land parcels of 15 hectares or more in the Less Favoured Area, are eligible for payments of £8 per hectare, per year.

The payment rate for Entry Level Stewardship was determined using a combination of agronomic assumptions based on various farming systems which covers income forgone and costs incurred calculations, along with an incentive element where it was deemed appropriate. A more detailed breakdown setting out the calculations behind each option can be found in the England Rural Development Programme Modification to the Commission.

Environmental Controls

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what advice she is offering to farmers on whether they will need to register with the Environment Agency for *(a)* a waste management licence and *(b)* a pollution prevention and control permit. [35779]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Environment Agency has issued interim guidance to advise farmers of the regulatory requirements when waste management controls (waste management licensing or waste pollution prevention and control (PPC) permits) apply to agriculture. This guidance was published in *Farmers Weekly* on 2 December 2005 and will be published in *British Farmer and Grower* on 28 December 2005. The Environment Agency's National Customer Contact Centre (0845 6033113) has launched a dedicated enquiry line for agricultural waste.

The Defra funded Environment Sensitive Farming programme (ESF) holds events across all regions of England and Wales for farmers. ESF advises and informs farmers on the new controls. The website can be viewed at http://www.environmentsensitivefarming.co.uk/. In addition, a Recycling Directory that provides recycling and disposal advice to farmers on agricultural waste is available at http://www.wasterecycling.org.uk/. The Environment Agency has set up a Communications Group involving agricultural industry stakeholders.

The Communications Group have drafted a plan for a range of activities starting in early 2006 using publications, posters, CDs, pig and poultry events and workshops for intensive livestock operators. These workshops will provide practical assistance to operators in submitting their PPC applications. The Environment Agency has established a website for intensive livestock operators concerning PPC at http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/business/444304/1224648/1224695/1116263/?version=1&lang=_e

The Environment Agency's "Guide for applicants for pig and poultry rearing units" is already available and was updated in July 2005. The Environment Agency is currently holding a public consultation on new guidance entitled "IPPC—How to comply—Guidance for intensive pig and poultry farmers". The consultation ends on 24 February 2006. It is expected that the final guidance will be published in Spring 2006.

EU Sugar Regime

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what criteria were used to agree additional EU support for sugar producers in the French Département d'Outre Mer; and if she will make a statement. [36637]

Mr. Bradshaw: The additional support for sugar producers in the outermost regions of the EU, including French overseas departments, is based on the specific characteristics distinguishing production in those areas and will be integrated into local support programmes as provided for in the relevant Council Regulations in the POSEI (Programme of Options Specific to Remote and Insular Regions) series.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received from farmers on the recent announcement on the EU sugar reforms. [36951]

Mr. Bradshaw: Farmers representatives have recognised the sugar agreement as a tough but necessary reform, removing recent uncertainties about the future of the sector. They have also asked for early discussions with Ministers on the detail of the compensation arrangements for UK sugar beet growers.

Expert Advisers

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what criteria govern the number of papers a candidate must have published to be considered an expert member of her Department's statutory advisory bodies; and whether, when considering applications for membership of such bodies, her Department takes into account the declaration of conflict of interest at the end of papers published by scientific journals. [35797]

Jim Knight: There is not a standard requirement for expert members of DEFRA's advisory committees to have published scientific papers. All appointees must be able to demonstrate they posses the level of expertise and/or experience defined in the post criteria. The Department will seek to satisfy itself that the evidence provided by the candidate is appropriate to the post. The degree of expertise required will be decided on a post-by-post basis, in accordance with the requirements of each committee.

All applicants are asked to declare any potential conflicts of interest on their application form and again at interview. If the selection panel think there is anything in an application that could potentially be seen to conflict with the work of the committee it will be discussed with the candidate at interview. This approach follows the Commissioner for Public Appointment's code of practice.

Farm Animals (Disease Levy)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the merits of imposing a levy on farmers to pay for the cost of future animal disease outbreaks; and if she will make a statement. [36967]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Joint Industry Government Working Group announced 28 November in the "Partners for success—A farm regulation and charging strategy" will assess the merits of a levy on farmers as part of its consideration of the options for sharing the risks of animal disease outbreaks.

Food Recalls

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list the recalls of foodstuffs that have been notified to the Department over the last year for which figures are available. [35106]

Caroline Flint: I have been asked to reply.

The Food Standards Agency (FSA) advises that during the period 1 January-30 November 2005, product withdrawals or product recalls notified to them resulted in the agency issuing 58 Food Alerts for Information (FAFI).

During that period, the FSA also issued 16 food alerts for action (FAFA). These required the relevant local authority to undertake further investigation and/or enforcement action in order to remove the affected product/s from the food supply chain. In total 74 food alerts were issued.

Home Information Packs

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1061W, on home information packs, if she will place in the Library a copy of her Department's submission. [31834]

Mr. Bradshaw: A copy of the submission will be made available in the Library of the House. My officials will continue discussions with interested parties on the inclusion of contaminated land reports in Home Imformation Packs.

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman) of 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1061W, on Home Information Packs (HIPs), what information

on contaminated land she proposes should be included in HIPs; and if she will place the full submission to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister *(a)* in the Library and *(b)* on her Department's website. [36015]

Mr. Bradshaw: The submission referred to in the answer to the hon. Member for Meriden (Mrs. Spelman) has already been placed in the Library of the House. The Department has not put forward proposals of its own on the contents of Home Information Packs, but will continue discussions with interested parties on the possible inclusion of contaminated land reports in these Packs.

Integrated Pollution Legislation

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the regulatory impact of the Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control legislation. [37338]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Department undertook a regulatory impact assessment (RIA) of the Pollution Prevention and Control Regulations 2000, when these regulations were laid before Parliament. A further copy of this RIA will be deposited in the Library of the House.

The Department, with the support of the devolved Administrations and other Government Departments, is currently undertaking a review which will provide an evaluation of the UK implementation of EC Directive 96/61 on Integrated Pollution Prevention and Control, as implemented through the Pollution and Prevention and Control Regulations 2000, in terms of both costs and benefits. This evaluation is expected to be published in early 2006.

Landfill

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her estimate is of the amount of landfill capacity likely to be available in *(a)* 2010 and *(b)* 2015 at present rates of disposal. [36121]

Mr. Bradshaw: There is sufficient landfill capacity to meet current arisings. Landfill capacity in 2010 and beyond is difficult to predict. However, Government policies are designed to significantly reduce the demand for disposal in landfill in future.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent research she has commissioned into the types of material going to landfill. [36122]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Environment Agency's 2002–03 Commercial and Industrial Waste Survey provides the most comprehensive and up to date evidence. The total of construction, industrial and hazardous waste streams in England is estimated at 67.5 million tonnes, of which about 28.5 million tonnes goes to landfill. A further breakdown is given in the following table.

Landfill

	Tonnes	*Percentage*
Construction and demolition	1,335	75
Combustion wastes	4,163	43
Common sludges	188	17
Discarded equipment	70	24
Food wastes	555	10
Industrial sludges	417	26
Metallic wastes	67	5
Oils and solvents	68	9
Chemical wastes	1,168	32
Mineral wastes	1,564	63
General industrial wastes	4,766	77
General commercial wastes	11,609	82
Non-metallic wastes	620	11
Organic wastes	3	3
Paints, varnishes, etc.	81	36
Paper and card	902	9
Sorting residues	726	53
Total	28,438	
Average		42

DEFRA's annual Municipal Waste Survey provides the most comprehensive evidence on the sources, quantities and fates of municipal waste collected by local authorities in England. In 2003–04 local authorities collected 29.1 million tonnes of Municipal Solid Waste (MSW). Of this, 25.4 million tonnes was household waste, the remainder being collected from sources such as industry, commerce, municipal parks and gardens. In total 72 per cent. (20.9 million tonnes) of MSW was disposed of in landfill.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her estimate is of how many tons of paper went to landfill in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [36123]

Mr. Bradshaw: Data are not specifically collected on the amount of paper sent to landfill. However, the Confederation of British Paper Industries estimates the amount of paper consumed in the UK and therefore likely to become waste (shown in the following table). They also estimate that 38 per cent. of paper and board are recycled. The paper materials that are not sent for recycling will be disposed of by some method, but it is not known what proportion of this is sent to landfill.

Estimated consumption[1] of paper and board in the UK

Million tonnes

	Amount
1999	12.8
2000	12.9
2001	12.6
2002	12.4
2003	12.5

[1] Consumption is defined as UK production plus imports minus exports.

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs pursuant to the answer of 5 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 930W, on landfill, if she will make an assessment of the landfill requirement arising from the consumption of bottled water; and if she will draw up a plan of action to encourage the recycling of bottles. [36459]

Mr. Bradshaw: Glass and plastic bottles are already subject to recycling obligations under the Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 1997 (as amended), which require businesses that handle more than 50 tonnes of packaging a year and have a turnover greater than £2 million to recover and recycle specified tonnages of packaging waste.

In 2004, 344,000 tonnes of plastic packaging waste was recycled, of which we estimate that about 10 per cent. or 34,500 tonnes was plastic bottles, some of which would have held water. I understand that the plastic industry expect to recycle 50,000 tonnes of plastic bottles this year. Likewise, in 2004, 1,050,000 tonnes of glass packaging waste was recycled, of which approximately 75 per cent. was glass bottles and again some would have held water. It is worth noting, however, that in 2004 only 32,000 tonnes of glass was used to bottle water. It is much more sustainable for people to drink tap water.

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what financial penalties would be incurred by the United Kingdom in the event of non-compliance with the EU Landfill Directive; and if she will make a statement. [38573]

Mr. Bradshaw: The European Commission is not currently undertaking any infraction proceedings against the United Kingdom in relation to the Landfill Directive (1999/31/EC) as supplemented by Council Decision 2003/33/EC. In the absence of infraction proceedings, the issue of financial penalties does not arise.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many and what percentage of *(a)* closed and *(b)* operating landfill sites capture methane for electricity generation; what volume in total was captured in the last period for which figures are available; and what estimate she has made of savings in greenhouse gas emissions from (i) non-release of methane and (ii) displacement of fossil fuel generation, assuming all displacement came from such sources. [30924]

Mr. Bradshaw: In 2004, there were in excess of 200 generating stations utilising landfill methane in the UK. The Government does not hold statistics determining whether these landfill gas utilisation plants are located on closed landfill sites or operational ones. There are about 900 of the latter. According to DTI statistics, the total installed generating capacity at landfill sites in 2004 was 722 MW. Research for Defra by Colder Associates indicates that the volume of methane captured for electricity generation was about 1,070 thousand tonnes (kT) in 2004. An estimated additional 1,307 kt methane was captured and flared at landfill sites. This means that electricity generation and flaring saved greenhouse gas emissions of about 6 million tonnes carbon equivalent (MtC equiv), and about 7.5 MtC equiv, respectively. The total saving from capture was therefore about 13.5 MtC equiv. The generating plant produced about 4 TWh of electricity, equivalent to saving a further 0.5 million MtC equiv due to reduced emissions at power stations.

Livestock Markets

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assistance is available from her Department for the setting up of livestock markets. [36130]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are no funding schemes administered by DEFRA for the purpose of setting up of livestock markets, although DEFRA's Rural Enterprise Scheme (which in its present form ends next year) could provide assistance for the building of a livestock market as part of a farm diversification project. Details are publicly available from the Department.

Marine Environment

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her policy is in respect of the creation of a spatial planning regime for the marine environment. [38733]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government are preparing proposals for legislation to provide a new framework for the seas, based on marine spatial planning. A consultation paper on the proposed Marine Bill be will published early in 2006.

In 2004 DEFRA commissioned a pilot project to investigate with stakeholders a number of issues associated with the development of marine spatial planning. This is almost complete, and the final report will be available on www.abpmer.co.uk/mspp shortly.

Opinion Research/Public Relations

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what the value was of *(a)* public opinion research and *(b)* public relations contracts awarded by her Department in (i) each (A) nation and (B) region of the UK and (ii) London in 2004–05. [35954]

Jim Knight: I refer the hon. Member to the answers given on 7 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1294W and 12 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1600–1601W, salient details of which are given as follows.

(a) Public opinion research

Since 2001 Defra's Communications Directorate has commissioned the following omnibus tracking survey to measure public awareness of the Department, knowledge of its responsibilities and opinions on its performance:

Date	*Company*	*Cost (£)*
February 2002	Taylor Nelson Sofres	42,000
April 2004	Taylor Nelson Sofres	14,950
October 2005	Taylor Nelson Sofres	26,000

Copies of all three surveys are available in the Library of the House.

(b) Public relations

Since 2001 Defra's Communications Directorate has commissioned the following external media relations services.

Date	Agency	Cost (£)	Project
2002	Good Relations	5,900	Sustainable Food and Farming
2002	Biss Lancaster	189,366.67	Your countryside your welcome
2002	Red	121,848.93	Illegal Imports
2002	Country Porter Novelli	16,243	Sustainable Development
2003	Forster Company	11,170	Darwin Initiative
July 2004-March 2005	Media Moguls	261,558.70	Illegal Food Imports Campaign Phase 1
August 2005-present	Media Moguls	22,362.31	Illegal Food Imports Campaign Phase 2
January 2005-May 2005	Amazon Public Relations	55,904.84	Launch of the Sustainable Development Strategy
August 2005 to date	Amazon Public Relations	18,750	Sustainable Development case studies
October 2005 to March 2006	Weber Shandwick	60,000	Climate Change

All agencies provided specialist skills and services not currently available within Defra's Communications Directorate.

Details of public opinion research and public relations contracts broken down by nation and regional are not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportional costs.

Pensioners (Insulation Costs)

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her estimate is of the number of pensioner householders in Wakefield District who are eligible for assistance with *(a)* central heating insulation costs and *(b)* home insulation costs. [38334]

Mr. Morley: Information on the exact number of pensioner households in Wakefield District eligible for assistance from the Warm Front Scheme is not available.

The Warm Front Scheme Manager uses a range of tools to target activities to those who may qualify for assistance from the scheme and to raise awareness of the support available.

Poultry

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of the UK's poultry imports came from Thailand in 2004–05. [37634]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* Imports of poultry products from Thailand into the UK for the period 2003 to September 2005 are shown in the following table. The final row in the table shows that these represented 9.8 per cent. (by value) of total poultry imports into the UK for the period January to September 2005.

The importation of fresh poultry meat produced on or after 1 January 2004 and cooked poultry meat which has not been heat treated to at least 70°C was banned in January 2004. Poultry meat products which have been cooked to 70°C or more are not considered to be a risk.

	2003		2004		January to September 2005	
	Tonnes 000	£000	Tonnes 000	£000	Tonnes 000	£000
Total imports	567	1,071	622	1,153	495	854
Imports from Thailand	46	88	46	86	47	83
Proportion of imports from Thailand	8.1%	8.2%	7.4%	7.4%	9.6%	9.8%

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Note:

1. Data prepared by Trade statistics, Food Chain Analysis 3, DEFRA
2. 2005 data is subject to amendments.

Source:

HM Revenue and Customs.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many poultry owners in Northamptonshire are registered with her Department; and what the flock size is of each registered poultry owner. [38097]

Mr. Bradshaw: The following spreadsheet provides all the information currently held by the State Veterinary Service.

Poultry keepers in Northamptonshire

County parish holding number	Number of birds
29/001/0033	Not known
29/001/0041	Not known
29/003/0094	30
29/004/0008	16
29/007/0052	25
29/009/0050	31
29/010/0034	Not known
29/011/0047	Not known
29/011/0056	11
29/013/0002	Not known
29/016/0052	Not known
29/016/0060	Not known
29/017/0036	Not known
29/018/0003	24
29/021/0030	6
29/022/0006	Not known
29/022/0083	14
29/022/0085	Not known
29/024/0005	Not known
29/028/0026	3,850
29/028/0030	Not known
29/030/0070	1

Poultry keepers in Northamptonshire

County parish holding number	*Number of birds*
29/030/0075	Not known
29/031/0020	Not known
29/033/0069	Not known
29/034/0093	0
29/034/0106	Not known
29/034/0106	Not known
29/035/0066	Not known
29/037/0023	Not known
29/037/0092	Not known
29/042/7000	Not known
29/042/7002	Not known
29/042/7005	Not known
29/043/0035	30
29/043/0036	Not known
29/043/0037	5
29/045/0007	40
29/045/0011	18
29/046/0013	9
29/046/0047	3
29/048/0035	Not known
29/048/0038	Not known
29/049/0004	Not known
29/050/0038	27,500
29/050/0129	Not known
29/051/0059	20
29/052/0036	Not known
29/054/0061	8,200
29/054/0062	20
29/055/0008	Not known
29/055/0035	Not known
29/056/0035	Not known
29/057/0009	Not known
29/059/0085	Not known
29/059/0088	Not known
29/061/0026	Not known
29/062/0008	7
29/062/0065	6,650
29/062/0074	Not known
29/062/0079	Not known
29/063/0023	Not known
29/064/0014	3
29/064/0031	8
29/064/0033	Not known
29/066/0032	Not known
29/070/0055	Not known
29/070/0058	Not known
29/076/0013	30
29/077/0009	Not known
29/077/0078	Not known
29/077/9006	Not known
29/081/0013	12
29/085/0041	5
29/087/0001	4
29/087/0005	6,450
29/087/0012	4
29/087/0049	Not known
29/087/0050	Not known
29/088/0174	Not known
29/093/0006	12
29/094/0005	Not known
29/097/0067	Not known
29/101/0011	Not known
29/108/0018	Not known
29/109/0052	Not known
29/109/0053	10
29/110/0049	Not known
29/110/0063	Not known
29/113/0037	8
29/113/0039	Not known
29/116/0031	19
29/117/0036	Not known
29/117/0036	Not known
29/118/7000	Not known

Poultry keepers in Northamptonshire

County parish holding number	*Number of birds*
29/119/0018	Not known
29/122/9014	12
29/128/0067	30
29/131/0030	Not known
29/134/0043	350
29/142/0021	Not known
29/147/0039	Not known
29/148/0069	Not known
29/149/0018	Not known
29/149/0086	Not known
29/153/0001	Not known
29/153/0072	2
29/154/0006	1,256
29/156/0015	Not known
29/156/0052	2
29/156/0058	22
29/160/0012	0
29/162/0043	Not known
29/165/9017	Not known
29/170/0047	36
29/172/6000	3
29/173/0045	12
29/175/0236	0
29/175/0239	Not known
29/175/0244	14
29/175/6001	Not known
29/177/9004	Not known
29/180/0013	Not known
29/184/0001	Not known
29/186/0044	19
29/187/0038	2,000
29/187/0063	Not known
29/187/9001	Not known
29/188/0011	Not known
29/193/0044	16,000
29/193/0045	Not known
29/197/0023	Not known
29/202/0005	Not known
29/204/0008	Not known
29/205/0010	26
29/205/0018	Not known
29/215/0002	Not known
29/215/0003	Not known
29/219/0051	Not known
29/220/0054	Not known
29/223/0030	Not known
29/225/0011	Not known
29/227/0002	3,200
29/229/0013	Not known
29/231/0113	22
29/231/0114	Not known
29/233/0049	Not known
29/234/0011	116
29/235/0040	14
29/238/0131	27
29/238/0153	Not known
29/241/0035	7
29/242/0043	Not known
29/243/0051	Not known
29/243/7000	Not known
29/247/0013	48
29/247/0015	19
29/249/0045	25
Unknown	5,550
29/251/0033	Not known
29/251/0051	Not known
29/258/0066	Not known
29/259/0040	Not known
29/259/0040	Not known
Unknown	3,850
29/259/0045	Not known
29/260/0007	Not known
29/261/0021	7,350

Poultry keepers in Northamptonshire

County parish holding number	*Number of birds*
29/263/0031	Not known
29/263/0046	21
29/264/0013	203,800
29/264/9004	Not known
29/265/0067	Not known
29/265/0081	Not known
29/268/0010	7,850
29/268/0047	Not known
29/270/0076	7
29/272/9002	4,600
29/274/0024	Not known
29/274/0096	Not known
29/274/0100	Not known
29/274/0102	Not known
29/274/0104	Not known
29/274/0107	4
29/276/0001	Not known
29/276/0050	Not known
Unknown	5,500
29/279/0021	Not known
29/279/9000	Not known
29/284/0030	Not known
29/290/0020	Not known
29/290/7000	Not known
29/291/0043	Not known
29/293/0190	Not known
29/293/0192	Not known
29/293/0195	21
29/293/7000	Not known
29/293/8000	Not known
29/293/9028	Not known
Unknown	1,690
29/296/0210	Not known
29/297/0039	Not known
29/299/0024	Not known
29/299/9003	Not known
29/302/0064	Not known
29/307/0039	Not known
29/308/6000	16,100
Unknown	6

Rape Seed Oil

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much rape seed oil was produced in the UK in each of the last five years. [37443]

Jim Knight: Published annual data on the amount of crude rape seed oil produced in the UK are available up to 2003 and are presented in the following table. The rape seed crushed by UK crushers may be sourced from the UK or overseas.

Amount of crude rape seed oil produced in the UK

	Tonnes[1]
1998	669.4
1999	634.1
2000	615.6
2001	588.5
2002	609.3
2003	597.8

[1] DEFRA survey of oilseeds and nuts crushed in the United Kingdom and the crude vegetable oils, oilcake and meal produced

Crude oil may be further processed or refined, to produce partly processed and refined deodorised rape seed oil. The crude rape seed oil processed by UK hardeners and refiners may be sourced from the UK or overseas. Published annual data on the output of refined deodorised rape seed oil in the UK are available up to 2003 and are presented in the following table.

Output of rape seed oil produced in the UK

	Tonnes[1]
1998	720.6
1999	762.9
2000	700.7
2001	627.9
2002	604.5
2003	546.9

[1] DEFRA survey of the output of refined, deodorised vegetable oils, marine oils and animal fats by United Kingdom processing plants

This information including the historical data series is published on the DEFRA website and can be found at: http://statistics.defra.gov.uk/esg/datasets/histoils.xls

Recycling

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps she is taking to promote the separate collection and recycling of paper and other materials from small and medium-sized businesses; whether her Department has set targets for such recycling; and if she will make a statement. [34860]

Mr. Bradshaw *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* The Government aim to have reduced the amount of commercial and industrial waste going to landfill to 85 per cent. of the 1998 level by 2005. The recent Environment Agency report, published this month, showed waste recovery rates were at record levels in 2004, with 53 per cent. of all business waste recycled or re-used.

The main incentive for businesses to recycle more is economic. The landfill tax is increasing the cost of waste disposal and thus providing the waste management industry with a strong incentive to offer separate collection facilities for businesses.

£43 million from the landfill tax escalator was fed back into business via the Business Resource Efficiency and Waste (BREW) programme to fund a variety of initiatives such as Envirowise, which advises and supports businesses who want to improve their recycling performance.

The Producer Responsibility Obligations (Packaging Waste) Regulations 1997 have set targets to obligated businesses for recycling paper packaging waste, peaking at 70 per cent. in 2008. To create stable and efficient markets for recycled materials such as paper, Government have established the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP). Clean source separation of paper and other recyclates is a well recognised factor in obtaining best prices.

WRAP is currently undertaking a study aimed at finding ways to overcome the barriers currently inhibiting adequate provision of recycling services for SMEs, and to improve their capacity to recycle more waste. The study is funded by BREW. WRAP intend to deliver a series of trials to collect materials for recycling from SMEs that presently receive no recycling services.

Trials are expected to continue until summer 2006 after which WRAP will produce a final feasibility study report based on their findings.

Plastic Packaging

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much plastic packaging has been *(a)* recovered and *(b)* recycled in each of the last seven years. [37604]

Mr. Bradshaw: The amount of plastic packaging waste that was recovered and recycled in the last seven years was as follows:

Tonnes

	Recycled	*Energy recovery*[1]
1998	125,539	201,759
1999	198,461	223,321
2000	204,430	225,021
2001	269,962	231,273
2002	360,418	262,953
2003	321,205	269,721
2004	344,317	271,260

[1] Under the UK packaging regulations the amount of packaging waste recovered in the form of energy is not identified by packaging material. However, the Environment Agency estimates that about 45 per cent. of the packaging waste recovered in the form of energy was plastic packaging waste.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs from where plastic recycling schemes are being operated; and whether her Department has assisted each scheme *(a)* financially and *(b)* through the provision of advice. [35778]

Mr. Bradshaw: A recent survey commissioned by the Waste and Resources Action Programme (WRAP) showed that 73 per cent. of all UK local authorities offer some sort of plastic collection scheme. This year Defra is providing nearly £2 million under the Waste Implementation Programme to support ROTATE, WRAP'S local authority advisory service. Under ROTATE WRAP have advised several English local authorities on kerbside collection of plastics, in particular how they might add plastic to existing kerbside collection schemes. Advice has been provided to South Gloucestershire, London borough of Richmond, Telford and Wrekin, Tonbridge and Malling, Guildford, Southwark and Cheshire County along with the constituent collection authorities.

Roadside Pollution Units

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many roadside pollution monitoring units there are in each local authority in England; what pollutants they monitor; and what criteria govern their placement. [37774]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are 17 roadside sites in the National Automatic Urban and Rural Network (AURN; See Table 1), monitoring mainly oxides of nitrogen and carbon monoxide. There are a large number of roadside sites run by local authorities which are not in the AURN. Data from and site information on all the national monitoring sites are available on the National Air Quality Information Archive (www.airquality.co.uk).

Local authorities have a duty to Review and Assess air quality in their areas. This often involves monitoring of oxides of nitrogen, PM_{10} and other pollutants at roadside locations. While DEFRA is a statutory consultee for local authority reports on air quality, monitoring results are made available to the public by local authorities. DEFRA does not log the monitoring information from these assessments. A partial survey of monitoring sites in the UK was carried out in November 2003. This estimated the total number of monitoring sites in the UK at around 6–700. A large proportion of these are likely to be roadside sites.

Table 1: Pollutants monitored at roadside sites in the National Automatic Urban and Rural Network (AURN)

Site name	*Pollutants measured*	*Local Authority*
Bath Roadside	Oxides of nitrogen[1], Carbon monoxide	Bath and NE Somerset
Brentford Roadside	Oxides of nitrogen, Carbon monoxide	London Borough of Hounslow
Brighton Roadside	Oxides of nitrogen, Carbon monoxide	Brighton and Hove
Bristol OM	Oxides of nitrogen, Carbon monoxide	Bristol City Council
Bury Roadside	Oxides of nitrogen, Carbon monoxide, PM_{10}, sulphur dioxide, ozone	Bury MBC
Cambridge Roadside	Oxides of nitrogen	Cambridge City Council
Exeter Roadside	Oxides of nitrogen, Carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide, ozone	Exeter City Council
Haringey Roadside	Oxides of nitrogen, PM_{10}	London Borough of Haringey
Hove Roadside	Oxides of nitrogen, Carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide	Brighton and Hove
London A3 Roadside	Oxides of nitrogen, Carbon monoxide, PM_{10}	Kingston Upon Thames
London Bromley	Oxides of nitrogen, Carbon monoxide	London Borough of Bromley
London Cromwell Road 2	Oxides of nitrogen, Carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide	Kensington and Chelsea
Norwich Forum Roadside	Oxides of nitrogen	Norwich City Council
Oxford Centre Roadside	Oxides of nitrogen, Carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide	Oxford City Council
Southwark Roadside	Oxides of nitrogen, Carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide	London Borough of Southwark
Tower Hamlets Roadside	Oxides of nitrogen, Carbon monoxide	London Borough of Tower Hamlets
Wrexham	Oxides of nitrogen, Carbon monoxide, sulphur dioxide	Wrexham County Borough

[1] Oxides of nitrogen include nitric oxide (NO) and nitrogen dioxide (NO_2)

The criteria for defining a site as Roadside is as follows: the site must be between 1 m from the kerb of a busy road and the back of the pavement. Sites are typically within 5 m of the road with a sampling height of 2 to 3 m.

Scrapie

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many dead sheep have been collected as a result of the national survey for scrapie. [37903]

Mr. Bradshaw: So far this year, 10,505 fallen sheep aged over 18 months have been collected in the UK and submitted for testing under our national survey.

Single Farm Payment Scheme

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what percentage of digital mapping in relation to single farm payments is complete. [37240]

Jim Knight: Around 95 per cent. of the digital mapping required to support claims to the 2005 Single Payment Scheme (SPS) is complete based on the area within the Rural Land Register and the estimate of the area still awaiting digitisation. A significant proportion of the area was digitised prior to the inception of the SPS, but in excess of 130,000 mapping requests to modify or increase digitised areas have been received since September 2004.

Statutory Instruments

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what training is given to *(a)* policy officials and *(b)* lawyers in her Department responsible for drafting statutory instruments; and if she will make a statement. [33554]

Jim Knight: Statutory instruments are drafted by departmental lawyers based on instructions from policy divisions. Where SIs amend primary legislation, parliamentary counsel are consulted.

As members of the Government Legal Service (GLS), departmental lawyers receive extensive training on the preparation and drafting of statutory instruments. This consists of a combination of lectures and practical exercises run by experienced practitioners in the GLS, coupled with training given by legal advisers who advise the parliamentary scrutiny committees. In addition, senior managers in the GLS take a close interest in the quality of SIs and provide frequent feedback and on the job training to those with lead responsibility for drafting. This is an ongoing process and part of the continuing education of government legal advisers.

Sunset Clauses

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her policy is in respect of the use of sunset clauses in legislation. [33556]

Jim Knight: The appropriateness of a sunset clause for the whole or part of any proposed legislation is considered on a case by case basis. It is also addressed when a regulatory impact assessment relating to legislation is being prepared.

Timber

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether timber produced under the Australian Forest Standard scheme meets standards set by her Department for sustainability. [38655]

Mr. Morley: In November 2004 the Government commissioned its Central Point of Expertise on Timber (CPET) to examine five forest certification schemes to determine whether they provide credible assurance of legal and sustainable timber sources as defined in the model contract condition and specification used by central Government Departments. One of the schemes assessed was the Programme for the Endorsement of Forest Certification (PEFC) which sets forest management and certification requirements for national bodies, endorsed by PEFC, to adopt and apply to suit local conditions. PEFC has endorsed the Australian Forestry Standard (AFS) which means that forests and products that derive from the trees harvested in those forests that are certified as operating to the AFS can be marketed under the PEFC label.

CPET's initial assessment of the PEFC scheme was that on paper it provided credible assurance of legal harvesting but did not provide credible assurance of sustainable timber production. PEFC was judged not to have sufficient requirements for involving all relevant interest groups in the forest standard setting and forest management auditing process. This was judged to be a system failure at the international scheme level and was not influenced by actual situations at a national level. No national body was examined and there was no assessment of actual performance on the ground. PEFC has since changed its scheme requirements and been reassessed as providing a credible system, on paper, for assuring sustainable timber production as defined in Government contracts. However, the UK Government, aware that scheme changes at the international level are meaningless if not adopted nationally, gave notice that it would check to see that national PEFC bodies had implemented changes to their published requirements. CPET plans to make such checks in January 2006.

Waste Management

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the implementation of Government policy on waste management by *(a)* local authorities and *(b)* West Sussex county council. [37734]

Mr. Bradshaw: As part of the Audit Commission's role in ensuring that public money is spent economically, efficiently, and effectively on local government services, it inspects the waste and recycling services of authorities in England through the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). The assessment looks at refuse collection; street cleansing; education and enforcement; waste disposal; and, related services with an overall sub-score for waste management derived using best value inspection reports (where available), and performance indicator data.

In December 2004, the Audit Commission reviewed the waste management service of West Sussex county council and gave it a score of three out of a possible four for the way it is run.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of Tamworth borough council's response to new waste regulations which place a duty of care on householders for their household waste. [37826]

Mr. Bradshaw: Local authorities and the Environment Agency have powers to take enforcement action for breaches of the waste duty of care. It is for local authorities to develop their own local enforcement policy positions.

The Government are encouraging local authorities to actively promote legitimate waste disposal and to highlight the need for people to only use registered waste carriers. Local authorities are also being encouraged to investigate incidents of illegal waste disposal and to take action against offenders.

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many facilities burn municipal waste; and where they are located. [37622]

Mr. Bradshaw: There are currently 16 municipal waste incinerators in England, located in Bermondsey, Billingham, Birmingham, Bolton, Chineham, Coventry, Dudley, Edmonton, Grimsby, Huddersfield, Marchwood, Nottingham, Portsmouth, Sheffield, Stoke and Wolverhampton.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps the Government is taking to support local authorities in Bedfordshire in developing alternative methods of waste disposal; and if she will make a statement. [37637]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government continues to encourage all local authorities to move towards innovative methods of waste disposal which will reduce amounts of waste sent to landfill. In Bedfordshire all authorities have benefited from the award of approximately £2 million from the Government's National Waste Minimisation and Recycling Fund to invest in extending the collection of dry recyclables and garden waste. Additionally, a total of £304,000 has been awarded to the Bedfordshire authorities in 2005–06 through the Waste Performance Efficiency Grant—a figure that will be approximately doubled for 2006–07 and 2007–08.

Through Defra's Waste Implementation Programme and the Defra funded Waste and Resources Action Programme additional financial support and specialist advice has been taken up by the Bedfordshire authorities on strategic planning, communications and new technologies. It is pleasing to note that local authorities in Bedfordshire have taken full advantage of the Government support available to develop alternative methods of waste disposal.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what additional measures the Government are taking to assist growth areas to develop alternative methods of disposing of waste; and if she will make a statement. [37647]

Mr. Bradshaw: The Government continues to encourage all local authorities to move towards innovative methods of waste disposal which will reduce amounts of waste sent to landfill. In last year's Spending Review the Government announced an increase in the Environmental, Protective and Cultural Services (EPCS) Formula Spending Share block of £888 million by 2007–08 over 2004–05. Over the three-year period to 2005–06, authorities are also benefiting from a total of £294 million invested through the Waste Minimisation and Recycling Fund and its successor the Waste Performance and Efficiency Grant, will provide a further £260 million over the three years to 2007–08. Finally, through the private finance initiative (PFI), credits worth £355 million have been made available over the three years 2005–06 as an extra source of funding, with a further £535 million available in 2006–07 and 2007–08.

In growth areas, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have held regional seminars to discuss how waste arising from increasing population, particularly from construction, demolition and excavation can be properly planned for to ensure that the necessary infrastructure can be developed. The ODPM are also in discussions with the Environment Agency to carry out a study to predict quantities and types of waste that are likely to arise in the Thames Gateway region and the results from this study will be applicable to other designated growth areas.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what criteria are used when awarding local authorities permits for the disposal of annual amounts of biodegradable waste in landfill sites; and if she will make a statement. [37648]

Mr. Bradshaw: The allocation of landfill allowances for each Waste Disposal Authority has been made until 2020. The allocation process is based on the total waste arisings and amounts sent for disposal, recycling, composting or recovery that were reported to Defra by each local authority in the 2001–02 Municipal Waste Management Survey.

Allocations for the target years (2009–10, 2012–13 and 2019–20) are based on applying each Waste Disposal Authority's percentage contribution to 2001–02 Municipal Waste Management Survey (the base year) and applying a percentage reduction of Biodegradable Municipal Waste that can be sent to landfills from England in target years. The allocation process ensures that all Waste Disposal Authorities make a contribution to England's landfill reduction targets.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the facilities available in areas of major housing growth for the disposal of waste; and if she will make a statement. [37649]

Mr. Bradshaw: It is for local authorities, through the preparation of Regional Spatial Strategies and Waste Local Plans, to assess and plan for the facilities needed to deal with the waste arising in a region/area, including the growth areas.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received regarding the permissible annual amounts of biodegradable waste which can be disposed of in landfill sites by local authorities in Bedfordshire; and if she will make a statement. [37650]

Mr. Bradshaw: A consultation on the provisional allocation of landfill allowances was held in August 2004. Bedfordshire county council responded

expressing its concerns that the allocation of landfill allowances did not take into account the above-average population growth in the Bedfordshire area.

DEFRA officials will be meeting Milton Keynes council, Northamptonshire county council, Bedfordshire county council and Buckinghamshire county council, to discuss support to authorities with above-average population growth in January 2006.

Mrs. Dorries: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment the Government makes of projected increases in population and households in Bedfordshire when determining annual amounts of biodegradable waste permitted for disposal in landfill sites by local authorities; and if she will make a statement. [37675]

Mr. Bradshaw: A clear message from the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme consultation in 2003 was that all Waste Disposal Authorities wanted certainty in their allocations. It is our belief that basing the allocations on predictions of future population growth will not provide that certainty.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs whether it is her policy to implement the Waste Incineration Directive in full by 28 December; and if she will make a statement. [33694]

Mr. Bradshaw: The legislation necessary to implement the Waste Incineration Directive in full was in place by 28 December 2002. I understand that applications to the regulators (the Environment Agency or the local authority, depending on the capacity of the installation) from the operators concerned for the necessary permits are in the final stages of determination with a view to completion by 28 December 2005.

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much public money was spent on waste management and disposal in 2004–05; what proportion of gross domestic product this represents; and what changes in the cost are expected by 2010. [27879]

Mr. Bradshaw: In England approximately £47.5 million was spent directly by Defra and DTI in 2004–05.

In addition local authority revenue expenditure on waste management amounted to some £2.2 billion. The figures for capital expenditure for 2004–05 are not yet available.

Figures for English GDP are not separately published. The closest equivalent is Gross Value Added (GVA) which for 2003 (the most recent year for which figures were available) was some £815 billion.

An analysis of future waste-related costs will take place as a part of the Waste Strategy Review and the Comprehensive Spending Review.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of Gravesham council's response to new waste regulations which place a duty of care on householders for their household waste. [36950]

Mr. Bradshaw: Local authorities and the Environment Agency have powers to take enforcement action for breaches of the waste duty of care. It is for local authorities to develop their own local enforcement policy positions.

Local authorities, including Gravesham, have been actively encouraging residents to use registered waste carriers, as well as following up and investigating illegal waste disposal.

Yoghurt

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what discussions she has had with her EU counterparts on the EU proposals relating to the classification of yoghurt. [37267]

Caroline Flint: I have been asked to reply.

I am advised by the Food Standards Agency that in 2003 there was some initial interest at European level in setting European Commission standards for the composition and labelling of yogurt. However, no formal proposals for legislation have been made by the European Commission and there has been no further progress on this initiative since then.

PRIME MINISTER

Catering Facilities

Mr. Amess: To ask the Prime Minister what the cost was of *(a)* the in-house canteen and *(b)* other catering services provided by his Office in 2004. [35972]

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Prime Minister what the total value is of *(a)* catering and *(b)* entertainment contracts let by his Office; and what value of such contracts has been let in each nation and region of the UK, including London. [37459]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Members to the answer given by my noble Friend Lord Bassam of Brighton to the noble Lord Hanningfield on 21 July 2005, *Official Report*, column WA261. In addition, the cost of other catering services provided by my office in 2004–05 was £48,680. This includes associated overheads, including staffing. Beverages and light refreshments were provided for a broad spectrum of official events, including: Cabinet meetings, meetings with foreign Governments, and a wide range of external guests and visitors from the UK and overseas.

The in-house cafe in my office is self-financing.

Communications Interception

Norman Baker: To ask the Prime Minister whether it is his policy that no authorisation will be given for the interception of communications in respect of *(a)* hon. Members and *(b)* Members of the House of Lords; and if he will make a statement. [38741]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the written ministerial statement I made on 15 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 173WS.

Congressional Medal of Honor

Mr. Amess: To ask the Prime Minister when he expects to collect his Congressional Medal of Honor. [38418]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave the hon. Member for Louth and Horncastle (Sir Peter Tapsell) at Prime Minister's Questions on 14 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1301–02.

Harlow North Sustainability Symposia

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the representatives of his Office who attended the Harlow North Sustainability Symposia on 6 June. [37449]

The Prime Minister: As far as I am aware no one from my Office attended the Harlow North Sustainability Symposia on 6 June.

Ministerial Visit

Mr. Hands: To ask the Prime Minister if he will accompany the hon. Member for Hammersmith and Fulham on a visit to that constituency via the London Underground to observe changes in the levels of overcrowding since his last tube journey in 2000. [38625]

The Prime Minister: I have no current plans to do so.

The London Underground is the responsibility of Transport for London. Transport for London provides regular performance reports on the London Underground. These are available on their website (www.tfl.gov.uk).

Public Appointments

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Prime Minister if he will list the former hon. Members who left Parliament in 2005 who have since been appointed to public bodies by his Office, broken down by party; and who was responsible for making each appointment. [36678]

The Prime Minister: None. As Prime Minister I have responsibility for appointments to a number of public bodies sponsored by Government Departments. Details of former hon. Members who have been appointed to such positions have been addressed in each Department's response to the hon. Member.

Secondments

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Prime Minister how many secondees there have been to his Office from consultancy firms, including the Big Four accountancy firms, in each of the last three years; and what areas of the Department they have worked in. [37357]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my office forms part of the Cabinet Office. I have therefore asked my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Murphy) to reply. A copy of the reply will be placed in the Library of the House.

Spy Ring (Stormont)

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Prime Minister (1) when he was consulted about the decision to discontinue the case against those charged with running a spy ring at Stormont in 2002; [38723]

(2) what representations he has received on those charged with running a spy ring at Stormont in 2002 prior to the announcement of the case's discontinuance being made. [38724]

The Prime Minister: I refer the hon. Member to the answers I gave at Prime Minister's Questions on 14 December 2005.

Taxis

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Prime Minister how much has been spent by his Office on taxi travel in the 2005–06 financial year; and what proportion of such travel was undertaken in each nation and region of the UK, including London. [37460]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my Office forms part of the Cabinet Office. I refer the hon. Member to the letter from my right hon. Friend the then Duchy of Lancaster (John Hutton) to the hon. Member for Monmouth (David T.C. Davies), a copy of which is available in the Library of the House. Figures for financial year 2005–06 are not yet available.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Academies

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average time taken by her Department has been between receipt of a formal expression of interest for an academy and a decision being taken. [38133]

Jacqui Smith: The average time taken from final expression of interest to ministerial decision is about two months, subject to internal procedures.

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills on what date she received from Southwark council the expression of interest for a federated academy in East Dulwich; when she expects to make a decision on this; and if she will make a statement. [38134]

Jacqui Smith: The expression of interest was received on 8 July 2005. We are currently considering the proposals and hope to make a decision shortly.

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions have taken place between the city of Newcastle upon Tyne, the local Learning and Skills Council and Newcastle college about a second city academy in Newcastle for the 11 to 16 years age group. [38290]

Jacqui Smith: Discussions between Newcastle council, the local LSC and Newcastle college are a matter for them and I am not party to that information.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills on what *(a)* research and *(b)* exemplar the proposals to create (i) academy and (ii) trust schools were based; and what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of such schools. [36290]

Jacqui Smith: The independent five-year evaluation of the Academies Programme undertaken by PricewaterhouseCoopers shows that academies are

overwhelmingly popular with both parents and pupils, and that academies have made a significant difference to the teaching and learning culture since the predecessor schools. The evaluation has also found clear evidence that sponsors are having a positive impact on academies by both establishing a positive vision and ethos for the new academies, and also by providing their expertise.

Improvements in GCSE results are already in evidence, despite many pupils only having attended their academy for a few terms. Of the 14 academies open at the time of the last round of GCSE examinations, all but two showed an increase in the proportion of students achieving five grades A* to C relative to their predecessor schools, and the average annual increase in the number of students gaining five grades A* to C across all academies is 6 per cent. a year. Several academies have shown remarkable improvements in their GCSE results since opening. The City Academy in Bristol, for example, has shown an increase of 25 per cent. in the number of pupils achieving five grades A* to C in just two years. Four other academies have shown increases of greater than 20 per cent. since opening.

The Government's proposals to establish trust schools represent an extension of the freedom to innovate to schools outside those areas currently being targeted by the academies programme. The creation of trust schools will assist in offering more and better choice and diversity in the schools system for parents and pupils. Trust schools will build on the long tradition of voluntary schools which are backed by trusts, and also on the successful experience of specialist schools and academies in working with sponsors from the voluntary, not-for-profit and private sectors. The success of specialist schools in their value-added performance is attested by research by Professor David Jesson, most recently his study: 'Educational outcomes and value added by specialist schools, 2004'.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what criteria are used for the geographical distribution of academies; what part her Department plays in this; on what basis, and by whom, the schools to be designated as academies are chosen; whether local authorities have any veto on the establishment of an academy; and how many of the academies are in areas where a better schools building programme has been authorised. [36362]

Jacqui Smith: Academies are situated in areas of deprivation and/or educational need. The main criteria for consideration of an Academy is for it to be sited in an area of historically weak educational performance and that the local authority area concerned is listed in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister statistics on deprivation. Other factors such as poor ratings by OFSTED and low admission numbers for predecessor schools are sometimes considered, but it is the academic under-achievement and deprivation that are of primary importance. Some Academies are being established in areas not considered as deprived overall but with particular enclaves of deprivation or low attainment.

Local authorities have supported all Academy proposals to date through signing where appropriate the Expression of Interest (EOI) that formally establishes the project.

DfES is responsible for: identifying potential Academy proposals; working with the responsible stakeholders to produce an EOI for establishing an Academy; assessing the viability of the proposal once an EOI has been received including consulting with stakeholders in the local area; co-ordinating the building process for the Academy, setting up the Trust that will govern the Academy; working with the Trust and the Sponsor to set up the educational vision and ethos of the school; organising for the Funding Agreement to be signed between the Secretary of State and the Trust to govern the Academy.

All of the 27 open Academies are in areas where the Building Schools for the Future programme is running. A breakdown of which local authority is in which wave of the BSF programme can be found at http://www.bsf.gov.uk/documents/ in the document "Local Authority project by wave".

Administrative Savings

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what administrative savings have been made by her Department in each of the last eight years. [34938]

Bill Rammell: I refer the right hon. Member to the information on gross and net controlled administration costs underspends for Whitehall Departments which is published in the Public Expenditure Outturn White Papers for the relevant years. These are available in the Library of the House.

Efficiency gains are being made as part of the Spending Review 2004 efficiency programme, as set out in the DfES Efficiency Technical Notes which are available on the Department's website.

After-school Care (Disabled Children)

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding was allocated to the provision of after-school care for children with disabilities in *(a)* Staffordshire and *(b)* Tamworth constituency in each year since 1997; and what future funding has been allocated. [37823]

Maria Eagle: We are making funding available to all local authorities and schools up to 2008 to support them in setting up and embedding extended services in mainstream and special schools. The Government does not specify how much of this funding should be spent on disabled children. It will be for individual local authorities, in discussion with all schools in their area, to take a strategic approach to developing access to after school care through schools.

The Extended Schools prospectus issued in June 2005 makes it clear that children with disabilities or special educational needs must be able to access all new services, and schools have a responsibility to ensure this happens. The needs of children in particular schools will vary. Schools will need to work closely with parents to ensure that services are shaped around the needs of children and the wider community.

Annual Parents Meeting

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills for what reasons her Department decided to remove the obligation on governing bodies to hold an annual parents' meeting. [37659]

Jacqui Smith: The purpose of the annual parents' meeting was to provide an opportunity for a discussion of the manner in which the school had been conducted, and of any other matters relating to the school raised by the parents. Many meetings were very poorly attended and, despite adopting various innovative strategies to improve turnout, it still proved difficult, in many schools, to generate enthusiasm for attending the meetings. The new school profile will give parents a broader and deeper understanding of what a school is doing. The removal of the requirement to hold an annual parents' meeting allows governors to manage their own relationship and communications with parents, to better reflect local circumstances, this may include choosing to hold a meeting.

Removing the requirement to hold an annual parents' meeting also reduced the burden of legislative requirements on school governing bodies, granting greater freedom for school leadership to concentrate on continued improvements in performance.

Better Regulation Task Force

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what progress she has made on implementing the recommendations of the Better Regulation Task Force following its report of February 2004. [37978]

Maria Eagle *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* Guidance has been given to local authorities that directors of Children's Services should have functions relating to child employment as part of their remit, as recommended by the Task Force. We are continuing to consider whether and to what extent the Task Force's other specific proposals can contribute to the key outcomes which we want to see for all children, as described in our Green Paper "Every Child Matters". In doing so, we will continue to be mindful of the need not to impose unnecessary burdens on employers or local authorities.

Chronic Back Pain

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps are being taken in her Department to help civil servants with chronic back pain. [38871]

Maria Eagle: My Department takes the health and welfare of all its employees very seriously and has in place a system of ergonomic assessment and subsequent adjustments to ensure that individuals, including those with chronic back pain, get the adjustments they need to work effectively within the Department.

Adjustments may involve adaptation to IT equipment or software, office furniture or workstation and in some cases adjustments to work objectives and working patterns may be agreed.

My Department contracts with an occupational health provider for medical advice and occupational health advisers visit all my Department's sites on a regular basis to support managers when dealing with staff with health issues and to help identify the most effective intervention in complex workplace ergonomic issues. Staff are reminded frequently of the need for good posture and use of repetitive strain injury guard software.

Class Sizes

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research she has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated into the cost of reducing primary school class sizes to 20 pupils. [37635]

Jacqui Smith: We have not commissioned any research of this type.

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research she has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated into the cost of reducing secondary school class sizes to (i) 15 and (ii) 12 pupils. [37646]

Jacqui Smith: We have not commissioned any research of this type.

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average class size was in *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools in Oxford, East in each year since 2001. [36852]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is shown in the table.

Maintained primary and secondary schools[1]: average class size of one teacher classes[2] Position as at January each year

	Maintained primary	*Maintained secondary*
2001	25.6	23.9
2002	24.3	23.4
2003	24.0	22.3
2004	26.0	21.3
2005	26.8	20.5

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Classes taught during a single selected period in each school on the day of the Census in January.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

Connexions

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what proportion of Connexions advisers have received disability awareness training. [37350]

Maria Eagle: All Connexions personal advisers are trained in using appropriate assessment frameworks for working with young people. This training includes working with young people with learning disabilities.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many specialist advisers for disabled people are employed by Connexions. [37351]

Maria Eagle: Connexions is a universal service and has a work force equipped to respond to the full spectrum of client needs. Some personal advisers

specialise in work with young people with learning disabilities, but we do not collect data about personal advisers' individual specialisms.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what discussions she has had with Connexions on their ability to meet the needs of disabled people in the provision of their services. [37352]

Maria Eagle: Government Offices are responsible for ensuring that quality and continuity of Connexions services is maintained. Government Offices agree each Connexions Partnership's plans for meeting the needs of young people in their area. This includes providing assessments relating to Section 140 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000 and assisting young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities to obtain appropriate education, employment or training. Connexions Partnerships have a duty to carry out their responsibilities under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and the Department has issued guidance to assist them in meeting their obligations.

Departmental Contracts

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the total value is of *(a)* catering and *(b)* entertainment contracts let by her Department; and what value of such contracts has been let in each nation and region of the United Kingdom, including London. [37463]

Bill Rammell: The Department for Education and Skills total value of *(a)* catering: equals an annual subsidy of £51,740 *(b)* entertainment contracts: equals an expenditure of £478,029 on hospitality covering internal working meetings and lunches where external visitors or staff from other sites attend.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the *(a)* salary bill was and *(b)* administrative costs were for her Department in (i) each region and (ii) London in 2004–05. [35867]

Bill Rammell: The administration budgets regime overseen by the Treasury relates to Whitehall Departments only. How administration costs are controlled in the devolved Administrations is a matter for them. We do not monitor regional or central London administration costs separately.

I refer you to the most recent Public Expenditure Outturn White Paper (Cm 6639) for provisional 2004–05 departmental administration costs outturn (£250 million) and the DfES Departmental Report (Cm 6522) which contains estimated 2004–05 pay bill outturn (£164 million).

Departmental Estate

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much was paid by her Department in 2004–05 in rent for properties in *(a)* total, *(b)* each region and *(c)* London. [35932]

Maria Eagle: Details of how much was paid by the Department for Education and Skills in 2004–05 in rent for properties in *(a)* total, *(b)* each (i) region and (ii) nation of the UK and *(c)* London is in the following table.

Rent paid by DfES in 2004–05

£

Region	*Property*	*Annual rent*	*Annual VAT*	*Annual total*
London	Sanctuary Buildings	8,671,221	Nil	8,671,221
	Caxton House	8,174,500	1,430,538	9,605,038
	Westminster Suite	200,000	Nil	200,000
	Skyline House	322,997	56,525	379,522
	Bolton Street	3,765,000	Nil	3,765,000
	200 Great Dover Street	476,400	83,377	559,777
	12 Grosvenor Crescent	440,000	77,000	517,000
Region total		22,050,118	1,647,440	23,697,558
Yorkshire and the Humber	Maltravers Road Sheffield	21,000	3,675	24,675
	Moorgate House Rotherham	124,675	Nil	124,675
	Acorn Business Park Grimsby	15,500	2,712	18,212
	Albion Wharf York	280,724	49,127	329,851
	Fountain Hall Bradford	75,201	13,160	88,361
Region total		517,100	68,674	585,774
North West	Bayley House Bolton	62,300	10,902	73,202
	Atlas House Bolton	29,000	5,075	34,075
Region total		91,300	15,977	107,277
South East	Medway Annexe Sittingbourne	121,000	21,175	142,175
	Manorgate House Kingston upon Thames	175,000	30,625	205,625
Region total		296,000	51,800	347,800
East of England	Wesley House Luton	94,500	Nil	94,500
	Ipswich Skillcentre	49,360	8,638	57,998
	Old Market Hall Wolverton	37,500	6,562	44,062
Region Total		181,360	15,200	196,560

Rent paid by DfES in 2004–05

£

Region	*Property*	*Annual rent*	*Annual VAT*	*Annual total*
West Midlands	Brandon Court Coventry	128,600	22,505	151,105
	The Oaks Redditch	62,250	10,894	73,144
	Enterprise House Wolverhampton	89,750	15,933	105,683
	Wolverhampton Skillcentre	204,000	35,700	239,700
Region Total		484,600	85,032	569,632
Total for England		23,620,478	1,884,123	25,504,601

Departmental Projects

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what *(a)* building and *(b)* refurbishment projects are planned by her Department in (i) 2005–06 and (ii) 2006–07; and what the expected costs are of each project. [37380]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Education and Skills has *(a)* no building *(b)* no refurbishment projects planned in (i) 2005–06 and (ii) 2006–07.

Departmental Property

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what *(a)* land and *(b)* property her Department owns in Southend West constituency. [36188]

Maria Eagle: The Department for Education and Skills owns *(a)* no land and *(b)* no property in Southend West constituency.

Departmental Research

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research projects commissioned by her Department are being undertaken; and what the publication arrangements are in each case. [32993]

Bill Rammell: 125 DfES commissioned research projects are currently being undertaken, including projects conducted by other Government Departments and organisations to which the DfES contributes. DfES publishes findings from the research it commissions in line with the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act, the aim being to do so within 12 weeks of the final project completion date as stated on our website. I have outlined the currently planned arrangements for all these projects.

Departmental Staff

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many staff are employed by her Department in each region of England; and if she will make a statement. [35896]

Maria Eagle: The figures requested are published in Civil Service Statistics. Table D covers permanent staff numbers (FTE basis) in each department and agency. Civil Service Statistics are available in the Library and at the following address on the Cabinet Office Statistics website:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_of_the_civil_service/statistics/civil_service_statistics/index.asp

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 542W, on departmental staff, how many temporary staff have been employed for each statutory time limit in each year since 2001; and how many of the posts they filled were subsequently filled by *(a)* temporary staff and *(b)* temporary staff who had been employed for the statutory time period allowed. [36221]

Maria Eagle: The numbers of temporary staff employed for a period of 12 months in the complete calendar years in question are:

	Number
2001	3
2002	0
2003	8
2004	1

The number of posts subsequently filled by temporary staff within the Department and temporary staff who had been employed for the statutory time period allowed, is not collected centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 542W, what the *(a)* lowest cost per person, *(b)* highest cost per person, *(c)* median cost per person and *(d)* average cost per person was of employing (i) part-time, (ii) jobshare and (iii) full-time staff; and how many people were employed in each category in each of the last three years. [36222]

Maria Eagle: The cost information for *(a)* the lowest cost per person, *(b)* the highest cost per person, *(c)* the median cost per person and *(d)* the average cost per person was of employing (i) part-time, (ii) jobshare and (iii) full-time staff could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The numbers of people employed part time and full time in each of the last three years are in the following table.

Headcount

1 October	*Part time*	*Full time*
2005	580	3,467
2004	631	3,840
2003	654	4,220

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many agency staff were employed by her Department in each of the last three financial years; in which part of the Department they

were employed; on which projects they worked; what the cost was to the Department of employing them; and from which budget the funding came. [37367]

Maria Eagle: Statistics for temporary agency staff are recorded by days worked and the information for each of the last three financial years are detailed in the following table:

Calendar year	*Days worked*
2002	31,229
2003	27,087
2004	16,940

Agency staff are deployed across all directorates within the Department to meet business need.

Information on the projects that seconded staff have worked are not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Costs to my Department for employing agency staff for the last three financial years are set out in the following table. Costs are borne from GAE budgets.

Financial year	*Agency spend (£)*
April 2002/March 2003	2,688,149.33
April 2003/March 2004	1,621,232.81
April 2004/March 2005	1,498,419.95

Departmental Website

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much the website www.teachernet.gov.uk has cost her Department since it was set up. [38016]

Bill Rammell: The ongoing annual cost to host the TeacherNet website (www.teachernet.gov.uk) is £360,000.

This website is shortly to be integrated with other online services and migrated onto a new technical infrastructure which will deliver better value for money.

Disabled People

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding was allocated to the provision of after-school care for children with disabilities in *(a)* West Yorkshire, *(b)* the Wakefield district and *(c)* Normanton constituency in each year since 1997; and what future funding has been allocated. [36747]

Maria Eagle: We are making funding available to all local authorities and schools up to 2008 to support them in setting up and embedding extended services in mainstream and special schools. The Government does not specify how much of this funding should be spent on disabled children. It will be for individual local authorities, in discussion with all schools in their area, to take a strategic approach to developing access to after school care through schools.

The Extended Schools prospectus issued in June 2005 makes it clear that children with disabilities or special educational needs must be able to access all new services, and, schools have a responsibility to ensure that this happens. The needs of children in particular schools will vary. Schools will need to work closely with parents to ensure that services are shaped around the needs of children and the wider community.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the initial activity undertaken by her Department in response to those recommendations in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit Report Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People where lead responsibility was assigned to all Government Departments. [37066]

Maria Eagle: The Office for Disability Issues (ODI) will report annually to the Prime Minister on cross-Government progress in implementing the Strategy Unit report, "Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People". The first report is due to be published by summer 2006. A central unit in my Department is currently drawing together activities in response to the recommendations and will be liaising with the Department for Work and Pensions in drawing up the report, which will also include an assessment of the initial activity undertaken by Government Departments to fulfil the responsibilities they have outside of the ODI remit.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what mechanisms she has identified to enable local authorities to switch spending on services for families with disabled children from later intervention to early intervention; and if she will make a statement. [37346]

Maria Eagle: Early intervention is central to our policies on services for families with disabled children including the Childcare Strategy, the National Service Framework and Every Child Matters. These documents are already in the public domain.

Through the implementation of the 10-year childcare strategy, we have prioritised services to disabled children and their families. In particular, the early support programme sets out to improve the delivery of services for disabled children aged 0–3 years and their families. The early support programme was developed with the full involvement of parents and professionals and has produced resource materials demonstrating multi-agency work and effective practice. The work has been piloted with 45 pathfinder authorities and the approach and principles can be adopted by every local authority.

The National Service Framework (NSF) for Children, Young People and Maternity Services sets national standards for the first time for children's health and social care (and their interface with education) which promote high quality, child-centred services and personalised care that meets the needs of children, young people and their families. Standard one of the framework is about promoting health and well-being, identifying needs and intervening early. It is being delivered by a range of practitioners including GPs, midwives, health visitors, dentists, early years workers, school nurses and teachers working together. It addresses the needs of children from pre-conception to adulthood and integrates pre-school and school aged health promotion and assessment.

Within the Every Child Matters agenda, a key driver for early intervention at local level is effective multi-agency work through children's trust arrangements. This includes better information sharing, enhanced coordination at the front line around the needs of the users, and the more flexible use of budgets. Supporting this transition to earlier intervention will be an important theme in the forthcoming comprehensive spending review.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will adopt a key performance indicator for provision by education services of equipment services for disabled people; and if she will make a statement. [37347]

Maria Eagle: I have established mechanisms for agencies to work together to provide equipment services for disabled children through the National Service Framework, Every Child Matters and Children's Trusts. These mechanisms allow education services, local authorities and health services to work together to provide equipment services for disabled children that meet local needs. Specifying a key performance indicator that just looks at provision by education services would therefore not capture the full picture of overall provision of equipment to disabled people.

Early Retirement

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many of her Department's employees have taken early retirement in each year since 1997. [34037]

Maria Eagle: The number of employees who have taken early retirement in each financial year since 1997 are shown in the table.

Financial year (April to March)	*Number of employees*
1997–98	101
1998–99	51
1999–2000	50
2000–01	61
2001–02	84
2002–03	57
2003–04	28
2004–05	325

Education Maintenance Allowance

Edward Miliband: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the cost is of the education maintenance allowance scheme in 2005–06; and what estimate she has made of the cost if the lower age limit were abolished. [35602]

Maria Eagle: The current budget for education maintenance allowance (EMA) payments in the financial year 2005–06 is £403 million. However EMA is a demand led programme which is funded through Annually Managed Expenditure by HM Treasury so final provision may be different.

Although we are able to estimate the percentage of 16–18 year olds eligible for EMA on income grounds, we do not have household income for young people under the age of 16—specifically those who have completed GCSEs a year or more early. Therefore, we are unable to estimate the cost of EMA if the lower age limit was abolished.

Education Model (Sweden)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what account she took of the Swedish education model when preparing the proposals in the White Paper Higher Standards, Better Schools for All. [37781]

Jacqui Smith: The proposals in the Schools White Paper, "Higher Standards better schools for All: More Choice for Parents and Pupils" are designed to meet the needs of schools In England. The proposals take into account developments since 1997, building on existing programmes such as the special schools and new approaches to leadership, federation and collaboration.

There are significant differences between the Swedish model and the proposals for trust schools set out in the White Paper. Trust will not be able to make a profit and there will be no "right to supply" for promoters wishing to set up a new school.

Educational Qualifications (Coventry, South)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of working age people in Coventry, South hold a qualification at degree level or equivalent or above. [37887]

Bill Rammell: From the 2004/05 Annual Local Labour Force Survey, the percentage of working age people in Coventry, South that hold a qualification at degree level or equivalent or above is 30.5 per cent. (18,000 people). This compares with 23.0 per cent. (734,000 people) in the West Midlands and 26.1 per cent. (7,948,000 people) in England.

Family Fund Trust

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she last reviewed the remit of the Family Fund Trust; and if she will make a statement. [37349]

Maria Eagle: Following open competition, the Department commissioned PricewaterhouseCoopers to carry out a triennial review of the Family Fund in April 2005.

The review considered the continuing need for the Family Fund; the future role of the Family Fund following devolution; the Fund's aims, objectives and priorities; the organisational management of the Fund; the financial management of the Fund; and the relationships of the Fund to the UK funding Government Departments.

The Department has discussed the findings of the review with the chair of trustees and chief executive of the Family Fund and with officials in the Governments of Wales, Northern Ireland and Scotland. The recommendations are being considered alongside recommendations in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit report which relate to improving the life chances of disabled children.

Foster Carers (Abuse Allegations)

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what guidance she *(a)* has issued and *(b)* plans to issue to (i) local authorities and (ii) other agencies on dealing with allegations of abuse against foster carers. [37328]

Maria Eagle: The Government takes the issue of allegations of abuse against all people working with children very seriously. Encouraging all organisations to have good systems and clear guidance in place forms a vital part of establishing safe environments for children and young people. Guidance about managing cases of allegations of abuse against all people who work with children will be set out in Chapter 4 and Appendix 4 of "Working Together to Safeguard Children" which we will publish early next year.

In addition, we are currently funding the development of materials aimed at highlighting some of the specific issues around allegations against foster carers. These include an information leaflet to inform foster carers and others about the process for handling allegations, as well as training materials which are designed for use at the pre-and post-approval stages of foster carer training.

Free School Meals

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many pupils in *(a)* infant, *(b)* primary and *(c)* secondary schools in Dartford constituency (i) are eligible for and (ii) receive free school meals. [36718]

Jacqui Smith: The available information is shown in the table.

Maintained primary and secondary schools[1]: school meal arrangements[2]
January 2005
Dartford parliamentary constituency

	Number on roll	*Number of pupils taking free school meals[3]*	*Percentage taking free school meals*	*Number of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals*	*Percentage known to be eligible for free school meals*
Maintained primary	8,972	730	8.1	869	9.7
Maintained secondary	7,032	332	4.7	481	6.8

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Includes solely and dually registered pupils and boarding pupils.
[4] Based upon school level numbers of pupils who had a free school meal on 20 January 2005.
Source:
Annual Schools Census

Further Education (Funding)

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many further education colleges are receiving no funding for some of their students owing to the threshold for these colleges having already been met. [38292]

Bill Rammell: My Department allocates funds for further education (FE) colleges to the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) which is the planning and funding body for post-16 education and training in England. For FE the LSC distributes funds regionally and local offices allocate funds to providers based on locally agreed development plans. I can confirm that the LSC will fund these plans. This guarantee that college plans will be funded has been widely welcomed by the sector as ensuring stability and provides confidence that colleges can make commitments for the year based on assured funding levels. This guarantee means that those colleges recruiting above their agreed plans cannot expect to receive additional funding in the current year over and above the levels they have agreed with the LSC.

Information on the number of students completing courses in the academic year is not available until after the end of that year. Consequently where colleges have delivered higher volumes in priority areas we would expect this to be reflected in their plans for the following year.

Head Teachers

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary schools and *(b)* secondary schools were without a permanent head teacher for any period in the past 12 months. [38146]

Jacqui Smith: Information is not collected on the number of schools that were without a permanent head at any time in a 12 month period.

GCSEs

Mary Creagh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the 50 schools with the lowest average GCSE scores; and which of these have received support from the London Challenge New Views programme. [38001]

Jacqui Smith: School level figures for 2005 are not available until the School and College Achievement and Attainment Tables are published in January 2006. The lowest 50 maintained mainstream schools by average uncapped point scores at GCSE and equivalent in 2004 are given in the following table. Hayes Manor (Hillingdon) and Mitcham Vale (Merton) schools have had the opportunity to benefit from the London Challenge New Views programme and are in italics in the table.

Lowest 50 maintained mainstream schools by average uncapped GCSE point score[1,2] in 2004

Institution[3]	*Local authority*	*Number of 15-year-old pupils in reporting school year*	*Average uncapped point score*
Manchester Academy	Manchester	119	125.2
Thamesbridge College	Reading	82	136.1
Rushall Community College	Walsall	105	143.1
New College Leicester	Leicester	342	150.4
East Brighton College of Media Arts	Brighton and Hove	111	151.2
Montgomery School	Kent	54	161.1
William Sharp School	Nottingham	149	164.5
The College High School	Birmingham	217	166.3
The Ridings School	Calderdale	155	167.5
The River Leen School	Nottingham	136	171.6
Endeavour High School	Kingston Upon Hull	247	173.5
Withywood Community School	Bristol, City of	183	176.4
The Ramsgate School	Kent	123	179.4
Kaskenmoor School	Oldham	137	180.5
Elliott Durham School	Nottingham	97	181.6
The Gateway Community College	Thurrock	238	187.0
Isaac Newton School	Kingston Upon Hull	125	188.1
The International School and Community College, East Birmingham	Birmingham	238	188.1
Henry Mellish Comprehensive School	Nottingham	137	188.8
Sir Henry Cooper School	Kingston Upon Hull	174	189.2
Langleywood School	Slough	138	191.7
Agnes Stewart Church of England	Leeds	120	192.0
Campion Catholic High School	Liverpool	109	192.1
The Thorpe Bay School	Southend-on-Sea	127	192.6
Ribbleton Hall High School	Lancashire	103	193.1
Parklands High School	Manchester	148	193.1
Belle Vue Boys' School	Bradford	79	193.6
The Hayes Manor School	Hillingdon	113	193.9
Kingswood High School	Kingston Upon Hull	220	194.3
Halton High School	Halton	172	194.9
Corby Community College	Northamptonshire	142	195.1
Unity City Academy	Middlesbrough	241	195.4
Kings Norton High School	Birmingham	122	195.7
Mitcham Vale School	Merton	211	195.9
Queen's Park Technology College	Blackburn with Darwen	131	197.2
Birkdale High School	Kirklees	98	197.7
The Newark High School	Nottinghamshire	128	198.7
Barstable School	Essex	170	199.2
South Halifax High School	Calderdale	86	201.6
Fazakerley High School	Liverpool	127	201.8
City of Leeds School	Leeds	70	201.9
St. Benedict's College	Liverpool	137	202.4
Woodway Park School and Community College	Coventry	114	203.1
John Smeaton Community High School	Leeds	276	204.3
Buttershaw High School	Bradford	283	205.4
Fairham Community College	Nottingham	129	205.7
The Alfred Barrow School	Cumbria	110	206.5
Riverside Community College	Leicester	174	207.0
Central Technology College[4]	Gloucestershire	92	207.6
Hengrove Community Arts College[4]	Bristol, City of	215	207.6

[1] Average uncapped point score for pupils aged 15 at the beginning of the academic year (i.e. 31 st of August).
[2] Figures for 2004 include GCSEs and other approved qualifications.
[3] These figures include all maintained mainstream schools published in the Achievement and Attainment Tables with 30 or more pupils.
[4] Central Technology College and Hengrove Community Arts College had the same average points score and both are therefore included in the table.

Higher Education

Edward Miliband: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of the relevant cohort in *(a)* Doncaster North, *(b)* Yorkshire and *(c)* England entered higher education in each year since 1995. [35601]

Bill Rammell: The latest available figures on participation by constituency and region were published by the Higher Education Funding Council for England in January in "Young Participation in England", which is available from their website at: http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2005/05_03/ This shows participation rates for constituencies and region for the years 1997 to 2000, and these are shown in the table.

Young participation rate (YPR (A))

Percentage

	Year cohort aged 18 in:			
	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*
Doncaster North[1]	14	15	14	13
Yorkshire and Humberside	25.6	24.6	25.2	25
England	29.2	28.8	29.2	29.9

[1] Figures for constituencies are reported to the nearest whole number.

Source:

Higher Education Funding Council for England.

The Department uses the higher education initial participation rate (HEIPR) to assess progress on increasing first-time participation of English students aged 18–30 in higher education towards 50 per cent: the latest provisional figure for 2003–04 is 43 per cent. The HEIPR is not calculated at constituency level.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research the Department has *(a)* undertaken and *(b)* commissioned on how to improve the stay-on rate in rural areas as part of the Aimhigher Strategy for Higher Education. [37894]

Bill Rammell: Aimhigher is subject to a full and detailed evaluation strategy, using a range of analytical techniques to assess the effectiveness of the programme. This includes surveying Aimhigher partnerships, to look at policy and practice at a local level. These partnerships are selected to be representative of Aimhigher partnerships nationally, and so include rural areas.

So far, the evaluation has not uncovered any issues relating to the effectiveness and operation of Aimhigher in rural areas as distinct from other localities. However, the design of the Aimhigher programme, with a focus on local delivery and priority setting, would allow partnerships to tailor their range of activities to suit local needs.

As part of the ongoing evaluation strategy, the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE), who jointly manage the evaluation, will be publishing two research reports in the new year which may shed some further light on this question:

(i) Findings from four area studies, including one rural area; and

(ii) Findings from a survey of providers, which may include comments on rural issues.

Incentive Packages

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the value is of *(a)* pay supplements, *(b)* bonuses and *(c)* other incentive packages that are payable in her Department on the basis of geographic location; how many people are in receipt of each payment; and what the total cost to her Department of each payment was in 2004–05. [35898]

Maria Eagle: My Department does not have *(a)* pay supplements, *(b)* bonuses and *(c)* other incentive packages that are payable on the basis of geographic location.

Below the Senior Civil Service, it has higher pay bands for staff working in London and lower pay bands for staff working elsewhere, with pay band differentials ranging from 6 per cent. for senior staff to 23 per cent. for junior staff.

Independent Schools (Trust Status)

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether payment will be made for school buildings and assets of independent schools that wish to become trust schools; and from what source any such payments would be funded under the arrangements proposed in the Schools White Paper. [37660]

Jacqui Smith: No payment will be made for existing school buildings and assets of independent schools that wish to become trust schools. When an independent school enters the state sector the ownership of the school does not change. A trust is established under Charity Law, or the existing trust is amended, to hold the site and buildings for the purpose of the maintained school for as long as it remains open.

Media Monitoring

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much her Department has spent on media monitoring activities in each of the last eight financial years. [35636]

Maria Eagle: The following table gives spend, by year, for media monitoring activities.

	Amount (£ million)
2000/01	0.2
2001/02	0.1
2002/03	0.2
2003/04	0.2
2004/05	0.2
2005/06 (year to date)	0.2

It would only be possible to provide earlier details of expenditure on media monitoring activities, at disproportionate cost.

New Offences

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what new offences have been created by legislation introduced by her Department since May 2003; and if she will make a statement. [36192]

Jacqui Smith: Three new offences have been created in legislation introduced by this Department since May 2003 and powers for the Secretary of State to create a further three in subordinate legislation have also been passed by Parliament in this period.

Two new offences are found in the Education Act 2005, sections 109 and 111.

Both these offences relate to unauthorised disclosure of information. The Education Act 2005 introduced provisions to allow tax and social security information to be shared for the purpose of deciding on or checking eligibility for education maintenance allowances and

free school meals. Provision is then made for unauthorised disclosure of such information to be an offence.

Four new offences are found in the Children Act 2004, sections 45 and 63.

Section 45 of the Children Act 2004 gives the Secretary of State the power to set up through regulations a scheme for the registration of private foster carers and provides that the regulations may make provision which creates a number of offences. Section 45(3) says that regulations may provide that it is an offence for any person to knowingly make a statement which is false or misleading in a material particular in an application for registration as a private foster carer in accordance with the regulations.

Section 45(11) provides that the regulations may make it an offence for a person registered under those regulations without reasonable excuse to contravene or otherwise fail to comply with any requirement imposed on him in the regulations.

Section 45(12) provides that regulations may make it an offence for a person to foster a child privately while disqualified from being registered, unless certain exceptions apply.

No regulations have yet been made under section 45.

Section 63 of the Children Act 2004 enables the Inland Revenue to share tax credit, child benefit or guardian's allowance information (except where it relates to a person's income) with local authorities (or, in Northern Ireland, Health and Social Services Boards) for the purposes of inquiries and investigations relating to the welfare of a child; and makes it an offence for a staff member of an authority to disclose the information unless the disclosure is made: *(a)* in accordance with an enactment or order of court, *(b)* with the consent of person to whom the information relates, or *(c)* in a way that prevents identification of the person to whom the information relates.

Nurseries (Child Abuse)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what procedures are in place to help nursery workers report confidentially suspected child abuse perpetrated by others working in the same place of work. [37051]

Maria Eagle: Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children are fundamental duties for maintained nursery schools and private and independent nurseries. Providers are required to comply with local child protection procedures and to have a written statement of the arrangements in place for the protection of children. The statement must state staff responsibilities for child protection and include procedures to be followed in the event of allegations being made against a member of staff or volunteer. The statement should be based on the procedures laid out in the Government booklet "What to do if You're Worried a Child Is Being Abused — Summary". This booklet lays out clearly the circumstances when information about child abuse should be passed on to the relevant authorities in confidence.

Office for Disability

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether a Minister in her Department is planned to be nominated to take responsibility for liaison with the Office for Disability Issues; and if she will make a statement. [37065]

Maria Eagle: Anne McGuire, the Minister for Disabled People, has overall responsibility for the Office for Disability Issues (ODI). The Minister for Disabled People chairs a cross-government steering group which includes ministerial representatives from the Department of Health, Department for Education and Skills, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Department for Transport, and Department of Trade and Industry. The Minister in this Department nominated to take responsibility for liaison with the ODI is Lord Adonis.

Ofsted Team Inspectors

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many individuals have been removed by Ofsted from the list of team inspectors in each of the last five years; and how many were reinstated. [36409]

Jacqui Smith: This is a matter for Ofsted. HM chief inspector, David Bell wrote to my hon. Friend today, and a copy of his reply will be placed in the Library.

Letter from David Bell, dated 19 December 2005:

Your recent parliamentary question has been referred to me, as Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, for reply.

In sum, you asked how many individuals have been removed by Ofsted from the list of team inspectors in each of the last five years; and how many were reinstated.

In connection with inspections under Section 10 of the School Inspections Act 1996, team inspectors remained in the roll as long as they satisfied the conditions of their involvement: that they were fit and proper, competent and effective, to discharge the functions of the team inspector.

Team inspectors were also required to undertake mandatory training, as required by HMCI. Failure to complete such training resulted in team inspectors no longer being regarded as competent and effective and their removal from the roll. This explains the high 'removal' figures in 2001–02 and 2002–03 (non-completion of the mandatory training in evaluation of educational inclusion) and 2003–04 (non-completion of the mandatory training in the new framework for inspection).

Former team inspectors who were removed from the role for non-completion of the mandatory training were not excluded from re-applying to become a team inspector at a later stage. To do this, re-application through Ofsted's normal recruitment programme for training and assessment in inspection skills applied.

We do not have readily available information on the numbers of inspectors re-instated.

Individuals removed by Ofsted from the list of team inspectors in each of the last five years

Year[1]	Number of primary, secondary and special schools team inspectors removed from the role by Ofsted	Individuals re-instated
2000–01	1,611	n/a
2001–02	3,316	n/a
2002–03	549	n/a
2003–04	1,095	n/a
2004–05	114	[2]1

n/a = No data available.

[1] 2 September to 31 August.

[2] One team inspector was re-instated by Ofsted following a successful appeal to the DfES Appeals Tribunal against HMCI's decision to remove the team inspector from the roll in the year 2003–04.

A copy of this reply has been sent to Jacqui Smith and will be placed in the library of both Houses.

Outdoor Learning

Mary Creagh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what assessment she has made of the burden on families of the costs associated with school trips; [37984]

(2) pursuant to the answer of 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 147W, on outdoor learning, when she expects the recommendations of the working group set up to examine exclusion and school trips to be made public. [37997]

Jacqui Smith: On 25 November 2004, the results of 'The Cost of Schooling' survey carried out by BMRB social research on behalf of the Department were published. The survey looked at the costs associated with schooling that parents have to meet, including those related to school trips. A copy of the report is available on the Department's research website.

When published in spring 2006, we expect the Manifesto for Education Outside the Classroom to reflect proposals made by the 10 manifesto working groups, including the group looking at exclusion and school trips.

Performance Indicators

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on progress with the consultation on new English and mathematics performance indicators on secondary school achievement and attainment tables. [36026]

Jacqui Smith: The 14–19 education and skills implementation plan states that we will be publishing a supplement to the 2005 achievement and attainment tables, due to be published in January 2006, showing a range of indicators reflecting achievements in English and mathematics. The supplement will show performance against the key target measure of 5+A*-C including English and mathematics GCSEs and invite views on whether there might be additional English and mathematics indicators published in the achievement and attainment tables to supplement this key measure. Around 450 schools who are helping us pilot other tables developments will be asked for their views at conferences in the new year and a questionnaire seeking views on the indicators including English and mathematics will be available online.

Personal, Social and Health Education

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) if she will make personal social and health education a statutory subject in all primary and secondary schools in England; [37810]

(2) which recommendations made in the Personal, Social and Health Education in Schools: Time for Action report compiled by the Government's independent advisory groups on sexual health and teenage pregnancy she plans to implement; [37811]

(3) if she will ensure that sex education is taught as a compulsory subject in all faith-affiliated primary and secondary schools. [37812]

Jacqui Smith: There are no plans to make Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) statutory. The Government's focus is on improving the quality of PSHE teaching. Over the last three years we have funded the PSHE certificate, a continuing professional development programme which sets standards for the teaching of PSHE. Over 2,000 teachers have already gained certification and a further 1,800 teachers are undertaking the programme this year. We have also worked with the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority to produce new teaching and learning materials and assessment guidance for PSHE. We have also produced a DVD resource for teachers, "PSHE into Practice", which will support teachers' professional development in PSHE.

The Government normally responds to the annual report of the Independent Advisory Group on Teenage Pregnancy, which comments on and makes recommendations for the further development of the Teenage Pregnancy Strategy. The yet unpublished report 'Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) in schools: Time for Action' is a separate, ad-hoc report. When it is published the Government will consider its recommendations, but does not intend to publish a formal response.

All maintained schools, including those with a religious designation, are required to deliver the statutory elements of sex education, as set out in the National Curriculum Science Order, at primary and secondary levels. The DfES further recommends that all maintained schools use the PSHE framework to expand their provision and deliver a planned programme of SRE appropriate to the age, maturity and needs of pupils. This should be developed in consultation with the Governing Body and parents.

Primary Education (Gloucestershire)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent discussions she has had with Gloucestershire local education authority (LEA) on its reorganisation of primary education; and what guidance she is offering the LEA on proposals to close schools, with particular reference to small rural primary schools. [38109]

Jacqui Smith: The Secretary of State has had no recent discussions with Gloucestershire LEA on its reorganisation of primary education. Changes to school provision in an area are essentially matters for local decision. All local authorities have a statutory duty to ensure that there are sufficient places and that high quality education is provided in a cost effective way.

The Secretary of State has provided statutory guidance on the process that must be adhered to when considering any reorganisation of school provision. We recognise the importance of rural schools to their local area which is why we introduced the presumption against their closure in 1998. Although this does not

mean that no rural school will ever close, the case for closure needs to be strong and clearly in the best interests of education in the local area.

Primary School Exclusions (South Norfolk)

Mr. Bacon: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children were excluded from South Norfolk primary schools for not being ready to learn in each month since January 2001. [38269]

Jacqui Smith: The requested information is not collected centrally.

Private Members' Bills

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list those Private Members' Bills introduced under *(a)* Standing Order No. 14(6), *(b)* Standing Order No. 23 and *(c)* Standing Order No. 57 which were (i) supported and (ii) opposed by her Department in each session since 1997–98. [36191]

Maria Eagle: The information requested is not collected.

Public Relations

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the value was of *(a)* public opinion research and *(b)* public relations contracts awarded by her Department in (i) each (A) nation and (B) region of the UK and (ii) London in 2004–05. [35933]

Bill Rammell: In 2004–05 the Department for Education and Skills commissioned public opinion research worth £65,521. This research was on education and skills issues and formed part of the British Social Attitudes Survey, covering Scotland, Wales and all English regions (including London).

The Department also carries out a range of research to inform the development and evaluation of specific policies, some of which includes surveys of opinion. The Department publishes its research on the last Thursday of each month and research reports are available at www.dfes.gov.uk/research. The Departmen also awarded public relations contracts worth £695,324. The contracts covered campaigns to promote higher education (the "Aimhigher" campaign) and Foundation Degrees, as well as campaigns to tackle bullying and teenage pregnancy. These campaigns covered England (including London).

Qualifications

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of working age people in *(a)* Kettering constituency and *(b)* England hold a qualification at (i) degree level or equivalent and (ii) above degree level. [38096]

Bill Rammell: The following table shows analysis of the qualification levels of the working age population in Kettering constituency and England at degree level (level 4) and above degree level (level 5). This is presented alongside East Midlands data for comparison. Data comes from the Local Labour Force Survey for 2004–05.

Table 1: Proportion of the working age population holding a level 4/ level 5 qualification, as their highest qualification held

	Level 4	*Level 5*
Kettering	16.0	4.0
East Midlands	19.3	4.2
England	20.8	5.3

Note:
The working age population is defined as males and females aged 16–64 and 16–59 respectively.
Source:
Local Labour Force Survey for 2004–05

Rates

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much was paid by her Department in rates to each local authority in 2004–05; and how much was paid in *(a)* each region and *(b)* London in each year. [35986]

Bill Rammell: The following table lists how much was paid by the Department for Education and Skills in rates to each local authority in the UK in 2004–05; and paid in *(a)* each (i) nation and (ii) region of the UK and *(b)* London.

Rates paid by DfES in 2004–05

£

GO Region	*Local authority*	*Amount*	*Totals*
London	City of Westminster	4,279,327	
	London borough of Southwark	8,119	
London region			4,287,446
North East	Darlington borough council	198,008	
N. E. region			198,008
North West	Halton borough council	356,208	
N.W. region			356,208
East of England	Luton borough council	10,260	
	Peterborough city council	4,694	
E.E. region			14,954
Yorks and Humber	Rotherham MBC	24,919	
	Sheffield city council	825,679	
Y and H region			850,598
Total			5,707,214

Religious Services

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the statutory requirements are for schools to hold a daily religious service; and whether she plans to seek to amend the provisions. [38152]

Jacqui Smith: The current policy regarding collective worship is set out in the Department for Education and Skills circular 1/94. All registered pupils attending a maintained school, primary or secondary, should take part in a daily act of collective worship. This act of collective worship should be wholly or mainly of a broadly Christian character.

School Admissions

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many hon. Members responded to the consultation on revisions to the school admissions code of practice; and whether their views were incorporated into the summary of consultation responses published on 13 December. [38711]

Jacqui Smith: Two MPs, including my hon. Friend, responded to the consultation on the draft School Admissions Code of Practice and their views were taken into account. Their responses were included in the summary of responses.

School Choice

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of whether school choice requires over-provision of school places. [37783]

Jacqui Smith: Local authorities are responsible for planning school places in their areas. They have a duty to ensure that there are sufficient places to meet the needs of the local community and must also ensure that high quality education is provided in a cost-effective way. We expect authorities to take parental preferences into account in the planning process and, in providing for parental choice, we recognise that they will need to maintain some surplus places. The Audit Commission acknowledged this in their update to Trading Places published in January 2002.

School Governors

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many vacancies there were for *(a)* parent governors and *(b)* school governors in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available. [37661]

Jacqui Smith: Data on the number of governor vacancies are not routinely collected by the Department. However, individual local authorities may collect and hold their own information on the number of governor vacancies.

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment her Department has made of the causes of variations *(a)* between regions and *(b)* within regions in vacancies for school governors. [38222]

Jacqui Smith: Data on the number of governor vacancies are not routinely collected by the Department. However, individual local authorities may collect and hold their own information on the number of governor vacancies. No assessment has been made of the causes of the regional variation and variations between areas in vacancies for school governors.

School Meals

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether school meals in each local education authority are *(a)* produced in-house, *(b)* outsourced and *(c)* outsourced but being brought back in-house; and, in respect of those being brought back in-house, by what date she expects this to be done. [37892]

Jacqui Smith: The Department for Education and Skills has not until now collected information about school meals arrangements in local authorities. We have however recently undertaken an audit of local school meals arrangements and my officials are currently analysing the data we have received from the 102 authorities that responded. The results of the survey will be available in January and will provide us with a fuller picture of school meals provision in those authorities, including which school dinners are produced in-house and which are outsourced. We will not however have information on which school dinners are outsourced but being brought back in-house, nor when this will happen, as this information was not collected in the survey.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the schools in the Stroud constituency which *(a)* have and *(b)* do not have their own kitchens, broken down by type of school. [37893]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* The school premises data that my Department receives from authorities identify numbers of kitchen/dining spaces in each school that are considered by authorities and schools to be lacking or unsuitable, but kitchens are not separately identified.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will list the schools in Kettering constituency which *(a)* have and *(b)* do not have their own kitchens, broken down by type of school; and how many pupils attend each school. [38149]

Jacqui Smith: The school premises data that my Department receives from authorities identify numbers of kitchen/dining spaces in each school that are considered by authorities and schools to be lacking or unsuitable, but kitchens are not separately identified.

School Science

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps are being taken to encourage more pupils to study *(a)* physics, *(b)* chemistry and *(c)* mathematics at A level. [37021]

Jacqui Smith: The Government's recent 14-19 Education and Skills White Paper reaffirms our commitment, as outlined in the 10-year Science and Innovation Investment Framework and our response to Professor Smith's inquiry into post-14 mathematics education, to encourage more young people to study

physics, chemistry and mathematics at A level. We are taking this forward by improving teaching and learning across all school phases by:

introducing a newly structured A level, for first teaching from September 2004, making AS/A level mathematics more flexible and manageable;

introducing a new programme of study for science at key stage 4, leading to new GCSEs. The new programme maintains the breadth, depth and challenge of the current curriculum, while catering for a wide range of young people's interests and aptitudes which will ensure that the science taught in schools inspires young people to pursue further study;

developing a new two tier mathematics GCSE so that all young people have the opportunity to achieve a grade C;

asking QCA to develop and test a new curriculum and assessment model for mathematics from entry level to level 3 which will incorporate changes resulting from work that QCA has been doing in response to recommendations in the Smith report;

renewing and updating the Primary National Strategy framework for the teaching of mathematics, to ensure that it supports schools and settings to raise attainment still further;

reviewing science and mathematics at key stage 3, especially in relation to the new science programme at key stage 4 and the review of the Primary National Strategy;

providing innovative and exciting continuing professional development for teachers and technicians through the national network of science learning centres;

establishing a National Centre for Excellence in the teaching of mathematics, that will develop a continuing professional development framework for mathematics teachers and quality assure mathematics continuing professional development programmes;

introducing, from September 2004, a framework for the teaching and learning of mathematics in post-16 education;

agreeing to the expansion of the Mathematics in Education and Industry project with a view to establishing a network of centres to improve take-up and teaching of GCE further mathematics;

improving teacher recruitment in science and mathematics by increasing the value of the teacher training bursaries for science and mathematics graduates and 'golden hellos' for new science and mathematics teachers;

piloting courses designed to enhance subject knowledge of those who wish to do initial teacher training in physics, chemistry or mathematics but who do not have the necessary subject knowledge.

School Sports

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to encourage children to participate in sport in schools; and if she will make a statement. [38231]

Jacqui Smith: The Department for Education and Skills and the Department for Culture, Media and Sport are jointly implementing the national school sport strategy in England. In the five years to 2008 over £1.5 billion is being invested (including £686 million lottery funding) to implement the strategy. Spearheading action is the creation of a national network of sports colleges and school sport partnerships across England. To date, 80 per cent. of schools in England are already part of one of the 411 live partnerships and all schools will be within one by 2006.

The strategy is delivering an ambitious public service agreement target to increase the percentage of 5 to 16-year-olds who spend a minimum of two hours a week on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum to 75 per cent. by 2006 and then 85 per cent. by 2008. The long-term ambition, by 2010, is to offer all children at least four hours of sport every week.

Good progress is being made and we are on track to deliver the target. The 2004/05 school sport survey results found that overall, 69 per cent. of pupils in the 11,498 schools involved, were participating in at least two hours of high quality PE and school sport a week. In 2003/04 this figure was 62 per cent.

Of course my hon. Friend would know that the issue of PE and sport in schools in Wales is a devolved matter.

Schools (Energy Provision)

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many schools are fitted with *(a)* solar panels, *(b)* photovoltaic roof tiles, *(c)* micro combined heat and power and *(d)* micro generation technologies. [35804]

Jacqui Smith: My Department does not hold data on numbers of schools with solar panels, photovoltaic roof tiles, micro combined heat and power, or micro-generation technologies. 184 schools have been helped from the microgeneration funding programmes administered by the Department of Trade and Industry. In supporting the expansion of the microgeneration sector, the Government place particular emphasis on renewable energy technology in school buildings.

Schools (Gravesham)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what funding is planned to be made available to schools in Gravesham for anti-bullying campaigns. [37838]

Jacqui Smith: Funding for anti-bullying campaigns is not made available on either a local authority or school by school basis. Rather it is a matter for local authorities to decide how they distribute funds to schools through their locally agreed formulae.

Support for anti-bullying work is embedded in the behaviour and attendance strands of the National Strategies which have at least one consultant in place in each local authority. In addition support is also provided through DfES funded Anti-Bullying Alliance coordinators in each Government Office region.

At a national level the Department has funded a number of initiatives to tackle bullying. Since 1997 this has included events to disseminate good practice, plus development of guidance and resources for schools. We have supported an award scheme to share and celebrate the excellent work of schools and young people. We have funded the voluntary sector to embed effective practice and offer training and support to schools, young people and their parents. We have run public information campaigns encouraging children to 'tell someone' and to support their friends as well as recently launching two new DVD resources during this year's Anti-Bullying Week.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of whether the funding increase for schools in Gravesham will ensure that all the schools will be able to fulfil the planning, preparation and assessment initiative. [37839]

Jacqui Smith: We estimate that the full year costs of implementing the final phase of workforce reform from September 2005, including guaranteed time for planning, preparation and assessment for all teachers, will create an average pressure of 0.7 per cent. on the budgets of nursery and primary schools for 2006–07, on top of the 1 per cent. we allowed for in 2005–06. We have added that to our estimate of the universal, average cost pressures on schools in 2006–07 to give nursery and primary schools a guaranteed minimum increase in their core budgets of 4 per cent. per pupil next year. And we have earmarked £70 million within the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) to enable local authorities to meet the cost of the higher guarantee for nursery and primary schools. This funding will be consolidated into the DSG baseline for 2007–08.

Schools (Parental Involvement)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what evidence her Department has evaluated on whether parents wish to play a more active role in *(a)* establishing new schools and *(b)* attending parents' councils. [37848]

Jacqui Smith: We have received several inquiries from parents interested in setting up new maintained schools. Four parent groups have published proposals to establish new schools of which two have been successful.

A survey of parental involvement published last year showed that 72 per cent. of parents say they want to be more involved in their child's education but only 48 per cent. feel that the school makes it easy to get involved. The current vacancy rate for parent governors is around 10 per cent.—parents want to be more involved, but do not come forward to volunteer as parent governors.

Parent councils will be more accessible: they will be less formal, a lesser commitment and parents will be able to focus discussion on areas they are interested in. We funded a small-scale pilot project to look at experience and develop some good practice—the evaluation showed that the parent councils engaged parents who would not have had the confidence to raise concerns on their own or to be parent governors, that parents had views and ideas to share, and that schools and parents were keen to continue and embed the project.

Schools White Paper

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what duties *(a)* community schools, *(b)* trust schools, *(c)* special schools, *(d)* city academies, *(e)* pupil referral units, *(f)* federated schools and *(g)* foundation schools will have to admit (i) pupils with special needs with statements, (ii) pupils with special needs without statements and (iii) looked-after children under the proposals in the School White Paper. [37664]

Jacqui Smith: We have no plans in the White Paper to change schools' statutory duties in respect of the admission of mainstream or statemented pupils.

For mainstream admissions, all maintained schools (including federated and trust schools) are required to comply with existing admissions legislation and have regard to the School Admissions Code of Practice.

For statemented pupils, admission to maintained schools is through the school being 'named' on the child's statement. Schools will remain under a statutory duty to admit children with statements which name their school. Local authorities can also arrange admission to pupil referral units and non-maintained special and independent schools through the statement.

Academies are required by their funding agreements to consent to being named in a child's statement. They are also required to comply with mainstream admissions law and to have regard to the School Admissions Code of Practice.

We have also recently amended legislation to ensure that priority is given to the admission of looked after children to all maintained schools as one of the most vulnerable groups in the community. Regulations will come into force in the new year.

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether *(a)* pupil referral units and *(b)* special schools will be able to apply for trust status under the proposals in the Schools White Paper. [37665]

Jacqui Smith: The White Paper does not propose arrangements to allow pupil referral units to become eligible to apply for trust status.

For special schools, the White Paper acknowledges that trust status for special schools raises a number of complex issues. We will continue to work with schools and other partners to decide the best way forward.

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether *(a)* trust schools that were previously independent and *(b)* other trust schools will be permitted to become independent under the arrangements proposed in the Schools White Paper. [37669]

Jacqui Smith: The White Paper proposes no arrangements that will enable maintained schools to move from the maintained sector to the independent sector. Trust schools will be maintained schools, and as such will be subject to the same rules as other maintained schools. The 'independence' the White Paper proposals envisage relates to greater freedom of operation within the maintained sector.

Science Teaching

Mary Creagh: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many teachers have attended *(a)* the regional science learning centres and *(b)* the National Science Learning Centre since they opened. [37999]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is not collected by DfES. One of our key performance indicators is the number of teacher training days delivered by the centres. Figures for 2005 will be available in January 2006.

Secondary School Places

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of demand for secondary school places in the next 10 years. [37663]

Jacqui Smith: The number of 11 to 15-year-olds in all schools in England is projected to fall from 3,255,000 in 2005 to 2,908,000 in 2015. Excluding independent schools and non-maintained special schools, the number of pupils aged 11 to 15 is projected to fall from 3,020,000 in 2005 to 2,702,000 in 2015.

The Learning and Skills Council will fund an additional 50,000 school, college and work based learning places for 16 to 19-year-olds by 2008. Beyond 2008 numbers are expected to remain broadly constant as participation increases towards our aim of 90 per cent. of 17-year-olds by 2015 but the overall 16 to 19-year-old population falls. The exact number of places in secondary schools will depend on the choice of institution made by young people.

Secondments

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many seconded staff were transferred into her Department in each of the last three financial years; in which part of the Department they were employed; on which projects they worked; what the cost to the Department was of employing them; and from which budget the funding came. [37368]

Maria Eagle: Statistics for seconded staff in each of the last three financial years are detailed in the following table:

Financial year	*Number of inward secondees*
2002/03	73
2003/04	85
2004/05	94

Seconded staff are deployed across all directorates within the Department to meet business needs.

Information on the projects that seconded staff have worked are not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost. Costs are borne from both running and programme budgets.

Sector Skills Bodies

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 8 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 452W, on the Learning and Skills Council, what proportion of the £40 million savings announced in the Learning and Skills Council press release of 16 September will be redirected to learners in *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07 and *(c)* 2007–08. [36394]

Bill Rammell: The LSC is currently consulting on the detail of it's restructuring exercise which will result in savings in administration costs. I expect that these savings will start to become available from 2007–08. Once the consultation is completed my Department and the LSC will agree where these savings should be directed to meet our priorities and a full profile for the release of savings.

Sixth Forms

Edward Miliband: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many children under 16 years of age entered sixth form in the last year for which figures are available. [35598]

Jacqui Smith: In January 2005 there were approximately 780 pupils aged under 16 in school sixth forms[1], that is in National Curriculum Year Group 12,13 or 14; the corresponding figure for January 2004 was 830.

Young people under 16 years of age might also be enrolled elsewhere in the Further Education (FE) sector. It is not possible to state which are enrolled in school sixth forms, recorded on the Pupil Level Annual School Census (PLASC), and which are also enrolled in other FE recorded separately on the Individual Learner Record (ILR). It is likely that the vast majority of learners aged under 16 recorded on the ILR attend colleges in addition to school rather than instead of school.

The ILR for 2003/04 shows 76,200 academic age 14 or 15-year-olds in FE, of which 60,200 enrolled with General Colleges of Further Education (GFEC); 3,000 in Special Colleges for Agriculture and Horticulture; and 1,500 in Sixth Form Colleges (SFC).

[1] Schools are defined as having a sixth form if there is one or more pupils in National Curriculum Year Groups 12, 13 or 14

Surplus School Places

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whether her Department has plans to fund surplus school places under the proposals in the Schools White Paper. [38244]

Jacqui Smith: Local authorities are responsible for planning school places in their area. They have a duty to ensure that there are sufficient places to meet the needs of the local community and must also ensure that high quality education is provided in a cost-effective way.

Where schools expand or new schools are created to meet parental demand we expect local authorities to act decisively to remove surplus places in schools which are not popular with parents and to ensure educational resources are used in the most efficient way possible. This year, we are allocating over £5.5 billion of capital funding to schools and authorities. This funding can support local school reorganisation, including those directed to the removal of surplus places.

Building Schools for the Future aims to renew all secondary schools over 15 waves of investment starting from this year. When authorities are prioritised in this programme, they must develop a strong strategic vision for the delivery of secondary education in their area. Additional funding for primary schools has been announced from 2008–09. Further details of this programme will be announced next year.

Trust Schools

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills in what way the financial arrangements for a trust school will differ from those in place for foundation schools. [38062]

Jacqui Smith: Trust schools will be funded on exactly the same basis as other maintained schools, including foundation schools. They will receive multi-year revenue budgets from their local authority under the new school funding arrangements we are introducing from April 2006. They will receive direct capital funding on the national formula and have access to the substantial funding allocated to their authority and through the Building Schools for the Future programme.

Trust schools will also be subject to the same financial controls, including audit arrangements, as apply currently to maintained schools, through each local authority's statutory Scheme for Financing Schools.

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the legal duties and responsibilities of governors of trust schools will be under the proposals in the Schools White Paper. [37662]

Jacqui Smith: Under the proposals contained in the "Higher Standards, Better Schools For All" White Paper, the duties and responsibilities of governing bodies of trust schools will be the same as those of the governing bodies of foundation schools.

The governing body of trust schools will, as do all governing bodies of maintained schools, have a legal duty to conduct the school with a view to promoting high standards of educational achievement. Their responsibilities include setting the strategic direction, objectives, targets and policies for the school, approving the school budget and reviewing progress against the budget, plans and targets, acting as a critical friend to the head teacher by providing support and challenge and appointing the head teacher. Governing bodies in trust schools will also employ their staff and be their own admissions authority, this is the same as in voluntary aided and foundation schools.

University Entrants

Mr. Harper: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what percentage of pupils from *(a)* the Forest of Dean constituency and *(b)* Gloucestershire went on to university in each of the last five years. [36246]

Bill Rammell: The latest available figures on participation by constituency and region were published by the Higher Education Funding Council for England in January in "Young Participation in England", which is available from their website at: http://www.hefce.ac.uk/pubs/hefce/2005/05_03/. This shows participation rates for constituencies and region for the years 1997 to 2000, and these are shown in the table.

Young participation rate (YPR(A))

Percentage

Year cohort aged 18 in:	*Forest of Dean*	*Gloucestershire*
1997	33	36
1998	32	34
1999	28	33
2000	33	35

Source:
Higher Education Funding Council for England.

The Department uses the Higher Education Initial Participation Rate (HEIPR) to assess progress on increasing first-time participation of English students aged 18–30 in higher education towards 50 per cent.: the latest provisional figure for 2003/04 is 43 per cent. The HEIPR is not calculated at constituency level.

Volunteering

Stephen Hesford: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what steps she is taking to promote the involvement of young people in volunteering. [38144]

Maria Eagle: The Youth Green Paper "Youth Matters" sets out a number of broad areas of activity designed to encourage young people to volunteer and contribute to their community. It aims to test out more varied approaches to volunteering, in line with the Russell Commission's recommendations.

This includes, for example, expanding peer mentoring. The Chancellor has recently announced in his pre-Budget report a new investment aimed at introducing and evaluating more structured and formalised approaches to peer mentoring in schools. We will also be promoting more active citizenship approaches in schools, further and higher education and more volunteering in public services. We are building on the experience of Millennium Volunteers and the Young Volunteer Challenge to develop more flexible approaches to volunteering and to expand longer term volunteering opportunities.

LEADER OF THE HOUSE

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Weir: To ask the Leader of the House how much was spent on external consultants and advisers by his Office in each year since May 1997. [39098]

Mr. Hoon: The information is as follows:

Consultants:
The Office of the Leader of the House of Commons employed one consultant on IT issues during August 2005 at a cost of £3,760.

Advisers:
The Office of the Leader of the House of Commons has not employed any external advisers since May 1997.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Leader of the House how much was spent on advertising by his Office in each year since May 1997. [39100]

Mr. Hoon: None. The Office of the Leader of the House of Commons does not spend any money on advertising.

PR Companies

Mr. Weir: To ask the Leader of the House if he will list the public relations companies that have had contracts with his Office since May 1997. [39099]

Mr. Hoon: The Office of the Leader of the House of Commons has not had any contracts with public relations companies.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Barristers

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Solicitor-General if he will list the 10 barristers instructed to advise and represent in court his and other Departments through the Department who received the highest sums in the last financial year; how much each received in each case; and if he will make a statement. [23497]

The Solicitor-General: The Attorney-General is responsible for appointment and operation of the civil panel of Junior Counsel and First Treasury Junior Counsel. Government Departments instruct barristers on the Panel Departments may instruct Panel Counsel to provide advice outside the sphere of litigation. There is no central record of this and disproportionate cost would be incurred in collating this information from all Departments.

The 10 barristers instructed by the Inland Revenue, the then HMC&E DEFRA, DWP/DH and Treasury Solicitor who were paid the highest sums in the financial year ending 31 March 2005 to conduct civil litigation on behalf of the Crown and the amounts paid are:

Counsel	*Amount paid in last financial year including VAT (£)*
Philip Sales	619,633.76
David Ewart	347,578.46
Jonathan Crow	287,883.78
Julie Anderson	242,518.46
Nicholas Moss	226,758.28
Jennifer Richards	199,459.75
Leigh-Ann Mulcahy	185,270.28
Lisa Giovannetti	184,739.87
David Barr	182,048.38
Robin Tam	163,819.71

A number of qualifications need to be added to these figures:

The amount paid to barristers in one financial year is not necessarily reflective of the work carried out during that year. Payment may take place during or sometime after the work and different Departments have different payment practices.

The figures must be interpreted carefully and do not represent the personal earnings of the barristers listed—figures are inclusive of VAT and disbursements incurred. After VAT has been deducted, banisters will typically pay 25–30 per cent. of fees in professional expenses, Additionally, barristers face the same expenses as any other self-employed person, including income tax and national insurance contributions.

The Crown pays barristers at a fixed hourly rate for work payable, for example, only when hearings take place, and does not use a brief fee system.

Not all payments could be verified with the individuals concerned. Cases in dispute, where records of payments held by the Departments differ to those held by the practitioners, have been included. Where possible, amounts have been verified by practitioners and adjusted where necessary.

The Crown, under the Panel Counsel system, has access to some of the very best advocates, who are appointed on merit following fair and open competition and represent excellent value for money.

Crown Prosecution Service

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General who the director of *(a)* the Crown Prosecution Service, *(b)* the Crown Prosecution Service in Southend and *(c)* the Essex Crown Prosecution Service is; what relevant specialist qualifications each holds; and what the career of each has been to date. [37761]

The Solicitor-General: Ken Macdonald QC is the Head of the Crown Prosecution Service and the Director of Public Prosecutions. He is a barrister and was called to the Bar in 1978. He was appointed Queen's Counsel in 1997. He joined the CPS on 1 November 2003.

The District Crown Prosecutor for the South East Prosecution Team in Southend is Diane Stenning. She joined the CPS as a Legal Trainee in 1991 and was admitted as a solicitor in 1993. She transferred to CPS Essex in 1998.

The post of Chief Crown Prosecutor for CPS Essex is currently vacant. From 1999 until September 2005 this post was held by John Bell. He was admitted as a solicitor in 1974 and until the formation of the CPS in 1986 was employed by the Durham Police Authority. The post is currently being held on a temporary basis by Paula Abrahams. She was called to the Bar in 1987 and joined the CPS in the same year as a newly qualified lawyer.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General what action he takes to prevent the bringing of inappropriate *(a)* higher and *(b)* lesser charges by the Crown Prosecution Service. [38033]

The Solicitor-General: Crown prosecutors must apply the Code for Crown Prosecutors and the Director of Public Prosecution's Guidance on Charging to determine if a case proceeds and, if so, on what charge.

Statutory Charging was brought in by the Criminal Justice Act 2003. As a result, dedicated experienced prosecutors now work with the police on cases from start to finish. They advise the police on lines of inquiry and advise on the evidence that should be gathered. In all but minor cases, the prosecutor decides the charge and will review the case continually. Fewer charges will be amended, and fewer charges will be dropped.

Statutory Charging arrangements are being implemented in phases across the 42 Criminal Justice Areas by a joint national CPS/ACPO team. To date, 28 areas operate Statutory Charging. The remaining 14 areas are operating Shadow Charging schemes (whereby charging is operated on a non-mandatory basis, mirroring as closely as possible Statutory Charging arrangements between 9 am and 5 pm Monday to Friday). These remaining areas are scheduled to move to Statutory Charging by April 2006.

Public Interest

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Solicitor-General what criteria are used to determine matters of public interest in criminal cases. [38704]

The Solicitor-General: Normally, in any case where there is sufficient evidence to afford a reasonable prospect of conviction the public interest would require

prosecution. However, in each case the prosecutor will weigh the considerations in favour of prosecution against those that considerations against prosecution. The Code for Prosecutors published by the Public Prosecution Service, and which is available on their website at www.ppsni.gov.uk and copies of which are kept in the Library, set out examples of what those considerations may be. The list is not exhaustive.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Solicitor-General how many cases since 1997 have been discontinued in Northern Ireland on the basis of the public interest; and what the charges were in each case. [38725]

The Solicitor-General: This information was not kept by the Department of the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland and could be compiled only at disproportionate cost by the individual examination of all files discontinued since 1997. This information has started to be kept by the Public Prosecution Service. The only figures currently available are for the areas of Fermanagh and Tyrone and for Greater Belfast and are for the period 1 April to 30 September 2005. Prosecution decisions in respect of 7,327 individuals were taken over that period. Of that number 1,510 resulted in decisions of no prosecution and, of that number, 164 (10.9 per cent.) were made on grounds of public interest. This represents 2.2 per cent. of the total number of individuals dealt with.

Details of each case could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Solicitor-General how many cases have been discontinued on grounds of the public interest in England and Wales in each year since 1997; and what the charges were in each case. [38727]

The Solicitor-General: Figures on the reasons for discontinuance, including the number dropped on the grounds of the public interest, are available only with effect from April 2004. The following table shows this information for 2004–05, and for 2005–06 up until 15 December 2005.

The Crown Prosecution Service does not hold records of the outcome of each individual charge. However, a record is maintained of the principal offence with which each defendant was charged, divided into 12 categories. The table also shows discontinuances on public interest grounds in each of these 12 groupings.

The table both shows the volume of these outcomes, and expresses them as a proportion of all completed cases during the two years.

Discontinuance in magistrates' courts and crown court on the grounds of public interest
By principal offence category

	Number	*Percentage*
2004–05		
A. Homicide	7	0.0
B. Offences Against The Person	1,476	0.1
C. Sexual Offences	141	0.0
D. Burglary	336	0.0
E. Robbery	87	0.0
F. Theft And Handling	1,949	0.2
G. Fraud And Forgery	102	0.0
H. Criminal Damage	1,038	0.1
I. Drugs Offences	442	0.0
J. Public Order Offences	1,502	0.1
K. All Other Offences (excluding Motoring)	1,076	0.1
L. Motoring Offences	3,726	0.3
Total	11,882	1.0
2005–06 (to 15 December 2005)		
A Homicide	8	0.0
B. Offences Against The Person	2,528	0.3
C. Sexual Offences	212	0.0
D. Burglary	469	0.1
E. Robbery	76	0.0
F. Theft And Handling	2,950	0.4
G. Fraud And Forgery	149	0.0
H. Criminal Damage	1,573	0.2
I. Drugs Offences	564	0.1
J. Public Order Offences	2,553	0.3
K. All Other Offences (excluding Motoring)	1,626	0.2
L. Motoring Offences	5,409	0.7
Total	18,117	2.2

Spy Ring (Stormont)

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Solicitor-General if the Government of the Irish Republic was *(a)* consulted and *(b)* informed of the decision to withdraw the prosecution of those charged with running a spy ring at Stormont in 2002. [38709]

The Solicitor-General: There was no consultation with the Irish Government in respect of the decision to end this prosecution. They were informed the day of the hearing at which the charges were withdrawn.

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Solicitor-General on how many occasions *(a)* the Director of Public Prosecutions and *(b)* the Senior Crown Counsel discussed with the Attorney-General the prosecution of the case against those charged with running a spy ring at Stormont in 2002. [38710]

The Solicitor-General: In the exercise of his statutory duty of superintendence, the Attorney-General is kept informed by the Director of Public Prosecutions for Northern Ireland of significant cases through correspondence, meetings and by telephone, both direct and through officials. Information on the exact number of times this case was raised is not available.

The Attorney-General did not discuss this matter directly with the Senior Counsel instructed to prosecute this case although he had sight of counsel's advice as part of the papers provided to him by the Director.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Appeals Service

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the national targets are for the Appeals Service; and what the performance of relevant offices in South Devon has been against those targets. [34032]

Mrs. McGuire: This is a matter for Christina Townsend, Chief Executive of the Appeals Service. She will reply to the hon. Member.

Letter from Christina Townsend, dated 19 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question what the national targets are for the Appeals Service; and what the performance of relevant offices in South Devon has been against those targets.

The information you have asked for is not available in the format requested, as the Appeals Service does not have specific appeals processing offices in the South Devon area but instead have eight Regional processing centres across the country. Our Cardiff office, which handle appeals for the whole Wales and South West Region, administers appeals for the South Devon area.

Each year, the Secretary of State sets targets for the overall performance of the Appeals Service. These targets are shown in the table below together specifically with our Cardiff office's performance against those targets for 2004–05.

Appeals Service Secretary of State target for 2004–05	*Cardiff Appeals Processing Office performance*
The number of cases over 24 weeks old as at 1 April 2004 will be reduced by at least 15 per cent. by 31 March 2005	A 25 per cent. reduction in older cases was achieved
For cases returned by the Commissioner, the average waiting time for an appeal to be re-heard will be no more than 8 weeks from the date of return to the Appeals Service[1]	6.5 weeks
The average waiting time for an appeal to be heard will be no more than 11 weeks from the time of receipt by the Appeals Service[2]	11.3 weeks

[1] Excludes cases requiring further evidence.
[2] Excludes stayed cases awaiting decision in lead cases in a higher court (the effective date will commence from withdrawal of stay being notified).

I hope this reply is helpful.

Asbestos

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the terms of reference were for the research carried out by the Health and Safety Executive in relation to the risks of exposure to asbestos when removing textured coatings; and if he will make a statement. [34767]

Mrs. McGuire: The aim of study HSL/2005/32 "An investigation into the airborne fibre releases during the removal of textured coatings from domestic premises", commissioned by the Health and Safety Executive from the Health and Safety Laboratory, was to measure the airborne fibre and asbestos concentrations released during the removal and repair of damaged chrysotile containing textured coatings, at some 40 sites.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will ask the Health and Safety Executive to carry out further tests on the proposed new methods of work when undertaking the removal of textured coatings to assess the risk of exposure to asbestos before taking a decision on whether to remove textured coatings from the list that only licensed contractors are able to remove. [34768]

Mrs. McGuire: HSE has commissioned new research from the Health and Safety Laboratory (HSL) on the exposure levels arising from work to remove textured coatings containing asbestos that is carried out in line with the methods and control measures set out in the Health and Safety Commission's (HSC's) draft Approved Code of Practice. The results will be taken into account as part of the HSC's consultation process and consideration of the revised asbestos regulations.

Benefits

Julie Morgan: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of people aged over 60 years are receiving housing benefit and/or council tax benefit *(a)* with pension credit and *(b)* without pension credit. [37435]

Mr. Timms: The information is not available in the format requested.

The available information is in the following tables.

Housing benefit (HB) and council tax benefit (CTB) recipients aged 60 and over and pension credit (PC) recipients: May 2005

	HB		*CTB*		*PC*	
	Caseload	*Percentage population*	*Caseload*	*Percentage population*	*Caseload*	*Percentage population*
Great Britain	1,518,100	12.4	2,444,500	19.9	2,680,200	21.8

Housing benefit (HB) and council tax benefit (CTB) recipients aged 60 and over also in receipt of pension credit (PC): May 2005

	HB[1] and PC		*CTB[1] and PC*	
	Caseload	*Percentage population*	*Caseload*	*Percentage population*
Great Britain	1,237,500	10.1	1,972,100	16.1

[1] Figures may include a small number of men aged 60 to 64 in receipt of income-based jobseekers allowance.

Notes:
1. The data refers to benefit units, which may be a single person or a couple.
2. Caseloads have been rounded to the nearest hundred and percentages have been given to one decimal place.
3. For HB/CTB, figures for any non-responding authorities have been estimated.
4. Housing benefit figures exclude any extended payment cases.
5. Council tax benefit totals exclude any second adult rebate cases.
6. Pension credit replaced MIG on 6 October 2003 and extended IS entitlement to customers aged 60 plus.
7. Countries are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.
8. Population percentages have been calculated using 2004 ONS mid-year population estimates.
9. 'Aged 60 and over' is defined as benefit units where the claimant and/or partner are aged 60 and over. Therefore figures will contain some claimants aged under 60 where there is a partner aged over 60 years.
10. Percentages of the population are based on the population aged 60 plus.

Sources:
Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit Management Information System Quarterly 100 per cent. caseload stock-count taken in May 2005.
DWP Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS).
Office for National Statistics (ONS) mid-2004 population estimates.

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what indicators will be used to assess progress towards his Department's aims to simplify the benefits system. [38572]

Mr. Timms: In its recent report on complexity in the benefits system, the National Audit Office acknowledged that the Department has taken a number of steps to tackle complexity. We are setting up a dedicated benefit simplification team which will seek to build on these steps. It will also investigate whether it is possible to produce a reliable set of indicators to measure progress.

British Muslims

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what arrangements are in place to monitor the work of organisations in receipt of public money whose programmes are designed to increase the ability of British Muslims to enter the labour market; [37926]

(2) how many organisations in receipt of public money whose work involves promoting the participation in the labour market of British Muslims *(a)* do not publish an annual report, *(b)* had their accounts queried by auditors and *(c)* did not submit their accounts on time in each of the last 10 years. [37931]

Margaret Hodge: We have an ethnic minority employment strategy in place to help people from ethnic minority groups improve their access to the labour market; this includes Muslims, three quarters of whom come from Asian backgrounds, and people from other faith communities. The high level strategy is monitored through our public service agreement (PSA) target and by the Ethnic Minority Employment Task Force.

Contracts let by Jobcentre Plus are subject to formal contract management processes involving provider self-assessment and quarterly Jobcentre Plus reviews. The Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI), responsible for all post-19 learning provision in England, operates a four-year inspection cycle; each Jobcentre Plus provider is inspected once within the cycle and graded on a four-point scale. All ALI reports are published. The Scottish Inspectorate and ESTYN perform similar functions in Scotland and Wales.

DWP sponsors three Invest to Save Budget (ISB) Ethnic Minority Employment pilots, run by Voluntary and Community Sector organisations. ISB funding comes from HM Treasury; before they agree to part-fund bids, the Home Office takes up references and ensures that the lead organisation meets standard financial requirements. The pilots are then monitored by HM Treasury and DWP through six-monthly reports.

Buncefield Oil Depot

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will place in the Library a copy of the Health and Safety Executive reports relating to the improvement notice, and subsequent compliance, served against British Pipeline Agency Ltd. at the Buncefield Terminal. [38330]

Mrs. McGuire: Yes, copies of the relevant extracts of documents will be placed in the House of Commons Library.

Details of the improvement notice in question are already available on HSE's website.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will place in the Library a copy of the Health and Safety Executive guidance relating to safety and security in fuel depots. [38331]

Mrs. McGuire: Copies of the written relevant guidance document are already publicly available, but I will place a copy in the Library.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what guidance the Government have given to emergency planning authorities with regard to safety and security in and near fuel depots. [38332]

Mrs. McGuire: Sites which store or use large quantities of flammable substances such as fuels are subject to the Control of Major Accident Hazards Regulations 1999 (COMAH).

Guidance on emergency planning for sites subject to the COMAH Regulations (Emergency Planning for Major Accidents, HSG191) has been issued by the Health and Safety Executive in its role as joint Competent Authority. More general guidance on the COMAH regulations, which includes further advice on emergency planning, has also been published by HSE (A Guide to the Control of Major Accident Hazards regulations 1999, L111). The Cabinet Office has also prepared guidance on dealing with major emergencies (Dealing With Disaster, ISBN 185 893 9208).

Burslem Job Centre

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what discussions he has had on the future use of the Burslem Job Centre; [37716]

(2) what assessment he has made of the *(a)* cost and *(b)* ease of access for people using the Burslem Job Centre of using other centres; and if he will make a statement. [37733]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to my hon. Friend.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 19 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions concerning what discussions he has had on the future use of the Burslem Job Centre; and what assessment he has made of the *(a)* cost and *(b)* ease of access for people using the Burslem Job Centre of using other centres. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Once Burslem Jobcentre has closed, full responsibility for the property rests with the owners Land Securities Trillium.

Prior to the decision to close Burslem Jobcentre, a full feasibility study was conducted which mapped customers by postcode against existing public transport routes. Burslem and the surrounding area are well served by public transport. The longest journey time for current Burslem Jobcentre customers to one of the other surrounding Jobcentre Plus offices is 20 minutes, costing £2 return.

I hope this is helpful.

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many staff are based at Burslem Job Centre; and what plans there are to transfer them; [37717]

(2) how many *(a)* full-time and *(b)* part-time workers are employed at Burslem Job Centre. [37720]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to my hon. Friend.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 19 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions asking how many staff are based at Burslem Job Centre and what plans there are to transfer them; and how many *(a)* full and *(b)* part time workers are employed at Burslem Job Centre. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

There are currently twenty-three staff based at Burslem Jobcentre. These staff will be redeployed to other Jobcentre Plus sites, by means of preference exercises. A preference exercise allows an individual to select a location that is most suitable to them to travel to or a job role they are particularly interested in. Staff are also able to apply for vacancies in other offices in the Department for Work and Pensions as they become available.

Of the twenty-three staff currently based at Burslem Jobcentre, twenty are full time workers and three are part time.

I hope this is helpful.

Carers Allowance

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps he takes to ascertain whether persons claiming carers' allowance *(a)* as live-in carers are carers or cohabitees and *(b)* are capable of and competent to act as carers, and are acting as such. [38059]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of carer's allowance is a matter for the chief executive of the Disability and Carers Service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Terry Moran, dated 19 December 2005:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what steps he takes to ascertain whether persons claiming carers allowance *(a)* as live-in carers are carers or cohabitees and *(b)* are capable of and competent to act as carers and are acting as such.

The Minister for Disabled People, Anne McGuire MP, promised you a substantive reply from the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service.

To be entitled to Carer's Allowance (CA) a customer must be "regularly and substantially" caring for a severely disabled person for at least 35 hours a week. All customers who claim CA are required to sign a statement confirming that they do that.

The conditions of entitlement for CA do not specify that the carer must live with the disabled person therefore no checks are carried out on this when claims for CA are received.

From 5th December 2005, CA claim packs contain a statement that allows the disabled person, or someone acting on their behalf, to acknowledge that someone is claiming CA for caring for them, to confirm whether 35 hours caring is taking place, to acknowledge that their benefits may be affected by the CA claim, and to understand that their Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance records will be checked in order to process the CA claim.

The disabled person, or someone acting on their behalf, must sign the statement before the claim to CA is processed.

I hope this is helpful.

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in the Leeds West constituency have been in receipt of the carer's allowance in each year since it was introduced. [35124]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of carer's allowance is a matter for the chief executive of the Disability and Carers Service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Terry Moran, dated 19 December 2005:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in the Leeds West constituency have been in receipt of the carer's allowance in each year since it was introduced.

The Minister for Disabled People, Anne McGuire MP, promised you a substantive reply from the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service.

The information available is in the following table:

Carer's allowance cases in receipt of payment for Leeds West parliamentary constituency

Thousand

May	*Cases in payment*
2005	0.6
2004	0.6
2003	0.6
2002	0.5

Notes:

1. Definitions and conventions: "-" nil or negligible; "." not applicable; caseload figures are rounded to the nearest hundred and displayed in thousands; Totals may not sum due to rounding.

2. Caseloads at parliamentary constituency level are not available previous to the dates shown.

3. Caseload (thousands): Totals show the number of people in receipt of an allowance, and excludes people with entitlement where the payment has been suspended.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study and DWP 100 per cent. Data.

I hope this is helpful.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in the Tamworth constituency have been in receipt of the carer's allowance in each year since it was introduced. [35655]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of carer's allowance is a matter for the chief executive of the disability and carers service, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Terry Moran, dated 19 December 2005:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people in the Tamworth constituency have been in receipt of the carer's allowance in each year since it was introduced.

The Minister for Disabled People, Anne McGuire MP, promised you a substantive reply from the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service.

The information available is in the following table:

Carer's allowance cases in receipt of payment for Tamworth parliamentary constituency

Thousand

	Cases in payment
May	
2005	0.8
2004	0.8
2003	0.8
2002	0.8

Notes:
1. Definitions and Conventions: "-" Nil or Negligible; "." Not applicable; Caseload figures are rounded to the nearest hundred and displayed in thousands; Totals may not sum due to rounding.
2. Caseloads at parliamentary constituency level are not available previous to the dates shown.
3. Caseload (Thousand): Totals show the number of people in receipt of an allowance, and excludes people with entitlement where the payment has been suspended.

Source:
DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study and DWP 100 per cent. Data.

I hope this is helpful.

Child Poverty

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what assessment he has made of the impact of housing costs on child poverty; and if he will make a statement. [24226]

Margaret Hodge: Specific information regarding low income for Great Britain is available in "Households Below Average Income 1994/95–2003/04". The threshold of below 60 per cent. contemporary median income is the most commonly used in reporting trends in low income. Figures are provided for children based on distributions sourced from the Family Resources Survey using two definitions of net disposable income. One uses a concept before, and one after, housing costs have been deducted from household income. Housing costs include rent, mortgage interest payments, water rates or water charges, structural insurance, ground rent and service charges.

However, poverty is about more than low income. It is also about health, education, housing and the quality of the environment. The seventh annual Opportunity for all report, published recently, sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and presents information on the indicators used to measure progress against this.

Housing is an important part of the Government's strategy on poverty and social exclusion. Opportunity for All monitors the proportion of children in non-decent homes, and also includes an indicator monitoring the proportion of families with children in temporary accommodation.

The document 'Measuring child poverty' published in December 2003 outlines the Government's measure of UK child poverty for the long-term. This includes a material deprivation measure which will capture children in families with high unavoidable costs, such as housing costs or childcare, which can adversely impact on living standards and leave people with low disposable incomes. Because it incorporates a new—higher—relative income line it will count some children as in poverty for the first time. The quality of housing will be directly measured as part of the material deprivation indicators, and will include housing that is poorly repaired, overcrowded or cold.

Copies of all documents are available in the Library.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what progress has been made towards meeting the Government's 2005 child poverty targets in Tamworth constituency; and if he will make a statement. [37820]

Margaret Hodge: The Government's target, set in the 2002 Spending Review, is to reduce the number of children in low-income households by at least a quarter by 2004–05, as a contribution towards the broader target of halving child poverty by 2010 and eradicating it by 2020.

As set out in Household Below Average Income (HBAI), between 1998–99 and 2003–04 (the latest data available) the number of children living in relative low-income households fell by 500,000 on a before housing costs basis and by 600,000 on an after housing costs basis.

The Government are broadly on track to meet their 2004–05 target. Final data for the 2004–05 target will be available in spring 2006.

The data source does not allow us to provide robust estimates below regional level.

Chronic Back Pain

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what steps are being taken in his Department to help civil servants with chronic back pain. [33872]

Mrs. McGuire: When faced with staff who suffer chronic back pain, a line manager is required to consider and, where appropriate, make reasonable adjustments. They will take into account the nature and severity of the disability or the underlying medical condition, and the treatment being received.

In addition, the Department provides support to individuals who suffer medical conditions, which may be affected by their working environment. Our Occupational Health Provider carries out full workplace assessments and adaptations (for example a special chair) are put in place as a result of recommendations they make. In order for this process to be streamlined, a pilot is currently under way involving all parties; Occupational Health, facilities managers, procurement and equipment suppliers, to put in place adaptations in the shortest possible time. The Department does not take a legalistic approach to the Disability Discrimination Act, in that, anyone identified as needing a workplace adaptation will be accommodated where it is reasonable to do so.

Child Support Agency

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what plans there are to apply retrospection to Child Support Agency cases pre-dating 3 March 2003

where a non-resident parent is found to be liable for lower child maintenance payments under the new system of calculating child maintenance. [36874]

Mr. Plaskitt: There are no plans to apply any retrospection to any Child Support Agency cases when they are moved to the new scheme.

Department IT

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent action he has taken to ensure that departmental staff involved with the restructuring of IT provision within his Department have the necessary skills. [28709]

Mrs. McGuire: In order to deliver its ambitious programme of business transformation and modernisation, so that welfare reform can be delivered more efficiently to its customers, my department is acting to recruit key staff to improve its in-house skills.

Following open competition the Department has made more than 90 professional appointments, providing the Department with IT capability to match the best in industry. The Department has appointed a Chief Information Officer (CIO) with extensive experience in the delivery of major IT and business change programmes. The CIO aims to ensure the delivery of effective, reliable and value for money information systems and services. Other appointments have been made at Director level, in the areas of project management, programme management, portfolio management, IT strategy and development and commercial management.

In addition the Department is establishing robust competency frameworks for all its IT specialists. These frameworks are aligned with Professional Skills for Government established by the Cabinet Office and the Transformational Government strategy published on 2 November 2005.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the 10 highest-paid employees in his Department, broken down by *(a)* job title and *(b)* salary including bonuses; and whether the individual concerned is (i) a civil servant and (ii) a contractor in each case. [27437]

Mrs. McGuire: The 10 highest-paid employees in my Department by job title and pay range are shown in the following table:

Job title	*Pay range*
Permanent Secretary, DWP	£130,350 to £209,477
Chief Executive, Jobcentre Plus	£130,350 to £209,477
Group Director and Chief Information Officer, Programme and Systems Delivery Group	£93,139 to £198,197
Group Finance Director	£93,139 to £198,197
Chief Executive, The Pension Service	£93,139 to £198,197
Chief Executive, Child Support Agency	£93,139 to £198,197
Chief Technology Officer, Programme and Systems Delivery Group	£75,607 to £159,659
Information Systems Programme Director, Jobcentre Plus	£75,607 to £159,659
Strategic IT Sourcing Director Programme and Systems Delivery Group	£75,607 to £159,659
Strategic Programme Director, Child Support Agency	£75,607 to £159,659

All of the above are civil servants. Individual salaries are not disclosed, in order to protect the privacy of the individuals concerned. I refer the hon. Member to the DWP's Departmental Report, a copy of which has been placed in the Library, for the salary of the Permanent Secretary, the Chief Executive of The Pension Service and the Group Finance Director.

Information on Civil Service reward is available at:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/index.asp

Disability and Carers Service

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether a Minister in his Department is planned to be nominated to take responsibility for liaison with the Office for Disability Issues; and if he will make a statement. [37081]

Mrs. McGuire: The Office for Disability Issues is a cross-government unit which reports to the Minister for Disabled People in this Department, who has lead responsibility, in collaboration with colleagues across Government, for driving forward the Government's 20 year strategy to deliver substantive equality for disabled people.

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the national targets are for the disability and carers service; and what the performance of offices in South Devon is in relation to those targets. [36575]

Mrs. McGuire: The administration of disability and carers service is a matter for the chief executive of that agency, Mr. Terry Moran. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Terry Moran, dated 19 December 2005:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the national targets are for the Disability and Carers Service; and if he will publish the performance of offices in South Devon in relation to those targets.

The Minister for Disabled People, Anne McGuire MP, promised you a substantive reply from the Chief Executive of the Disability and Carers Service.

The information available on DCS national targets for 2005–2006 is in the following table:

Event	*National targets 2005–06*
DLA Normal Rules Claims	39
DLA Reconsiderations	35
DLA Appeals	37
DLA Decision Maker Accuracy	90%
AA Normal Rules Claims	22
AA Reconsiderations	35
AA Appeals	35
AA Decision Maker Accuracy	90%
CA Claims	22
CA Appeals	35
CA Decision Maker Accuracy	96%

Note:

For DLA/AA Claims, Reconsiderations, Appeals and CA Claims and Appeals the national target is an Actual Average Clearance Target (AACT), given in working days. The AACT is calculated by, adding up the total cumulative days taken to clear all cases and dividing this by the total number of cases cleared.

No AACT data is available specifically for the South Devon area. However, the information in the table below provides the year-to-date (YTD) performance, against the national targets, for Bristol Disability Benefits Centre (DBC).

Event	*Bristol DBC YTD AACT*
DLA Normal Rules New Claims	34.4
DLA Reconsiderations	26.4
DLA Appeals	25.6
AA Normal Rules New Claims	20.7
AA Reconsiderations	24.1
AA Appeals	25.6

Notes:

1. Bristol DBC deals with the whole of South West of England from Gloucester in the north, Swindon and Bournemouth to the east, through to the Isle of Scilly.

2. Decision Maker accuracy is only reported at national level.

The DCS does not publish performance figures for offices in South Devon, as there are no DCS offices in the South Devon area. The performance against targets for Bristol DBC is available in its Customer Service reception area. Overall DCS performance against targets is reported in the 'DCS Annual Report and Accounts' that is available in the Libraries of both Houses.

I hope this is helpful.

Disability Living Allowance

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 24 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2252W, on disability living allowance, how many recipients of *(a)* highest rate care component and *(b)* middle rate care component are also in receipt of the higher rate mobility component, broken down by region. [35347]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* The requested information is in the table.

Disability living allowance: numbers of recipients of (a) the highest rate care component and the higher rate mobility component; and (b) the middle rate care component and the higher rate mobility component in Great Britain at 31 May 2005 by Government office region

Government office region	*Highest rate care component and higher rate mobility component*	*Middle care component and higher rate mobility component*
North East	24.1	22.6
North West	68.6	68.6
Yorkshire and Humber	41.4	38.4
East Midlands	31.5	28.3
West Midlands	43.0	38.2
East	31.9	28.3
London	45.1	37.5
South East	40.0	35.2
South West	30.2	29.6
Wales	39.1	32.0
Scotland	51.6	49.1
Unknown	0.3	0.4
Total	446.3	408.3

Notes:

1. Figures are in thousands, rounded to the nearest hundred, and exclude cases where payment of the allowance is suspended; for example, because the recipient has been a NHS hospital in-patient for more than four weeks. Totals may not sum due to rounding.

2. Postcodes are used to allocate recipients to the relevant Government office region. The figures shown against "Unknown" are those for cases where the postcode is incomplete.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study.

Disabled People

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what representations he has received on the UK's involvement with the draft UN Convention on the Rights of Disabled People; and if he will make a statement. [34879]

Mrs. McGuire: The Department receives occasional correspondence on the draft UN Convention. We have also established a mechanism for regular review meetings with UK non-governmental organisations representing disabled people to keep them up to date with progress and seek their views on draft text. Additionally, the UK's involvement in the Convention is often discussed during regular meetings between departmental Ministers and disability organisations.

Employment Zone (Tower Hamlets)

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions for what reasons new deal 25 plus in the London borough of Tower Hamlets has been replaced with the Employment Zone. [36367]

Margaret Hodge: Employment Zones are about finding the best way of helping jobless people find work and focus on those areas facing the most severe labour market problems. Areas like Tower Hamlets were chosen for Employment Zones because they had the highest unemployment rates in the country and the highest share of people unemployed for two years or more.

By harnessing the skills and expertise of the organisations and partnerships involved in Employment Zones we are able to provide more innovative ways of helping people into jobs. We are also providing additional help to reduce the high level of long-term unemployed jobseeker's allowance claimants in Tower Hamlets, beyond that which had been available under new deal 25 plus.

Finance Director

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions who the director of finance in his Department is; what relevant specialist qualifications he or she holds; and what the details of his or her career to date are. [26399]

Mrs. McGuire: The Finance Director General for the Department for Work and Pensions is John Codling. He is a CIPFA qualified accountant. John joined the Benefits Agency as Finance Director in April 1998. He was subsequently appointed the DSS Finance Director in May 2000 and then Finance Director General for DWP in 2001. Before joining the Benefits Agency John was Finance Director of the Funding Agency for Schools and before that held a series of senior posts in the Health Service and Local Government in both England and Scotland.

Financial Assistance Scheme

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he expects the first payments to be made by the Financial Assistance Scheme. [38288]

Mr. Timms: The first payments by the Financial Assistance Scheme to members of the ASW (Cardiff) pension scheme, the first scheme to provide us with the required details, have been issued and should be in individuals' bank accounts by Wednesday 21 December.

Firework Storage Sites

John Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the Health and Safety Executive, when considering whether applicants for licensed firework storage sites are fit and proper persons, takes into account the criminal record of applicants other than their record with relation to explosives legislation. [36387]

Mrs. McGuire: The Manufacture and Storage of Explosives Regulations 2005 permit a licensing authority to refuse a licence where it takes the view that the applicant is not a fit person to store explosives. This means that the licensing authority does not have confidence in the applicant's ability or willingness to store the explosives safely.

In considering this issue the authority will primarily consider previous breaches of health and safety legislation but it can also take into account breaches of other relevant legislation where this reflects on the ability of the applicant to store safely and its willingness to comply with health and safety legislation.

HSE does not have access to the police criminal records and is not therefore able to run criminal records checks.

Gas Industry Levy

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent discussions he has had with *(a)* Ofgem, *(b)* the Health and Safety Commission and *(c)* the Council of Registered Gas Installers on the proposals from the Health and Safety Commission in 2000 for a levy on the gas industry to fund (i) a watchdog to promote carbon monoxide awareness and (ii) equipment for gas emergency services to test for carbon monoxide; and if he will make a statement. [34746]

Mrs. McGuire: None. However, my noble friend the Lord Hunt is due to meet both the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) and CORGI early next year when these issues are on the agenda.

The Health and Safety Commission's Fundamental Review of Gas Safety in 2000 recommended a levy on the gas industry for research and publicity, not specifically for a watchdog to promote carbon monoxide awareness.

Household Incomes

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent assessment has been made of the *(a)* comprehensiveness and *(b)* accuracy of advice given by Jobcentres on the effect on household incomes of coming off the unemployment register and engaging in part-time work. [34097]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 19 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning what recent assessment has been undertaken of the comprehensiveness and accuracy of the advice given by jobcentres on the effect of household incomes of coming off the unemployment register and engaging in part time work. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

I am not aware of any such assessment within the past year.

Jobcentre Plus advisors use a networked version of the Departmental Integrated Benefits Information System (IBIS) computer system to help them provide 'Better-off in work advice to customers. This IT tool provides a comprehensive calculation across the full range of income-based benefits and tax credits. The user either enters the amount of benefit known to be in payment, or lets the system calculate current entitlements based on the information provided by the customer. The system then allows a 'what if scenario to be entered to compare to the current position, and this will most typically involve a customer's prospective job details. Such events often involve a number of consequential changes such as the addition of travelling expenses and childcare and the IBIS system prompts for all of these to be considered and captured where appropriate.

Once all of the additional information has been entered for the prospective change, the system performs another series of calculations to show estimated entitlements. It also performs a financial comparison between the current actual position and the (typically) in work estimate. This is known as the Better Off calculation and shows a customer exactly how much per week they will gain or loose by taking a particular job.

With regard to accuracy, we take this very seriously and regularly update the IBIS system in line with, for example, changes to benefit rates. When we have investigated cases where the advice may have appeared incorrect, we have generally found this to have been caused either by incorrect or incomplete information being supplied by the customer, or when circumstances have changed between the advice being given and, for example, the take up of a job.

Household Poverty

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what percentage of households were in poverty *(a)* before housing costs and *(b)* after housing costs in the most recent year for which figures are available; and how many in each case were (i) local authority tenants, (ii) housing association tenants, (iii) private tenants, (iv) owner occupiers with a mortgage and (v) those who own outright. [38319]

Margaret Hodge: Poverty is about more than low income. It is also about health, housing, education and the quality of the environment. The seventh annual 'Opportunity for all' report (Cm 6239), published in October 2005, sets out the Government's strategy for tackling poverty and social exclusion and presents information on the indicators used to measure progress against this strategy .

Specific information regarding individuals living in low income households is available in "Households Below Average Income 1994/95–2003/04", available in the Library. The threshold of below 60 per cent. contemporary median income is the most commonly used in reporting low income.

Information on the percentage of households in relative low income, and the number of households in low income by tenure type is presented in the following

table for 2003–04. A relative low income household is defined here as a household with income below 60 per cent. of contemporary median income.

	Before housing costs	*After housing costs*
Percentage of households in low income	17	21
Number of households in low income by tenure type		
(i) local authority tenants	800,000	1,300,000
(ii) housing association tenants	400,000	800,000
(iii) private tenants	400,000	800,000
(iv) owned with a mortgage	800,000	1,000,000
(v) owned outright	1,700,000	1,200,000
(vi) other	100,000	100,000
Total number of households in low income	4,300,000	5,200,000

Notes:
1. Tables show percentages rounded to the nearest percentage point, and numbers rounded to the nearest 100,000.
2. Figures may not sum due to rounding.

Income Support

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the average length of time taken by the Department is to process requests for appeals in relation to income support awards. [36328]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* The administration of the Appeals Service is a matter for the Chief Executive of the Appeals Service, Christina Townsend. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Christina Townsend, dated 19 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question regarding the average length of time taken by his department to process requests for appeals in relation to income support awards.

I refer the Honourable member to my letter dated the 21st November 2005, a copy of which can be found on the House of Commons Hansard within the Written Answers section, column 1669W.

I hope this reply is helpful.

Industrial Injuries Benefit

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of expenditure by his Department on industrial injuries benefit for each year from 1990–91 to 2006–07; and if he will make a statement. [36737]

Margaret Hodge: The information is in the table.

Expenditure on industrial injuries benefits since 1990

	Status	*Nominal terms*	*Real terms, 2005–06 prices*
1990–91	Outturn	584	877
1991–92	Outturn	655	927
1992–93	Outturn	668	916
1993–94	Outturn	686	918
1994–95	Outturn	707	931
1995–96	Outturn	731	937
1996–97	Outturn	743	920
1997–98	Outturn	747	898
1998–99	Outturn	761	892
1999–2000	Outturn	753	866
2000–01	Outturn	759	861
2001–02	Outturn	778	862
2002–03	Outturn	783	840
2003–04	Outturn	783	819
2004–05	Estimated	795	814
2005–06	Planned	803	803
2006–07	Planned	801	782

Notes:
1. Figures are for Great Britain
2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest £ million.
3. Figures for real terms are based on 2005–06 prices.
4. The industrial injuries benefits expenditure quoted is a total of industrial injuries disablement benefit, industrial death benefit, and other industrial injuries benefits.
5. Expenditure information is published on the Department's internet website at the following address—http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd4/expenditure.asp. The information in the internet tables has recently been updated, following the pre-Budget report 2005, and is therefore consistent with the pre-Budget report.

Source:
Expenditure figures have been taken from the DWP Expenditure Tables (Tables 3, 3a, 4, and 4a).

Jobcentre Plus

Sir Malcolm Rifkind: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) if he will list the *(a)* private companies and *(b)* voluntary organisations that deliver Jobcentre Plus contracts; [27868]

(2) what percentage of outsourced employment services contracts are delivered by *(a)* private companies and *(b)* voluntary organisations; and what the value is in 2005–06 in each case. [27869]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 19 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your questions requesting a list of organisations that deliver Jobcentre Plus contracts broken down into private and voluntary sector organisations, and what percentage of outsourced employment services contracts are delivered by these organisations and their contract value for 2005–06. This is something which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

A list of organisations which have Jobcentre Plus contracts has been placed in the library. Unfortunately, we are currently not able to breakdown this list of providers between private and voluntary organisations. This information could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

However, Jobcentre Plus is currently implementing a new system which will enable information on programmes and providers to be obtained and collated more readily. The decision to set up this improved database came as a recommendation from the Jobcentre Plus Programme Procurement Review. Jobcentre Plus has set up a new externally administered accreditation service which will capture comprehensive information on all contractors and their sub contractors, broken down by programme and by type of organisation e.g. private company, voluntary body etc. This new system should be largely complete by April 2006.

With regard to your request for information regarding contract value, the total available budget for all Jobcentre Plus provision for 2005–06 is £1.1 billion. The actual expenditure on all these demand led contracts will, of course, depend on the volume of customers who actually take up the opportunities available within the various programmes. It will not be possible to break down expenditure by category of provider until the new database is available from April 2006.

I hope this is helpful.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many claimants live more than five miles from an integrated Jobcentre Plus customer-facing office. [34250]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 19 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning how many claimants live more than 5 miles away from an integrated Jobcentre Plus customer facing office. This falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

We do not hold information on the distance our customers have to travel to their nearest Jobcentre Plus office.

In planning the new network of Jobcentre Plus offices, local managers take into account many factors including population spread, availability and cost of public transport, and the distance between offices. We aim to locate our new offices where there are good transport links.

Inevitably as the office network changes, there will be some customers who will find they will have to travel further. Jobcentre Plus is actively working with local partners to ensure that these hard to reach communities have access to services. In many locations, particularly rural locations, we are often able to provide outreach facilities, ensuring access to job vacancies, advice and information through third party premises.

In practice this means that with our new network, very few of our customers would have to travel more than 5 miles to access Jobcentre Plus services, other than in the most remote rural areas. Customers are now using our offices differently. More of our face-to-face customer contact is on an appointment basis and information on job vacancies is readily available by telephone and Internet. This enables staff in our offices to focus on those customers in greatest need of support.

I hope this is helpful.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how Jobcentre Plus has performed against its customer service targets in each year since 2001. [35359]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 19 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning how Jobcentre Plus has performed against its customer service targets in each year since 2001. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

Jobcentre Plus was created in April 2002 bringing together the former Employment Service and those parts of the former Benefits Agency delivering services to working age people.

Jobcentre Plus's performance against its targets is published each year in our Annual Report and Accounts, copies of which can be found in the House of Commons Library. Performance against our Customer Service Target for the last three operational years and current operational year is in the table below.

For the operational year 2004/05, social security offices were included in the data capture process for the Customer Service Target. These offices had not previously been assessed under the Mystery Shopper component of the target. There were training initiatives underway at the time to up skill the staff. This was against a background of reducing headcount and the continued rollout. The expected progress on rollout was not achieved in 2004/05, and therefore the target achievement level was not upgraded in 2005/06.

Customer service

Percentage

	Target	*Achievement*
2002–03	79	85
2003–04	83	83.4
2004–05	81	83.2
2005–06	81	84.8

Note:
For 2005–06 the performance achieved is up to end of September 2005.

I hope this is helpful.

New Deal

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how much was spent on the New Deal in Beverley and Holderness in each year from 1997–98; and what the estimate is for each year to 2008–09. [38122]

Margaret Hodge: Figures for expenditure and estimates for New Deal spend/forecast are not available at constituency level.

New Registrations (Slough)

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) how many people from the new EU member states have joined the new deal scheme in Slough in each of the last five years; [38508]

(2) how many people registered for the new deal in Slough in each of the last five years for which data are available. [38512]

Margaret Hodge: Information is not collected on the nationality of those starting new deal.

National Insurance Contributions

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions by how many years qualifying national insurance contributions would have to be reduced in order that 90 per cent. of newly retired women would receive a full basic state pension in their own right. [23680]

Mr. Timms: The information is not available in the form requested.

Home responsibilities protection (HRP) reduces the number of qualifying years needed for a full basic state pension by up to half, so the precise number of years an individual requires will vary according to the number of years of HRP awarded. However, departmental administrative data indicates that if a full basic state pension were paid to those who have the equivalent of at least 10 qualifying years, approximately 85 per cent. of newly retired women in March 2005 might receive the full basic pension. This may overestimate the reduction in qualifying years needed for a particular proportion of newly retired women to receive a full BSP in their own right, due to the way in which HRP interacts with qualifying years.

Women's basic state pension records are continuing to improve with the combined effect of increased labour market participation and HRP, so in the future a much more modest reduction in qualifying years might be

needed to achieve the same outcome. We estimate on the basis of the current system that by 2025 men and women reaching age 65 will have similar basic state pension entitlements.

Notes:

1. The answer is based on 2004–05 departmental administrative data which provides information about the amount of basic state pension (BSP) in payment.

2. The answer includes an approximation of the proportion of women at state pension age in March 2005 who made a late claim or deferred their state pension entitlement.

3. Currently women normally need 39 qualifying years for a full BSP and 10 qualifying years to get the minimum BSP, at least one year must derive from paid NICs. In 2020, when SPA for women is raised to age 65, the number of qualifying years for women will equalise with men, increasing to 44 for the full BSP and 11 qualifying years for the minimum BSP (which is 25 per cent. of the required qualifying years for a full BSP over a person's working life). The administrative data does not hold information on the entitlements of those who fail to qualify for the minimum BSP.

4. The figure is based on those women with the equivalent of 10 or more qualifying years. This includes women who have at least 10 qualifying years from paid NI contributions, or a combination of contributions and NI credits as well as women who have some home responsibilities protection HRP on their record. For example, a women with 19 years of HRP and 5 years of paid contributions is entitled to the same amount of BSP as a person with 10 years of paid contributions only.

5. The data set does not break down how the BSP is accrued (for example the number of years of paid contributions, credits or HRP). For this reason, the answer should be treated as approximate only.

6. The answer is based on women aged 60 in March 2005 resident in Great Britain.

Pathways to Work

Linda Gilroy: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people *(a)* aged over 50 and *(b)* aged under 50 (i) joined Pathways to Work, (ii) subsequently found work, (iii) joined New Deal for Disabled People (excluding people in Pathways to Work pilot areas) and (iv) subsequently found work (excluding people in Pathways to Work pilot areas) in the last year for which figures are available. [26194]

Margaret Hodge: The information requested is in the tables.

Number of people who have joined Pathways to Work between September 2004 and August 2005

	Number of individuals starting Pathways to Work	*Number who subsequently found work*
Aged 50 and over	21,530	1,640
Aged under 50	58,460	5,620
Age not known	3,670	830
Total	83,660	8,090

Notes:

1. Data are to the end of August 2005.

2. Figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

Source:

Pathways to Work Evaluation Database

Starts to New Deal for Disabled People (excluding people in Pathways to Work pilot areas) between September 2004 and August 2005

	Number who started NDDP between September 2004 and August 2005, inclusive	*Number who subsequently found a job through NDDP*
Aged 18–49 years	39,980	13,170
Aged 50+ years	13,950	4,800
Total	54,020	17,990

Notes:

1. Data are to the end of August 2005.

2. All figures are rounded to the nearest 10.

3. Totals include people for whom age is not recorded. Because of this, and due to rounding, components will not necessarily sum to totals.

Source:

Information Directorate, DWP, 2005

Pension Reform

Mr. Waterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what changes in public expenditure he expects to arise as a result of the state retirement pension age for women rising to 65 years. [33438]

Mr. Timms: The Government's long-term projections of benefit spending following the pre-Budget report of 5 December give total United Kingdom benefit spending on pensioners as £104.1 billion in 2020 compared with £77.3 billion in 2005. All figures are given in 2005–06 prices.

If women's state pension age were to remain at 60, then benefit expenditure on pensioners would be £13.7 billion higher. This saving is offset by extra costs of £3.5 billion on benefits for those of working age. Hence the change of the state retirement pension age to 65 years for women, with associated rises in the qualifying age for benefits such as pension credit or winter fuel payments, is expected to lead to a net saving in benefit expenditure of £10.1 billion in the year 2020 (figures do not sum exactly due to rounding).

Pensioners

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the administration costs were of the *(a)* pensioners' Christmas bonus, *(b)* the over-80s age top-up to the basic pension and *(c)* winter fuel allowance in 2004–05; and if he will make a statement. [20012]

Mr. Timms: We estimate that the cost of paying winter fuel payment, worth £1.9 billion to 11.4 million customers in 2004–05, was £23.2 million. The costs of administering the Christmas bonus and over-80 payment are not separately identifiable.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what proportion of pensioners receive *(a)* a contracted-out pension and *(b)* SERPS or S2P; and what estimate he has made of the average amount received by these pensioners. [35371]

Mr. Timms: Information on the numbers and amounts of contracted-out pensions is not available. The only available information relates to deductions from additional State Pension in respect of periods of contracting-out from SERPS prior to April 1997.

The total number of people receiving an additional State Pension which is subject to a contracted-out deduction is over 4 million representing 37.6 per cent. of all people receiving State Pension.

The total number of people receiving an additional State Pension under SERPS and/or S2P is just over 7 million representing around 61 per cent. of all people receiving State Pension. For those in receipt of additional State Pension the weekly average amount is £18.80.

Notes:

1. Data is taken from 5 per cent. extract of Pension Service Computer System as at 31 March 2005, therefore figures are subject to a degree of sampling variation. They are also adjusted to be consistent with the overall February caseload from the WPLS.
2. Caseload figures are rounded to the nearest million.
3. Amounts are rounded to the nearest 10p.

Source:

DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) 100 per cent. data and 5 per cent. samples.

Pensions Service

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the national targets are for The Pension Service; and what the performance of offices in South Devon is in relation to those targets. [36576]

Mr. Timms: The annual targets for The Pension Service are published each year in the agency's Business Plan. Copies of The Pension Service's Business Plan 2005–06 are available in the House of Commons Library.

Customers based in the Plymouth and Torbay areas are dealt with by Bath Pension Centre.

The following table shows Bath Pension Centre performance information available at October 2005, against the published targets in The Pension Service Business Plan 2005–06.

	National target	*Bath Pension Centre*[1]
Pay guarantee element of pension credit (households)	2.1 million	N/A
Reduce losses from fraud and error (percentage)	20	—[2]
Telephone calls answered (percentage)	92	97.6
Telephone calls blocked (percentage)	Less than 1	0
Pension credit application process time (days)	10	7.63
Pension credit accuracy rate (percentage)	96	94.4
State pension claims (non complex) (percentage)	95 in 60 days	96.65
State pension claims (complex cases) (percentage)	91 in 85 days	—[2]
State pension claims accuracy rate (percentage)	98	98.50[3]
Deal with state pension forecast requests (days)	15	N/A
Issue winter fuel payments for 2005–06 (for claims received before 24 Sept 2005) by:	Christmas 2005	—[2]
Reduce sick absence (days)	8	8.8

[1] Year to date.

[2] Not available. This information is only collated on a national basis.

[3] Interim October summary figure.

Performance Development System

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the annual administrative costs of the Performance Development System in the Department were in each of the last three years. [38742]

Mrs. McGuire: The information requested is not available.

Personal Capability Assessment

Roger Berry: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether the Government are conducting a review of the Personal Capability Assessment; and if he will make a statement. [36798]

Margaret Hodge: The Personal Capability Assessment is acknowledged as being one of the most comprehensive benefit assessment processes in use anywhere in the world. Of course, in common with all our services, its effectiveness is under constant review as we seek to continuously improve.

In developing our proposals for welfare reform we are reviewing whether the process can be further developed to contribute more to supporting an individual's recovery and return to work. Any proposals emerging from this review will be detailed in our Welfare Reform Green Paper, which will be published in due course.

Poverty

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Yeovil (Mr. Laws) of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1682–86W, on poverty, if he will break down the information by *(a)* region and *(b)* county. [34398]

Margaret Hodge: Specific information regarding low income for Great Britain is available in "Households Below Average Income (HBAI) 1994/95–2003/04", available in the Library. The threshold of below 60 per cent. of median household income is the most commonly used in reporting trends in low income.

The data source does not allow us to provide robust estimates below regional level. Estimates at a regional level can be provided using data from 1994/95.

Information on the number of children living in relative low income for Scotland, Wales and by Government Office Region from 1994–95 onwards has been placed in the Library.

The figures are for absolute and relative incomes. Absolute low income is defined here for individuals as living in a household with income below 60 per cent. of 1996–97 median income which has been adjusted for inflation. Relative low income is defined here for individuals as living in a household with income below 60 per cent. of contemporary median.

Secondments

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what advisers to the Prime Minister have been seconded to work for the Department during the past year; and if he will make a statement. [31856]

Mrs. McGuire *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* No advisers to the Prime Minister have been seconded to work for my Department during the past year.

Statutory Instruments

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what training is given to *(a)* policy officials and *(b)* lawyers in his Department responsible for drafting statutory instruments; and if he will make a statement. [33657]

Mrs. McGuire: Statutory Instruments are drafted by departmental lawyers based on instructions from policy divisions. Where SIs amend primary legislation, parliamentary counsel are consulted.

As members of the Government Legal Service (GLS), departmental lawyers receive extensive training on the preparation and drafting of statutory instruments. This consists of a combination of lectures and practical exercises run by experienced practitioners in the GLS, coupled with training given by legal advisers who advise the parliamentary scrutiny committees. In addition, senior managers in the GLS take a close interest in the quality of SIs and provide frequent feedback and on the job training to those with lead responsibility for drafting. This is an ongoing process and part of the continuing education of government legal advisers.

Winter Fuel Payment

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the cost was of administering the winter fuel payment in 2004–05. [32726]

Mr. Timms: We estimate that the cost of paying winter fuel payment, worth £1.9 billion to £11.4 million customers in 2004–05, was £23.2 million.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many pensioner households are eligible for the winter fuel allowance in Lancashire. [37732]

Mr. Timms: Last winter there were 175,150 pensioner households in Lancashire that received a winter fuel payment. We expect the number to be similar for this winter.

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 5.
2. Any residence found to have four or more occupants is not included in these figures as it is assumed to be a Residential Care or Nursing Home.
3. Local authorities and parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.

Source:
Information Directorate, 100 per cent. sample.

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what his estimate is of the number of pensioner householders in Wakefield district who are eligible for assistance with winter fuel payments. [38329]

Mr. Timms: It is not possible to provide an estimate of the number of pensioner householders who are eligible for a winter fuel payment. Last winter 62,010 householders in the Wakefield local authority received a winter fuel payment. We would expect the number to be similar for this winter. The figures for winter 2004–05 are also available in the Library.

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest five.
2. Local authorities and parliamentary constituencies are assigned by matching postcodes against the relevant ONS postcode directory.

Source:
Information Directorate, 100 per cent. sample

Working Neighbourhood Pilot

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will list the payments agreed by his Department to each private contractor for the Working Neighbourhood Pilot. [36370]

Margaret Hodge: The information requested is in the tables.

1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005

£

Event	JSA and anybody not working excluding lone parents, incapacity benefit, income support and severe disability allowance clients	Lone parents, incapacity benefit, income support and severe disability allowance clients
Engagement	300	853
Job entry	1,370	2,500
Job retention for 13 weeks	2,600	5,550

1 April 2005 to 31 March 2006

£

Event	JSA and anybody not working excluding lone parents, incapacity benefit, income support and severe disability allowance clients	Lone parents, incapacity benefit, income support and severe disability allowance clients
Stage 1—Engagement	300	n/a
Stage 2 (after 4 weeks for JSA clients)	450	1,250
First job outcome payment	400	1,000
Second job outcome payment (after 5 weeks employed)	400	1,000
Third job outcome payment (after 13 weeks employed)	3,600	3,600

Notes:
1. Stage 1 Engagement is initial contact and preparation of a work plan.
2. Stage 2 applies to those on JSA and anybody not working excluding lone parents, incapacity benefit, income support and severe disability allowance clients. It occurs after 4 weeks, the completion of the work plan and the commencement of job search.

TREASURY

Cash Machines (Northern Ireland)

David Simpson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 7 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1376W, on cash machines, how many cash machines in Northern Ireland charged customers to withdraw money in each of the last 10 years. [38602]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Unfortunately LINK's historical data on ATMs are not broken down by location.

Electoral Register

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many and what percentage of households in each *(a)* London borough and *(b)* constituency were on the electoral register on 1 January; and if he will make a statement. [36462]

Ms Harman: I have been asked to reply.

Treasury has transferred this question to my Department as we deal with Electoral Policy.

The most recent published statistics on electoral registration are for 1 December 2004. Following, there are two tables showing:

1. The number of local government electors in each London borough; and

2. The number of parliamentary electors in each London constituency.

Please note that these statistics relate to individual electors rather than to households. Estimates on the percentage of individuals and households registered are not available at constituency or borough level.

Table 1: Number of registered local government electors at 1 December 2004, by London borough

Borough	*Number of local government electors*
Barking and Dagenham	119,372
Barnet	214,421
Bexley	171,904
Brent	180,665
Bromley	228,983
Camden	144,326
City of London	6,018
Croydon	246,866
Ealing	215,814
Enfield	194,611
Greenwich	160,176
Hackney	129,274
Hammersmith and Fulham	116,144
Haringey	152,486
Harrow	162,049
Havering	175,668
Hillingdon	181,145
Hounslow	165,583
Islington	120,297
Kensington and Chelsea	98,629
Kingston upon Thames	99,014
Lambeth	203,055
Lewisham	177,731
Merton	135,678
Newham	171,815
Redbridge	181,192
Richmond upon Thames	120,146
Southwark	180,173
Sutton	131,315
Tower Hamlets	145,444
Waltham Forest	159,399
Wandsworth	211,816
Westminster	135,810

Source:
Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Table 2: Number of registered parliamentary electors at 1 December 2004, by constituency in London

Constituency	*Number of parliamentary electors*
Barking	57,310
Battersea	69,093
Beckenham	75,143
Bethnal Green and Bow	82,157
Bexleyheath and Crayford	64,840
Brent East	55,115
Brent North	59,629
Brent South	55,722
Brentford and Isleworth	79,433
Bromley and Chislehurst	71,532
Camberwell and Peckham	55,755
Carshalton and Wallington	66,949
Chingford and Woodford Green	61,585
Chipping Barnet	66,260
Cities of London and Westminster	71,321
Croydon Central	81,038
Croydon North	83,826
Croydon South	77,071
Dagenham	60,311
Dulwich and West Norwood	72,148
Ealing North	78,180
Baling, Acton and Shepherd's Bush	70,094
Ealing, Southall	83,471
East Ham	77,547
Edmonton	58,676
Eltham	57,267
Enfield North	66,378
Enfield, Southgate	63,539
Erith and Thamesmead	71,774
Feltham and Heston	80,476
Finchley and Golders Green	69,252
Greenwich and Woolwich	63,764
Hackney North and Stoke Newington	58,635
Hackney South and Shoreditch	63,776
Hammersmith and Fulham	78,295
Hampstead and Highgate	66,725
Harrow East	84,044
Harrow West	74,286
Hayes and Harlington	57,810
Hendon	70,959
Holborn and St. Pancras	66,301
Hornchurch	60,256
Hornsey and Wood Green	76,646
Ilford North	69,972
Ilford South	78,296
Islington North	56,975
Islington South and Finsbury	56,457
Kensington and Chelsea	61,426
Kingston and Surbiton	71,231
Lewisham East	57,616
Lewisham West	57,998
Lewisham, Deptford	56,519
Leyton and Wanstead	60,089
Mitcham and Morden	65,608
North Southwark and Bermondsey	77,088
Old Bexley and Sidcup	68,072
Orpington	78,925
Poplar and Canning Town	83,129
Putney	61,279
Regent's Park and Kensington North	77,350
Richmond Park	69,025
Romford	58,993
Ruislip-Northwood	61,206
Streatham	78,615
Sutton and Cheam	62,321
Tooting	70,201
Tottenham	66,400

Table 2: Number of registered parliamentary electors at 1 December 2004, by constituency in London

Constituency	*Number of parliamentary electors*
Twickenham	71,116
Upminster	55,493
Uxbridge	58,311
Vauxhall	79,022
Walthamstow	62,833
West Ham	61,634
Wimbledon	63,943

Source:
Office for National Statistics (ONS)

Equitable Life

Sir John Butterfill: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent discussions he has had with the Parliamentary and Health Service Ombudsman on the report of her investigation into the prudential regulation of Equitable Life. [37287]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The Parliamentary Ombudsman's investigation into the prudential regulation of Equitable Life is, like all such investigations, being conducted in private. The Treasury is co-operating fully with the investigation.

Sir John Butterfill: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether he has received information from the Parliamentary Ombudsman on a publication date for her report on the prudential regulation of Equitable Life; whether he has made representations to the Parliamentary Ombudsman on this subject; and if he will make a statement. [38761]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: The timetable for the completion of the Parliamentary Ombudsman's investigation into the prudential regulation of Equitable Life is a matter for her.

The Treasury is co-operating fully with the Ombudsman's investigation which, like all such investigations, is being conducted in private.

Gift Aid

Greg Clark: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the cost is to the Government of administering the gift aid scheme per pound of tax relief received by charities. [38574]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: HM Revenue and Customs does not distinguish the costs of administering gift aid from other activities in relation to charities and charitable giving.

National Insurance (Musicians)

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what impact assessment was conducted in relation to the requirement on music sector companies to pay class 1 national insurance contributions if they employ freelance musicians; and if he will make a statement. [38031]

Dawn Primarolo: The Department of Social Security was responsible for the policy on national insurance contributions and changes to legislation covering actors and musicians that were introduced on 17 July 1998. The changes were made following prior consultation with Equity and the Musicians Union and other organisations.

Pensions

Paul Flynn: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of the amounts payable in the basic pensions in the year 2006–07 for *(a)* individuals and *(b)* couples if pensions had been increased by the levels of earnings inflation since 1997. [36411]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

The information is in the table.

	£
State Pension (singles per week)	90.90
State Pension (couples per week)	145.25

Notes:
1. Figures are based on the April 1997 rate of State Pension uprated in line with the non-seasonally adjusted September Average Earnings Index including bonuses for 1997, and subsequent years, and take account of the convention that rates of State Pension are rounded to the nearest 5 pence.
2. The couples rate is taken to be the value of a full Category A Pension combined with the value of a full Category B Pension.

Red Diesel

Mr. Drew: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what derogation there is within the EU for the use of red diesel by pleasure craft; and if he will seek to extend the derogation. [37895]

John Healey: The Energy Products Directive (EPD) prohibits the use of rebated gas oil in leisure boats for private use, but the UK enjoys a derogation from this provision. This derogation expires at 31 December 2006 and can be renewed only with the unanimous agreement of the council.

We confirmed in the pre-Budget report that we are minded to apply for an extension of this derogation. We will issue an initial regulatory impact assessment on the effects of ending the derogation early next year and this document will be used as the basis for further information gathering and discussions.

Stamp Duty

Mr. Mark Field: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what estimate he has made of revenue from stamp duty on property in each of the next three financial years. [38211]

Mr. Ivan Lewis: Estimated and projected revenues for total stamp taxes in 2005–06 and 2006–07 are published in Table B14 of the pre-Budget 2006 report. The component of the duty attributable to land and property (Stamp Duty Land Tax) is given in the following table:

£ billion

	Stamp duty land tax
2005–06	7.0
2006–07	7.8

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to the answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 83W, on tax credits, how many recommendations have been made by HM Revenue and Customs internal audit relating to fraud since 2003–04. [37981]

Dawn Primarolo: Internal Audit's role is to provide an independent and objective opinion to the Chairman and Audit Committee on risk management, control and governance. Over the course of the year it will report to the Chairman and Audit Committee on a whole range of issues including fraud and compliance and make recommendations where appropriate.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what estimate he has made of the cost of tax credits between 2003–04 and 2013–14 if *(a)* the yield from recovered overpayments is excluded from the calculation and *(b)* the reforms announced in the pre-Budget report were not introduced; [37982]

(2) what estimate he has made of the yield from recovered tax credit overpayments between 2003–04 and 2013–14 if *(a)* the pre-Budget reforms were not introduced, *(b)* the pre-Budget reforms are introduced and *(c)* the income disregard is raised to £25,000 from 2006–07. [37983]

Dawn Primarolo: The likely scale of behavioural change resulting from no longer recovering any overpayments could have significant costs to the Exchequer; no estimates are available of this cost.

The effect of the tax credit package is contained within table 1.2 of the 2005 pre-Budget report.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Agency Staff

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many staff were employed by non-departmental public bodies and agencies for which he has responsibility in 2004–05 in *(a)* total and *(b)* each (i) nation and (ii) region of the UK and *(c)* London. [35937]

Dr. Howells: Our non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) employ a total of 7,715 staff.

The detailed figures are as follows:

four full-time and one part-time for the British Association for Central and Eastern Europe;

0 for The Government Hospitality Advisory Committee for the Purchase of Wine;

four full-time and two part-time for the Great British China Centre;

0 for the Marshall Aid Commemoration Commission;

69 for the Wilton Park Academic Council;

7,613 (in the UK and abroad) for the British Council;

two part-time for the Foreign Compensation Commission;

12 for the Westminster Foundation for Democracy;

eight for the Diplomatic Service Appeals Board.

All of the UK-based staff are located in London except in the case of The British Council and The Wilton Park Academic Council. The British Council has 45 staff in Scotland, 5.8 in Wales and 29 in Northern Ireland. Within the UK there are five staff in the East of England, three in the East Midlands, three in the West Midlands, three in Yorkshire and Humber, two in the North East, three in the South West, four in the South East and 575 in London. All 69 of the staff at The Wilton Park Academic Council are based in the South-East of England, in Sussex.

Airspace (Extraordinary Renditions)

Mr. Hague: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs on what date *(a)* he and *(b)* his officials first became aware of allegations that the United States was using civil aircraft for the purpose of the rendition of terrorist suspects. [37966]

Dr. Howells: As the US Secretary of State, Condaleezza Rice, made clear in her statement of 5 December 2005, the United States and other countries have for decades used "renditions" to transport terrorist suspects from the country in which they were captured to their home country or to other countries where they can be questioned, held or brought to justice. As to the current allegations about rendition, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and his officials became aware of them when they appeared in the media.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he *(a)* has written and *(b)* intends to write to the US Administration to ask whether UK airspace has been used for the purpose of the extraordinary rendition of anyone accused of terrorist activities since 11 September 2001; and if he will make a statement. [37280]

Dr. Howells: I refer the right hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary to the right hon. and learned Member for North-East Fife (Sir Menzies Campbell) on 12 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1652–53W.

Albatrosses

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what penalties can be imposed on people who are found to be responsible for deaths to albatrosses in the waters around *(a)* South Georgia, *(b)* the South Sandwich Islands and *(c)* the British Antarctic Territory; and whether there are plans to change these penalties. [36085]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The incidental mortality of albatrosses and petrels in the waters of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (SGSSI) is now virtually zero, following a very successful campaign to employ effective mitigating measures on fishing vessels.

Penalties do exist under the SGSSI Fisheries (Conservation and Management) Ordinance 2000, as amended, and the Falkland Islands Dependencies Conservation Ordinance 1975. These include a maximum fine of £250,000 for fishing vessels which breach fishing licence conditions, and a fine of £150 for those who kill, wound, capture, molest or export any

native bird (including albatrosses or petrels). The latter penalty will be increased as part of the current revision of South Georgia legislation.

Within the British Antarctic Territory, whose territorial sea lies within the Antarctic treaty area, penalties could only be imposed on UK nationals or those operating British-registered vessels. However, longlining vessels, which pose the greatest risk to albatrosses and petrels, are not permitted to fish in British Antarctic Territory waters. Penalties exist under the British Antarctic Territory Fauna and Flora (Conservation) Ordinance 1990. The maximum statutory penalty is £5,000. There are no plans to change this figure.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are being taken to protect the albatross populations in *(a)* South Georgia, *(b)* the South Sandwich Islands and *(c)* the British Antarctic Territory; and how much funding was allocated to their protection in each place in each of the last eight years. [36086]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Albatrosses are protected under the South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands Fisheries (Conservation and Management) Ordinance 2000 and the Falkland Islands Dependencies Conservation Ordinance 1975; various Conservation Measures of the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR) and the Agreement for the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels (ACAP).

The British Antarctic Survey are continuing with a long-term study of the breeding success of albatrosses at South Georgia. The birds are tracked by satellite to discover how they disperse at sea away from the Islands, and where they are at most risk of being killed by Illegal, Unregulated and Unreported (IUU) fishing outside South Georgia waters.

The Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (GSGSSI) ensures long-term monitoring of populations around the Island, manages tourism in such a way as to protect the breeding birds, and works with CCAMLR and the fishing industry to protect albatross species at sea.

Scientific observers are placed on all longline fishing vessels and most trawlers to develop mitigation methods and monitor their success. This has cost the GSGSSI an average of over £500,000 per annum over the last three years. In addition, specific projects ashore that contribute to albatross protection have cost GSGSSI £10,400 in 1999; £42,167 in 2000; £55,000 in 2001; £39,946 in 2002; £55,513 in 2003; £83,575 in 2004, and are estimated to be £100,000 in 2005. It is accepted by CCAMLR, Birdlife International and the IUCN (World Conservation Union) that incidental seabird deaths in the South Georgia fisheries are now negligible.

There are no breeding albatrosses on any of the South Sandwich Islands. Their protection at sea is included in the work of GSGSSI as described.

All Antarctic fauna are protected under the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty. This is enacted into UK legislation through the Antarctic Act 1994, which prohibits any interference with Antarctic fauna without a specific permit.

The Government of the British Antarctic Territory has undertaken a number of environmental projects to reinforce the protection of vulnerable species in Antarctica. These have included the development of Antarctic Specially Managed and Protected Areas, under the Protocol on Environmental Protection to the Antarctic Treaty. These projects were not, however, specific to albatross and petrel species.

Assets (Corruption)

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what value of illicitly acquired assets of a foreign state recovered by British authorities has been returned to the victim state in each year since 1997; and if he will make a statement. [35404]

Ian Pearson: The Government welcome the new powers granted under the United Nations Convention Against Corruption which will make it easier for states to restrain funds. International co-operation is currently directed by existing legislation. However, these procedures have proved to be a barrier to providing effective assistance and as such there is no record of return of assets. The power of British authorities to seize assets will be strengthened when an Order in Council comes into force under the Proceeds of Crime Act (2002) in January 2006. The 2002 Act also provides for domestic action to be taken by way of civil recovery proceedings. I cannot comment on ongoing live cases and to date no assets have been returned.

Bangladesh

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions the UK Government have had with the Government of Bangladesh regarding that government's human rights record. [37813]

Dr. Howells: We regularly raise human rights with the Government of Bangladesh. I visited Bangladesh from 14 to 16 November 2005. I underlined the UK's commitment to, and support of, human rights in Bangladesh during my discussions including with human rights campaigners and representatives of religious and ethnic minorities and in a widely reported high profile speech.

The British high commission in Dhaka is actively engaged in the promotion of human rights. On 10 December 2005, in a speech to mark World Human Rights, the high commissioner called publicly on political and religious leaders in Bangladesh to defend minority rights, and to work to eradicate unlawful killings. The British high commission routinely monitors and often raises human rights with the Government of Bangladesh, both bilaterally and together with EU partners. As the EU Presidency, our high commission has specifically lobbied Ministers and officials on minority rights, the persecution of human rights defenders, freedom of the media and the observance of human rights by law enforcement agencies. They have also helped to raise awareness in Bangladesh of the plight of indigenous peoples, refugees and of human rights in wider civil society. The high commission also has regular contacts with human rights

non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and other activists in Bangladesh, and provides funding to NGOs for human rights based programmes.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the human rights situation in Bangladesh. [37814]

Dr. Howells: We continue to have serious concerns about the human rights situation in Bangladesh including human rights abuses by the rapid action Battalion; the use of the death penalty, combined with legal and penal systems that do not have the appropriate probity or capacity; gender, ethnic and religious discrimination; the safeguarding of the rights of children and the disabled and the protection of vulnerable groups from exploitation. The British high commission in Dhaka regularly raise human rights issues with the Government of Bangladesh and provide funding to non-governmental organisations for human rights programmes.

Brazil

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on his Department's policy towards British citizens held without representation in Brazil. [37872]

Dr. Howells: Foreign and Commonwealth Office policy for all our overseas posts is for consular staff to visit detained British nationals if the detainee wishes them to do so. During visits to detainees, consular staff monitor their welfare, and can provide information on the local legal system and a list of local lawyers. However, consular staff are not qualified to give legal advice, nor can we pay for or provide legal representation.

If a detainee indicates, either at a first meeting or subsequently, that they do not wish to receive consular assistance, our staff will respect the detainee's wishes.

There are currently 37 British nationals in detention in Brazil. We do not keep records for any country of how many detainees have specifically asked not to receive consular assistance, so are unable to give a number for those not being assisted in Brazil.

Bribery (OECD Working Group)

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress the Government will report to the OECD Working Group on Bribery on how the United Kingdom is implementing the Working Group's Phase 2 review recommendations; and if he will make a statement. [36845]

Ian Pearson: The UK's oral report on progress against the phase 2 review recommendations will take place at the meeting of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development Working Group on Bribery in March 2006. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) is co-ordinating the inputs of those Government Departments involved in responding to the recommendations. This process will continue until the presentation of the UK's final written report in March 2007. The FCO is currently collating information in preparation for the oral report in March 2006. When this has been completed, a progress report will be published.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place in the Library the briefing documents drawn up by his Department for the oral report the UK will make to the OECD Working Group on Bribery in relation to the Working Group's Phase 2 review recommendations. [36846]

Ian Pearson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave today (UIN 36845).

British Antarctic Territory

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last visited *(a)* South Georgia, *(b)* the South Sandwich Islands and *(c)* the British Antarctic Territory; and whether he has any plans to do so. [36091]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has never visited these Territories, nor does he have any plans at present to do so.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to *(a)* encourage tourism to (i) South Georgia, (ii) the South Sandwich Islands and (iii) the British Antarctic Territory and *(b)* to restrict the impact of tourism on the wildlife in those areas. [36092]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Government of South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands (GSGSSI) encourages visits by tourist cruise vessels to South Georgia by attending the annual meeting of the International Association of Antarctica Tour Operators (IAATO), by providing services to shipping, by supporting the South Georgia Museum Trust and by preserving the wildlife and environment that attracts tourists. There are no facilities for tourists in the South Sandwich Islands.

The Antarctic Treaty, to which the UK is a Consultative Party, designates Antarctica as a continent for peace and science. While the Government considers sustainable tourism a legitimate activity in Antarctica, they do not promote tourism to the British Antarctic Territory.

The GSGSSI takes very seriously its responsibilities in restricting the impact of tourism on wildlife in South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands (SGSSI). A strict permitting process is in place, and visits to the Islands require the permission of the Commissioner for SGSSI. No cruise ship may land passengers other than at Grytviken/King Edward Point without being a member of IAATO. All IAATO vessels follow the Antarctic Treaty Environmental Protocol guidelines while at GSSI. Expeditions to SGSSI are vetted by an independent panel of experts, which considers the potential impact on wildlife and the environment. The GSGSSI has banned the use of helicopters for the purpose of tourism, and any other flying is strictly regulated. The GSGSSI has closed many areas of South Georgia to tourists in order that wildlife should remain undisturbed.

The UK has actively promoted measures to restrict the impact of tourism on Antarctic flora and fauna through the Antarctic Treaty System. These have included, for example, the development of Site Guidelines for visitors to key Antarctic tourism sites, and new requirements to ensure adequate insurance and search and rescue provision for Antarctic expeditions.

British Embassies (Overnight Visitors)

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what system is in place to log *(a)* day and *(b)* overnight visitors to the British embassies in (i) France, (ii) Germany, (iii) Iran, (iv) Italy, (v) Russia, (vi) Saudi Arabia, (vii) North Korea, (viii) Zimbabwe and (ix) the US. [32742]

Ian Pearson *[pursuant to the reply, 2 December 2005, Official Report, c. 871W]:* I regret that an inaccurate answer was given to part of the hon. Member's question, regarding the system for logging in visitors to the embassy in Saudi Arabia. The correct answer should read as follows:

The embassy in Saudi Arabia: The embassy and residence are in the same compound. The names of guests at official events in the residence and overnight guests staying at the residence are recorded electronically. A log is not kept of other visitors to the embassy.

Building/Refurbishment Projects

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what *(a)* building and *(b)* refurbishment projects are planned by his Department in (i) 2005–06 and (ii) 2006–07; and what the expected costs are of each project. [37416]

Dr. Howells: Building and refurbishment projects planned/being undertaken by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in 2005–06 and 2006–07, and the expected costs of these projects in those years are:

£000

	Building projects	*FY 2005–06*	*FY 2006–07*
Algiers	New offices	700	8,866
Almaty	New offices	100	3,100
Amman	New visa offices	820	400
Astana	New offices	100	3,661
Baghdad	New offices and staff accommodation	11,452	—
Bangkok	Staff accommodation	1,100	3,869
Bangkok	Security work	600	—
Basra	New offices and staff accommodation	9,263	—
Chennai	New visa offices	1,170	10
Colombo	New offices	500	5,600
Doha	New offices and residence	1,105	4,410
Durban	Office fit-out	159	—
Dushanbe	New offices and residence	764	5
Hanslope Park, Bucks	Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Building	3,148	17,637
Hanslope Park, Bucks	Childcare Nursery	250	500
Hanslope Park, Bucks	Security work	500	500
Harare	New offices	700	4,050
Islamabad/Karachi	Staff accommodation	3,211	2,289
Istanbul	New visa offices	100	2,900
Jakarta	New offices	100	2,151
Kabul	Office fit-out	200	273
Kabul	Residence and staff housing	2,700	—
Kampala	New offices	1,500	—
Ljubjlana	Residence	100	1,116
Manila	New offices	330	4,637
Mumbai	New offices	250	1,332
Munich	Office fit-out	—	1,500
Pyongyang	Office fit-out	—	500
Rabat	New offices	4,000	2,164
Sana'a	New offices	4,000	2,773
Sarajevo	New offices	200	600
Shanghai	Office fit-out	40	—
Skopje	Office fit-out	3,500	—
Tbilisi	New offices	20	2,000
Tehran	Staff accommodation	—	2,000
Tirana	Residence	1,263	20
Warsaw	New offices	500	9,500

£000

	Refurbishment projects	*FY 2005–06*	*FY 2006–07*
Belgrade	Health and Safety works	36	—
Buenos Aires	Security work	600	1,100
Buenos Aires	Health and Safety works	2,700	163
Damascus	Security works	775	—
Dublin	Security works	—	1,800
King Charles St	Fourth floor conversion to open plan	5,630	3,162

£000

	Refurbishment projects	FY 2005–06	FY 2006–07
Kingston	Health and Safety works	1,350	120
Manila	Health and Safety works	468	400
Moscow	Residence	301	4,010
Ottawa	Offices	175	1,000
Tokyo	Health and Safety works	290	1,150
Washington	Offices	410	5

Burma

Mr. Binley: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations as the UK representative on the UN Security Council for that body to impose sanctions against Burma. [36729]

Ian Pearson: We encourage all the appropriate bodies of the United Nations (UN) to help bring about national reconciliation and respect for human rights and democracy in Burma. There is currently no agreement for imposing UN Security Council sanctions, but we continue to support any action in the UN Security Council which would help to promote reform and positive change in Burma.

China

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the social and political situation in China. [37890]

Ian Pearson: China is undergoing a period of rapid economic and social development. There have been improvements in recent years in the quality of life for most people living in China. But the Government remains concerned about the human rights situation in China. Through regular dialogue with the Chinese authorities, we encourage China to engage constructively with the international community on social issues and human rights and to institute political reforms to match economic growth.

Convergence Funds

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* counterparts in EU member states and *(b)* the European Commission regarding the future of convergence funds. [38028]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We have discussed the financial perspectives, including the convergence objective, at Ministerial and/or official level with each and every EU member state, the two Accession states (Bulgaria and Romania), the European Commission and the European Parliament.

Correspondence/Parliamentary Questions

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when his Department will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Brent East, dated 28 April, regarding Mr. Andrew Papworth. [37743]

Dr. Howells: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has no record of receiving a letter dated 28 April from the hon. Member. Officials have asked the hon. Member's office for a copy of the letter but no copy was held. A letter dated 14 December about the issues raised by the hon. Member's constituent, Mr. Papworth, was received in the FCO's Ministerial Support Unit that day. The hon. Member should expect a reply within 20 working days.

Clare Short: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when UK Visas will reply to the letter of 10 May from the right hon. Member for Birmingham, Ladywood regarding an application by Shahnaz Begum (B-C Islamabad reference 864696, date of birth 01/01/1971). [38118]

Dr. Howells: UK Visas replied to my right hon. Friend's letter on 15 December. We are sorry for the delay, which was due to a filing error.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many *(a)* letters from hon. Members, *(b)* letters from members of the public and *(c)* parliamentary questions from (i) hon. Members and (ii) Lords were dealt with by his Department in each year since 1995 in respect of the percentage his Department took (A) more than one month and (B) more than three months to provide a substantive answer; and if he will make a statement. [37417]

Dr. Howells: The Cabinet Office, on an annual basis, publishes a report to Parliament on the performance of Departments in replying to Members/Peers correspondence. The report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005, *Official Report*, columns 139–40WS. Reports for earlier years are available in the Library of the House.

Information on letters from members of the public and on parliamentary questions in the form requested is not held centrally and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Cotton (Subsidies)

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with his EU counterparts to co-ordinate pressure on the United States to cut subsidies to the cotton sector. [35760]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We recognise the importance of cotton production for a number of developing countries, particularly Benin, Burkina Faso, Chad and Mali. World Trade Organisation (WTO) members in July 2004 agreed to deal with the issue of cotton

"ambitiously, expeditiously, and specifically, within the agricultural negotiations".

Progress on cotton subsidies is an important litmus test of developed countries' development credentials within the WTO Round, including those of the EU. Failure to reach agreement on cotton will seriously damage prospects for the ambitious, pro-development outcome to the WTO Round that we are all seeking. We need an ambitious outcome on agriculture and this should include early implementation of the agreement on cotton.

The United States (US) has clearly had the greatest influence on the world price for cotton, distorting the market both through domestic support and export subsidies, which together amount to around $3.9 billion a year. We have encouraged the US to implement rapidly the findings of the WTO Appeals Panel report, and will continue to do so.

My right hon. Friend the Minister for Trade raised the issue of cotton subsidies during his statement on the WTO Round at the European Parliament's Plenary Session on 30 November. The EU has already agreed major reforms to the EU cotton sector in 2004. We are encouraging EU producers to decouple payments to the maximum extent possible.

Democratic Republic of Congo

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department is taking to ensure that the 2006 elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo are free and fair. [37456]

Ian Pearson: We and our international partners are urging the Congolese transitional Government and Independent Electoral Commission to stick closely to the agreed timetable for elections, to ensure that they are as transparent as possible and that they reflect the will of the Congolese people. We are encouraging all political parties to participate in the process.

The UK has contributed £10 million to the United Nations (UN)-administered trust fund for elections, and will contribute £8 million to election security. Together with our international partners, we have secured $103 million of additional UN funding for UN peacekeeping force (MONUC) support to election logistics.

Departmental Consultants

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many civil servants in each grade have left his Department in each of the last three years to join consultancy firms; and which firm each joined. [37364]

Dr. Howells: In many cases we do not know where staff go to work after they have left the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. Where we do know, this information is not kept in consolidated form and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps are taken by his Department to support staff with mental ill-health. [36276]

Ian Pearson: All Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) staff have access to a full occupational health service provided by Capita Health Solutions through the FCO healthcare contract with International SOS. This includes advice on adjustments to working arrangements as appropriate.

All FCO staff also have access to a confidential support and counselling service provided by an external employee assistance programme as well as access to professionally trained in-house welfare officers.

Detention Centres (US Flights)

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 12 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1647W, on detention centres (US flights), what information *(a)* he and *(b)* his officials have (i) received and (ii) sought about whether the United States transports detainees from one country to another for the purpose of questioning; and whether UK (A) air-space and (B) territory has been used in this process. [38314]

Dr. Howells: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary to the right hon. Member for North East Fife (Sir Menzies Campbell) on 12 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1652–53W.

Diplomatic Cars (Clamping)

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make it his policy to clamp illegally parked diplomatic cars of countries who have refused to pay *(a)* parking fines and *(b)* the London congestion charge. [38836]

Dr. Howells: No. The Government cannot introduce a policy of wheel clamping of diplomatic vehicles as this would be in breach of International Law. Article 31.1 of the Vienna Convention on Diplomatic Relations 1961 states that

> "A diplomatic agent shall enjoy immunity from the criminal jurisdiction of the receiving State."

Provision for exemption from wheel clamping is also made for owners of vehicles with "D" plates under Section 70 of the Road Traffic Act 1991.

Disability

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether a Minister in his Department is planned to be nominated to take responsibility for liaison with the Office for Disability Issues; and if he will make a statement. [37091]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I welcome the launch of the Office for Disability Issues. As Minister responsible for Human Resources in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO), my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary will take responsibility for liaison with this new Office.

The FCO looks forward to working with the Office for Disability Issues, in particular to ensure that we deliver the strategy set out in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit report, Improving the Life Chances of

Disabled People, and to deliver the new duties to promote disability equality set out in the Disability Discrimination Act (2005).

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the initial activity undertaken by his Department in response to those recommendations in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit Report Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People where lead responsibility was assigned to all Government Departments. [37092]

Dr. Howells: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) administration, in consultation with the FCO's Disability Action Group (a group of staff with an interest in disability, chaired by the Board Champion for Disability), is addressing the recommendations set out in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit Report, "Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People".

Our goal is to be an employer of choice for disabled people by 2010. Our action plan and agreed priorities include:

developing more transparent procedures for boarding and recruiting disabled officers;

providing training for disabled staff and their line managers;

securing more resources for reasonable adjustments;

developing guidelines for line managers of disabled staff;

participating in the Employers' Forum on Disability Benchmark;

organising a "Disability Awareness Week" with a series of lunch time seminars.

Embassy Closures

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 10 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 744W, on embassy closures, if he will publish *(a)* a report of discussions about the closure of the embassies and *(b)* the cost-benefit analysis relating to the closure of each embassy. [37836]

Dr. Howells: As my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary said in his written ministerial statement of 15 December 2004 *Official Report*, columns 137–140WS), changes to our overseas network to align our resources more effectively to our priorities were aimed at enhancing our effectiveness in representing British interests abroad, and helping to deliver an efficient service on behalf of the British taxpayer. It is not our practice to publish discussions about the closure of embassies.

The benefits of the work of British embassies and missions are not quantifiable in cash terms. Decisions are made on the basis of where resources best meet the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's strategic priorities.

Eritrea/Ethiopia

Mr. Laurence Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he plans to have with the Government of Eritrea on that country's expulsion of United Nations peacekeepers; and if he will make a statement. [36727]

Ian Pearson: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave my hon. Friend for Stroud (Mr. Drew) today (UIN 36932).

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs (1) what steps have been taken by his Department to advance the 2002 International Court ruling on Badme in the Eritrea-Ethiopia border demarcation dispute; [36150]

(2) what steps his Department has taken to support the implementation of paragraphs 1 and 2 of UN Resolution 1640 (2005) on Eritrea and Ethiopia; [36151]

(3) if the Government will support the Security Council's Resolution of 23 November threatening sanctions against both Eritrea and Ethiopia if they continue the deployment of troops on the Badme border; what sanctions are envisaged; and how soon after the specified 30 day redeployment period such sanctions will be enforced; [36152]

(4) if he will make a statement about recent progress in Ethiopia's implementation of the proposals of the International Arbitration Commission for its border with Eritrea. [36197]

Ian Pearson: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave my hon. Friend for Stroud (Mr. Drew) on 13 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1951–52W).

Richard Burden: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the human rights situation on each side of the border between Ethiopia and Eritrea; and if he will make a statement. [33407]

Ian Pearson: We are concerned about reports of serious human rights abuses which continue to occur in both Ethiopia and Eritrea. In Ethiopia these include the mass arrest of Opposition supporters and reports of harsh conditions and physical violence in the detention camps. We have called for an independent investigation of reports of lethal violence by security forces, which has cost many lives.

In Eritrea the prolonged detention of members of religious minorities and the arrest of family members of those accused of evading military service are examples of serious and ongoing abuses.

We raise these matters regularly in bilateral contacts with the governments concerned and in our capacity as EU Presidency. My noble Friend the Minister for Africa (Lord Triesman of Tottenham) did so most recently by letter to President Isaias on 6 October and with the ambassador of Eritrea on 18 October. He will also raise human rights directly with the Ethiopian Prime Minister when he visits Addis Ababa shortly.

EU Convergence Fund

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much Convergence Fund money would be allocated to West Wales and the Valleys under *(a)* the Luxemburg presidency's final budgetary proposals and *(b)* the UK presidency's budgetary proposals as presented on 5 December. [37333]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Under the UK presidency's future financing proposal, tabled on 5 December, West Wales and the Valleys would receive the same level of convergence funding as under the final proposal made by Luxembourg in June this year. The exact sums involved will only be clearer if and when final agreement is reached on the EU's Financial Perspectives for 2007–13.

EU-Israel Association Agreement

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 5 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1026W, on the EU-Israel Association Agreement, when he expects the proposed new EU-Israel working group on human rights to be convened; who will be represented on it; how often it will meet; whether its proceedings will be in public; whom it will report to; and how it will relate to the monitoring and implementation of the human rights obligations of the EU-Israel Association Agreement. [38005]

Dr. Howells: The EU and Israel agreed to establish a working group on human rights at the Political Dialogue and Co-operation sub committee on 21 November. The European Commission will be consulting Israel and member states on the modalities of the EU- Israel Human Rights Working Group with a view to a meeting taking place in the first quarter of 2006. Reinforcing our dialogue with Israel on human rights through this working group will also help to monitor the implementation of the relevant provisions of the EU-Israel Association Agreement.

David Lepper: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs in what circumstances the Government would support the suspension of the EU-Israel Association Agreement; and if he will make a statement. [38245]

Dr. Howells: We do not believe consideration should be given to suspending the EU-Israel Association Agreement. The conflict between Israel and the Palestinians has caused and continues to cause suffering on both sides. We should not be looking at imposing sanctions on either side, but at supporting them to get back to a political process in order to reach a just and lasting negotiated settlement.

Guantanamo Bay

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the US Department of Defense decision to conduct the first war crimes trials at Guantanamo Bay with the power to impose the death penalty; what discussions he has had with his EU counterparts on this; and if he will make a statement. [36675]

Dr. Howells: The Military Commissions at Guantanamo Bay have been suspended, pending consideration of the Hamdan case by the United States (US) Supreme Court. This is not expected before early next year. The US Government have confirmed that they will not seek the death penalty for any of the nine terrorist suspects they have formally charged at Guantanamo Bay.

The Government's views on the Military Commissions are well known. The Government expressed publicly their reservations about the Commission from July 2003 when two British nationals were designated for possible trial. They subsequently concluded that the Commissions did not meet the standards required for our nationals.

My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has not discussed the Commissions with my EU counterparts recently.

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations his Department has made to the US Administration concerning the release of prisoners from Guantanamo Bay. [38254]

Dr. Howells: We discuss Guantanamo Bay with the United States (US) Government on a regular basis. The US Government is well aware of our continuing concerns over the conditions of detainees there.

Human Rights, Democracy and Good Governance Programme

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what criteria are used to differentiate the support for the promotion of democracy from *(a)* human rights and *(b)* good governance under the Human Rights, Democracy and Good Governance Programme. [35619]

Ian Pearson: The Government consider the promotion of Human Rights, Democracy and Good Governance as interdependent and mutually reinforcing. The Foreign and Commonwealth Offices's approach to this task has been to mainstream this work throughout relevant Global Opportunities Fund (GOF) programmes. This includes the Sustainable Development programme (formerly Human Rights, Democracy and Good Governance), which incorporates the grant in aid to the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, as well as the Reuniting Europe, Engaging with the Islamic World and Economic Governance (formerly Emerging Markets) programmes. The criteria for supporting projects for the promotion of democracy under GOF programmes are to strengthen political parties, parliaments, civil society and other institutions of democracy; support increased participation by the disenfranchised, especially women, ethnic minorities and the disabled, in accordance with principles of equality, diversity and non-discrimination; and to promote freedom of expression that underpins the exercise of democracy. On human rights, the GOF programmes seek to support projects that combat torture, the death penalty and promote child rights. We seek to promote good governance by supporting projects that enhance the rule of law, e.g. to enhance separation of powers, independent and professional judiciaries and legal services, access to justice and independent complaint mechanisms, such as ombudsmen.

Identity Cards

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what estimate he has made of the *(a)* total and *(b)* net cost of (i) integrating the proposed identity card scheme into his Department's IT systems and (ii) the on-going operation of the scheme within his Department. [31109]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has kept in close touch with the Home Office over the ID card scheme. It is not possible to estimate the potential cost to the FCO until legislation has been completed and policy issues relating to use of or access to ID cards overseas have been clarified.

Illegal Fishing

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to prevent illegal fishing in the waters surrounding South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands; and if he will make a statement. [36065]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands deploys fishery patrol vessels and utilises remote sensing techniques to monitor fishing activities in the 200-nautical-mile maritime zone around South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands, and to detect illegal vessels. It is believed that little illegal activity presently takes place in the zone, and that detection rates are high. An illegal vessel was arrested in the zone, successfully prosecuted and subsequently scuttled (in Falkland Islands' waters) by the South Georgia Government earlier this year.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what the cost was in 2004–05 of *(a)* preventing illegal fishing and *(b)* maintaining sustainable fisheries in the waters surrounding (i) South Georgia and (ii) the South Sandwich Islands. [36080]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands are accounted together as they are one territory.

The current cost of preventing illegal fishing is about £2 million per annum. This figure consists of the cost of operating the fishery patrol vessel and other surveillance activity.

The cost of maintaining sustainable fisheries is just under £2 million per annum. This figure includes £1 million to finance the British Antarctic Survey Fisheries Research Laboratory and support services at King Edward Point, a cost which is shared equally between the South Georgia Government and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office. The remainder is expended on other fisheries research and a fisheries observer programme.

Thus the current annual expenditure on fisheries research, protection and management is nearly £4 million, excluding a significant proportion of the salaries paid to the permanent staff of the South Georgia Government, much of whose time is devoted to fisheries management.

This compares to a total income from fishing licences of £3,101,890.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many fishermen were prosecuted for illegal fishing in UK waters around *(a)* South Georgia, *(b)* the South Sandwich Islands and *(c)* the British Antarctic Territory in each of the last eight years. [36090]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: There were no prosecutions for illegal fishing in waters within the South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands 200-nautical-mile Maritime Zone between 1997 and 2003 inclusive.

Three prosecutions commenced in 2004 in relation to two separate vessels, and involving two defendants (limited companies). Appeals are pending in relation to two of the three resulting convictions. Two prosecutions took place in 2005 in relation to one vessel involving two defendants (one limited company and one individual). This last prosecution resulted in a conviction and a substantial fine. Following the failure of the vessel owners to pay the fine, the South Georgia Government seized the vessel and, after removing from it all potential pollutants, scuttled it in Falkland Islands' waters.

The territorial waters around the British Antarctic Territory fall under the remit of the Antarctic Treaty and the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources. Fishing in these waters is confined to Krill. No illegal fishing has been reported. No prosecutions have taken place.

Illegal Whaling

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many illegal whalers were prosecuted for activities in and around *(a)* the Antarctic, *(b)* South Georgia and *(c)* the South Sandwich Islands in each of the last eight years. [36079]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave him today (UIN 36081). Whaling in waters adjacent to the Antarctic is regulated by the International Whaling Commission. We are not aware of any prosecutions in Antarctic waters.

The Government of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands operates intensive fisheries surveillance/enforcement within its 200-nautical-mile maritime zone. Illegal whalers within the zone would therefore almost certainly be detected. There have been no recorded instances of whaling vessels in South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands waters, nor consequently any prosecutions in the last eight years.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to protect whales in and around *(a)* the Antarctic, *(b)* South Georgia and *(c)* the South Sandwich Islands. [36081]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: All great whale species are included in the moratorium on commercial whaling introduced by the International Whaling Commission (IWC) in 1985–86. The Government strongly support the retention of the IWC moratorium. Scientific research whaling, which is permitted under the 1946 International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, is not covered by the moratorium. The Southern Ocean Sanctuary was established by the IWC in 1994 as a protected area for whales.

Commercial whaling in the waters of the 200-nautical mile Maritime Zone of South Georgia and the South Sandwich Islands is prohibited by the Fisheries (Conservation and Management) Ordinance 2000, as amended.

Iran

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what progress has been made towards the return of British military equipment confiscated by the Iranians in the summer; and if he will make a statement. [37455]

Dr. Howells: We have pressed the Iranian authorities on numerous occasions, at both ministerial and senior official level, in Tehran and London, to return the boats and equipment they have detained since June 2004. Our discussions are on-going.

Israel

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met representatives of the Israeli Government to discuss Israel's commitment to phase 1 of the Roadmap; and if he will make a statement about Israel's progress to date. [36941]

Dr. Howells: Since disengagement, both my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary and I have met with members of the Israeli Government to discuss progress on their Roadmap commitments. Israel remains committed to making progress against the Roadmap.

We believe that there is an opportunity to build upon the current momentum created by disengagement and the Rafah Movement and Access Agreement.

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last met representatives of the Israeli Government to discuss Israel's policy of home demolition. [36942]

Dr. Howells: We are greatly concerned by the demolition of Palestinian homes and property. We most recently raised this issue on 6 December, when the British ambassador in Tel Aviv spoke to the director general of the Israeli Ministry of Foreign Affairs, expressing our concerns over the proposal to reinstate the policy of punitive house demolitions. The ambassador also set out our concerns to the chief of general staff (Lt. Gen. Dan Halutz) on 8 December.

Anne Milton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact of the Israeli security barrier on the Palestinian economy. [36943]

Dr. Howells: The routing of the separation barrier restricts the freedom of movement of both Palestinian people and goods in and around the West Bank. This has a detrimental effect on the Palestinian economy. We have made no specific assessment on the effects the barrier has on the Palestinian economy. We continue to raise this matter with the Israeli Government.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 5 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1028W, on Israel, if he will raise his concerns about the indiscriminate damage caused by low-flying aircraft in Gaza with the UN. [38014]

Dr. Howells: Our voting record at the United Nations (UN) will continue to reflect our concerns regarding Israel's military actions in the Occupied Territories. The damage caused by the low flying aircraft is reported at the UN's monthly briefings. We have no plans to raise our concerns with the UN but we will continue to raise this with the Israeli Government. The ambassador in Tel Aviv raised this issue with the Israeli Defence Force Chief of General Staff on 8 December.

Longline Fisheries

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the Government will take steps to reduce the use of longline fisheries in the waters around *(a)* South Georgia, *(b)* the South Sandwich Islands and *(c)* the British Antarctic Territory. [36084]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The longline fishery for Patagonian toothfish around South Georgia provides the mainstay revenues for the Territory.

The fishery is undertaken in a sustainable way, in line with Total Allowable Catches (TACs) and stringent conservation measures determined by an international body, the Commission for the Conservation of Antarctic Marine Living Resources (CCAMLR). This year, CCAMLR agreed to a limited TAC of 100 tonnes for the South Sandwich Islands, linked to detailed scientific research, and a TAG for South Georgia of 3,556 tonnes.

Vessel quotas and conservation measures are strictly enforced by the Government of South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands, supported by a comprehensive programme of scientific research. All toothfish fisheries in the South Georgia and South Sandwich Islands (SGSSI) 200-nautical-mile Maritime Zone operate strict mitigating measures to minimise by-catch of non-target species. As a result of these efforts, the incidental catch of seabirds in these fisheries is virtually nil.

The South Georgia toothfish fishery received official recognition for the sustainable way in which it is managed when it was awarded Marine Stewardship Council certification in March 2004. It is the only fishery in the Southern Ocean to have received such certification.

Given these factors, the Government see no need to change the method of fishing for toothfish in the waters around SGSSI.

No longline fisheries are permitted in the waters adjacent to the British Antarctic Territory.

Mexico

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of *(a)* the relationship between Venezuela and Mexico, and *(b)* the effect of the decision to withdraw ambassadors. [36665]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: A disagreement between Mexico and Venezuela, including over a possible Free Trade Area of the Americas, has led to the withdrawal of their ambassadors from Caracas and Mexico City respectively. We consider this to be a bilateral issue between the two Governments.

Mockbul Ali

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what position in his Department Mr. Mockbul Ali was appointed to in the past five years; what the date was of the appointment; what its remit was; and what selection process was used in making the appointment. [37992]

Dr. Howells: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not comment publicly on the contract of employment for individual members of staff.

Nigel Potter

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the US authorities about the case of Mr. Nigel Potter, ex-chief executive of Wembley plc. [37879]

Ian Pearson: We are aware of the passage of Mr. Potter's case through the US courts. Mr. Potter has legal representation. We are unable to directly interfere in the US Judicial process but we will continue to provide Mr. Potter with appropriate consular assistance.

Nuclear Missiles (Security)

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Pendle (Mr. Prentice) of 27 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 522W, on nuclear missiles (security), if he will list the projects the United Kingdom supports under the Global Partnership; how much has been paid to each; and if he will make a statement on performance in improving material security. [37677]

Dr. Howells: The Government have implemented a major portfolio of projects in Russia as part of the UK's contribution to the Global Partnership and details of all our projects are published in an annual report published every December. The 2005 report will be published on 21 December and copies placed in the Library of the House. Some £35 million was spent on UK Global Partnership nuclear projects in 2004–05 and forecast spend for 2005–06 is around £37 million. Many of the projects we support under the UK Global Partnership Programme contribute to the enhanced security of nuclear materials, including through the retraining of former weapons scientists and engineers and the associated creation of sustainable employment in the closed nuclear cities. Projects include work to ensure the safe and secure storage of around 20,000 Spent Nuclear Fuel Assemblies from nuclear submarines at Andreeva Bay, work to enhance the physical protection of civilian nuclear institutes and the training of guard commanders at key Russian nuclear establishments. We are working closely with other donor countries to co-ordinate work on improving material security at a number of sites across Russia, to determine priorities and ensure sustainable improvements are made from our grant-aid. We believe that our growing portfolio of nuclear security projects will substantially enhance the security of materials stored at facilities in Russia. Project specifications are agreed with Government experts in the UK's Office of Civil and Nuclear Security and implementation of projects closely monitored by private sector project managers.

Old Whaling Stations (Pollution)

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to prevent pollution from old whaling stations from damaging the environment around *(a)* South Georgia, *(b)* the South Sandwich Islands and *(c)* the British Antarctic Territory. [36075]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Work has recently been completed on the clean-up of the former whaling station at Grytviken, which now presents no hazard to wildlife or to those who visit or work in this area of South Georgia. However, the South Georgia Government are aware that the derelict whaling stations at Stromness, Husvik and Leith Harbour present similar hazards to those previously present at Grytviken, largely in the form of asbestos, heavy fuel oil and collapsing buildings. There are no whaling stations in the South Sandwich Islands.

No funds are currently available to the South Georgia Government to carry out the clean-up of these other whaling stations, although it is hoped that it will be possible to undertake some of this work (mostly on the clean-up of heavy fuel oils) in the event of an increase in income from the licensing of fishing around South Georgia. Meanwhile, signs have been erected around the former whaling stations at Stromness, Husvik and Leith Harbour warning visitors not to approach within 200 metres of them due to the hazards presented by the asbestos and dangerous structures.

The British Antarctic Survey (BAS) undertook clean-up work at the site of a former UK base (and former Norwegian whaling station) at Deception Island, South Shetland Islands in 1992. This work included the removal of 500 drums of waste fuel and debris. A further 45 m^3 of waste, including asbestos and other hazards, was removed by BAS in April 2004.

The site has now been designated as Historic Site and Monument (HSM) No. 71 under the Antarctic treaty, and forms part of the Deception Island Antarctic specially managed area. A conservation strategy for HSM 71 allows for the ongoing clean-up of debris resulting from the gradual deterioration of the buildings and other structures.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much has been spent in each of the last eight years on removing pollutants from the whaling stations and other whaling industry sites around *(a)* South Georgia, *(b)* the South Sandwich Islands and *(c)* the British Antarctic Territory. [36083]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Work was carried out in 2003 and 2004 to remove hazardous substances, mainly asbestos but also including heavy fuel oils, from the whaling station at Grytviken, South Georgia; and to make the whaling station safe for visitors and those who work at Grytviken and King Edward Point. The total cost of the project was £6.7 million. This was met from South Georgia Government funds. Around 3,000 cubic

metres of asbestos were safely removed and disposed of by burial on site. The work was carried out to full UK standards.

There are no whaling stations in the South Sandwich Islands.

The clean-up undertaken at Deception Island in 2004 was part of a wider clean-up of abandoned bases in the Antarctic Peninsula. The total cost of this work undertaken by the British Antarctic Survey during the 2003–04 austral summer at three sites, including Deception Island, was £434,000.

Overseas Missions

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list overseas missions of his Department which have closed since 1997; and on what date each *(a)* opened and *(b)* closed. [38223]

Dr. Howells: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO)has closed 26 overseas missions since 1997. The following table provides further details. In most cases, the financial year in which the post had opened or closed has been given because we do not keep a record centrally of more detailed information, and in any event there is not a clear date on which a mission closes. Like any well-run organisation, the FCO continues to realign its resources flexibly in line with UK interests.

Overseas Missions Closed since 1997

Mission	*First opened*	*Closed*
Barranquilla (Colombia)	1889	1997–98
Zurich (Switzerland)	1887	1997–98
Kuching (Malaysia)	1969	1998–99
Chiang Mai (Thailand)	1884	1998–99
Cleveland (USA)	1910	1999–2000
Pusan (Korea Rep)	1970	1999–2000
Seville (Spain)	[1]pre 1852	2000–01
Bamako (Mali)	[2]1962	2003–04
San Salvador (El Salvador)	1968	2003–04
Tegucigalpa (Honduras)	1894	2003–04
Managua (Nicaragua)	1894	2003–04
Douala (Cameroon)	1992	2004–05
Vientiane (Laos)	1995–96	2004–05
Oporto (Portugal)	[1]pre 1852	2004–05
Tarawa (Kiribati)	[3]1979	2004–05
Maseru (Lesotho)	[4]1965	2005–06
Antananarivo (Madagascar)	1972	2005–06
Mbabane (Swaziland)	[4]1968	2005–06
Nassau (Bahamas)	[4]1973	2005–06
Asuncion (Paraguay)	1854	2005–06
Dallas (USA)	1969	2005–06
Phoenix (USA)	1996	2005–06
San Juan (USA)	[1,5]pre 1852	2005–06
Fukuoka (Japan)	1999	2005–06
Port Vila (Vanuatu)	1980	2005–06
Leipzig (Germany)	2001	2005–06

[1] Already listed in first Foreign Office list 1952.
[2] Opened with locally engaged staff; 2000–01 regraded to a UK staff mission; 2001–02 regraded to an embassy.
[3] Opened as a high commission which was closed 1993–94; 2001–02 reopened as a mission with locally engaged staff.
[4] Following independence.
[5] As dependency of Spain; as dependency of US from 1899.

Petrel Populations

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he is taking to protect the petrel populations around *(a)* South Georgia, *(b)* the South Sandwich Islands and *(c)* the British Antarctic Territory. [36066]

Jim Knight: I have been asked to reply.

As a party to the Agreement on the Conservation of Albatrosses and Petrels, the UK supports the Agreement Secretariat in its efforts to protect petrels throughout their range, which includes South Georgia, the South Sandwich Islands and the British Antarctic Territory.

This year Defra have contributed additional project funding of £35,000 to support activities agreed at the first Advisory Committee Meeting of the Agreement. One such activity is the creation of a database of population status and trends for breeding sites, which will include South Georgia, the South Sandwich Islands and the British Antarctic Territories.

In addition the joint Foreign and Commonwealth Office/Department for International Development's Overseas Territories Environment Programme has allocated £100,000 to the South Georgia Giant Petrel and White-chinned Petrel conservation programme.

Poland

Mr. Burrowes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps the Government are taking to seek the restitution of property owned by British subjects and taken by the Communist regime in Poland after the Second World War. [36800]

Dr. Howells: There is currently no property restitution law in Poland. A draft law was under discussion in the previous Polish Parliament, prior to elections on 25 September 2005. The new Government will probably look at the issue anew, so it is unlikely that a new property restitution law will be agreed soon. It is possible to pursue claims through the Polish courts, but the British embassy in Warsaw does not have sufficient resources to assist individual cases. A list of English-speaking lawyers is, however, provided on request. We have lobbied the previous Polish Government to improve the law in the area of property restitution on behalf of all British citizens with claims, and we will do the same with the new Government.

Private Military Companies

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer to the hon. Member for Cheltenham (Mr. Horwood) of 2 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 879W, on private military companies, what the duration is of the contracts with *(a)* ArmorGroup and *(b)* Control Risks Group; whether the contracts specify particular locations; and whether they include employment of local labour. [36876]

Dr. Howells: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) has two security contracts with Amorgroup Services. The first is for an armed guarding force in Iraq, which expires on 30 June 2006. The second is for close protection teams in Afghanistan, which expires in December 2005 but has an option to extend for two years.

The FCO has three security contracts with Control Risks Group. One is for close protection teams in Iraq, which expires on 30 June 2006. The second provides armed guarding forces in Saudi Arabia, which expires in September 2006 but has an option to renew for one year. The third is to provide guard forces for our missions in Beijing, Hong Kong, Cairo and Moscow, which expires in September 2006 but has an option to extend for two years.

The contracts do not refer to the employment of local labour but both companies employ local nationals to support their operations.

The Iraq security contracts are due to be re-tendered next year.

Public Appointments

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the former hon. Members who left Parliament in 2005 who have since been appointed to public bodies by his Department, broken down by party; and who was responsible for making each appointment. [36684]

Dr. Howells: Joyce Quin (Labour Party) was appointed to the Wilton Park Academic Council in November 2005 by my noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Lord Triesman of Tottenham).

Saddam Hussein

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assistance the UK Government have given the Iraqi court conducting the trial of Saddam Hussein. [37522]

Dr. Howells: The Government have provided capacity building training to the Iraqi High Tribunal (formerly known as the Iraqi Special Tribunal) in international law and procedures for trial judges, prosecutors and investigators. The Government also funded the visit of a witness protection expert in August 2005 and contributed to an international fund to provide an International Special Adviser to the trial chamber.

Sierra Leone

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on *(a)* the security situation and *(b)* the strength of democratic institutions in Sierra Leone. [36572]

Ian Pearson: The overall security situation in Sierra Leone is generally calm, but fragile. We agree with the United Nations (UN) assessment that the situation is sufficiently improved to allow the full departure of the UN Mission in Sierra Leone (UNAMSIL) by the end of 2005. There has been progress on improving the training, leadership and professionalism of the Sierra Leone army and police forces. A UK-led International Military Assistance and Training Team (IMATT) has aided much of this reform by close co-operation with the army, and will remain in Sierra Leone until at least 2010. They currently have approximately 100 personnel in country. We have also provided support to the police in a training and reform programme, which has left them better able to deal with internal security. Following the arrest of opposition leader Mr. Charles Margai, the police have so far dealt in a competent and low-key way with resulting public disturbances.

Sierra Leonean institutions remain generally weak and lacking in capacity. Much has been achieved since the end of hostilities in 2002, but much work remains. An Anti-Corruption Commission is functioning well. A civil service reform programme is under way. Local councils exist, but lack capacity and resources. The judiciary is overstretched and under-resourced. Parliament lacks the necessary resources to allow it to exercise full powers of oversight. The UK is assisting in the development of democratic institutions, including assistance to the judiciary and police through a £25 million project, assistance to the civil service reform programme and wide-ranging governance and anti-corruption support. But the 11 years of civil war have left enormous deficits in institutional capacity, which is slow to recover.

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the personal security and freedom of Charles Margai, opposition leader in Sierra Leone. [36573]

Ian Pearson: Mr. Charles Margai, leader of the Peoples Movement for Democratic Change (PMDC) was arrested on 7 December, and transferred to Bo for legal proceedings to begin. He was bailed by Bo Magistrates Court on 8 December. His court hearing is scheduled for 16 December. The charges relate to incidents on 18 November in Bo, when supporters of Mr. Margai clashed with the entourage of Solomon Berewa, the Vice President.

We have called on all parties, their leaders and supporters in Sierra Leone to act moderately and responsibly, and to avoid any actions or statements that could intensify the situation. We further hope that the court proceedings against Mr. Margai will proceed swiftly, and according to due process. Through our high commission in Freetown we remain in close touch with all parties, including those acting in Mr. Margai's defence, and we continue to monitor developments closely.

Sir Christopher Meyer

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 164–66W, on Sir Christopher Meyer, if he will place in the Library copies of *(a)* all relevant correspondence from (i) Sir Christopher Meyer and (ii) his publishers and *(b)* the responses to that correspondence. [37878]

Dr. Howells: Copies of the correspondence between the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Sir Christopher Meyer and between the Cabinet Office and his publishers about his book have been placed in the Library of the House.

South East Asia

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what action he is taking to encourage the protection of religious freedoms in South East Asia. [37166]

Ian Pearson: The promotion of human rights, including freedom of thought, conscience and religion, is central to our foreign policy. We condemn instances where individuals are persecuted because of their faith or belief, wherever they happen and whatever the religion of the individual or group concerned.

Where states fail to implement their obligations under international human rights law, we consider what action we can take on a case-by-case basis and we continue to raise our concerns in relevant international fora. Both bilaterally and with our EU partners, we regularly raise specific cases of religious persecution with the governments concerned, and take every opportunity to urge states to pursue laws and practices which foster tolerance and mutual respect and to protect religious minorities against discrimination, intimidation and attacks.

We take every appropriate opportunity to press the governments in the region to adhere to their international human rights obligations and to guarantee the right of all religious groups to practice their faith freely.

Sudan

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the current situation in the Darfur region of Sudan; and if he will make a statement. [37102]

Ian Pearson: We remain very concerned about the situation in Darfur. In his latest report, the United Nations Secretary General notes that while there have been fewer attacks between the parties, the security situation remains poor. Banditry and lawlessness are rife, and continue to hamper the delivery of humanitarian supplies, particularly in south and west Darfur. We have made clear that this violence, and particularly attacks on humanitarian workers, are unacceptable. We are encouraging anyone with information on the perpetrators to pass it to the relevant bodies for consideration under United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1591 and 1593.

We continue to press the parties to rein in their fighters and to reach a political agreement. The seventh round of Darfur peace talks began in Abuja on 29 November. The UK fully supports the African Union-led mediation team and has provided financial and technical assistance to the talks. We also plan to maintain our observer presence throughout the talks.

Sugar Regime

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact that the new EU reductions in sugar subsidies will have on Caribbean *(a)* agricultural economies and *(b)* Caribbean communities in other countries. [36147]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We recognise the consequences that the reforms to the EU Sugar Regime agreed at the 24 November Agriculture Council may have on some African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) sugar producers with preferential access to the EU market. However, we welcome the overall agreement in the broader context of reforming the EU's Common Agricultural Policy and the benefits this will bring to many developing countries. Furthermore, the sugar reforms will see a smaller price cut and a longer adjustment period than originally proposed. This will give the ACP a better opportunity to adapt to the reforms.

The EU will provide transitional assistance to help ACP producers improve their efficiency in the sugar sector where feasible or diversify into more profitable sectors. Ensuring that credible and timely transitional assistance is in place remains a priority for the UK.

In September 2003, the Department for International Development (DfID) commissioned consultants (LMC International Ltd) to produce an independent report into the impact that EU sugar reform would have by 2015 on the ACP countries that are party to the Sugar Protocol. This work was updated in June 2005, after the Commission put forward its proposals but before agreement was reached on the shape of the reforms. It therefore assumes a 39 per cent. price cut rather than the actual 36 per cent.

More recent assessments have been carried out by European Commission funded consultants, who again assumed a 39 per cent. price cut. For example, in Jamaica the consultants concluded that this would reduce the value of sugar export revenues from 6.9 per cent. of total exports to 4.9 per cent. and reduce GDP by 0.8 per cent. over four years.

My noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Parliamentary Under-secretary of State, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, discussed the impact of reform of the EU sugar regime on the Caribbean at a meeting in London in October with members of the Caribbean British Business Council, which represents British businesses with interests in the Caribbean. The subject was also discussed at the UK Caribbean Business Forum in London in June, which brought together Ministers and leading businessmen from the UK and the Caribbean.

Currently, DFID is working with Caribbean countries affected by the reforms to help them draw up the country plans through which the EU's transitional assistance will be delivered.

Derek Conway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether discussions are under way with the EU to determine the criteria that will be used to determine how much Caribbean sugar protocol nations will receive from the euro transitional assistance budget proposed to ease the impact of the reduction in sugar prices over the next four years. [36438]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: There have been some preliminary discussions about how to allocate transitional assistance for Africa Caribbean and Pacific countries to adjust to sugar reforms. The Commission have said that allocations will be based on the needs of

each country, in particular on the impact of the reform on the sugar sector in the country concerned and on the relative importance of the sugar sector in the economy. The Caribbean countries involved are working to develop their country plans to determine how assistance could best be used. Given the impact that sugar reform will have on some of the Caribbean countries involved, they should be well placed to qualify for their fair share of assistance under the criteria the Commission are developing.

Derek Conway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps he took to ensure that the concerns of British businesses with interests in Jamaica, Guyana and Belize were taken into account in the reform of the EU sugar regime. [36460]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State (Lord Triesman of Tottenham), discussed the impact of reform of the EU sugar regime on the Caribbean at a meeting in London in October with members of the Caribbean British Business Council, which represents British businesses with interests in the Caribbean. The subject was also discussed at the UK Caribbean Business Forum in London in June, which brought together Ministers and leading businessmen from the UK and the Caribbean. Our high commissions in the region have also maintained regular contact with such businesses.

Derek Conway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether an impact study was carried out on the crime and security implications for the UK of the decision to cut sugar prices in Caribbean nations known to be tran-shipment points for narcotics and small arms to the UK. [36461]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Through our contacts with Governments, business and civil society in the Caribbean, we are aware that a reduction in the EU sugar price will have social consequences for those deriving an income from sugar production. That is why the EU will provide transitional assistance to help Caribbean producers improve their efficiency in the sugar sector where feasible or diversify into more profitable sectors. Ensuring that credible and timely transitional assistance is in place remains a priority for the UK. The Department for International Development (DFID) are collaborating with the World Bank to assess the implications of the EU reforms.

DFID, Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs, the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Ministry of Defence continue to assist Caribbean Governments and their security and law enforcement agencies in their fight against drugs trans-shipment and organised crime.

Tactica Vehicles

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what export licences have been granted for the export to Indonesia of *(a)* Tactica vehicles and *(b)* spare parts for Tactica vehicles since 1 May 1997; and if he will make a statement. [36854]

Dr. Howells: The UK is committed to maintaining one of the most rigorous and transparent arms export control systems in the world. Information on export licensing decisions is published by destination in the Government's Annual and Quarterly Reports on Strategic Export Controls, available at http://www.fco.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/Xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1091037171526. The Government cannot provide information on the suppliers of specific exports, as this would breach commercial confidentiality.

Tortured Detainees

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to other EU Governments on investigating allegations that detainees held by other states may have been tortured in their countries. [37041]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 14 December 2005]:* My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has discussed these allegations with his EU counterparts. Following those discussions, he—as EU presidency—wrote to the US Secretary of State, Condoleeza Rice, about the allegations. The US Secretary of State issued a public statement on this subject on 5 December, and sent a copy of that statement to my right hon. Friend on 6 December by way of reply to his letter. He has communicated this response to his EU counterparts.

Travel Costs

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what was the additional cost of *(a)* his and *(b)* his officials' early return from Moscow to permit him to vote in the proceedings in the Terrorism Bill. [28110]

Mr. Douglas Alexander *[pursuant to the reply, 16 November 2005, Official Report, c. 1268W]:* Regarding the total cost of the charter aircraft, the charter company has now informed us that the total cost of the charter was £96,400, which included an additional £28,200 for diverting through the UK on 9 November, £2,000 less than given in my reply.

UN Convention Against Corruption

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 2 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 881W, on the UN Convention Against Corruption, if he will list the organisations his Department met to discuss the convention; and on what dates each meeting took place. [36842]

Ian Pearson: Discussions on the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) have formed part of the regular contact between the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and a wide range of external stakeholders with an interest in anti-corruption issues. It would be impossible in practice to provide a comprehensive list of all such contacts with every stakeholder since the negotiations for UNCAC began. The principal contacts on this issue have been with the Department for International Development, the Home Office, Transparency International and business associations such as the Confederation of British Industry and the International Chamber of Commerce.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 2 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 881W, on the UN Convention Against Corruption, if he will place in the Library the minutes of the meetings his Department held with the International Chamber of Commerce and the Confederation of British Industry at which the convention was discussed. [36843]

Ian Pearson: Discussions on the United Nations Convention Against Corruption (UNCAC) have formed part of the many contacts between the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the International Chamber of Commerce and the Confederation of British Industry, as well as with NGOs and many other interested parties. Even where fully recorded, it would be inappropriate to reveal the content of contacts that were intended to remain confidential between the parties involved.

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place in the Library the representations he has received from *(a)* businesses, *(b)* business organisations and *(c)* non-governmental organisations on the UK signing and ratification of the UN Convention Against Corruption. [36847]

Ian Pearson: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave today (UIN 36843).

UN Firearms Protocol

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if the Government will ratify the UN Firearms Protocol. [36849]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Government remains committed to ratifying the United Nations (UN) Firearms Protocol. However the UK and other EU member states believe that, as first step, the European Weapons Directive needs to be amended to bring it into line with the UN Firearms Protocol. We are working with the European Commission and EU member states to achieve this.

UN Security Council

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what steps his Department has taken during the UK presidency of the EU to promote European consensus on reform of the UN Security Council. [37920]

Dr. Howells: At the United Nations (UN) World Summit in September, the EU agreed on the need to reform the main UN bodies, including the Security Council, to enhance the representativeness, transparency and efficiency of the UN system. Given strongly held views among EU partners on how the Security Council should be reformed, there is no EU consensus on a particular model of reform.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on reform of the UN Security Council. [37921]

Dr. Howells: At the United Nations (UN) 2005 World Summit, all 191 member states agreed that reform of the Security Council was an essential element of the overall UN reform agenda. The UK has long-supported such reform to ensure that the work of the Security Council is more representative, effective and transparent. At a Foreign and Commonwealth Office event marking the 60th anniversary of the UN in June, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, reiterated the Government's position that

> "we want to see a Security Council which reflects today's world and the contributions of the UN's members to its objectives. The UK therefore supports the expansion of both the permanent and non-permanent membership, with permanent representation for Japan, Germany, India and Brazil, and for Africa".

The UK is also committed to enhancing the Security Council's working methods, including holding more Council discussions in public, expanding the involvement of interested countries, and holding more frequent meetings with troop contributing countries.

UN Standing Fund

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had regarding the establishment of a standing fund within the UN to allow it to respond more effectively to emergencies. [35763]

Mr. Thomas: I have been asked to reply.

At the UN Millennium Review summit (MRS) in September (2005 in New York), my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn) argued for support from other donor countries for a revised and expanded UN Central Emergency Revolving Fund (CERF), and along with the UK, six other countries pledged annual donations (Sweden $40 million, Netherlands $12 million, Ireland $12 million, Switzerland $4 million, Luxembourg $4 million, and Norway $30 million over two years).

Since the summit, my right hon. Friend and I have raised this in a number of meetings including the EU Informal Humanitarian Aid Committee in October.

The Commonwealth Heads of Governments Meeting in November, and the informal meeting of EU Development Ministers in Leeds in October.

Senior officials have discussed the CERF during meetings in recent months with interested donors such as the US (in October) and New Zealand (in November). My right hon. Friend has also written to non-traditional donors. British embassies have lobbied for support from Argentina, Brazil, Brunei, India, Indonesia, Jordan, Mexico and Qatar. The CERF was discussed when my right hon. Friend met the NGO consortium British Overseas Aid Group recently, and officials have covered the CERF during recent wider discussions on the reform package with the NGO community.

Venezuela

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the relationship between Venezuela and Bolivia, with particular reference to reports of Venezuelan interference in Bolivian domestic politics. [36830]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We are aware of recent allegations of Venezuelan interference in Bolivian domestic politics, including comments made by the Venezuelan Chargé d'affaires in Bolivia, and continue to monitor the situation. We consider this issue is first and foremost a bilateral matter between the two countries.

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the effects of Venezuela selling oil to Caribbean and Central American countries at concessionary rates; and if he will make a statement. [36831]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We are following Venezuela's oil agreements with a number of countries and other parties with close interest. It is up to those involved to assess whether the terms involved make sense or not—some have chosen to accept the terms, others have not. It will be some time before the full economic and political impact of these agreements is seen.

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the effects of Venezuela offering free medical treatment to patients in a number of Caribbean countries; and if he will make a statement. [36832]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We welcome any constructive efforts to enhance the delivery of healthcare in the Caribbean region where there are a number of real needs. In this respect, free medical treatment is most welcome.

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the relationship between Venezuela and the United States of America; with particular reference to the sale of discounted heating oil to Massachusetts by Venezuela. [36833]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Bilateral relations between Venezuela and the United States (US) are a matter for the two countries concerned.

We understand that Citgo Petroleum Corporation, a US registered company owned by the Venezuelan Government, is providing discounted oil to low-income communities in the US, including in New York and Massachusetts. A US State Department spokesman has recently commented that the US regards this as an

> "issue of an American company helping American people, which is good and right and proper".

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of *(a)* relations between Venezuela and Jamaica and *(b)* the implications of those relations for (i) UK-Venezuela relations, (ii) UK-Jamaican relations and (iii) the wider region. [36834]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We understand that relations between Venezuela and Jamaica are good and have recently been enhanced by an agreement signed between them under the "PetroCaribe Agreement". We do not believe that this relationship has made any significant difference to the good relations we have with Jamaica or Venezuela, or to relations within the Caribbean.

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the likely effect on the Venezuelan agricultural sector of Venezuela joining Mercosur; and if he will make a statement. [36835]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Although an announcement on Venezuelan membership of Mercosur has been made, it is not yet clear what the practical implications of this will be. Therefore, we cannot at this stage make any judgments about specific sectoral impact, namely the agricultural sector. We understand that the European Commission, on behalf of the EU, is currently reviewing the situation, and will continue to do so as more information becomes available.

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the likely effect of Venezuela's membership of Mercosur on the Free Trade Area of the Americas. [36836]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Although an announcement on Venezuelan membership of Mercosur has been made, it is not yet clear what the practical implications of this will be. Therefore, it is not currently possible to make an assessment of the effect of Venezuelan membership of Mercosur on the proposal for a Free Trade Area of the Americas.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the account of the situation in Zimbabwe given on 7 December by the UN Under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs; and what action he is proposing to take in the United Nations as a result. [37140]

Ian Pearson: We share Mr. Egeland's, United Nations (UN) Under-Secretary for Humanitarian Affairs, concern following his visit to Zimbabwe that "the humanitarian situation in Zimbabwe is extremely serious and worsening". We regret that instead of accepting UN assistance, President Mugabe has chosen to vilify the UN and Mr. Egeland following that visit. The Government of Zimbabwe must shift, in the interests of all Zimbabweans, from a policy of confrontation to a policy of co-operation with the international community, including with the UN.

Mr. Egeland briefed the UN Security Council on 19 December on humanitarian issues in Africa, at which the UK raised the issue of Zimbabwe.

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures his Department is taking both bilaterally and within international organisations to support the movement for democratic change in Zimbabwe. [37310]

Ian Pearson: The Government does not support any political party in Zimbabwe. We do support all those working for peaceful democratic change, including non-governmental organisations, human rights activists, lawyers and civil society groups. We also work closely with the United Nations and our international partners to address the political and economic crisis in Zimbabwe, to help provide for Zimbabweans' basic needs such as food and healthcare, and to help restore

democratic norms, including the rule of law, human rights, freedom of speech, freedom of association, an independent media, and Government accountability.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Asian Tsunami

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether the commitment by the Foreign Secretary of 3 January 2005 that the Government would match those funds donated by the public to the Asian tsunami fund has been honoured in full; and how the Government's matched funds have been spent. [38289]

Mr. Thomas: The UK Government have allocated the equivalent of around £290 million to disaster relief and reconstruction in the Tsunami-affected countries. Funds donated by the public to the Disasters Emergency Committee have totalled some £450 million.

Government funding can be broken down into:

75 million of our bilateral funds to the humanitarian relief effort;

an additional 65 million to the longer-term reconstruction phase;

an estimated 50 million through tax relief on public donations made through the Gift Aid Scheme;

contributions through the European Community (EC). The EC has already committed £123 million in humanitarian assistance and up to €350 million for longer-term reconstruction. The UK's share of this would be approximately £55 million;

debt relief. Following the tsunami, the UK announced that Sri Lanka would be eligible for the UK's multilateral debt relief initiative (MDRI). Under this initiative, the UK will pay our share (10 per cent. or around £45 million) of Sri Lanka's debt service costs to the World Bank until 2015.

DFID has provided two consultants to work with the authorities and partners in Aceh Indonesia.

Reconstruction will take many years to complete and funds will be programmed accordingly. The priority now is to ensure that funds already committed by the UK and other donors are effectively spent. The Government are working closely with the governments of Indonesia and Sri Lanka on the longer-term reconstruction effort. The UK Government will not provide financing in excess of need. The Government will continue to keep under review the financing needs of the tsunami-affected countries.

Biosafety Protocol

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what representations he has made to the United Nations about the application of the Biosafety Protocol to biotechnology companies whose products may cause environmental damage. [38215]

Mr. Thomas: Neither myself nor my right. hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for International Development (Hilary Benn) have made any representations to the United Nations of this kind.

The Biosafety Protocol is an international treaty, which applies to countries that have signed and ratified it. Parties to the Protocol may introduce national legislation which relates to the activities of biotechnology companies in their countries.

The UK, in line with the European Union (EU), has implemented the Biosafety Protocol within its domestic legislation and this legislation applies to companies which operate within the EU.

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what representations he has made to *(a)* the United States, *(b)* Argentina and *(c)* Canada regarding their ratification of the Biosafety Protocol. [38756]

Mr. Morley: I have been asked to reply.

We have regular contacts with the US, Canadian and Argentinean Administrations on a wide range of international environmental issues, including the importance of having the broadest possible membership of Cartagena Protocol. Officials have, for example, recently been in touch with their counterparts in Argentina to explore their latest plans to ratify the Protocol. The Government's view is that we need to encourage more countries to ratify the Protocol, especially major agricultural exporters, such as the United States, Canada and Argentina. If agricultural exporters fail to sign up to the Protocol, the global status of GM products approved in those countries that have not signed the Protocol will be uncertain, and confidence in the safety of the products of new biotechnology will suffer.

Brazil

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the effects of Soya planting in Brazil on local communities in Parana. [38366]

Mr. Thomas: DFID has not made any assessment of the effects of Soya planting on local communities in Parana. Parana is a small state in the south of Brazil. DFID's programme has focused on the poorest areas of the country, particularly the North and Northeast, and on national level initiatives.

The rural economy in Parana is characterised by small family-run farms. Soya cultivation, on the other hand, is generally highly mechanised and managed by wealthy large scale producers. A switch to Soya production could therefore lead to an increase in rural unemployment and further migration to urban areas.

Burundi

Mr. Joyce: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what support the UK has provided to the demobilisation process in Burundi. [35703]

Hilary Benn: The UK is a major contributor to the Multi-Country Demobilisation and Re-integration Programme (MDRP), a World Bank-managed regional programme which provides the framework for demobilisation and re-integration activities in the Great Lakes Region, including Burundi. We have committed $25 million to the MDRP and have funded a number of

complementary activities in Burundi. To date, over 19,458 combatants, including child soldiers, have been demobilised.

Central Asia (Aid)

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what plans he has for UK bilateral aid to *(a)* Tajikistan and *(b)* Kyrgzystan between 2005–06 and 2007–08. [38565]

Mr. Thomas: In 2005–06, DFID has committed £3 million to Tajikistan and £5.6 million to the Kyrgyz Republic in bilateral aid. In addition, we have agreed a £7 million contribution to a 5 year multi-donor programme of support to the health sector in the Kyrgyz Republic, the first £3 million of which we hope to disburse in 2005–06. We have also committed £6.4 million to a regional programme to combat HIV/AIDS in Tajikistan, the Kyrgyz Republic and Uzbekistan between 2005–06 and 2008–09. This includes £1.8 million in bilateral support to each country and a £1 million contribution to a World Bank regional project.

DFID has not yet finalised bilateral aid allocations for 2006–07 and 2007–08. We plan to increase our allocations to Tajikistan and the Kyrgyz Republic, which are the two poorest countries in Central Asia. We have strengthened the DFID office in the Kyrgyz Republic and are doing so in Tajikistan, to enable us to engage more effectively with governments and donors and to increase the scope and impact of our programmes.

Child Soldiers

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assistance his Department provided to charities for the rehabilitation of child soldiers in Sierra Leone and other African countries in the last five years. [37453]

Hilary Benn: DFID has funded a range of charities and UN agencies supporting the rehabilitation of child soldiers in Africa over the last five years. In Sierra Leone all child combatants were disarmed as part of the extensive Disarmament Demobilisation and Re-integration (DDR) process undertaken at the end of the war. DFID provided £12.4 million in support of this programme. DFID recognises the problems faced by former child combatants in re-integrating back into their communities and we have previously provided funding to support skills training and other activities for child ex-combatants. DFID has in the past, provided core funding to the Office of the United Nations Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict (OSRSG/CAAC) whose programme has included advocacy work using ex-child combatants. More broadly across Africa as a whole we have funded the following organisations:

Rwanda

Save the Children study into improving conditions for girl soldiers in DDR processes—£20,000.

Uganda

Support to war affected children and youth in northern Uganda through a variety of organisations, including Save the Children, GUSCO (a local NGO) and UNICEF. This includes direct support to former child soldiers—£650,000.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (PRO

UNICEF—Launch of the Programme for the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) of Children associated with armed groups in the Democratic Republic of Congo—£750,000.

Central Africa

UK contribution to Great Lakes Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme. Covers Angola, the DRC, Burundi, Rwanda, Central African Republic, Republic of Congo and Uganda. Child soldiers will be included within these activities. $25 million over five years. Approximately £14 million.

Sudan

UNICEF: Child soldier disarmament, demobilisation and the return, reunification and reintegration of vulnerable children—£505,000.

Preparatory Support Programme for DDR in Sudan. This will include a major focus on children associated with fighting forces—£2 million.

Liberia

UNICEF Liberia education and Re-integration for Children Associated with he Fighting Forces—£402,500.

Liberia Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Re-integration Programme. Child soldiers will be included within these activities—£3 million.

Commission for Africa

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development when he will implement the findings of the Commission for Africa, published in March with particular reference to trade justice rather than liberalisation; and if he will make a statement. [36877]

Hilary Benn: The Commission for Africa (CfA) was established in February 2004 and provided an opportunity to take a fresh look at Africa's past and present and the international community's role, and agree recommendations on the future. When the Prime Minister launched the CfA report on 11 March 2005, he committed to reflecting its recommendations in policy, and since then many of the recommendations have been reflected in commitments made by the G8 at Gleneagles and by the UN at the Millennium Review summit.

The G8 recognised the importance of a successful outcome to the World Trade Organisation (WTO) Doha Development Agenda (DDA) to generate growth and create the conditions for development. The WTO ministerial conference in Hong Kong represents an important opportunity to deliver real gains for developing countries. The UK Government are working to ensure that there is appropriate flexibility in the DDA negotiations to allow poor countries to decide, plan and sequence their economic reforms in line with their national programmes and priorities for development.

Developing countries should not be forced to open up their markets, either through trade negotiations, whether bilateral, multilateral or otherwise, or through aid conditionality, but should be allowed to choose the best policies for poor people and the environment.

Trade justice also requires a stronger link between trade and development. Many developing countries cannot take advantage of new trade opportunities resulting from more open markets because of significant human, institutional and infrastructural constraints. The UK is supporting a number of initiatives recommended by the CfA report which will help countries to overcome these constraints. The Department for International Development has committed to increase Aid For Trade to £100 million by 2010; has pledged $20 million to the Africa Infrastructure Consortium, to facilitate more effective infrastructure investments to promote economic growth and trade; and has committed $30 million over three years to the Investment Climate Facility, of which one area of focus will be to improve the efficiency of customs administrations across Africa.

The G8 endorsed commitments to increase funding for trade related capacity building. The UK continues to support this, providing assistance to African Governments and sub-regional institutions to develop and negotiate trade policy, for example with regards to WTO or EU Economic Partnership Agreements (EPA).

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what mechanisms are in place to assess the effectiveness of consultant-led projects in his Department; what sanctions are available to penalise consultants who run unsuccessful projects; how many projects conducted by consultants were assessed as unsuccessful in each year since 2000; and what sanctions were imposed. [29063]

Hilary Benn: All DFID's contracts contain clear and explicit terms of reference drawn-up and agreed with our partners. The consultants performance is monitored, to ensure contracted services make their intended contribution to project outcomes.

No payments to consultants are made until DFID is satisfied with their output. If problems arise, the consultants are given the opportunity to take corrective action. If DFID remains dissatisfied, payment of received invoices is withheld and if necessary the contract would be terminated. Over the last three years, approximately five payments have been withheld. DFID has sole rights of termination which we have exercised on two occasions due to poor performance since 2000. DFID may also require the replacement, at no extra cost, of non-performing team members. If problems occur remedial action is usually satisfactory.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department takes to ensure that consultancies do not claim excessive expenses while working for the Department and its agencies. [29064]

Hilary Benn: A financial costing is agreed for each consultancy contract. Invoices are paid in arrears and are monitored to ensure costs comply with the contract. Random audit checks are also carried out.

Darfur

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development when he last discussed the situation in Darfur with his Sudanese counterpart; and if he will make a statement. [37451]

Hilary Benn: I remain very concerned about the situation in Darfur,. When I visited Sudan in June 2005 I held detailed discussions with members of the Sudanese Government, including Vice President Taha and the then Minister for Humanitarian Affairs as well as representatives from the African Union and NGOs. Most recently, I discussed Darfur with the presidential adviser, Bona Malwal, in London on 30 November.

In his latest report, the UN Secretary General notes that while there have been fewer attacks between the parties, the security situation remains very poor. Banditry and lawlessness are rife, and continue to hamper the delivery of humanitarian supplies, particularly in South and West Darfur. We have made clear that this violence, and particularly attacks on humanitarian workers, are entirely unacceptable. We are encouraging anyone with information on the perpetrators to pass it to the relevant bodies for consideration under United Nations Security Council Resolutions 1591 and 1593.

We continue to press the parties to rein in their fighters and to reach a political agreement. The seventh round of Darfur peace talks began in Abuja on 29 November. The UK fully supports the AU-led mediation team and has provided financial and technical assistance to the talks. We also plan to maintain our observer presence throughout the talks.

Democratic Republic of Congo

Mr. Joyce: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the Government have taken to ensure the transparency and accountability of World Bank funds channelled through the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo. [35702]

Hilary Benn: The World Bank's financial support to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is provided in accordance with the Bank's fiduciary standards. Funds given to the Government of the DRC as budget support are clearly registered as such in the budget and will have a specific budget line if they are for a particular programme or activity. Tracking and monitoring of the funds is done through the DRC's Public Expenditure Management Reform programme, which includes the requirement to publish monthly execution reports. There is specific reporting on the use of external contributions to the budget (e.g. World Bank budget support and Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) funds) and on areas such as health and education components to particularly track expenditures in these priority sectors.

The World Bank is working with the Government of the DRC to improve overall public financial management, for example through promoting the implementation of a fully computerised public accounting system complying with international standards, strengthening the role and capacity of government financial control institutions and reforming the public financial management education programme.

The World Bank and the International Monetary Fund are also working with the Government to improve the composition and efficiency of spending, in particular on health, education and rural development services that benefit the poor, to ensure that the authorities are able to spend increased resources (including from debt relief) efficiently and effectively.

DFID's office in Kinshasa works closely with the World Bank in promoting development and poverty reduction in the DRC. We monitor the reports from the World Bank on expenditure tracking and we also monitor progress on improvements in public expenditure management through discussions with the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). We also use the UK's seat on the World Bank board in Washington to stay actively involved with the composition and performance of the World Bank's portfolio in the DRC.

Mr. Joyce: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the Government have taken to ensure that World Bank programmes in the Democratic Republic of Congo do not have a negative impact on the *(a)* rights and *(b)* livelihoods of those who depend on the integrity of the forest ecosystem. [35704]

Hilary Benn: The exploitation of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)'s forests has the potential to generate significant benefits for the country's people. But forestry resources need to be managed in a transparent and environmentally sustainable way, which both generates revenues and promotes the rights and livelihoods of forest dwellers. The UK is advocating this balanced approach to forest management in its engagement with all partners working on the issue in the DRC.

The World Bank provided support for development of the new DRC forestry code. The code is based on a forest classification system, which will delineate areas for commercial exploitation and community forestry. The code also provides for rights of access for traditional users, the transparent auctioning of forest concessions and the decentralised allocation of revenues.

Donors (led by the World Bank and the EC) are now discussing how best to support the implementation of the code. A multi-donor trust fund is planned. At the same time, and in recognition of the lack of implementation capacity on the ground, the World Bank is stressing the need to curb illegal and unsustainable exploitation. Two conditions; the continuation of the moratorium on the granting of new forestry concessions and a legal review of existing concessions, were attached to the most recent tranche of World Bank budget support. DFID supports this approach.

Progress in the forest sector has also been discussed with our EU partners under the UK's presidency of the EU in the DRC.

Mr. Joyce: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what measures have been taken to ensure funds allocated by his Department are not diverted to pay the salaries of members of the armed forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo. [35705]

Hilary Benn: Salaries for soldiers in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC's) armed forces come from the DRC's national budget, not from donor funds. The UK has been active, however, in urging the Government of the DRC to ensure that its soldiers receive their salaries. A properly integrated, paid and trained national army is essential for consolidating peace and security in the DRC and the whole Great Lakes region. At present, soldiers rarely receive their salaries, creating insecurity for all as they prey on civilians to make ends meet.

While in the in DRC in November, I advised President Kabila that the UK (through the Africa Conflict Prevention Pool) would support the basic needs (sanitation and accommodation) of soldiers in newly integrated brigades. However, this support is conditional on the DRC Government ensuring that soldiers are properly paid, including through implementing the recommendations of the EU's advisory mission on Security Sector Reform (SSR). One of the key strands of this work is a project to reform the army pay system. It will see advisers seconded to each integrated brigade to oversee payment of the soldiers' salaries and to help ensure that the DRC's own money reaches the people it was destined for and is not diverted by corrupt senior officers. We expect the Government of the DRC to approve the report's recommendations shortly.

Mr. Joyce: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what assessment he has made of the demobilisation process in the Democratic Republic of Congo. [35706]

Hilary Benn: The UK is concerned by the limited progress made by the demobilisation process in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Progress is slow because too few soldiers associated with the different "composants" of the transitional government are being encouraged and facilitated to enter the process. The UK, with the rest of the International Community, continues to press the Government of the Democratic Republic of Congo to accelerate its efforts in the implementation of the demobilisation and re-integration process. I personally urged President Kabila and other members of the transitional government to step up army integration and demobilisation of soldiers during my recent visit to Democratic Republic of Congo.

The International Committee Accompanying the Transition process in the DRC (CIAT)—in which the UK is a very active member) has repeatedly pushed the Congolese transitional government for more progress in this area. The CIAT released a very strong statement in early December urging the Government of the DRC to speed up both the integration of the army and demobilisation of ex-combatants. The international community, including the UK, are providing substantial direct support to the demobilisation process. The UK is putting $25 million over 5 years into the World Bank's Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme (MDRP), covering nine countries including the DRC.

Departmental Estate

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development which buildings and sites

used by his Department and related agencies *(a)* have ceased to be used in the last year and *(b)* will be closed under current plans for relocation. [31760]

Mr. Thomas: No buildings have yet been closed under DFID's relocation plans. However, it is our intention to close our second London office at 20 Victoria street, SW1, at the conclusion of the current lease in December 2006.

Departmental Guidance (Evidence/Documentary Access)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his policy is with regard to *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in his Department giving evidence to the (i) Scottish Parliament, (ii) National Assembly for Wales and (iii) Northern Ireland Assembly committees; and to what categories of document he gives (A) full access, (B) restricted access and (C) no access to (1) Scottish Parliament, (2) National Assembly for Wales, (3) Northern Ireland Assembly and (4) House of Commons Select Committees. [37393]

Hilary Benn: Requests for the attendance of Ministers or officials to give evidence to the devolved legislatures, and for the provision of information to the assemblies, will be considered on a case by case basis. The consideration will reflect: the principles set out in the Cabinet Office guidance "Departmental Evidence and Response to Select Committees" (July 2005); the policy outlined in the Department for Constitutional Affairs' Devolution Guidance Note No. 12 "Attendance of UK Ministers and Officials at Committees of the devolved legislatures"; and the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act. The principles underlying the provision of information to House of Commons Select Committees are set out in "Departmental Evidence and Response to Select Committees", particularly sections 4B and 4C.

I spoke to members of the European and External Relations Committee of the Scottish Parliament by video link on 22 March 2005.

Departmental Research

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what research projects commissioned by his Department are being undertaken; and what the publication arrangements are in each case. [33000]

Mr. Thomas: DFID's current centrally funded research programmes and projects are:

Health

Research Consortium for Research on Equity and Health Systems (CREHS)

Research Consortium on Future Health Systems: Making Health Systems Work for the Poor

Team for Applied Research to Generate Effective Tools and Strategies (TARGETS) Research Consortium (research that improves the health of the poor and vulnerable through effective communicable disease control).

Communicable Diseases: Vulnerability, Risk and Poverty (COMDIS)

Research and capacity building in reproductive and sexual health and HIV/AIDS in Developing Countries

Realising Rights: improving sexual and reproductive health for poor and vulnerable populations

Achieving MDGs 4 and 5: Strategic research to develop the evidence base for policy for mother and infant care at facility and community level

Mental health policy development and implementation in Africa: breaking the cycle of mental ill-health and poverty

LAPDAP—Anti-malarial Drug

Vitamin A trial (Ghana)

DART and ARROW (Anti-retroviral trials)

Infant Vaccines

Urban Families HIV

Malaria (London School)

Reproductive Health Services

Health Economics

Maternal Health

TB (London)

TB (Liverpool)

HIV (London)

HIV (Liverpool)

Neonatal Health

Social Science

Faiths in Development: Taking faiths seriously: understanding the relationships between values and beliefs, societies, states and development

Young Lives: a longitudinal research project investigating the nature of childhood poverty in four developing countries

Crisis States Programme

Migration, Globalisation and Poverty Research Centre

Chronic Poverty Research Centre

Centre for the Future State

Centre on Citizenship, Participation and Accountability

Centre for Research on Inequality, Ethnicity and Human Security

Improving Institutions for Pro-Poor Growth

New and Emerging Markets Research Programme

Regulation and Competition Research Programme

Securing land rights in Africa: Can land registration serve the poor?

Changes in Land Access, Institutions and Markets in West Africa

Poverty traps, nutrition, health status and anti-poverty interventions in rural India

From Economic to Political Crisis: Policy-Based Lending in the Middle East and North Africa

Children at Work: Determinants and Implications of Child Labour and Schooling Decisions in India

Sources of Rising Lifetime Incomes in Poor Countries

Monetary policy, growth and stability in sub-Saharan Africa: future policy issues

Community-based Service delivery

Modelling research-policy linkages, locating the poor and assessing cumulative regulation impact on the forest poor in India.

Pro-poor rural economic and enterprise development: A framework for analysis and action

Stronger by association—understanding how small forestry enterprise associations can work for the poor

New insights into promoting rural innovation:. Learning from civil society organisations about the effective use of innovation in development

Democratising Local Governance in Africa: Reform, Citizen Participation and Institutional Responsiveness in Kenya, Ghana, Tanzania and Uganda

Land Access and Participatory Territorial Development: lessons and policy implications from South Africa and Brazil

Understanding interlinks ages in community-driven development: individuals. community workers and institutions

The Extent and Nature of Absolute Poverty

Education

Consortium for Research on Educational Access, Transitions and Equity (CREATE)

Implementing Quality Education in Low Income Countries

Improving the Outcomes of Education for Pro-Poor Development: Breaking the Cycle of Deprivation

Agriculture

Crop protection Programme

Crop post harvest Programme

Livestock Production Programme

Animal Health Programme

Fisheries management science Programme

Aquaculture and Fish Genetics Programme

Post Harvest Fisheries Programme

Plant sciences Programme

Forestry Research Programme

Natural Resources systems Programme

Gardens For Life project (Eden Project)

Bolivia Facilitating Innovative Technologies (programme)

Recovering Markets: The keys to inclusion of small-scale producers in dynamic markets (Multi-funded programme with NED)

Infrastructure

Global Transport Knowledge Partnership (gTKP)

South East Asia Community Access Programme (SEACAP)

Transport And Rural Infrastructure Services Learning And Sharing Partnership

Engineering Knowledge and Research Programme

Disability Technology Programme

Communication

PANOS Research Communication Programme (RELAY)

The Global Development Network (GDNet)

Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERI)

AGORA initiative (improving access to global online research in agriculture)

The Science and Development Network (SciDev.Net)

Technology for Agriculture (TECA) initiative

Coherence in international research information systems

Mobilising Knowledge for Development.

AGFAX and the New Agriculturalist

TV Drama Series, Kenya

Television Trust for the Environment (TVE) Hands On

Research Communication for Kenya.

International Technical Information Service by Practical Action

Process and Partnership for pro-poor change, International Livestock Research Institute

Developing Information and Communication Technology Based Cooperative Microenterprises for Poor Women

In addition we support a range of multilateral and UK collaborative research initiatives.

Publication Arrangements

All projects are required to publish their results, and in new projects at least 10 per cent. of the budget must be used to promote the communication, dissemination and uptake of research.

The Central Research Department supports a number of projects that improve access to research findings, especially for scientists and institutions from developing countries (for example, through the Science and Development Network (SciDev. Net) and the Programme for the Enhancement of Research Information (PERI).

Disability

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether a Minister in his Department is planned to be nominated to take responsibility for liaison with the Office for Disability Issues; and if he will make a statement. [37093]

Mr. Thomas: Because of the overseas focus of its work, DFID does not have a key role to play in the delivery of the recommendations outlined in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit Report. We do not therefore, have any plans to appoint a Minister with specific responsibility for liaising with the Office for Disability Issues (ODI).

We do, however, have a strategy in place for removing the barriers faced by disabled people in the workplace and this ties in with one of the key aims of the ODI-to be an exemplar organisation in equal opportunities practice. DFID also takes into consideration disability issues in the context of our wider approach to social exclusion within our overseas development programmes, and plan to keep abreast of any best practice policies that emerge through ODI and other lead departments.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will make a statement on the initial activity undertaken by his Department in response to those recommendations in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit Report Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People where lead responsibility was assigned to all Government Departments. [37094]

Mr. Thomas: Due to the overseas nature of DFID's work, we do not have a key role to play in the delivery of policies and/or services which are central to the achievement of the Government's 20 year vision to improve outcomes for disabled people in the UK.

We have not therefore, undertaken any specific activity in response to the Strategy Unit Report's recommendations which relate ostensibly to the provision of UK public services.

We do, however, have a strategy in place for removing the barriers faced by disabled people in the workplace and this ties in with one of the key aims of the Office for Disability Issues (ODI)-to be an exemplar organisation in equal opportunities practice. DFID also takes into consideration disability issues in the context of our wider approach to social exclusion within our overseas development programmes, and plan to keep abreast of any best practice policies that emerge through ODI and other lead departments.

External Contractors (Technical Assistance)

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many technical assistance contracts between his Department and external contractors were terminated in each year since 1997. [37502]

Hilary Benn: DFID has no central record of the number of contracts terminated in each year since 1997 and could not produce this information without incurring a disproportionate cost.

GM Crops

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what research his Department has funded on genetically modified crops and food since 1997; and at what cost. [38010]

Mr. Thomas: Since 1997 DFID has spent £2,761,890 through its contracted research programmes for research on genetic transformation in fish and crops. £2,245,489 was provided by Plant Sciences Research Programme (PSP), for research on transformation of rice, potato and cooking banana crops. £516,401 was provided for research on transgenic Tilapia, by the Aquaculture and Fish Genetics Research Programme. This is less than 3 per cent. of the total spending within the Renewable Natural Resources Research Strategy.

DFID also provides unrestricted funding to the institutions of the Consultative Group on International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). Some of these institutions are implementing research on genetic modification technology, but it is not possible to attribute any specific DFID funding to these activities.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what contracts for projects relating to GM crops and foods have been let by his Department to external consultants in each year since 1997. [38011]

Mr. Thomas: Since 1997, DFID has funded two programmes which have had small elements of research involving Genetically Modified (GM) techniques:

The Plant Sciences Research Programme (PSP) has issued seven research contracts for research on transformation of rice, potato and cooking banana crops.

The Aquaculture and Fish Genetics Research Programme has issued two contracts for research on transgenic Tilapia.

HIV/AIDS

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what recent discussions he has had with the United Nations about HIV/AIDS in developing countries; and if he will make a statement. [38229]

Mr. Thomas: In 2005, AIDS has been a centrepiece of the UK's Presidencies of the G8 and EU. On 9 March 2005, with the Joint United Nations Programme for HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS), France and the United States of America, the UK, through DFID, co-hosted the "Making the Money Work" event in London to translate the Three Ones harmonisation principles into action. The Global Task Team established at this meeting has made significant time bound recommendations for improving the coordination and quality of international support for national-led responses to the epidemic. DFID is working in country and through the relevant UN boards to ensure the recommendations of the Global Task Team are put into practice.

Following the commitments made at the G8 Summit in July and Millennium Review Summit in September to scale up towards universal access, DFID will co-chair the Global Steering Committee with UNAIDS, established to take forward the commitments made at the summits to support countries in establishing more ambitious comprehensive country-led responses to AIDS.

At the UK-hosted Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria Replenishment Conference in September, the UK doubled its funding to the Global Fund from £51 million for 2006 and £51 million in 2007, to £100 million for 2006 and £100 million for 2007. Our contribution amounted to some 10 per cent. of the total US$3.7 billion pledged. Overall, the UK has pledged £359 million (US$640 million) to the Global Fund over 7 years (2002–08). We have also doubled our contribution to UNAIDS from £8 million to £16 million for this year.

To take forward the HIV and AIDS situation in developing countries, DFID Ministers hold regular discussions with heads of the relevant United Nations Agencies (in particular, UNAIDS). I have recently met with Anne Veneman, the head of the United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), Peter Piot, head of UNAIDS, and Thoraya Obaid, head of United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), where we discussed current HIV and AIDS issues.

At the United Nations General Assembly Special Session in June 2006, to review the global progress against the Declaration of Commitment which member states signed up to in 2001, DFID will be actively be involved in preparation for this session through dialogue with our EU partners and UN agencies.

Kenya

Mr. Scott: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what programmes his Department is funding in Kenya. [38666]

Hilary Benn: DFID is the second largest bilateral donor to Kenya. In 2004–05, DFID spent £39 million. This year we will spend £50 million. Our primary aim is to support the implementation of the Government of Kenya's Economic Recovery Strategy. Our focus is on supporting accountable service delivery, stimulating pro-poor growth, tackling HIV/AIDS and working to improve donor effectiveness. Around 75 per cent. of our spending supports the health and education sectors. Kenya is making excellent progress towards the education Millennium Development Goals (MDGs).

DFID's support, with others will assist with the construction of 11,880 new or refurbished classrooms by 2010, plus more education materials to each one of the 18,500 primary schools in Kenya. In health, it is estimated that the doubling of DFID's support to £47 million will deliver 11 million insecticide treated bed nets, saving 167,000 children's lives, and reducing under-five mortality in Kenya by at least 15 per cent. We are also supporting the Government of Kenya to

develop a wider strategy for health care and to tackle HIV/AIDS, another area where Kenya is making significant progress where prevalence has fallen from around 11 per cent. to 6 per cent. in five years.

DFID supports other areas of work including land and agricultural reform, private sector development, public financial management, improved statistics, and support to governance, justice and law and order. DFID worked with the Government of Kenya to help produce a credible anti-corruption action plan. Against this, they have already passed Procurement and Privatisation Bills, fully staffed the Kenya Anti-Corruption Commission, and have developed a code of ethics for Ministers. While the fight against corruption will be hard, these measures should begin to reduce the opportunities for grand corruption; but leadership in this fight remains equivocal and no senior Ministers have yet been asked to take responsibility for corrupt deals. DFID will continue to work with the key anti-corruption institutions, civil society, and the private sector, to continue the pressure in the fight against corruption while, at the same time, helping to deliver benefits to poor people.

Maldives

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much aid the UK allocated to the Maldives in each year since 2000. [38354]

Mr. Thomas: I refer my right hon. Friend for Rotherham to the response I gave to him on 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 472W.

Information about how much aid the Maldives have received in 2005 is not yet available.

Public Appointments

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the former hon. Members who left Parliament in 2005 who have since been appointed to public bodies by his Department, broken down by party; and who was responsible for making each appointment. [36687]

Mr. Thomas: The Department for International Development (DFID) has not appointed any former hon. Members, who left Parliament in 2005, to the public bodies for which it is responsible.

Renewable Energy

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how many renewable energy projects his Department has undertaken since 1997; in what year each was undertaken; in what location; and what the *(a)* nature and *(b)* cost was of each project. [38224]

Mr. Thomas: I shall reply to the right hon. Member for Devizes shortly.

Somalia

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps his Department is taking to secure aid agency transport links to Somalia. [37454]

Hilary Benn: DFID takes the security of aid provision very seriously in relation to Somalia and we are working closely with the international community to promote the establishment of an effective Somalia Government, to return stability and the rule of law. To this end we are helping Somalia develop an effective civilian police force. In partnership with other UK Government Departments, we are closely engaged in how to address the issues of piracy, terrorism and other forms of cross-border criminal activities with our international partners in the region.

DFID has also provided significant financial support through the Humanitarian Response Fund (HRF) for Somalia, administered by the UN Office for the Co-ordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) which has responsibility, inter alia, for the security of UN operations on the ground. We are also planning to provide increased funding to the World Food Programme (WFP) which will include transport and security.

South Asia Earthquake

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development if he will list the main categories of aid and supplies the UK has pledged to help victims of the South Asia Earthquake; and how much of each category which has been pledged has been delivered. [39304]

Mr. Thomas: Following the 8 October earthquake, DFID has pledged a total of £58 million to the immediate relief phase. The following table gives details of DFID allocations to date. These can be found in our regularly updated situation reports placed on the DFID website, www.dfid.gov.uk. In addition, DFID has pledged £70 million to support reconstruction and longer-term recovery.

DFID funding allocations

Partner	*Activity*	*Amount (£)*
Non-governmental organisations (NGOs)		
Oxfam	3,500 winterised family tents, 19,700 collapsible 10-litre jerry cans, 7,530 wool blankets, 40,000 sleeping mats, 20,000 tarpaulins	[1]998,448
Oxfam	Water/sanitation	560,000
Islamic Relief	10,000 tarpaulins, 20,000 blankets, 1,000 winterised family tents	[1]258,000
Christian Aid/Church World Services	1,000 winterised tents in-kind; programme for shelter, food and first aid. 2,000 tarpaulins from Lahore (£10,000)	[2]310,000
Save the Children UK	Provision of shelter, blankets, clothing, primary health care, psycho social support to children	300,000
Save the Children UK	Shelter	600,000

DFID funding allocations

Partner	*Activity*	*Amount (£)*
Save the Children India	Shelter for India administered Kashmir	500,000
Action Aid	Food packages, health centres, psycho social support, and shelter; 1,250 tarpaulins from Lahore (£6,100)	306,100
Rural Support Programmes Network	Tents, food, sanitation, water; 2,750 tarpaulins from Lahore (£13,500)	313,500
Mercy Corps	Health units, emergency obstetrics and outreach	212,000
International Health Partners	Provision of various emergency medicines	50,000
Norwegian Refugee Council	Stoves and fuel	300,000
Norwegian Refugee Council	Shelter	700,000
CAFOD	Water and sanitation and shelter, and cash for work; 2,000 tarps from Lahore (£10,000)	310,000
International Medical Corps	Mobile health clinics, primary health care training, distribution of hygiene kits	289,000
GOAL	2,000 tarpaulins from Lahore	10,000
ACTED	Shelter, toolkits and latrines	300,000
Action Against Hunger	Wat/san	337,123
Internews	Communication, support to journalist training, radio distribution	300,000
Tearfund	Shelter	498,964
Merlin	To set up two field trauma units in the Panj Kot valley. Support to four primary health centres and health outreach via mobile units.	800,000
Australian Aid International	Health	199,424
Handicap International	Health assistance and rehabilitation to disabled population	300,000
Humanitarian Accountability Partnership International	Support to agency accountability mechanisms	45,402
International Rescue Corps	Health assistance	300,000
Solidarite	Water/sanitation	314,055
Sub-total		9,412,016
UN Agencies		
Flash Appeal: $549 million requested for 6 months		
WHO	Shipment of health and trauma kits to Pakistan (covering 40,000 people for 3 months) and programme surveillance and response teams. 1 staff secondment 3 months.	670,000
OCHA	Humanitarian Information Centre module + vehicle; other in-kind support (vehicles, staff secondments)	[1]350,000
OCHA	Coordination and additional support to the Humanitarian Information Centre	750,000
OCHA	Support to Security Communications via information communications technology	500,000
UNHAS	Support for helicopters, one refueler	2,258,250
UNHAS	Helicopter support	1,400,000
UNJLC	Staff secondments	50,000
WFP	Logistics support	800,000
WFP	Food support	650,000
UNDSS	Four vehicles to support United Nations Department for Safety and Security and relief worker safety and security	[1]150,000
IOM	Shelter packages including tents, stoves and cooking equipment, including 2 staff secondments	830,000
IOM	Shelter materials and personnel support	1,000,000
UNICEF	Water and sanitation, staff secondment	1,080,000
UNHCR	Camp management, staff secondments	1,250,000
UNHCR	Airlift for 27,000 stoves	126,493
Details of DFID secondments	DFID secondments: liaison officer for Humanitarian Information Centre (OCHA); air operations expert (UN Joint Logistics Centre); 3 shelter experts (IOM); 1 Civ/mil officer (OCHA Military Civil Defence Agency); 1 logistician (WHO); 4 military logistical planners (UNJLC); 1 GIS officer for HIC (OCHA); 1 air ops (UNHAS); 2 water supply specialists (UNICEF); 1 senior site planner (UNHCR).	
Sub-total allocated		11,864,743
Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement		
ICRC	Helicopters, winter clothing, tents and food in Pakistan administered Kashmir; one refueler	2,578,250
Federation	Relief supplies for NWFP Pakistan	2,000,000
Sub-total		4,578,250
MOD Operations; DFID marginal costs		
MOD	Three Chinooks deployed for 28 days until 25 November	
MOD	C130 airlift of rations and water from Kabul	
MOD	40 tonnes of vegetarian rations and transport from UK to NATO Air Bridge	
MOD	Airlift of 2 PUMA helicopters from Spain for use by ICRC	
Sub-total allocated		[3]3,000,000
DEC airlift		
DEC	Merlin (26 flights)	228,751
DEC	British Red Cross (21 flights)	1,730,437
DEC	Save the Children (10 flights)	503,162

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DFID funding allocations

Partner	*Activity*	*Amount (£)*
DEC	Oxfam (7 flights)	354,875
DEC	Islamic Relief (4 flights)	420,000
DEC	World Vision (5 flights)	218,766
DEC	Christian Aid (3 flights)	346,080
DEC	Pakistan High Commission (1 flight)	126,000
DEC	Miscellaneous costs	75,671
Sub-total allocated		4,003,433
NATO support		
NATO	Charter heavy lift aircraft to transport priority relief items from UN warehouses in Europe and the Middle East to Pakistan	[4]2,000,000
NATO	59 Independent Commando Squadron, Royal Engineers to work under NATO command for shelter construction in high areas	[4]2,500,000
ECHO		
ECHO	DFID contribution towards European Commission Humanitarian Office funding	1,600,000
DFID Pakistan		
Various organisations	To be programmed to support local humanitarian efforts	[4]1,000,000
Birdlife International	Immediate relief activities	17,000
Rural water supply and sanitation programme	Water/sanitation	385,587
Helicopter operation		
Helicopters	4 Mil-8 medium lift helicopters to the UNHAS operation four months	4,100,000
DFID direct costs		
Direct costs	Search and Rescue teams; DFID assessment teams, operating costs	2,050,000
Total		46,108,442

[1] In kind.
[2] Including £115,000 in kind.
[3] Estimated.
[4] Allocated.

Sunset Clauses

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what his policy is in respect of the use of sunset clauses in legislation. [37392]

Hilary Benn: The appropriateness of a sunset clause for the whole or part of any proposed legislation is considered on a case by case basis. It is also addressed when a regulatory impact assessment relation to legislation is being prepared.

DFID is not currently taking any legislation through Parliament.

Uganda

Mr. Joyce: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development whether he plans to press for the United Nations Security Council to discuss and adopt a resolution on the conflict in northern Uganda during the UK's presidency. [35701]

Hilary Benn: The UK is committed to find a resolution to the conflict in northern Uganda. I am aware a number of non-governmental organisations have written to my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, advocating a UN Security Council Resolution during the UK's Presidency of the Security Council in December. These ideas are currently being considered.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps are being taken by his Department to tackle the use of child soldiers in northern Uganda. [35738]

Hilary Benn: The UK Government deplores the use of child soldiers. Child abduction is the rebel Lord's Resistance Army's (LRA) principle recruitment method. Although a recent World Health Organisation Survey in parts of northern Uganda indicated a significant decline in LRA abduction rates in 2005, the problem remains serious. Large numbers of children are forced to commute into town centres at night to avoid abduction by the LRA. We are helping UNICEF provide safe shelters in which these children can sleep. We are also helping UNICEF re-integrate child soldiers that escape or are rescued from the LRA through counselling, help with tracing families and specific initiatives to deal with the social challenges of re-integration.

We remain concerned about continued reports of a small number of under age recruits in the Ugandan army. Uganda has ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child, which prohibits recruitment into the armed forces under the age of 18. The Government of Uganda works with agencies such as UNICEF to ensure underage recruits are identified and demobilised. UK officials in Kampala continue to monitor the situation closely.

Zimbabwe

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development how much aid from the UK has been committed to *(a)* the Republic of Zimbabwe and *(b)* non-governmental organisations operating in Zimbabwe in each of the last five years for which figures are available. [30161]

Hilary Benn: By the end of this financial year, DFID will have committed over £140 million to humanitarian and HIV/AIDS programmes in Zimbabwe since 2001–02. This will include approximately £95 million committed directly to non-governmental organisations. The breakdown is as follows:

£ million

Financial year	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*[1]
Humanitarian					
NGO	1.77	16.73	17.63	11.16	9.43
UN	5.0	6.52	7.66	3.24	13.76
Health and HIV/AIDS[2]					
NGO	4.96	5.5	8.03	10.23	9.85
UN	0.05	0	0	0.5	6.7
Other	3.47	1.17	0.85	0.73	0.26
Total	15.23	29.93	34.17	25.58	40.00

[1] Figures for the financial year 2005–06 refer to planned expenditure.
[2] Includes support for orphans and vulnerable children, insecticide treated bednets, and an emergency programme to reduce maternal mortality.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Digital Television

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps her Department is taking to offer assistance to individuals with the switchover to digital television. [38075]

James Purnell: The Government and broadcasters have set up Digital UK to provide the necessary information. Their activities will include major communication campaigns, direct mail and a call centre giving practical advice on how to prepare for switchover.

In addition, specific assistance will be available to households where someone is aged 75 or over; and households with people with severe disabilities. This will consist of providing the necessary equipment to convert one TV set and the relevant support to install and use such equipment.

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the availability of digital television. [38082]

James Purnell: The vast majority of households can, with the appropriate equipment, receive digital TV services via either digital satellite, digital terrestrial or cable.

However at least a quarter of households cannot currently receive the digital terrestrial television (DTT) service; this figure cannot be increased before switchover, which will take place between 2008 and 2012.

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps her Department is taking to offer individuals assistance with the switchover to digital television. [38515]

James Purnell: Digital UK will provide extensive information to ensure everyone knows what is happening, what they need to do, and when. Their activities will include major communication campaigns, direct mail and a call centre giving practical advice on how to prepare for switchover.

In addition, specific assistance will be available to households where someone is aged 75 or over; and households with people with severe disabilities. This will consist of providing the necessary equipment to convert one TV set and the relevant support to install and use such equipment.

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the progress towards digital switchover. [38537]

James Purnell: I refer the hon. Member to the answer my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State gave to the hon. Member for Hemel Hempstead (Mike Penning) on 11 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 765W.

BBC Charter

Mr. Blizzard: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she expects to announce the renewal of the BBC Charter. [38076]

Tessa Jowell: We intend to publish the White Paper and draft Charter and Agreement early in 2006. The new Charter and Agreement will replace the existing instruments, which expire on 31 December 2006.

Olympic Games 2012

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the latest estimate is of construction costs for the 2012 Olympic games facilities; and if she will make a statement. [38083]

Tessa Jowell: The current estimate of the cost of constructing the Olympic sports venue and press centre is around £1.2 billion, inclusive of inflation, fees and contingencies. I am determined that all costs will be tightly controlled and to ensure that the 2012 Games are delivered on time and within the funding envelope.

Administrative Savings

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what administrative savings have been made by her Department in each of the last eight years. [34946]

Mr. Lammy: Information on gross controlled administration costs underspends for my Department is included in the published Public Expenditure Outturn White Papers for the relevant years. These are available in the Library of the House.

Details of efficiency gains being made as part of the SR04 efficiency programme, as set out in the Efficiency Technical Notes, are available on the Department's website:

http://www.culture.gov.uk/global/publications/archive_2004.

Arts Council

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent discussions she has had with the Arts Council. [38532]

Mr. Lammy: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State last met Sir Christopher Frayling, Chair of Arts Council England, on 26 May 2005. I meet Sir Christopher and members of the Arts Council's senior executive team on a more regular basis.

BBC Licence Fee

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent discussions she has had on the BBC's licence fee proposals. [38533]

James Purnell: The BBC have briefed DCMS Ministers on their proposals. The Government is currently conducting a funding review to determine the level of the television licence fee to apply from April 2007 and will announce the outcome in due course.

Big Lottery Fund

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much of the Big Lottery Fund (BLF) money will go to voluntary and community organisations; how much the BLF cost to create; and if she will make a statement. [38535]

Mr. Caborn: The Big Lottery Fund has given an undertaking that 60–70 per cent. of funding will go to voluntary and community sector organisations. The cost to date of the administrative merger of the Community Fund and the New Opportunities Fund to create the Big Lottery Fund is £4.976 million. The administrative merger is now effectively complete, though some minor costs will be incurred in effecting the legal merger, if the National Lottery Bill is passed.

Broadcasting (Illegal Jamming)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what representations she has received from UK *(a)* regulators and *(b)* broadcasters about disruption to the programmes of (i) BBC on 19 September and (ii) Channel 5 on occasions between 14 and 26 October and on 21 November from illegal jamming; and if she will make a statement. [34916]

James Purnell: The Secretary of State has not received any direct representations from broadcasters or regulators about disruption to either BBC or Channel 5 programmes due to illegal jamming in September and October.

The Office of Communications (Ofcom) did advise DCMS officials of a report of interference, received by Ofcom on 25 October, from Arquiva the network operator responsible for transmission of Channel 5 television services in the UK. This report concerned interference to a third party satellite link used to feed programmes to the Channel 5 network, which in turn interrupted the station's television broadcasts in the UK.

Neither Ofcom nor DCMS officials received formal complaints of similar interference to any other UK broadcasters, including the BBC, between September and November.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what advice she has received on the impact of the jamming of the Telstar 12 and Hotbird satellites from within Libya on United Kingdom broadcasters; and if she will make a statement. [34920]

James Purnell: The Office of Communications (Ofcom) advised DCMS officials that the regulator had on 25 October received a report from Arquiva, the network operator responsible for transmission of Channel 5 television services in the UK, regarding interference to the Telstar 12 satellite service.

The Telstar 12 satellite provides programme feeder links for Channel 5 television broadcasts. Interference to the satellite, which is understood to have originated from a transmitter based in Libya, caused intermittent disruption to Channel 5 services within the UK over a period of approximately two weeks during October. DCMS officials advised FCO officials of the problem. The matter was taken up by FCO officials through the appropriate channels in Libya.

Interference has now ceased and there have been no further reports of interruption to Channel 5 or other UK television broadcast stations. DCMS officials nevertheless remain in touch with Ofcom and FCO officials to monitor the situation and will take appropriate steps should there be a re-occurrence of the problem.

Neither Ofcom nor DCMS officials have received reports of interference to the Hotbird satellite.

Children's Play

Helen Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much her Department spent on children's play and leisure facilities in 2004–05; and what this figure is as a percentage of her Department's total budget. [38982]

Mr. Lammy: The Department does not directly fund services or facilities and has therefore spent no money on children's play and leisure facilities in 2004–05.

Helen Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many local authorities have *(a)* a local play strategy and *(b)* a framework for children's play. [38983]

Mr. Lammy: The Department does not hold this information centrally. I understand, however, that the Big Lottery Fund has awarded a development grant to the Children's Play Council (CPC) to develop a proposal to deliver the England wide support and development infrastructure for the fund's new play programme. CPC will undertake an audit of local authority play strategies as part of this work.

Helen Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport which Departments are represented on the official interdepartmental group on children's play; what the work programme of the group is; and when it will report. [38981]

Mr. Lammy: Departmental membership of the cross-departmental officials' group on children's play is as follows: Culture, Media and Sport (Chair); Education and Skills; Environment, Food and Rural Affairs; Health; Transport; Home Office; Office of the Deputy Prime Minister; and the Treasury.

The group's aim as defined in its terms of reference is:

"To develop a coherent and strategic cross departmental approach to play policy; and to maximise the contribution that play can make to DCMS priorities and to those across Government, while recognising the importance of play in its own right."

The group has met three times and has considered a number of topical issues. The group reports to me on an ongoing basis.

Ann Coffey: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport What recent progress her Department has made in improving play facilities in parks. [38080]

Mr. Lammy: We are working closely with other Government Departments through our cross-departmental group on play, to improve opportunities for play in England. Thanks to the £155 million play programme announced by the Big Lottery Fund earlier this year, a huge number of existing play facilities across England will be improved and new ones created. This will include those based in parks and open spaces.

Child Sports Trainees (China)

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with the International Olympic Committee about prevention of cruelty to and exploitation of child trainees for Olympic sports in China. [38073]

Mr. Ceborn: The Secretary of State has made clear on several occasions that the Government expects child athletes to be trained and treated in an acceptable manner, consistent with the spirit and values of the Olympic movement.

We also welcome the recent announcement by Jack Rogge, President of the International Olympic Committee, who has said the IOC will look into allegations of mistreatment of child gymnasts in China.

Correspondence

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) when she will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for St. Albans dated 25 October 2005; [32362]

(2) what the reasons are for the time taken to answer *(a)* the question tabled by the hon. Member for St. Albans on 22 November 2005, reference 32363 and *(b)* the letter referred to in the question; and if she will make a statement. [36878]

James Purnell: I apologise for the delay in replying to *(a)* the question 32362 and *(b)* the letter of 25 October 2005. I will reply to the hon. Members letter shortly.

The Department has received a large volume of correspondence both from hon. Members and members of the public in the run-up to and immediately following the implementation of the Licensing Act 2003 on 24 November 2005 this year.

Every effort is made to handle all correspondence effectively and efficiently. Correspondence from hon. Members is handled in accordance with the principles set out in 'Handling Correspondence from Members of Parliament, Members of the House of Lords, MEPs and Members of Devolved Assemblies: Guidance for Departments'.

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the average time taken for her to reply to letters from hon. Members was in the last period for which figures are available. [36808]

Mr. Lammy: Every effort is made to handle all correspondence effectively and efficiently.

All correspondence from hon. Members and peers is handled in accordance with the principles set out in "Handling Correspondence from Members of Parliament, Members of the House of Lords, MEPs and Members of Devolved Assemblies: Guidance for Departments". The same principles apply when handling correspondence from members of the public.

The Cabinet Office, on an annual basis, publishes a report to Parliament on the performance of Departments in replying to Members/peers correspondence. The report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005, *Official Report*, columns 137–40WS. Reports for earlier years are available in the Library of the House.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how many *(a)* letters from hon. Members, *(b)* letters from members of the public and *(c)* parliamentary questions from (i) hon. Members and (ii) Lords were dealt with by her Department in each year since 1995; in respect of the percentage her Department took (A) more than one month and (B) more than three months to provide a substantive answer; and if she will make a statement. [37401]

Mr. Lammy: Every effort is made to handle all correspondence effectively and efficiently.

All correspondence from hon. Members and Peers is handled in accordance with the principles set out in 'Handling Correspondence from Members of Parliament, Members of the House of Lords, MEPs and Members of Devolved Assemblies: Guidance for Departments'. The same principles apply when handling correspondence from members of the public.

The Cabinet Office, on an annual basis, publishes a report to Parliament on the performance of Departments in replying to Members/Peers correspondence. The report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005, *Official Report*, columns 137–40WS. Reports for earlier years are available in the Library of the House.

The information we hold on letters from the public refers only to the period from 1997, and whether or not we were late in responding. See table.

	Public total	*Percentage late*
1997 (after 1 May 1997)	9,239	39
1998	19,794	39
1999	15,244	35
2000	14,380	29
2001	11,216	29
2002	9,051	35
2003	8,359	41
2004	8,177	43
2005 (to 30 September 2005)	9,355	41

DCMS has set up a new Central Information and Briefing Unit, which will help ensure that replies to correspondence from the public are dealt with in a prompt, accurate and helpful manner.

The Department for Culture, Media and Sport aims to ensure that hon. Members receive a substantive response to their named day questions on the named day and endeavour to answer ordinary written questions within a working week of being tabled. We also aim to answer Lords written questions within two weeks of being tabled. Unfortunately, this is not always possible but we do make every effort to achieve these time scales.

The figures for the total number of written parliamentary questions tabled by (i) hon. Members and (ii) Lords and answered in each year since 1995[1] are given in the table together with the number for those years that took (A) between one-three months and (B) more than three months to provide a substantive answer.

	Total number of written questions answered (Commons)	*Written questions answered late (1–3 months) (Commons)*		*Written questions answered late (3 months) (Commons)*	
		Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
1999	1,113	22	1.9	2	0.18
2000	1,418	67	4.7	0	—
2001	1,423	59	4.14	7	0.49
2002	1,753	38	2.16	0	—
2003	1,351	43	3.18	3	0.14
2004	1,408	47	3.33	1	0.07
2005 (up to 8 December 2005)	1,436	59	4.10	5	0.34

	Total number of written questions answered (Lords)	*Written questions answered late (1–3 months) (Lords)*		*Number of written questions answered late (3 months) (Lords)*
		Number	*Percentage*	
1999	170	2	1.17	0
2000	161	6	3.7	0
2001	156	2	1.28	0
2002	204	3	1.47	0
2003	149	0	—	0
2004	335	0	—	0
2005 (up to 8 December 2005)	147	4	2.72	0

[1] Accurate figures for years prior to 1999 are not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Source:

Information derived from the DCMS parliamentary questions database.

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she will reply to the letter from the hon. Member for Sittingbourne and Sheppey on behalf of Superintendent Alasdair Hope dated 13 October. [38429]

James Purnell: I wrote to my hon. Friend on 12 December in reply to his letter of 13 October.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the *(a)* salary bill was and *(b)* administrative costs were for her Department in (i) each (A) nation and (B) region of the UK and (ii) London in 2004–05. [35873]

Mr. Lammy: My Department's net administration costs for 2004–05 were £40,452,000, of which £19,814,000 related to its salary bill. The Department has no staff located outside London.

The administration budgets regime overseen by the Treasury relates to Whitehall departments only. How administration costs are controlled in the devolved Administrations is a matter for them. Treasury do not monitor regional or central London administration costs separately.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what *(a)* building and *(b)* refurbishment projects are planned by her Department in (i) 2005–06 and (ii) 2006–07; and what the expected costs are of each project. [37400]

Mr. Lammy: The Department for Culture, Media and Sport has no planned building projects in either year. It is planning to refurbish its main headquarters building in London but has yet to agree tenders for the work.

The Royal Parks have no planned building projects in either year. But the refurbishment of the Royal Parks office building in Kensington Gardens is estimated to cost about £50,000 in 2005–06; that of the Old Police House in Hyde will cost about £250,000 in 2005–06.

The Royal Parks have no refurbishment projects planned in 2006–07.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what the total value is of *(a)* catering and *(b)* entertainment contracts let by her Department; and what the value of such contracts has been let in each nation and region of the UK, including London. [37483]

Mr. Lammy: The information is as follows:

(a) A new contract was placed as from October 2004 to cover catering and hospitality[1] at the Department's London HQ building on a fixed price basis. The annual cost of the contract should not exceed £53,000.

Royal Parks Agency has let no catering contracts in the last financial year but has spent £24,000 on hospitality.

(b) Neither DCMS nor Royal Parks Agency has let any entertainment contracts in the last financial year.

[1] The term hospitality covers tea, coffee and working lunches for staff and visitors

Disability

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether a Minister in her Department is planned to be nominated to take responsibility for liaison with the Office for Disability Issues; and if she will make a statement. [37075]

Mr. Lammy: Anne McGuire, the Minister for Disabled People, has overall responsibility for the Office for Disabled Issues (ODI). The Minister for Disabled People chairs a cross-government steering group which includes ministerial representatives from the Department of Health, Department for Education and Skills, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Department for Transport and Department of Trade and Industry. I am the Minister in this Department nominated to take responsibility for liaison with the ODI.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the initial activity undertaken by her Department in response to those recommendations in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit Report, Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People, where lead responsibility was assigned to all Government Departments. [37076]

Mr. Lammy: My Department fully supports the recommendations of the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit Report, Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People. We look forward to working with colleagues across government on taking forward those recommendations which are for all Government Departments to implement.

Elite Athletes (Funding)

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what submissions her Department made to the Treasury prior to the pre-Budget report concerning funding for elite athletes at the 2008 and 2012 Olympics; and who was asked to contribute to those submissions. [38359]

Mr. Caborn: This Department, with the support of UK Sport, the Government's lead agency on elite sport, had numerous discussions with HM Treasury about levels of public funding for elite athletes, grassroots sport and wider participation. These discussions are ongoing.

English Heritage

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent discussions she has had with English Heritage. [38516]

Mr. Lammy: Both my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, and I have regular meetings with English Heritage. Most recently, I met the chairman on 23 November 2005 and attended a meeting of the English Heritage Commission on 7 December 2005.

Film Production

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what film production supported by public *(a)* funding and *(b)* other assistance took place in the North West of England in each of the last five years. [37123]

James Purnell: North West Vision, the Regional Screen Agency for the North West of England has supported a number of film productions in the region, through direct funding and other assistance, over the last five years; specifically:

	Direct funding		*Other assistance*[1]
	Feature film	*Short film*	*Feature film*
2005	1	29	5
2004	1	14	5
2003	1	24	7
2002	—	13	7
2001	—	12	3

[1] Data for other assistance given to short film projects is not readily available.

Government Art Collection

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer of 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1136W, on departmental spending, when the Minister will place in the Library the document listing the works of art purchased by the Government Art Collection in the year 2004–05. [37684]

Mr. Lammy: The document listing works of art purchased by the Government Art Collection in the year 2004–05 was deposited with the Libraries of both Houses on 30 November 2005.

Independent Fees Review Panel

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the Independent Fees Review Panel interim report. [38517]

James Purnell: On 5 December, my Department published the Interim Report of the Independent Licensing Fees Review Panel that has been set up to consider whether the new licensing fees are set at the right level. Copies of the report have been deposited in the Libraries of both Houses and are available at: http://www.culture.gov.uk/alcohol_and_entertainment/monitoring_and_evaluation/ifreview.htm

I am grateful to the chair, Sir Les Elton, and all the members of the panel for all the hard work they have undertaken over the last few months. I am content with the broad thrust of the panel's four initial recommendations and have asked my policy officials to consider the detailed implications of the proposals and report back to me with an action plan early in the new

year. The Panel's Interim Report also identifies nine areas that they wish to consider further, leading to their final report in autumn 2006.

Independent Sports Review

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps she has taken to implement the findings of the Independent Sports Review (ISR); what recent meetings she has had on the ISR; and if she will make a statement. [38510]

Mr. Caborn: I always welcome contributions and ideas regarding the way we fund and administer the delivery of sport. I therefore read the Independent Sports Review with interest and noted its recommendations. I have not held any recent meetings to discuss the report.

Jubilee Sailing Trust

Mr. Swayne: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what action the Government are taking to assist the Jubilee Sailing Trust to secure the future of the vessels Lord Nelson and Tenacious; and if she will make a statement. [38000]

Mr. Caborn: The Jubilee Sailing Trust has already received significant lottery funding from Sport England. Decisions on further financial support are a matter for Sport England.

We continue to support sailing for people with disabilities through organisations such as RYA Sailability.

Angela Watkinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make funding available to secure the future of the Jubilee Sailing Trust. [38383]

Mr. Caborn: The Jubilee Sailing Trust has already received significant lottery funding from Sport England. Decisions on further financial support are a matter for Sport England.

We continue to support sailing for people with disabilities through organisations such as RYA Sailability.

Junk Food Advertising (Consultation)

Mary Creagh: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport for what reasons the Ofcom consultation on junk food advertising has been postponed from November 2005 until February 2006. [37998]

James Purnell: The matters raised are the responsibility of the Office of Communications (Ofcom) as independent regulator. Accordingly, my officials have asked the chief executive of Ofcom to respond directly to the hon. Member. Copies of the chief executive's letter will be placed in the Libraries of the House.

Licensing Act

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the effects of the Licensing Act 2003 on the Government's Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy; and if she will make a statement. [32790]

James Purnell: The Licensing Act 2003 is an important part of the Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy which will allow a more responsible attitude to drinking through the removing the artificial and fixed closing times that encouraged people to drink as much as possible before last orders and created flashpoints for conflict through late night queuing for transport and fast food.

The new regime will encourage a more diverse night time economy that is not aimed solely at the younger market and has brought in tough new powers to crack down on problem premises that encourage drunkenness and disorderly behaviour.

While it is too early to measure the real impact of reform, early signs are positive with an unprecedented engagement from local residents, the police and others in influencing licensing decisions and tens of thousands of premises already have new conditions to adhere to which promote the licensing objectives.

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer of 24 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 2228–9W, on the Licensing Act, if she will make it her policy to revise the guidance to licensing authorities to require them to send details of applications on the register to relevant *(a)* councillors and *(b)* hon. Members. [33744]

James Purnell: The guidance cannot be used to place such requirements on licensing authorities: that would be a matter for primary or secondary legislation. We not rule out considering changes to the legislation, but only if a compelling case arose during the review of the Guidance or from other work to evaluate the effectiveness of the new regime, including the requirements for publicising applications. I will take note of my hon. Friend's suggestions, but hope she will understand that it is too early to anticipate the outcome of the current review.

Mr. Clegg: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she made of the impact of the Licensing Act 2003 on those whose only alcoholic product for sale is communion wine before the introduction of the Licensing Bill; and what such assessment she has made since implementation of the Act. [36223]

James Purnell *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* Before the introduction of the Licensing Bill, the Government carried out a widespread consultation which offered an opportunity for stakeholders to participate, including the manufacturers and suppliers of communion wine. All responses were carefully considered in framing the new legislation.

The Licensing Act 2003 only came into force on 24 November 2005, and it is still too early to make an assessment of the impact of our reforms in respect of any category of services or premises. However, the Government have made a commitment to monitor the impact of the new laws. This includes Sir Les Elton's on-going independent review of licensing fees. His panel would welcome evidence from any fee payers about the impact of the new regime on their businesses or organisations.

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether a councillor who has made a representation on a licensing application on his

own behalf as a resident is precluded under *(a)* the Licensing Act 2003 and *(b)* the Councillors' Code of Conduct from attending and speaking at a licensing committee on that application as (i) a resident and (ii) a representative of other residents. [36817]

James Purnell *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* I am not aware of any provision in the Licensing Act 2003 or the Councillors' Code of Conduct which prevents a local councillor who is an interested party and who has made relevant representations from speaking at the licensing committee hearing. Similarly, there is nothing to stop a councillor speaking at a hearing on behalf of other interested parties who have made relevant representations, provided that they have asked him to do so and have notified the licensing authority, as required by the Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005.

My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State wrote to licensing authorities on 30 September this year reiterating that there is nothing to prevent a local councillor from making representations if asked to by residents, nor from seeking the views of their residents on licensing matters as they would for any other issues.

Of course, it would be expected that any councillor who is also a member of the licensing committee and who is making a representation as an interested party, or on behalf of another interested party, would disqualify themselves from any involvement in the decision-making process affecting the premises in question.

Following a review of the code of conduct for members by the Standards Board for England, the Government have recently announced its intention to amend the code along the lines proposed by the board. These proposals include changes which would support members' advocacy role.

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) how many establishments she estimates are trading without a licence under the Licensing Act 2003 in *(a)* total, *(b)* the Wellingborough local authority area and *(c)* the East Northamptonshire area; [36918]

(2) how long she expects it will take to process outstanding licence applications under the Licensing Act 2003 in *(a)* total, *(b)* the Wellingborough local authority area and *(c)* the East Northamptonshire local authority area; [36923]

(3) how many licences have been applied for under the Licensing Act 2003; and how many of these have not been processed in *(a)* total, *(b)* the Wellingborough local authority area and *(c)* the East Northamptonshire local authority area. [36924]

James Purnell: Feedback from licensing authorities indicates that around 190,000 applications have been made for premises licences or club premises certificates under the Licensing Act 2003. Of these, we estimate that about 75 per cent. (142,500) were applications made before 6 August 2005 to convert and/or vary licences under the old regime and would have been automatically deemed granted or refused if not processed after two months.

Applications that have subsequently been made will usually be processed in about a month if there are no representations, or about two months if there are representations and hearings, although the precise position will vary between local authorities.

We believe the vast majority of applications have been processed and, while not all licences have actually been issued, we are confident that licensing authorities have made it clear to licensees the terms under which they can trade. We intend to conduct a formal data gathering exercise in the new year in order to publish comprehensive information about the number of licences granted.

We have no information on the number of premises that are found to be trading without a licence, but we estimate that 98 per cent. of premises that would require a licence had applied before the new regime came into effect. Enforcement of the licensing regime is a matter for licensing authorities and authorised persons, such as the police.

We do not hold specific information for the Wellingborough and East Northamptonshire areas.

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what additional resources were made available to local authorities to take on the functions under the Licensing Act 2003. [36922]

James Purnell: Costs incurred by local authorities in meeting their requirements under the Licensing Act 2003 will, provided that they have been incurred legitimately and efficiently, be fully met by fees within the national fee regime. No additional resources should therefore be necessary.

The Government are keeping fee levels under review and will be working closely with the independent panel set up under Sir Les Elton, and with local government representatives, to ensure that the fees have been set at the right level.

Licensing Committees

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will issue guidance to clarify whether an objector making oral representations at a licensing committee is able to raise new issues which she has not previously raised in written representations on the same application. [37038]

James Purnell *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* Under the Licensing Act 2003 (Hearings) Regulations 2005 (SI No. 44), interpretation of the regulations regarding the governance of hearings is a matter for the licensing committee hearing the individual case, and ultimately for the courts if any decision is challenged.

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what guidance she has issued on local authority officers informing elected councillors of licensing applications in their wards. [37327]

James Purnell: None. It is for local authorities to decide what policy to adopt in relation to communications with elected councillors about licensing matters.

London Development Agency

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what legal entity will own the land acquired by the London Development Agency for the 2012 Olympics *(a)* prior to and *(b)* after 2012. [36864]

Mr. Caborn: The ownership of the land will depend on the decision taken by the Secretary of State about whether to confirm the London Development Agency's Lower Lea, Olympic and Legacy Compulsory Purchase Order (expected in 2006).

If it is confirmed, the London Development Agency, as the acquiring authority, would have legal title vested in the land within the Olympic Park—both prior to and after the games in 2012.

Maldives

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what discussions she has had with the UK tourist industry about the safety of British tourists travelling to the Maldives. [38355]

James Purnell: My Department has not held discussions with the UK tourist industry about dangers to British tourists travelling to the Maldives. My Department's responsibilities are focused on inbound and domestic tourism.

I am aware that the FCO provides travel advice notices on its website for over 200 countries based on the most accurate and up-to-date information available to that Department. This is designed to help British travellers make informed decisions about travelling abroad.

Media Ombudsman

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will consider appointing an independent media ombudsman; and if she will make a statement. [38599]

James Purnell: The Government is satisfied with the present arrangements for the independent regulation of broadcasting, principally by Ofcom, and of the press, by the Press Complaints Commission.

Music Education

Gordon Banks: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on Government support for music and music education. [38079]

Mr. Lammy: The Government are committed to supporting music in all its forms. We are achieving this through increased investment—funding for music through Arts Council England has more than doubled since 1997 to over £100 million this year.

My Department continues to work very closely with the Department for Education and Skills on the Music Manifesto, which celebrated its first anniversary in July. This sets out a series of shared aims for music education over the next three to five years, and has the support of over 420 signatories from across the education, cultural and music sectors.

Responsibility for music within schools falls to the Department for Education and Skills.

Through the Live Music Forum, we are working to ensure that opportunities for the promotion of live music are realised to the full.

Organised Sport

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps her Department has taken to encourage organised sports in inner city areas. [37157]

Mr. Caborn: The Department is committed to driving up participation in sport by providing facilities and services that meet local needs. Sport England is delivering a number of projects which target inner city areas, including StreetGames networks that specialise in providing organised sporting activities for young people in deprived inner city neighbourhoods and which promote the development of local leaders and coaches.

Pornography

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what definition of pornography is used by her Department. [38637]

James Purnell: We use the same definition as everyone else. In terms of regulation, we consider the harm that any type of material (whether pornography, violence, portrayal of drugs use, etc.) is likely to cause to the vulnerable, particularly children.

Press Complaints Commission

Mrs. Curtis-Thomas: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the *(a)* role, *(b)* accountability of the Press Complaints Commission and *(c)* its work in relation to sexist material. [38531]

James Purnell: The Press Complaints Commission is entirely independent of Government. It is accountable to the Press Standards Board of Finance. The Editors' Code of Practice contains a clause on discrimination which forbids pejorative reference to an individual's gender, but it does not cover matters of taste and decency.

Sailing

Charlotte Atkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on steps the Government are taking to encourage people with disabilities to participate in sailing activities. [38074]

Mr. Caborn: Through Sport England and the English Federation for Disability Sport, we are working with the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) and RYA Sailability to encourage more disabled people to take up sailing.

UK Sport funding is being provided to support elite disabled sailors in their preparations for the 2008 Paralympics in Beijing. £304,000 has been provided so far with the prospect of more being provided in 2006. In addition to this, one sailor is currently being supported through a TASS 2012 Scholarship.

Sports Funding (Manchester)

Sir Gerald Kaufman: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much funding has been provided for sport in Manchester in the last 12 months, broken down by source of funding; and how much of this went to *(a)* activities and *(b)* organisations in the Gorton constituency. [38420]

Mr. Caborn: The following amounts of funding for sport have been made available in the north west region from December 2004 to December 2005: £24,118,150 lottery funding and £1,462,642 Exchequer funding. Financial information isn't available at constituency level and cannot be split between activities and organisations. However, table 1 gives some examples of projects in the Gorton constituency during this period.

Table 1: Sport projects in the Gorton area in the last 12 months

Funding source	*Recipient*	*Project*	*Sector*	*Award amount (£)*
Exchequer	Greater Sport	PE and School Sport Links	Sport participation and capacity building	34,700
Exchequer	Greater Sport	Towards an Excellent Service	Sport participation and capacity building	15,000
Lottery	Greater Sport	Women and Girls Equity Post	Skateboarding	40,000
Lottery	North West Awards for All	North West Boccia Development Association	Other sporting activity	4,400
Lottery	North West Awards for All	Passport 2 Sport—Multi-Sports Club Central	Mix of sporting activities	4,956

Taxis

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much has been spent by her Department on taxi travel in the 2005–06 financial year; and what proportion of such travel was undertaken in each nation and region of the UK, including London. [37484]

Mr. Lammy: My Department's expenditure on taxi travel to November in 2005–06 is £12,161.27. It represents expenditure on taxis provided by the Department's contracted agent, black cabs and taxis in London and elsewhere.

An analysis of expenditure by nation and region is not recorded on the Department's accounting system and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Television Licensing

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she expects to make an announcement on the future level of the television licence fee. [38139]

James Purnell: In line with the commitment made in the Green Paper published in March of this year, the Government are currently conducting a funding review to determine the level of the licence fee to apply from April 2007. Work is continuing and we will make an announcement in due course.

Mr. Kemp: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) how many calls in 2005 initially received by the computerised voice recognition system used by the TV Licensing Authority for address transfers were then transferred to human operators for completion because the software could not understand regional and national accents and dialects, broken down by region of call origin; [38731]

'(2) if she will undertake research to establish whether the computerised voice recognition system used by the TV Licensing Authority for address transfers could be adapted to deal with a higher proportion of calls from people with north eastern English accents; [38737]

(3) which regional and national dialects and accents of the United Kingdom were most frequently not recognised in 2005 by the computerised voice recognition system for address transfers used by the TV Licensing Authority; [38738]

(4) whether the computerised voice recognition system used by the TV Licensing Authority for address transfers was designed to recognise English spoken with regional accents. [38739]

James Purnell: The BBC has responsibility for the administration and enforcement of the television licensing system and TV Licensing carries out the day to day administration and enforcement under contract to the corporation. I have therefore asked the BBC's head of revenue management to consider the questions raised by my hon. Friend and to write to him direct. Copies of the reply will be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Tourism

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much has been spent in each of the last five years in promoting tourism to the UK in China; and what assessment she has made of the effects of the promotion campaigns. [37960]

James Purnell: My Department works actively to promote both domestic and inbound tourism. At a national level, marketing and other work to promote the sector is the responsibility of VisitBritain.

DCMS funding to promote tourism to the UK in China is via VisitBritain and in 2004–05 a budget of £200,000 was agreed.

It is too early to give an assessment of the effects of the promotion campaign. However, VisitBritain's strategy to increase the value of inbound tourism and visitor numbers includes focusing its efforts on China as one of the markets with the greatest potential for growth.

Winter Olympic Sports

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much public funding has been allocated to winter Olympics sports in each of the last five years. [38356]

Mr. Caborn: The total amount of exchequer and lottery funding provided to winter Olympic sports in the current winter Olympic cycle, October 2002 to September 2006 is shown in the following table:

	Lottery funding provided (£)
October 2002 to September 2003	931,973
October 2003 to September 2004	1,023,411
October 2004 to September 2005	1,372,817
October 2005 to September 2006	1,166,630

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport whether the Government have been involved in setting *(a)* formal and *(b)* informal targets for performance at the (i) 2006 and (ii) 2010 winter Olympic games; and if she will make a statement. [38357]

Mr. Caborn: Following a review of athlete performances with the six winter sports that are currently funded through UK Sport's World Class Performance programme, UK Sport, the Government's lead agency for elite sport, estimates that we will win up to three medals at the Turin winter Olympic games.

UK Sport will agree medal targets for 2010 with their funded sports following the Turin games.

World Cup 2006

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the ticket allocation for England fans at the 2006 Football World Cup. [38430]

Mr. Caborn: While the Government and the FA have requested a greater allocation of tickets for England fans for the 2006 World Cup in Germany, this is the responsibility of FIFA.

I wrote to the President of FIFA in October about this issue and received an assurance that it will do everything in its power to ensure that England fans will receive as many tickets as possible.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Advisory Non-departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list her Department's advisory non-departmental public bodies *(a)* which the Government is required to consult prior to legislative proposals and *(b)* whose advice the Government is required to publish. [29759]

Ms Harman: *(a)* Prior to legislative proposals, the Government is required to consult the following advisory non-departmental public bodies (NDPBs) sponsored by the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA):

Advisory Council on National Records and Archives
Boundary Commission for England
Boundary Commission for Scotland
Boundary Commission for Wales
Civil Justice Council
Council on Tribunals
Criminal Procedure Rule Committee
Crown Court Rule Committee
Family Procedure Rule Committee
Insolvency Rules Committee
Land Registration Rule Committee

(b) The Government is required to publish the advice of the following advisory NDPBs sponsored by the DCA:

Boundary Commission for England
Boundary Commission for Scotland
Boundary Commission for Wales
Law Commission
Legal Services Consultative Panel

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs which of the advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by her Department *(a)* have a statutory base, *(b)* publish their advice to Government, *(c)* publish an annual report and *(d)* lay an annual report before Parliament; and whether this is under a statutory requirement in each case. [29760]

Ms Harman: The information can be found in the following table.

Name of advisory non-departmental public body (NDPB)	*(a) Hold public meetings*	*If so, whether under a statutory requirement*	*(b) Conduct public consultation exercises*	*If so, whether under a statutory requirement*	*(c) Conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests*	*If so, whether under a statutory requirement*
Advisory Committees on General Commissioners of Income Tax	No	No	No	No	No	No
Advisory Committees on Justices of the Peace in England and Wales	No	No	No	No	No	No
Advisory Council on National Records and Archives	No	No	No	No	No	No
Boundary Commission for England	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Boundary Commission for Scotland	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Boundary Commission for Wales	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No
Civil Justice Council	Yes[1]	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Civil Procedure Rule Committee	Yes (proposed)[2]	No	Yes[3]	Yes[4]	No	No
Council on Tribunals	No	No	Yes[5]	No	Yes[6]	No

Name of advisory non-departmental public body (NDPB)	(a) Hold public meetings	If so, whether under a statutory requirement	(b) Conduct public consultation exercises	If so, whether under a statutory requirement	(c) Conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests	If so, whether under a statutory requirement
Courts Boards	Yes	No	No	No	No	No
Criminal Procedure Rule Committee	No	No	Yes[7]	No	No	No
Crown Court Rule Committee	No	No	No	No	No	No
Family Justice Council	No	No	No	No	No	No
Family Procedure Rule Committee	Yes (proposed)[8]	No	Yes[9]	Yes	No	No
Insolvency Rules Committee	No	No	No	No	No	No
Land Registration Rule Committee	No	No	Yes[10]	No	Yes[11]	No
Law Commission	No[12]	No	Yes[13]	No	Yes[13]	No
Legal Services Consultative Panel	No	No	No	No	No	No
Strategic Investment Board	No	No	No	No	No	No

[1] Civil Justice Council: has held public meetings in the past but not currently.
[2] Civil Procedure Rule Committee: agreed in July 2005 to start holding public meetings in 2006.
[3] Civil Procedure Rule Committee: public consultation means that any interested body or individual, whether commercial or not, has the opportunity to respond.
[4] Civil Procedure Rule Committee: consultation is statutory under the Civil Procedure Act 1997.
[5] Council on Tribunals: consults with a range of Tribunal users, practitioners and other stakeholders through various consultation methods.
[6] Council on Tribunals: consults representative professional bodies e.g. the Law Society, Bar Council, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors. Other commercial interests have responded to consultations.
[7] Criminal Procedure Rule Committee: conducts consultations before making rules; the views of commercial interests may be captured.
[8] Family Procedure Rule Committee: agreed in December 2005 to hold public meetings in 2006.
[9] Family Procedure Rule Committee: consults as appropriate and in accordance with statutory requirements.
[10] Land Registration Rule Committee: where appropriate, consultation will be conducted by Land Registry before the Committee considers proposed rules.
[11] Land Registration Rule Committee: see previous footnote.
[12] Law Commission: from time to time holds public meetings under consultation process.
[13] Law Commission: all the projects it undertakes involve wide public consultation exercises with anyone affected by the law. This can include outside commercial interests.

Name of advisory non-departmental public body (NDPB)	(d) Publish a register of members' interests	If so, whether under a statutory requirement	(e) Publish agendas for meetings	If so, whether under a statutory requirement	(f) Publish the minutes of meetings	If so, whether under a statutory requirement
Advisory Committees on General Commissioners of Income Tax	No	No	No	No	No	No
Advisory Committees on Justices of the Peace in England and Wales	No	No	No	No	No	No
Advisory Council on National Records and Archives	Yes	No	No	No	Yes[1]	No
Boundary Commission for England	No	No	No	No	No[2]	No
Boundary Commission for Scotland	No	No	No	No	No	No
Boundary Commission for Wales	No	No	No	No	No	No
Civil Justice Council	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Civil Procedure Rule Committee	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Council on Tribunals	Yes[3]	No	Yes	No	Yes[4]	No
Courts Boards	Yes[5]	No	Yes	No	Yes[6]	No
Criminal Procedure Rule Committee	No[7]	No	Yes	No	Yes[8]	No
Crown Court Rule Committee	Yes[9]	No	No	No	No	No
Family Justice Council	No	No	Yes	No	Yes[10]	No
Family Procedure Rule Committee	Yes	No	No	No	Yes[11]	No
Insolvency Rules Committee	No	No	No	No	No	No
Land Registration Rule Committee	No	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Law Commission	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes[12]	No
Legal Services Consultative Panel	Yes[13]	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Strategic Investment Board	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes[14]	No

[1] Advisory Committee on National Records and Archives: publish summaries of minutes of meetings.
[2] Boundary Commissions for England, Scotland and Wales: publish the minutes of public inquiries only.
[3] Council on Tribunals: the DCA maintains a register of members' interests. This is available on request.
[4] Council on Tribunals: meeting agendas and minutes are available on request under Freedom of Information Act 2000 publication scheme.
[5] Courts Boards: registers of members' interests available on request in accordance with publication schemes under Freedom of Information Act 2000.
[6] Courts Boards: meeting agendas and summaries of minutes may be available on request in accordance with their publication schemes under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.
[7] Criminal Procedure Rule Committee: plans to make a register of interests available.
[8] Criminal Procedure Rule Committee: will make meeting agendas and minutes available on request.
[9] Crown Court Rule Committee: register of members' interests available on request.
[10] Family Justice Council: publishes summaries of minutes on website.

[11] Family Procedure Rule Committee: register of members' interests and meeting minutes available on request under Freedom of Information Act 2000 publication scheme.
[12] Law Commission: register of members' interests available on request.
[13] Legal Services Consultative Panel: register of members' interests available on DCA website; minutes and agendas available on request.
[14] Legal Services Consultative Panel: register of members' interests available on DCA website; minutes and agendas available on request.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs which of the advisory non-departmental public bodies sponsored by her Department *(a)* hold public meetings, *(b)* conduct public consultation exercises, *(c)* conduct consultation exercises with outside commercial interests, *(d)* publish a register of members' interest, *(e)* publish agendas for meetings and *(f)* publish the minutes of meetings; and whether this is under a statutory requirement in each case. [29761]

Ms Harman: The information can be found in the following table.

Name of advisory non-departmental public body (NDPB)	*(a) Statutory base*	*(b) Publish their advice to Government*	*If so, whether under a statutory requirement*	*(c) Publish an annual report*	*If so, whether under a statutory requirement*	*(d) Lay an annual report before Parliament*	*If so, whether under a statutory requirement*
Advisory Committees on General Commissioners of Income Tax	No	No	No	No[1]	No	No	No
Advisory Committees on Justices of the Peace in England and Wales	No	No	No	No	No	No	No
Advisory Council on National Records and Archives	Yes[2]	No	No	No[3]	No	Yes	Yes[4]
Boundary Com mission for England	Yes[5]	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Boundary Commission for Scotland	Yes[6]	Yes	Yes	No	No	No	No
Boundary Commission for Wales	Yes[7]	Yes	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
Civil Justice Council	Yes[8]	Yes	No	Yes	No	No	No
Civil Procedure Rule Committee	Yes[9]	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Council on Tribunals	Yes[10]	No	No	Yes	Yes[11]	Yes	Yes[12]
Courts Boards	Yes[13]	No	No	No	No	No	No
Criminal Procedure Rule Committee	Yes[14]	No	No	Yes[15]	No	No	No
Crown Court Rule Committee	Yes[16]	No	No	Yes	No	No	No
Family Justice Council	No	No	No	Yes (proposed)[17]	No	No	No
Family Procedure Rule Committee	Yes[18]	No	No	Yes (proposed)[19]	No	No	No
Insolvency Rules Committee	Yes[20]	No	No	No[21]	No	No	No
Land Registration Rule Committee	Yes[22]	No	No	No	No	No	No
Law Commission	Yes[23]	Yes	Yes[24]	Yes	Yes[25]	Yes	Yes[26]
Legal Services Consultative Panel	Yes[27]	No	No	No	No	No	No
Strategic Investment Board	No	No	No	Yes	No	No	No

[1] Advisory Committees on General Commissioners of Income Tax: an annual report is submitted to the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA).
[2] Advisory Council on National Records and Archives: established in 2003 following the merger of the Public Records Office and the Historical Manuscripts Commission. The Advisory Council on Public Records was first created under s1(2) of the Public Records Act 1958.
[3] Advisory Council on National Records and Archives: it is optional for an annual report to be made.
[4] Advisory Council on National Records and Archives: if an annual report is made, there is a statutory requirement to lay it before Parliament under s1(3) of the Public Records Act 1958.
[5] Boundary Commission for England: Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, as amended by the Boundary Commissions Act 1992, refers.
[6] Boundary Commission for Scotland: Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, as amended by the Scotland Act 1988 and the Boundary Commissions Act 1992, refers.
[7] Boundary Commission for Wales: Parliamentary Constituencies Act 1986, as amended by the Boundary Commissions Act 1992, the Local Government (Wales) Act 1994 and the Government of Wales Act 1998, refers.
[8] Civil Justice Council: Civil Procedure Act 1997 refers (and the Access to Justice Act 1999 and the Courts Act 2003).
[9] Civil Procedure Rule Committee: Civil Procedure Act 1997 refers.
[10] Council on Tribunals: Tribunals and Inquiries Act 1992 refers.
[11] Council on Tribunals: required by section 4(7) of the Tribunals and Inquiries Act 1992 to make an annual report.
[12] Council on Tribunals: Lord Chancellor required to lay the annual report before Parliament under section 4(7) of the Tribunal and Inquiries Act 1992.
[13] Courts Boards: the Courts Act 2003 refers.
[14] Criminal Procedure Rule Committee: S70 of the Courts Act 2003 refers.
[15] The work of the Criminal Procedure Rule Committee is reported within the DCA's Departmental Annual Report.

[16] Crown Court Rule Committee: s86 of the Supreme Court Act 1981 refers.
[17] Family Justice council: aims to publish first annual report in late summer/early autumn 2006.
[18] Family Procedure Rule Committee: s75 of the Courts Act 2003 refers.
[19] Family Procedure Rule Committee: annual report to be submitted in December 2005 for publication.
[20] Insolvency Rules Committee: S413 of the Insolvency Act 1986 refers.
[21] Insolvency Rules Committee: submits contribution for DCA annual report.
[22] Land Registration Rule Committee: s127 of the Land Registration Act 2002 refers.
[23] Law Commission: s1 of the Law Commissions Act 1965 refers.
[24] Law Commission: the Lord Chancellor is required under s3(2) of the Law Commissions Act 1965 to lay Law Commission programmes of work before Parliament.
[25] Law Commission: under s3(3) of the Law Commissions Act 1965 it makes an annual report to the Lord Chancellor.
[26] Law Commission: its annual report is laid before Parliament under s3(3) of the Law Commissions act 1965.
[27] Legal Services Consultative Panel: s35 of the Access to Justice Act 1999 refers.

Appeal Court Hearings

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the procedure is for removing *(a)* a Crown court judge and *(b)* an Appeal Court judge; how many (i) Crown court and (ii) Appeal Court judges have been removed from office in each year since 1975; what the circumstances were in each case; and if she will make a statement. [37543]

Ms Harman: The information requested is as follows:

(a) Under section 17(4) of the Courts Act 1971, a Crown court judge can only be removed from office by the Lord Chancellor, with the agreement of the Lord Chief Justice, for misbehaviour or incapacity. This process would normally be initiated following an investigation undertaken by a judge nominated by the Lord Chief Justice, at the request of the Lord Chancellor; or following conviction for any criminal offence potentially or actually carrying a sentence of imprisonment.

(b) Judges at the level of the High Court and above may only be removed by the Queen on presentation of an Address by both Houses of Parliament.

(i) In the period since 1975 I am aware of one Circuit Judge who has been removed by the Lord Chancellor, exercising his statutory powers under the Courts Act 1971. That judge had been convicted of smuggling in 1983.

There have been no Addresses of both Houses of Parliament regarding the removal of a judge of the High Court or above since 1975.

Barristers

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list the 10 barristers instructed by the Treasury Solicitor to advise and to represent the Government in court proceedings who received the highest payments in the last financial year; how much each received; and if she will make a statement. [23499]

The Solicitor-General: I have been asked to reply as Law Officers are accountable for the Treasury Solicitor.

The 10 barristers instructed by the Treasury Solicitor to advise and to represent the Government in court proceedings who were paid the highest sums for this work in the last financial year (ending 31 March 2005) and the amounts paid are:

£

Counsel	*Amount paid in last financial year including VAT*[1]
Philip Sales	619,633.76
Ian Burnett QC	327,595.20
Christopher Wilson	304,891.85
Jonathan Crow	287,883.78
Christopher Lewsley	237,255.76
Julie Anderson	227,810.61
Stuart Catchpole QC	201,160.08
Jennifer Richards	199,459.80
Monica Carss-Frisk	195,116.02
Leigh- Ann Mulcahy	182,478.63

[1] The figures include payment for instruction in arbitrations as well as in court proceedings. Alternative Dispute Resolution mechanisms are used as appropriate.

A number of qualifications need to be added to these figures:

The amount paid to barristers in one financial year is not necessarily reflective of the work carried out during that year. Payment may take place during or sometime after the work.

The figures must be interpreted carefully and do not represent the personal earnings of the barristers listed—figures are inclusive of VAT and disbursements incurred. After VAT has been deducted, barristers will typically pay 25 to 30 per cent. of fees in professional expenses. Additionally, barristers face the same expenses as any other self- employed person, including income tax and national insurance contributions.

The Crown pays barristers at a fixed hourly rate for work payable, for example, only when hearings take place, and does not use a brief fee system.

Not all payments could be verified with the individuals concerned. Cases in dispute, where records of payments held by the Treasury Solicitor differ to those held by the practitioners, have been included. Where possible, amounts have been verified by practitioners and adjusted where necessary.

Criminal Offences

Simon Hughes: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to her answer of 1 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 742–43W, on criminal offences, which criminal offences were created in each Act named in her answer. [38361]

Ms Harman: My answer of 1 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 742–43W, listed all of the primary legislation sponsored by the Department from May 1997 rather than the criminal offences created in that legislation. This is because the information requested cannot be provided except at disproportionate cost because of the period of time covered by the question.

However, I refer the hon. Member to the reply to the hon. Member for Winchester (Mr. Oaten) on 24 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 136W, which provided some of the requested information.

Data Protection

John Hemming: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the deterrent effect of court awards for compensation for breaches of the Data Protection Act 1998. [30685]

Ms Harman: None. The purpose of compensation under the Data Protection Act 1998 is not to act as a deterrent, but to compensate individuals for any damage or harm arising from a breach of their rights. We have further not made any assessment.

Departmental Research

Bob Spink: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what research projects commissioned by her Department are in progress and what the publication arrangements are. [33033]

Bridget Prentice: Commissioned research projects in progress are listed in the table and publication arrangements, where decided, are indicated.

Projects commissioned by the Research Unit are published in hard copy in the DCA Research Series and posted on the DCA website. Other reports may be posted on the DCA or HMCS websites or produced in hard copy, but for some work in progress the exact nature of publication is not yet decided.

Research commissioned by the OCA for 2005:

Projects	*Publication arrangements*
Research unit	
Evaluation of automatic referral to mediation pilot in the Central London Civil Justice Centre	DCA Research Series
Impact of Debt Advice	DCA Research Series
Ethnic Diversity and the Jury System	DCA Research Series
Training and regulating those providing legal services	DCA Research Series
A process and outcome evaluation of court conciliation at first appointment in contact cases	DCA Research Series
Separating from cohabitation: How former cohabitants resolve parenting and financial issues	DCA Research Series
Evaluation of the implementation of the measures to support and protect victims of domestic violence in the domestic violence, crime and victims Bill	DCA Research Series
Problem clustering and legal remedies	DCA Research Series
Small claims litigants—satisfaction with process and outcomes	DCA Research Series
Small claims mediation scheme at Exeter County Court	DCA Research Series
Other projects	
Research on providing information to cohabitants about their rights and responsibilities through registrars	To be decided
An evaluation of the effectiveness of a campaign to raise awareness about the rights and responsibilities of people living in a cohabiting relationship	To be decided
Research on the demographic data available on cohabitants	To be decided
Constitutional Settlement—A policy development report on Measuring Success in Constitutional Reform	To be decided
HMCS Charter Mark Strategy project	To be posted on HMCS website
National Customer Satisfaction Survey 2005–06	To be posted on HMCS website
Research into advice market structure, funding mechanisms and the consequences of these	To be decided
Community Justice Initiative (CJI) evaluation: Salford	To be decided
Community Justice Centre (CJC) evaluation: North Liverpool	To be decided
A literature review by Durham and Leeds Universities on encouraging engagement from debtors	To be decided
An evaluation of the National Mediation Helpline	On HMCS website
An evaluation of the Fast track and multi-track mediation scheme at Exeter and Guildford County Courts	On HMCS website
An evaluation of the Central London County Court voluntary scheme 1999–2003	On HMCS website
An evaluation of the Fast and multi-track mediation scheme at Birmingham Civil Justice Centre	On HMCS website
An evaluation of the Small claims mediation scheme at Manchester County Court	On HMCS website
An evaluation of the Small claims mediation scheme at Exeter County Court	On HMCS website
An evaluation of the Small Claims Support Service at Reading County Court	On HMCS website
An evaluation of the Wandsworth Dispute Resolution Scheme	On HMCS website
Research on the use of rule 9.5 of the Family Proceedings Rules 1991 (separate representation for the child in family proceedings)	To be decided
Research on 'The impact of assessment centres for judicial appointments on increasing diversity'	To be decided
Research into reasons why eligible female and BME solicitors and barristers do not apply for judicial appointment	To be decided

Electoral Registration

Chris Ruane: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will conduct research into the impact of functional illiteracy on electoral registration rates. [38271]

Ms Harman: The Electoral Commission published its report "Understanding Electoral Registration" in September this year. Although the research did not specifically address the impact of functional illiteracy, it found some significant gaps in people's awareness and knowledge of the registration process.

There are no plans to conduct research into the impact of functional illiteracy on electoral registration rates; but my Department is working with key stakeholders on improving the annual canvass form by making it clearer, simpler and easy to understand.

Family Law Act

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs whether she plans to adjust the criminal legal aid budget to provide for changes in criminal defence costs under the section 42A of the Family Law Act 1996. [37773]

Bridget Prentice: We constantly review our forecasts for both civil and criminal legal aid and take any action necessary to fund all those cases which require legal aid.

Gender Recognition Panel

Lynne Jones: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many *(a)* acceptances and *(b)* rejections there have been of the applications received by the Gender Recognition Panel; and what the reasons were for each rejection. [38057]

Ms Harman: The information requested is as follows:

In total, 1,153 applications have been received and 896 full Gender Recognition Certificates have been issued. 17 applications have been rejected. Disclosing the reasons for each rejection would be likely to reveal the identity of these applicants. Reasons for rejection include incomplete or insufficient medical evidence, an incomplete statutory declaration, or refusal by an applicant to state whether he or she is married.

Inquests

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what the average waiting time was between the death of a person and the conclusion of the inquest in *(a)* England and *(b)* Teesside in the last 12 months. [38382]

Ms Harman: The average time taken between the death of a person and the conclusion of the inquest in 2004 (the latest 12-month period for which figures are available) was 22 weeks in England and 35 weeks in Teesside.

Judges (Complaints)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list the complaints made by *(a)* members of the public, *(b)* hon. Members and *(c)* members of the House of Lords about the conduct of (A) Crown court judges and (B) judges of the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division) in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; and what the outcome was in each case. [37544]

Ms Harman: Since 1998, the Judicial Correspondence Unit in the Department for Constitutional Affairs has received each year between 1,000 and 1,600 complaints from members of the public and Members of Parliament. These include some complaints against judicial office holders sitting in the tribunals. (The majority of the complaints received turn out to be complaints about judicial handling and judicial decisions, in neither of which the Lord Chancellor can intervene because of the principle of judicial independence).

The Lord Chancellor would not normally make public the detail of individual complaints or the disciplinary action resulting from those that are upheld unless he and the Lord Chief Justice conclude that it is in the public interest to do so.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what guidance is issued to members of the public wishing to make a complaint about *(a)* a Crown court judge and *(b)* a judge of the Court of Appeal (Criminal Division); and if she will make a statement. [37545]

Ms Harman: Leaflets are available in courts for users who wish to complain and information is also provided by way of frequently asked questions on the Department for Constitutional Affairs' website at www.dca.gov.uk/legalsys/complain.htm. More detailed guidance is provided in the Lord Chancellor's Judicial Complaints Protocol which is available to members of the public on request.

Juries

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the selection of juries is representative of the ethnic profile of the local population. [37748]

Ms Harman: The principle of random selection from the electoral register should mean that the composition of juries, whether in terms of ethnic background, age, gender, sexuality or religion is broadly representative of the general population. Jurors are summoned from geographic catchment areas within 1½ hours travelling distance from the Court. The Government is committed to ensuring that juries reflect the full diversity of the communities they serve. The Electoral Administration Bill currently before Parliament includes provisions aimed at improving both the quality and the coverage of the electoral register. In addition the "Get London Registered" campaign will target young people and black and ethnic minority groups to ensure that they are properly represented on electoral registers.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what data her Department collects on the ethnic composition of juries; and what recent research her Department has conducted into the under-representation of ethnic minorities on juries. [37759]

Ms Harman: The Department for Constitutional Affairs does not collect data on the ethnic composition of juries, or any other data for monitoring purposes. As jury selection is a random process there is no business requirement to collect data on ethnicity. A research project looking at the ethnic make-up of juries from summoning through to service, commissioned by DCA, is due to be published in 2006.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will take steps to increase the subsistence allowance for jurors; and if she will make a statement. [38694]

Ms Harman: Jurors can claim for subsistence, travel and financial loss. The allowances are reviewed annually in line with inflation. Jurors are currently paid daily subsistence of £5, or £10.67 if they are required to be at court for more than 10 hours.

National Parking Adjudication Service

Paul Rowen: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps the Department has taken to ensure that decisions taken by the National Parking Adjudication Service are consistent. [37967]

Ms Buck: I have been asked to reply.

The National Parking Adjudication Service is an independent tribunal and their Parking Adjudicators operate under supervision of the Council on Tribunals. To help ensure impartiality and fairness, the Government do not have any powers to question decisions they make.

Royal Household

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs pursuant to the answer of 12 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1755W, on the Royal Household, if she will list those members of Her Majesty's family who are also members of the Royal Family regularly undertaking official duties and functions on Her Majesty's behalf. [38445]

Ms Harman: According to the official Court Circular, the following Members of The Queen's Family are listed as having undertaken official duties and functions on Her Majesty's behalf: The Duke of Edinburgh, The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall, The Princess Royal, The Duke of York, The Earl and Countess of Wessex, The Duke and Duchess of Gloucester, The Duke and Duchess of Kent and Princess Alexandra.

Search Warrants

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many search warrants were granted by Northamptonshire magistrates in the last year for which figures are available. [38100]

Ms Harman: The number of search warrants issued between 1 December 2004 and 30 November 2005 was 1,166.

Sentencing Guidelines

Mr. Amess: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what recent guidelines her Department has issued to judges about consistency of sentencing; and if she will make a statement. [36185]

Fiona Mactaggart: I have been asked to reply.

It is not the role of Government to issue guidelines on sentencing. The Criminal Justice Act 2003 set up the Sentencing Guidelines Council (SGC), an independent body chaired by the Lord Chief Justice, which is tasked with framing guidelines on sentencing. One of the factors to which the council must have regard when framing its guidelines is the need to promote a consistency of approach in sentencing. When sentencing an offender, courts must have regard to any guidelines which are relevant to the case.

The SGC has to date issued guidelines on Reduction in Sentence for a Guilty Plea, Overarching Principles: Seriousness, New Sentences: Criminal Justice Act 2003 and, most recently, Manslaughter by Reason of Provocation.

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Administrative Savings

Mr. Maude: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what administrative savings have been made by his Department in each of the last eight years. [34954]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) was created following the Machinery of Government changes on 29 May 2002.

The 2002 Spending Review provided for an increase of £902 million in the departmental expenditure limit by 2005–06, an annual average real growth of 4.9 per cent. To deliver the expanded programme, administration expenditure was also budgeted to increase.

In each year since the ODPM was established, administration spending has been constrained to below budget. Information on gross and net controlled administration costs underspends for Whitehall Departments is published in the Public Expenditure Outturn White Papers for the relevant years, which are available in the Library of the House.

Efficiency gains are now being made as part of the 2004 Spending Review (SR04) efficiency programme, as set out in Efficiency Technical Notes which are available on Departments' websites. The administration efficiency savings proposed for ODPM, compared with 2004–05, are set out as follows:

	SR04 administration efficiency savings (£ million)
2005–06	8
2006–07	16.5
2007–08	25

Arson

Mike Penning: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many incidents of arson there were in *(a)* Dacorum and *(b)* Hertfordshire in each year since January 1997. [29570]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The number of deliberate primary fires attended by the Fire and Rescue Service in Hertfordshire is in the following table. Data are not available centrally for Dacorum.

Deliberate primary fires, Hertfordshire, 1997–2004

	Number
1997	848
1998	826
1999	1,091

Deliberate primary fires, Hertfordshire, 1997–2004

	Number
2000	1,276
2001	1,303
2002	1,294
2003	1,265
2004	[1]959

[1] Data for 2004 are provisional.
Source:
ODPM

Bellwin Scheme

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the *(a)* local authorities, *(b)* fire authorities and *(c)* police authorities in Hemel Hempstead, will be eligible for Bellwin scheme assistance. [38333]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Yes, provided the actions authorities need to take result in eligible costs above the authorities' thresholds. Emergency financial assistance is available to local authorities under the Bellwin scheme to help with their costs incurred in taking immediate action to safeguard life or property or to prevent severe inconvenience to the inhabitants of the area. Local authorities have one month from the end date of an incident in which to notify the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister of an intention to make a claim. Dacorum borough council has already registered such an intention and officials here have spoken to both Dacorum and Hertfordshire county council about the procedures to follow.

Circular 15/92

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 191–92W, on planning, if he will place circular 15/92 on his Department's website. [33480]

Yvette Cooper: It is now available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website.

Civil Servants

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many civil servants in each grade have left his Office in each of the last three years to join consultancy firms; and which firm each joined. [37362]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not hold this information on its former staff centrally, and could provide it only at disproportionate cost.

Construction Industry Research and Information Association

Mary Creagh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the results of the research study commissioned by his Department, project ID 11476, completed by the Construction Industry Research and Information Association on 31 December 2004, are expected to be published. [33845]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* A number of research reports prepared for the Buildings Division of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are being prepared for publication. The report mentioned by my hon. Friend is one of them. It is expected that the reports will be available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website early in the new year.

Correspondence

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many *(a)* letters from hon. Members, *(b)* letters from members of the public and *(c)* parliamentary questions from (i) hon. Members and (ii) Lords were dealt with by his Office in each year since 1995 in respect of the percentage his Department took (A) more than one month and (B) more than three months to provide a substantive answer; and if he will make a statement. [37390]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) was formed on 29 May 2002.

The Cabinet Office, on an annual basis, publishes a report to Parliament on the performance of Departments in replying to Members/Peers correspondence. The Report for 2004 was published on 6 April 2005, *Official Report*, columns 137–40WS. Reports for earlier years are available in the Library of the House.

Information on the number of letters received from members of the public by the ODPM is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Information in respect of the number of parliamentary questions tabled by hon. Members and noble Lords for the ODPM is given below:

	PQs from MPs	PQs from Lords
2002[1]	1,532	83
2003	2,747	180
2004	3,397	159
2005[2]	3,218	160

[1] 29 May 2002 to 31 December 2002.
[2] 1 January 2005 to 30 November 2005.

Information on the percentage of letters and parliamentary questions that took *(a)* more than one month and *(b)* more than three months to provide a substantive answer, is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Council Tax

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment the Government have made in the last three years of the possible effect of *(a)* council tax revaluation and *(b)* further council tax increases on the likelihood of (i) civil disobedience and (ii) civil unrest. [33499]

Mr. Woolas: None.

Council Tax (Kent)

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of spending by *(a)* Kent county council and *(b)* Gravesham borough council was financed from council tax in each financial year since 1996–97. [37592]

Mr. Woolas: The percentage of Revenue Expenditure by Kent county council and Gravesham borough council that has been financed from council tax in each financial year since 1996–97 is as follows.

Percentage

	Kent county council	*Gravesham borough council*
1996–97	24.3	19.4
1997–98	25.5	19.5
1998–99	27.5	26.0
1999–2000	27.8	25.0
2000–01	27.9	34.0
2001–02	27.9	29.1
2002–03	28.5	35.1
2003–04	29.4	33.9
2004–05	29.4	35.3
2005–06	28.8	32.3

The data are as reported by local authorities and are taken from Revenue Summary (RS) returns for 1996–97 to 2003–04, and Revenue Account budget (RA) returns for 2004–05 and 2005–06.

The definition of council expenditure used here is that expenditure funded from Aggregate External Finance (AEF), council tax and authorities' reserves.

Comparisons across years may not be valid due to changes in the method of reporting the information. In particular, the outturn data for 1996–97 to 2002–03 have been calculated on a non-FRS (Financial Reporting Standard) 17 basis whilst the outturn data for 2003–04 have been calculated on an FRS 17 basis. The budget data for 2004–05 and 2005–06 are a mix of FRS 17 and non-FRS 17. This is because for their 2004–05 and 2005–06 budget forms local authorities, after consultation, were given the option to complete their forms either on a non-FRS 17 basis or on an FRS 17 basis. Hence, figures for different years may not be directly comparable.

Criminal Offences

Simon Hughes: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the criminal offences created in legislation sponsored by his Department between the end of the 2003–04 session and April 2005. [38325]

Jim Fitzpatrick: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Southend, West (Mr. Amess) on 15 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 2197W.

Decent Homes Standard

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage of homes in Tamworth constituency he estimates did not meet the Decent Homes Standard in each year since 1992. [35658]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not produce its own estimates of homes meeting the Decent Homes Standard in individual local authorities. Local authorities report annual estimates of the proportion of non-decent homes in their own stock through the Business Plan Statistical Appendix (BPSA). Data are available from 2001, when the Decent Homes Programme began and local authorities started reporting this information. The following table shows the percentage of non-decent stock owned by Tamworth borough council.

Tamworth local authority

	Reported percentage of stock which did not meet the Decent Homes Standard
2001	48
2002	45
2003	39
2004	41
2005	29

Housing association data broken down by local authority is only available from 2005. Prior to this the number of non-decents was collected for individual housing associations, who may own stock in several different local authorities. As at 31 March 2005, 218 housing association homes in Tamworth did not reach the Decent Homes Standard, which amounted to 16.18 per cent. of the total registered social landlords (RSL) owned stock of 1,347 homes.

Local authorities make estimates of non-decent homes in private sector housing as part of their housing strategy but only began assembling systematic evidence on decent homes for the private sector following the introduction of the PSA 7 Private Sector target in 2002. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not collect estimates for individual local authorities, as it makes national estimates of private sector non-decency through the English House Condition Survey (EHCS).

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what percentage of homes in Kettering constituency he estimates did not meet the Decent Homes Standard in each year since 1997. [36138]

Yvette Cooper: The office does not produce its own estimates of homes meeting the Decent Homes Standard in individual local authorities. Local authorities report annual estimates of the proportion of non decent homes in their own stock through the Business Plan Statistical Appendix (EPSA). Data are available from 2001, when the Decent Homes Programme began and local authorities started reporting this information. The following table shows the percentage of non-decent stock owned by Kettering borough council and Daventry district council.

	Reported percentage of houses that are non-decent
Kettering local authority	
2001	5
2002	13
2003	13
2004	10
2005	9
Daventry local authority	
2001	0
2002	0
2003	9
2004	2
2005	1

Housing association data broken down by local authority are only available from 2005. Prior to this the number of non-decents was collected for individual housing associations, who may own stock in several different local authorities. As at 31 March 2005, 150 housing association homes in Kettering did not reach

the Decent Homes Standard, which amounted to 11.47 per cent. of the total RSL owned stock of 1,308 homes (including shared housing bedspaces). In Daventry, 71 housing association homes did not reach the Decent Homes Standard, which amounted to 5.92 per cent. of the total RSL owned stock of 1,200 homes.

Local authorities make estimates of non decent homes in private sector housing as part of their housing strategy but only began assembling systematic evidence on decent homes for the private sector following the introduction of the PSA seven private sector target in 2002. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not collect estimates for individual local authorities, as it makes national estimates of private sector non-decency through the English House Condition Survey (EHCS).

Departmental Assets

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 7 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1429W, on the Asset Register, whether his Department's accounting system SAP has the facility to print information that is held on it. [38217]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The SAP system has a full suite of standard reporting functionality. The reports can either be reviewed on screen or can be printed out or can be electronically downloaded.

Departmental Estate

Dr. Cable: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister which buildings and sites used by his Department and related agencies *(a)* have ceased to be used in the last year and *(b)* will be closed under current plans for relocation. [31754]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The information requested is as follows:

(a) Since November 2004 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has ceased to use offices on part 16th, entire 17th, and entire 18th floors of Portland House, Victoria. They were vacated in June 2005.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is responsible for three executive agencies, the Planning Inspectorate at Temple Quays, Bristol, the Fire Service College at Moreton-in-Marsh, and the Queen Elizabeth II Conference Centre in Westminster. None of the executive agencies has ceased the use of any buildings or sites in the last year.

(b) The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has current plans to relocate Headquarters staff from its 4th and 5th floor offices at Allington Towers by April 2008. These offices will be closed and handed back to the leaseholder, the Home Office.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minster has served Notice on behalf of the First Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister to terminate the lease of industrial buildings used by the Fire and Rescue Service Directorate at Marchington, Staffordshire. The buildings will be closed and vacated by the end of June 2006 at the latest. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Civil Resilience Directorate occupies part of the Marchington buildings and is to be relocated to alternative leased premises.

There are no current plans to relocate the three executive agencies.

Departmental Guidance (Evidence/Documentary Access)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what his policy is with regard to *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in his Office giving evidence to the (i) Scottish Parliament, (ii) National Assembly for Wales and (iii) Northern Ireland Assembly committees; and to what categories of document he gives (A) full access, (B) restricted access and (C) no access to the (1) Scottish Parliament, (2) National Assembly for Wales, (3) Northern Ireland Assembly and (4) House of Commons Select Committees. [37388]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Requests for the attendance of Ministers or officials to give evidence to the devolved legislatures, and for the provision of information to the assemblies, will be considered on a case-by-case basis. This consideration will reflect: the principles set out in the Cabinet Office guidance "Departmental Evidence and Response to Select Committees" (July 2005); the policy outlined in the Department for Constitutional Affairs' Devolution Guidance Note #12 "Attendance of UK Ministers and Officials at Committees of the devolved legislatures"; and the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act. The principles underlying the provision of information to House of Commons Select Committees are set out in "Departmental Evidence and Response to Select Committees", particularly sections 4B and 4C.

Departmental Property

Mr. Weir: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much was paid by his Department in 2004–05 in rent for properties in *(a)* total, *(b)* each (i) region and (ii) nation of the UK and *(c)* London. [35956]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) and its agencies paid a total of £26,641,641 in rent for properties in 2004–05. Of this amount £6,134,681 was recovered from tenants or other Government Departments occupying the property. ODPM also paid £211,214 in respect of rent to other Government Departments whose property they occupied. All the properties are in England and the amount of rent paid in respect of the regions of the UK was as follows:

£

Region	*Rent*	*Rent including where VAT paid*
London		
Eland House	12,350,000	14,511,250
Ashdown House	7,000,000	7,000,000
Portland House	3,203,757	3,764,414
Total London	22,553,757	25,275,664
Eastern		
Hempstead House Hemel Hempstead	230,000	270,250
Sheffield House, Stevenage	56,000	65,800
Building 3 Garston	36,789	43,227
Total Eastern	322,789	379,277
North West		
West Point, Manchester	33,175	38,981
1 High Street Glossop	10,000	10,000
Total North West	43,175	48,981

£

Region	Rent	Rent including where VAT paid
West Midlands		
Marchington Staffordshire Primary site	1,029,027	1,209,107
Marchington Staffordshire Secondary site	142,893	167,899
Total West Midlands	1,171,920	1,377,006
South West		
Planning Inspectorate Temple Quay House, Bristol	2,550,000	2,996,250
South West Total	2,550,000	2,996,250
England	26,641,641	30,077,178

[1] Serviced accommodation includes rent and other costs.

This answer does not include buildings occupied by Government offices, who carry out functions on behalf of 10 Government Departments.

Departmental Staff

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many staff are employed by his Department in each *(a)* region and *(b)* nation of the UK; and if he will make a statement. [35920]

Jim Fitzpatrick: I refer the hon. Member to Table D of the Civil Service Statistics website at: http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/managementof_the_civil_service/statistics/civil service_statistics/index.asp

This table covers permanent staff numbers on a full-time equivalent basis in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and agencies. Copies of Civil Service Statistics are also available in the Library of the House.

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the value is of *(a)* pay supplements, *(b)* bonuses and *(c)* other incentive packages that are payable in his Department on the basis of geographic location; how many people are in receipt of each payment; and what the total cost to his Department of each payment was in 2004–05. [35922]

Jim Fitzpatrick: In 2004–05, the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister *(a)* disbursed no pay supplements, *(b)* paid no bonuses, and *(c)* had no other incentive packages that were payable on the basis of geographic location.

Separate pay rates apply for staff within the London area and the rest of the country in both the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Headquarters and the Government Offices.

Deprivation Levels

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the levels of deprivation were in each ward in Kettering constituency in the last year for which figures are available, ranked from the least deprived to the most deprived. [38153]

Mr. Woolas: The Indices of Deprivation 2004 is the latest index for which data is available on deprivation in Kettering constituency. This index was not created at ward level but at Lower Layer Super Output Area (LLSOA) level, which covers approximately 1,500 people.

The following table lists the LLSOAs that fall within the wards in the Kettering constituency. This data shows that there are 67 LLSOAs in the constituency and that 40 per cent. (27) of these are ranked among the least deprived 20 per cent. of LLSOAs in the country. At the other end of the scale, only 6 per cent. (four) LLSOAs are in the most deprived 20 per cent. in England.

Parliamentary constituency 2005—Kettering

Lower Layer Super Output Area code	Ward name 2005	Index of Multiple Deprivation Rank
E01027121	Spinney	32007
E01027027	West Haddon and Guilsborough (pt)	31679
E01027116	St Peter's	31337
E01027108	St Giles	31226
E01027001	Brixworth	31050
E01027120	Spinney	30998
E01027086	Barton	30919
E01027098	Brambleside	30636
E01027115	St Peter's	30455
E01027125	Trinity	30299
E01026997	Boughton and Pitsford	29714
E01027003	Brixworth	29431
E01027018	Moulton	29206
E01027117	St Peter's	28654
EO1027089	Brambleside	28474
E01027002	Brixworth	28289
EO1027094	Loatland	28122
E01027099	Pipers Hill	28040
E01027097	Millbrook	27856
E01027000	Brixworth	27571
E01027098	Millbrook	27382
E01027122	Spinney	27282
EO1027022	Spratton	27061
E01027080	All Saints	27043
E01027084	Barton	27037
E01027087	Brambleside	26903
E01027019	Moulton	26326
E01027092	Latimer	25982
E01027103	Queen Eleanor	25915
EO1027020	Moulton	25680
E01027026	Welford	25520
E01027118	Slade	25484
E01027096	Millbrook	24906
E01027101	Plessy	24554
E01027107	St Giles	24488
E01027102	Plessy	24160
E01027023	Walgrave	24118
E01027030	Yelvertoft (pt)	23330
E01027095	Loatland	23129
E01027129	Welland	22728
E01027123	Tresham	21860
E01027090	Buccleuch	20330
EO1027109	St Giles	19756
E01027119	Slade	19075
E01027005	Clipston	18925
E01027126	Trinity	18703
E01027100	Pipers Hill	17416
E01027130	Wicksteed	17324
E01027114	St Michael's	17285
EO1027079	All Saints	17233
E01027091	Latimer	16543
E01027113	St Michael's	15220
EO1027085	Barton	14673
EO1027093	Loatland	14380
E01027124	Tresham	12265
E01027111	St Mary's	12169
E01027112	St Mary's	11494
E01027106	St Andrew's	10542
EO1027104	St Andrew's	10387
EO1027082	Avondale	8540
E01027105	St Andrew's	8377
E01027081	Avondale	8005
E01027128	Warkton	7635
E01027110	St Mary's	6196
E01027131	Wicksteed	5735
E01027083	Avondale	5573
E01027127	Warkton	2801

Designated Growth Areas

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 8 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1501–2W, on designated growth areas, what procedures his Department will put in place to respond to rapid population growth within designated growth areas; and what evidential sources will be used to trigger such a procedure. [37946]

Yvette Cooper: The answer to question reference 31849 referred to two forms of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's (ODPM) funding, namely Growth Areas funding and local government funding.

Growth Areas funding is being made available to support housing growth within the Growth Areas (including Thames Gateway). The £1.25 billion to be made available up to and including 2007–08 is based on the results of successive rounds of bidding and is not subject to further evidence on population growth.

Local government funding allocations for 2006–07 and 2007–08 are currently being consulted upon. This years assessment takes account of population projections as this allows the 2006–07 and 2007–08 settlements to be more forward looking. Previously settlements have been based on the latest available mid-year estimates as the dominant drivers. This change should provide more support for areas experiencing rapid population growth. The population projections are prepared by the Office for National Statistics using a trend-based methodology which projects forward the population (using 2003 mid-year population estimates as the starting point) into the future.

ODPM spending decisions for 2008–09 onwards are subject to future Spending Reviews. In its December 2005 response to Kate Barker's Review of Housing Supply, the Government announced that as part of the 2007 Comprehensive Spending Review it would undertake a cross-cutting review to:

"determine the social, transport and environmental infrastructure implications of housing growth in different spatial forms and locations;

establish a framework for sustainable and cost-effective patterns of growth, including by examining the use of targeted investment through the Community Infrastructure Fund and Growth Areas funding to support the fastest-growing areas; and

ensure that departmental resources across government are targeted appropriately for providing the national, regional and local infrastructure necessary to support future housing and population growth."

The cross-cutting review provides an opportunity for evidence of the funding needs experienced by Growth Areas as a result of rapid housing growth to be taken into account in future spending decisions of ODPM and other Departments.

Disability

Danny Alexander: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what work his Department has undertaken with organisations representing disabled people to ensure housing initiatives include disabled people; and if he will make a statement. [37432]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) is committed to working with a variety of disability organisations to ensure the requirements of disabled people are represented in its housing programmes.

For example, through consultation with the Disability Rights Commission and the Inclusive Environments Group of CASE, the Lifetime Homes Standard has been incorporated into the Code for Sustainable Homes.

In addition the Housing Corporation continues to be supportive of capital investment in housing for those in need of supported housing and extra care provision.

The ODPM is also working with the Disability Rights Commission to revise the code of guidance on the allocation of accommodation to ensure that housing authorities take into account the needs of disabled people when allocating social housing.

Organisations representing people with long-term disabilities were part of our consultation on the new HomeBuy scheme to help targeted groups, including those with disabilities, into home ownership.

The on-going review of the disabled facilities grant (DFG) has included wide-ranging consultation with groups representing disabled people and in particular those supporting families with disabled children. Following these consultations the Government have announced that from 31 December 2005 applications for a DFG from families with a disabled child will be exempt from a means test.

District Councils

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the procedures are for a district council which has adopted the cabinet system to revert to a committee-based system. [38114]

Mr. Woolas: Any local authority which is operating under the Cabinet system, which had a population of under 85,000 on 30 June 1999 may, by resolution of the council, move to the streamlined committee system. If the local authority has a directly elected mayor this move may only take place following a referendum of the local electorate endorsing the change. In all cases a local authority must first undertake consultation of residents, stakeholders and other interested parties on the proposed change, and have regard to the results of that consultation in determining the model and nature of constitutional arrangements.

English Partnerships

Mr. Evans: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much money has been raised by English Partnerships through the sale of assets in Lancashire in each of the last four years. [35476]

Yvette Cooper: The following amounts have been raised by English Partnerships through the sale of assets in Lancashire over the past four financial years, and also over the course of this financial year.

Financial year	Receipts (£ million)
2005–06[1]	5.0
2004–05	5.8
2003–04	5.8
2002–03	8.9
2001–02	2.7
Total	28.0

[1] Annual forecast for 2005–06.

Fire Services

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many call outs each retained fire service in Staffordshire has had in each of the last five years. [37821]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not hold any data centrally on call outs by retained fire and rescue services.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many times out-of-county fire appliances have been called to emergencies in Staffordshire due to Staffordshire services already being engaged in each of the last five years. [37822]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not hold any data centrally on out-of-county fire appliance attendances.

Flood Plains (Building)

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister who makes the decision on appeals by companies wanting to build on a flood plain. [36120]

Yvette Cooper: The decision on a planning appeal is made by the planning inspector unless the appeal has been recovered for decision by my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister, the First Secretary of State.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the appeal procedure is for a planning application which has been refused on the grounds that the building should not be allowed on a flood plain as shown by an Environment Agency flood map. [36127]

Yvette Cooper: Guidance on planning appeals procedures is set out in DETR Circular 5/2000. Links to the relevant statutory instruments and information on making an appeal can also be found on the Planning Inspectorate's website at www.planning-inspectorate.gov.uk/making_appeals.

Government Offices (Visits)

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many visits *(a)* he and *(b)* the Minister for Local Government and Communities has made on departmental business to each Government office region since May. [35580]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Since May, my right hon. Friends the Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for Local Government and communities have made visits on departmental business to each Government office region as follows:

Region	Deputy Prime Minister	Minister of Local Government and Communities
North West	3	3
North East	2	1
Yorkshire and Humber	3	3
East Midlands	0	2
East of England	1	2
West Midlands	0	2
South East	3	2
South West	3	2
London	4	2

Green Belt

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) how much land changing to residential use was within *(a)* the designated green belt and *(b)* greenfield land, in each year since 1997, broken down by region; [4312]

(2) how much land within the 1997 designated green belt changed to developed use in each year since 1997, broken down by region; [4313]

(3) how many new dwellings have been built within the 1997 designated green belt in each year since 1997, broken down by region. [4314]

Yvette Cooper *[pursuant to the reply, 16 November 2005, Official Report, c.1275–78]:* The available estimates are from Land Use Change Statistics, shown in the following tables. The numbers and table titles are unchanged but the units for the tables headed "New dwellings within 1997 designated green belt", given previously as "hectares", are corrected to "dwellings". The order of the tables has also been changed to follow the order of the questions. The estimates for 2003 are provisional and are subject to revision. Figures are not shown for 1999 as the data received for that year were incomplete. Figures for 1997 to 2000 reflect planning policies and decisions made before this Government took office.

Land changing to developed use within 1997 designated green belt

Hectares

(a) All on designated green belt

	1994	1995	1996	1997	1998	2000	2001	2002	2003
North East	43	20	11	143	18	47	13	21	18
North West	331	329	367	488	401	223	367	142	222
Yorkshire and the Humber	253	283	182	481	437	164	131	286	285
East Midlands	65	132	197	97	93	92	102	28	128
West Midlands	173	210	286	130	125	328	155	129	335

Land changing to developed use within 1997 designated green belt

Hectares

	(a) All on designated green belt								
	1994	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
East of England	172	183	159	196	238	273	319	169	339
London	19	28	44	95	64	37	125	36	64
South East	228	244	482	395	218	554	309	143	151
South West	48	145	207	58	85	132	75	35	29
England	1,332	1,573	1,935	2,084	1,678	1,850	1,596	988	1,570
Proportion of all green belt (percentage)	0.08	0.10	0.12	0.13	0.10	0.11	0.10	0.06	0.10

Hectares

	(b) On greenfield land (not previously developed)								
	1994	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
North East	14	15	7	109	8	45	6	16	10
North West	197	150	243	315	262	101	237	53	59
Yorkshire and the Humber	152	102	75	274	282	60	52	124	133
East Midlands	46	60	160	61	74	70	58	13	60
West Midlands	101	76	143	69	62	67	35	52	266
East of England	83	84	87	150	71	65	90	100	120
London	12	14	19	48	25	14	42	10	31
South East	112	103	104	204	69	389	90	40	57
South West	28	92	160	42	53	91	45	14	8
England	746	696	999	1,273	904	902	656	421	744
Proportion of all green belt (percentage)	0.05	0.04	0.06	0.08	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.03	0.05

Land changing to residential use within 1997 designated green belt

Hectares

	(a) All on designated green belt								
	1994	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
North East	3	3	1	2	7	1	0	2	3
North West	51	46	39	60	59	64	43	49	53
Yorkshire and the Humber	25	27	21	40	42	28	41	50	46
East Midlands	9	10	13	10	7	20	17	6	9
West Midlands	24	27	29	33	31	38	31	56	35
East of England	40	50	41	37	49	58	68	36	46
London	4	5	6	9	17	16	10	23	15
South East	62	52	49	67	54	75	64	52	55
South West	9	14	8	10	16	14	13	9	9
England	226	234	207	267	281	313	288	283	272
Proportion of all green belt (percentage)	0.014	0.014	0.013	0.016	0.017	0.019	0.017	0.017	0.016

Hectares

	(b) On greenfield land (not previously developed)								
	1994	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
North East	2	2	1	2	7	1	0	1	2
North West	26	17	27	36	29	23	17	20	25
Yorkshire and the Humber	18	17	15	24	25	21	20	25	22
East Midlands	6	6	4	4	4	6	12	3	6
West Midlands	15	15	19	14	17	22	17	24	14
East of England	11	14	12	10	10	22	13	13	20
London	1	2	0	0	7	6	3	8	4
South East	18	10	12	28	19	28	14	17	13
South West	3	9	4	6	10	7	4	5	2
England	101	93	94	123	127	135	99	115	109
Proportion of all green belt (percentage)	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.007	0.008	0.008	0.006	0.007	0.007

New dwellings within 1997 designated green belt

Dwellings

	(a) All on designated green belt								
	1994	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
North East	52	23	22	50	140	19	11	27	70
North West	879	771	730	1,284	1,049	1,350	799	1,019	1,565
Yorkshire and the Humber	373	423	316	630	673	508	891	939	815
East Midlands	143	125	181	194	143	297	289	117	120
West Midlands	390	533	474	610	507	731	817	879	653
East of England	552	580	499	479	846	956	1,181	485	795
London	89	153	171	182	441	384	218	405	287
South East	653	733	553	868	802	1,175	950	734	1,053
South West	124	211	109	159	309	271	243	199	163
England	3,255	3,552	3,055	4,456	4,910	5,691	5,399	4,804	5,521
Proportion of all new dwellings (percentage)	2	3	2	3	4	4	4	4	3

Dwellings

	(b) On greenfield land (not previously developed)								
	1994	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
North East	46	20	19	34	128	17	2	19	45
North West	472	285	486	746	486	355	296	329	682
Yorkshire and the Humber	289	269	173	336	361	373	462	361	405
East Midlands	93	77	67	93	77	39	148	39	65
West Midlands	220	313	288	276	225	372	462	333	250
East of England	119	134	132	107	135	331	198	145	286
London	56	67	6	3	238	131	72	127	79
South East	172	117	147	301	218	278	134	194	322
South West	53	135	46	93	195	90	32	76	34
England	1,520	1,417	1,364	1,989	2,063	1,986	1,806	1,623	2,168
Proportion of all new dwellings (percentage)	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1

Harlow North Sustainability Symposia

Mr. Prisk: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the representatives from his Department and public bodies for which his Department is responsible who attended the Harlow North Sustainability Symposia on 6 June. [37448]

Yvette Cooper: I understand that two representatives from English Partnerships attended the symposia on 6 June. However, there were no other attendees either from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister or its public agencies.

High Hedges

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many orders have been made by local councils in *(a)* England, *(b)* Staffordshire and *(c)* Tamworth constituency to remove hedges under the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003. [35659]

Yvette Cooper: I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given to the hon. Member for Tewkesbury (Mr. Robertson) on 7 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1428W.

Homelessness

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 18 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1440W, on homelessness, what the value was of funding for the project transferred from the Corporation of London; and which authority is now responsible for administering funding for this scheme. [28835]

Yvette Cooper: At the end of 2004, the decision was taken by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) to transfer responsibility for funding and managing the operation of the Aldgate Advice Centre from the Corporation of London to the London borough of Tower Hamlets. £235,000 of ODPM grant funding was transferred from the Corporation of London to Tower Hamlets to carry out this work. Tower Hamlets is now responsible for funding and managing the operation of this single homeless day service, which is still operating.

Housing

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many compulsory purchase orders have been made on empty properties by *(a)* Tamworth borough council and *(b)* the local authority recorded as the best performing in each of the last three years. [32031]

Yvette Cooper: Tamworth borough council has not, in the last three years, made any compulsory purchase orders on empty properties.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not collect data on the number of compulsory purchase orders made on empty properties each year by local authorities and it is not possible to determine the best performing.

James Duddridge: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on progress towards the Government's target of 80 per cent. home ownership. [34161]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister set out our future ambitions with regard to housing supply and helping people into home ownership as part of our response to Kate Barker's Review of Housing on 5 December 2005.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many homes for key workers have been provided by each local authority in Hampshire in each of the last five years; how many are unoccupied; and if he will make a statement. [35048]

Yvette Cooper: For the financial years, 2000–01 to 2004–05 1,531 homes have been provided for key workers in Hampshire of which 48 are currently unoccupied.

Local authority	*Homes provided*	*Homes unoccupied*
Basingstoke and Deane	295	2
East Hampshire	115	0
Eastleigh	67	2
Fareham	43	4
Havant	42	0
Rushmoor	94	0
Southampton	325	29
Portsmouth	84	0
Isle of Wight	18	2
Test Valley	41	0
Winchester	225	0
New Forest	48	0
Gosport	40	0
Hart	94	9

The figures above include Starter Home Initiative, Challenge Fund and Key Worker Living new build units and equity loans. For the equity loans for the Starter Home Initiative the figures provided are for key workers who work in Hampshire.

Mr. Ellwood: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what plans he has for large-scale housing developments in Bournemouth; what assessment he has made of the implications for greenbelt in the area; and if he will make a statement. [31332]

Yvette Cooper: The South West Regional Assembly—as the regional planning body—are working to prepare the new Regional Spatial Strategy for the South West which will look at housing need in the period to 2026. The Regional Assembly are due to put forward proposals for housing as part of the first draft of the Regional Spatial Strategy by spring next year. The Government have not made any proposals for housing developments in Bournemouth.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the housing capital allocations for each local authority in Hampshire were in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* each of the previous four years. [33990]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is set out as follows alongside funding for affordable housing provided to registered social landlords through the Housing Corporation's Approved Development Programme (ADP):

£000

	2000–01[1]	*2001–02*[1]	*2002–03*[1]	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Basingstoke and Deane housing capital	1,198	938	1,016	845	898
Major Repairs Allowance[2]	—	—	—	—	—
Disabled Facilities Grants	174	204	217	294	360
ADP[3]	1,443	1,459	1,922	13,718	6,455
East Hampshire housing capital	1,172	869	921	732	[4]—
Major Repairs Allowance[2]	—	—	—	—	—
Disabled Facilities Grants	143	143	169	108	226
ADP[3]	1,030	1,246	1,978	8,613	5,907
Eastleigh housing capital	795	674	692	577	[4]—
Major Repairs Allowance[2]	—	—	—	—	—
Disabled Facilities Grants	148	150	206	360	270
ADP[3]	787	1,592	2,437	10,874	5,068
Fareham housing capital	1,490	637	704	594	650
Major Repairs Allowance[2]	—	1,628	1,652	1,664	1,611
Disabled Facilities Grants	162	168	180	140	159
ADP[3]	569	1,111	1,205	553	3,809
Gosport housing capital	2,003	762	831	718	791
Major Repairs Allowance[2]	—	2,341	2,380	2,411	2,322
Disabled Facilities Grants	142	120	147	138	126
ADP[3]	727	169	1,548	5,755	2,160

£000

	2000–01[1]	2001–02[1]	2002–03[1]	2003–04	2004–05
Hart housing capital	440	362	372	324	371
Major Repairs Allowance[2]	—	—	—	—	—
Disabled Facilities Grants	98	160	97	159	150
ADP[3]	1,531	404	1,193	8,897	3,345
Havant housing capital	1,302	916	970	852	[4] —
Major Repairs Allowance[2]	—	—	—	—	—
Disabled Facilities Grants	300	300	272	420	420
ADP[3]	1,272	1,691	931	1,722	3,395
New Forest housing capital	3,850	1,745	1,833	1,409	1,435
Major Repairs Allowance[2]	—	3,091	3,157	3,214	3,140
Disabled Facilities Grants	220	240	361	240	240
ADP[3]	3,451	2,189	1,907	5,973	2,369
Portsmouth housing capital	12,619	5,336	5,164	3,641	3,854
Major Repairs Allowance[2]	—	10,751	11,108	11,341	10,962
Disabled Facilities Grants	321	512	419	458	475
ADP[3]	4,485	4,638	3,577	5,490	6,757
Rushmoor housing capital	1,050	851	942	765	805
Major Repairs Allowance[2]	—	—	—	—	—
Disabled Facilities Grants	105	105	121	90	120
ADP[3]	953	1,299	1,726	6,790	8,610
Southampton housing capital	13,704	6,079	5,828	4,264	4,367
Major Repairs Allowance[2]	—	11,407	11,776	12,078	11,788
Disabled Facilities Grants	349	360	443	459	515
ADP[3]	5,304	6,493	7,592	12,247	10,998
Test Valley housing capital	2,401	705	783	624	648
Major Repairs Allowance[2]	—	—	—	—	—
Disabled Facilities Grants	112	112	173	195	240
ADP[3]	840	1,672	1,381	3,945	2,937
Winchester housing capital	2,516	803	906	731	853
Major Repairs Allowance[2]	—	3,096	3,189	3,275	3,215
Disabled Facilities Grants	50	102	165	165	270
ADP[3]	354	669	4,097	6,241	16,307

[1] Includes an element of funding to be met from council's capital receipts.
[3] Includes funding provided through the Starter Home Initiative and Challenge Fund.
[2] Funding to meet the on-going costs of maintaining council housing.
[4] The authority agreed to resources being switched to the Housing Corporation for provision of additional affordable housing in their area.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the identified need for housing in each local authority in Hampshire was in each year since 2001; how much of that need was represented by the need for affordable housing; and if he will make a statement. [33992]

Yvette Cooper: The agreed regional policy identifies around 6,030 dwellings as being needed across Hampshire each year since 2001, comprising both market and affordable housing. This policy is currently under review as part of the preparation of the South East Plan.

Hampshire exhibits high levels of housing demand for a wide range of housing including, shared equity and social housing. Average house prices in Hampshire have risen by 249 per cent. over the period 1997–2005, and projected household growth across the South East is substantially higher than the current building rates. Individual local authorities have undertaken local housing needs assessments covering households unable to buy or rent in the open market, which demonstrates high levels of need for affordable housing.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent assessment he has made of the availability of affordable housing in Coventry South. [36238]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 13 December 2005]:* The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has made no recent assessment on the availability of affordable housing in Coventry South. We are aware of a new housing scheme planned for the Stoke area of the constituency. This is at the development stage and it is hoped offices and 600 affordable homes will be built on the previous Peugeot site.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the percentage of 18 to 25-year-olds, excluding students, living independently in *(a)* self-contained accommodation and *(b)* accommodation where some facilities are shared. [38318]

Yvette Cooper: Excluding students, the percentage of 18 to 25-year-olds in England who were living independently (i.e. they were not in a household that included one of their parents) was 48 per cent. according to the 2004–05 Survey

of English Housing. Of these, about 97 per cent. lived in self-contained accommodation and about 3 per cent. in accommodation where some facilities were shared.

Greg Clark: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what information his Department collects on the density of *(a)* existing and *(b)* new social housing. [38576]

Yvette Cooper: The information requested is not held centrally, and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister monitors the density of all new housing through its Land Use Change Statistics but these do not distinguish between social and private housing. Policies to increase the density of new housing apply to all tenures.

Local Government

Greg Clark: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what statistical measures the Government uses to compare the performance of different levels of regional and local government. [38575]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister sets a number of Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPIs) which may be used to compare the performance of local authorities across the range of their activities. Comparative data can be found at: www.bvpi.gov.uk

Mr. Evans: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what responses on the local government finance consultation he has received from *(a)* Ribble Valley borough council and *(b)* Lancashire county council; and when the responses were received. [35469]

Mr. Woolas: Lancashire county council responded on 10 October to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's public consultation on formula grant distribution. In addition, I met Lancashire county council on 5 October. No response was received from Ribble Valley borough council. Consultation on the local government settlement for 2006–07 runs from 5 December 2005 to 11 January 2006.

Mr. Evans: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the likely impact of changes in the local government formula grant on public services delivered by *(a)* Ribble Valley borough council and *(b)* Lancashire county council. [35470]

Mr. Woolas: Consultation on the local government settlement for 2006–07 runs from 5 December 2005 to 11 January 2006. The provision of local services is a matter for Ribble Valley borough council and Lancashire county council themselves, bearing in mind their statutory responsibilities.

Opinion Research/Public Relations

Mr. Weir: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the value was of *(a)* public opinion research and *(b)* public relations contracts awarded by his Department in 2004–05 in (i) each (A) nation and (B) region of the UK and (ii) London. [35957]

Jim Fitzpatrick: In the financial year 2004–05 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister undertook no public opinion research and awarded no public relations contracts.

Pathfinder Areas

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 191W, on pathfinder areas, if he will list the companies responsible for the constructions listed in *(a)* Manchester, Salford, *(b)* Birmingham, Sandwell and *(c)* Newcastle, Gateshead. [36586]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* The following table shows the companies responsible for the construction/conversion of homes in the pathfinder areas of Birmingham Sandwell, Manchester Salford and Newcastle Gateshead.

Pathfinder	*Construction Company*
Birmingham Sandwell	Kier Construction
Manchester Salford	Permisson Homes
	Dylan Homes
	Nutalls
	Contour
	Space
	Anton Richards
	Redrow
	Harron Homes
	Lowry Homes
	George Wimpey
	Bellway Homes
	Countryside
	Lovell Homes
	Artisan
Newcastle Gateshead	Bellway Homes
	Moore and Walker
	Macson Building and Roofing
	Fred Bowering
	Ultro Enterprises
	Moorside Builders

Playgrounds

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many local authority-owned playgrounds there were in each local authority in England in *(a)* 1997, *(b)* 2001 and *(c)* 2005. [37746]

Mr. Woolas: The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Population Projections

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whose population projections are used by the Registrar General in the new calculations for local government formula grant funding. [36624]

Mr. Woolas: The population projections used by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister in the 2006–07 and 2007–08 Local Government Finance Settlements are the 2003-based sub-national population projections for England produced by the Office for National Statistics.

Private Members' Bills

Mr. Amess: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list those Private Members' Bills introduced *(a)* under Standing Order No. 14(6), *(b)* Standing

Order No. 23 and *(c)* Standing Order No. 57 which were (i) supported and (ii) opposed by his Department in each Session since 1997–98. [36218]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister was formed on 29 May 2002.

The information requested is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost. (The ODPM's response to Private Members' Bills is normally set out by Ministers during the Second Reading debate.)

Recyclable Housebuilding Materials

Andrew Selous: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps he is taking to promote recyclable house-building materials. [37708]

Yvette Cooper: The Government supported the passage of the Sustainable and Secure Buildings Bill-now the Sustainable and Secure Buildings Act (2004). Among other things, the Act gives powers to make regulations concerning the use of recycled materials or the re-use of materials. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently investigating ways in which these new powers should be used. The Government are also now consulting on a code for sustainable homes, that includes sustainable materials.

Revenue Transfers

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much was transferred from *(a)* housing revenue accounts and *(b)* right to buy revenues of all local authorities in each of the last three years; and for what purposes it was transferred in each case. [10271]

Yvette Cooper: The Housing Revenue Account (HRA) system is redistributive, and is supported by the Exchequer. The Exchequer adds to the surpluses collected from some authorities in order to subsidise those who would otherwise make a deficit. The intention is that all authorities should be able to offer a similar standard of service while charging affordable rents.

The figures for the last three years are shown in the following table:

£

Financial year	Contribution from authorities assumed to have a surplus	Additional funding provided by Exchequer	Total subsidy paid to authorities assumed to have a deficit
2002–03	654,659,330	252,084,486	906,743,816
2003–04	706,268,335	187,928,643	894,196,978
2004–05	620,543,656	82,879,824	703,423,480

Prior to 2004–05, authorities had to set aside 75 per cent. of the net capital receipts from right to buy sales to repay debt (if they had debt). Less debt meant less debt charges for Government to subsidise, allowing the Government to support more new investment where the need was greatest.

From April 2004 set-aside was abolished. All authorities were required to pay 75 per cent. of their net capital receipts from right to buy to the Government so that it could be used fund new investment. Receipts from debt-free authorities are used to support Sustainable Communities programmes including the construction of new affordable housing and the improvement of existing housing. Receipts from authorities with debt are not hypothecated to any particular purpose.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) collects data on total pooled receipts and total amounts set aside by housing authorities. These figures include the amounts arising from right to buy sales alongside amounts relating to other housing capital receipts, but the amounts relating to right to buy sales are not separately identified. The available data is as follows:

£ billion

Financial year	Total set-aside	Total pooled
2002–03	1.9	n/a
2003–04	[1]—	n/a
2004–05	n/a	1.7

[1] ODPM did not collect data on set-aside for 2003–04 because, with the abolition of set-aside, there was no longer a need to collect audited set-aside data.

Government housing capital investment totalled £4.5 billion in 2004–05.

Right to Buy (Leeds)

John Battle: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what proportion of Leeds council housing stock has been sold under the Right to Buy since 1980; [35119]

(2) what proportion of council *(a)* houses and *(b)* flats in each Leeds constituency have been sold under the Right to Buy since 1980; [35121]

(3) how many council homes were sold under the Right to Buy scheme in Leeds, West constituency in each year since 1980. [35123]

Yvette Cooper: An estimated 28 per cent. of council housing stock in Leeds has been sold through the Right to Buy scheme since 1980. Information concerning the type of dwelling is not available. Constituency level data are not held centrally. The numbers of Leeds council dwellings sold each year since 1980 through the Right to Buy scheme, as reported by Leeds are tabulated as follows.

Leeds, Right to Buy sales

Financial year	RTB sales	Proportion of stock (percentage)
1979–80	0	0.00
1980–81	3	0.00
1981–82	636	0.65
1982–83	1,962	2.02
1983–84	1,128	1.18
1984–85	922	0.97
1985–86	900	0.97
1986–87	557	0.61
1987–88	n/a	n/a
1988–89	1,618	1.79
1989–90	3,197	3.64
1990–91	1,844	2.18
1991–92	944	1.15
1992–93	598	0.74
1993–94	656	0.82
1994–95	670	0.85
1995–96	648	0.83
1996–97	635	0.83

Leeds, Right to Buy sales

Financial year	*RTB sales*	*Proportion of stock (percentage)*
1997–98	731	0.96
1998–99	877	1.18
1999–2000	831	1.14
2000–01	952	1.33
2001–02	835	1.19
2002–03	1,076	1.57
2003–04	1,437	2.16
2004–05	1,866	2.87

n/a—not available

Sources:

Sales—Quarterly returns (P1A/B) to ODPM from local authorities.

Stock—ODPM Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix (HSSA).

Rough Sleepers (Severe Weather)

Tony Lloyd: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what account he takes of forecasts of severe weather when assessing the adequacy of provision of places for rough sleepers. [35478]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 7 December 2005]:* Local authorities are required to have strategies in place for ensuring that accommodation and support are available for people who become homeless or are at risk of homelessness. In areas with significant rough sleeping problems there are more detailed plans and arrangements for additional provision in severe weather. Usual practice is that such additional provision should be triggered by a Met Office forecast of zero degrees Celsius or lower for three consecutive nights.

Walking (Planning Implications)

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment his Department has made of the planning implications of the promotion of walking. [35033]

Yvette Cooper: Government policy is to seek to reduce the reliance on the private car by promoting alternative forms of transport, such as public transport, walking and cycling. Planning guidance is given in Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 13 "Transport". This says "walking is the most important mode of travel at the local level and offers the greatest potential to replace short car trips". Local authorities should consider walking within their local transport plans, which in turn inform local development frameworks (LDF). With reference to town centres, "Planning for Town Centres, Guidance on Design and Implementation tools", which accompanies Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 6 "Planning for town centres", states that local authorities should seek to improve the quality, convenience and safety of access on foot, by bicycle and public transport. It advises that further guidance is given in "Walking and Cycling Action Plan" (DfT, TINF391).

There is no national assessment of the planning implications of the promotion of walking but PPS1 "Delivering Sustainable Development" makes it clear that planning authorities should ensure their plans and policies are properly based on analysis and evidence.

NORTHERN IRELAND

A26

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects the Department for Regional Development Road Service works on the A26 to conclude; and what the expected final cost is. [37806]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Dr. Malcolm McKibbin, dated 19 December 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding when he expects the Department for Regional Development Roads Service works on the A26 to conclude, and what the expected final cost is. I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

Current work on the A26 at Ballynaloob between Ballymena and Ballymoney involves the construction of a "2+1" carriageway to create a safe overtaking opportunity for Ballymoney bound traffic, starting at Dunloy crossroads and continuing for some 1.6 kilometres towards Ballymoney. This is part of our programme to improve overtaking opportunities on single carriageways by widening of stretches to provide two lanes of traffic in one direction and one lane in the other.

An adjacent scheme to improve the Dunloy crossroads is being constructed at the same time. This is being undertaken in light of the poor safety record at the existing junction.

It is proposed to open the A26 at Ballynaloob to two-way traffic by 23 December 2005. However, finishing-off works including hedge and tree planting will continue for a few months after Christmas but most of this will be undertaken without the need for a diversion. The total cost for both schemes is expected to be £3.3 million.

I hope this information is helpful.

A6

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects the dualling of the A6 between Londonderry and Dungiven to *(a)* commence and *(b)* be concluded. [38340]

Mr. Woodward: The Chief Executive of Roads Service (Dr. Malcolm McKibbin) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Malcolm McKibbin, dated 19 December 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question regarding when he expects the dualling of the A6 between Londonderry and Dungiven to *(a)* commence and *(b)* be concluded. 38340

I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Roads Service.

Roads Service commissioned consultants in April 2005 to identify a corridor for the future dualling of the A6 between Castledawson and Londonderry. It is envisaged that this study will be completed in spring 2006 when the development of the scheme will move to a more detailed phase (Stage 2 Assessment) and public consultation process.

As announced by the Secretary of State, on 13 December 2005, it is hoped that the scheme will commence on site in the latter half of the Regional Strategic Transport Network Transport Plan 2015 period.

At this preliminary stage of scheme development, it is not possible to predict with any degree of accuracy how long this scheme, given its magnitude, would take to construct. We will advise you of likely construction duration when we are in a better position to assess it with reasonable confidence.

I hope this information is helpful.

Accidental Deaths

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many accidental deaths there were in Northern Ireland in each of the last 20 years. [37599]

Angela E. Smith: The following table gives the number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland in each year between 1985 and 2004 where the death was recorded as being caused by an accident[1].

[1] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes V01-X59, Y85, Y86 for years 2001–04 and Ninth Revision codes E800-E929 for years 1985–2000.

Table: Number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland where the death was recorded as being caused by an accident, 1985 to 2004

Registration year	*Number of deaths registered where the death was recorded as being caused by an accident*
1985	527
1986	487
1987	539
1988	540
1989	446
1990	456
1991	492
1992	376
1993	391
1994	430
1995	391
1996	402
1997	428
1998	381
1999	430
2000	364
2001	361
2002	424
2003	364
2004	448

Agenda for Change

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been allocated to each health board area to meet the salary commitments arising from the Agenda for Change agreement. [38142]

Mr. Woodward: The amount allocated to each health board area to meet the salary commitments arising from the Agenda for Change agreement is as follows:

	£
Eastern Board	30,645,592
Northern Board	10,078,041
Southern Board	9,134,583
Western Board	7,889,835

Apprenticeship (Insurance Costs)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what steps he will take to assist with insurance costs employers who wish to take on young apprentices for training. [37607]

Angela E. Smith: The Government provide a training grant to organisations for each apprentice employed. There are no plans to provide direct assistance with insurance costs.

Belfast Hospitals (Security)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much funding each hospital in Belfast has allocated to security in each of the last five years. [37586]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Coleraine Bus/Rail Station

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the annual change in passenger throughput at the bus/rail station in Coleraine has been since its opening. [37880]

Mr. Woodward: Translink has advised that the information requested is not readily available. As Coleraine bus and rail station was officially opened on 21 September 2001, midway through a reporting period, it is not possible to disaggregate the annual passenger numbers. Translink has, however, provided details of the numbers of passengers passing through the station in the following table:

Financial year	*Bus passengers*	*Rail passengers*	*Total passengers*
2002–03	522,357	546,404	1,068,761
2003–04	524,738	[1]—	n/a
2004–05	553,954	589,881	1143,835

[1] Due to the introduction of a new ticketing system, rail passenger figures for 2003–04 are not available.

Crime

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the extent to which *(a)* paramilitary organisations and *(b)* organised criminal gangs have been involved in the manufacture and distribution of counterfeit (i) medical and (ii) veterinary pharmaceutical products in the Province. [36359]

Mr. Woodward: There is no evidence to suggest that Northern Ireland based paramilitary organisations, or organised crime gangs, are involved in the manufacture or supply of counterfeit pharmaceuticals or veterinary pharmaceutical products. The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety (DHSS&PS) and the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) continue to monitor the situation closely. A small number of counterfeit veterinary pharmaceuticals were seized in a joint operation between the PSNI and DHSS&PS in April and May 2004.

The Independent Monitoring Commission has reported extensively on paramilitary activity and criminality in Northern Ireland and has not identified any links from paramilitary groups, or organised crime gangs, to the manufacture or distribution of counterfeit medicines or veterinary pharmaceutical products.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the *(a)* salary bill was and *(b)* administrative costs were for his Department in (i) Northern Ireland and (B) region of the UK and (ii) London in 2004–05. [35869]

Mr. Woodward: All the costs of the Northern Ireland Office (NIO) relate to "Northern Ireland" as per the Public Expenditure Statistical Analyses.

The salary bill and administrative costs for the NIO, excluding its Agencies and NDPBs, for 2004–05, were as follows:

	£
Salary bill	38,348,965
Administration (non-staff) costs[1]	33,617,207

[1] Administration costs cover the costs of all central Government administration other than the costs of direct frontline service provision or support activities that are directly associated with frontline service delivery.

Departmental Property

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much was paid by his Department in rates in 2004–05, broken down by local authority; and how much was paid in rates in 2004–05 in London. [35991]

Mr. Woodward: Rates in Northern Ireland are paid to the Rates Collection Agency and distributed. It is, therefore, not possible to break the amount down by council. The amount paid in respect of buildings occupied by the Northern Ireland Office, excluding its agencies and NDPBs, in 2004–05, was:

Belfast—£509,182

London—£281,269.

Departmental Savings

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what administrative savings have been made by his Department in each of the last eight years. [34944]

Mr. Woodward: Administrative savings are a target in the Northern Ireland Office's (NIO) Public Service Agreement (PSA).

1998 Comprehensive Spending Review period (1999–2000, 2000–01 and 2001–02)

Because of political uncertainties and doubts about the range of responsibilities for which the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland would be directly accountable to Parliament following devolution, the NIO did not publish a PSA in the 1998 Comprehensive Spending Review period (1999–2000 to 2001–02) and there was therefore no target to secure administrative savings. Actual savings made in this period were used to offset in-year pressures to allow the Department to live within its baseline allocations.

2000 Spending Review period (2001–02, 2002–03 and 2003–04)

The NIO published its first PSA as part of the 2000 Spending Review, setting out the Department's targets. This included a target of securing on-going savings of 3 per cent. in Core Departmental administration costs. This was met.

2002 Spending Review period (2003–04, 2004–5 and 2005–06)

The PSA for this period included a target of securing on-going savings of 2.5 per cent. in Core Departmental administration costs. This was met.

2004 Spending Review period (2005–06, 2006–07 and 2007–08)

During the 2004 Spending Review period, the NIO is committed to delivering 2.5 per cent. year on year efficiency targets. Efficiency Delivery Plans are in place to meet this target and the Department published an Efficiency Technical Note on 5 December.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many staff in his Department have *(a)* received official warnings and *(b)* faced disciplinary procedures in each year since 1995. [33072]

Mr. Woodward: The following warnings issued to Northern Ireland Office staff are in relation to poor attendance, performance and conduct. It is not possible to identify the number of staff who faced disciplinary action. This could be provided only at disproportionate costs.

	Warnings
2005	25
2004	18
2003	56
2002	67
2001	31
2000	31
1999	31
1998	31
1997	36
1996	28
1995	33

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many Northern Ireland Civil Service staff in *(a)* Enniskillen, *(b)* Dungannon and *(c)* Ballymena are employed at (i) AA, (ii) AO, (iii) EO2, (iv) EO1, (v) Staff Officer and (vi) Deputy Principal grade. [35596]

Angela E. Smith: The information in respect of permanent and casual staff in the 11 Northern Ireland Departments as at 11 January 2005 (the latest date for which figures are available) is not available in the form requested. The information in respect of Fermanagh, Dungannon and Ballymena district council areas is contained in the following table.

Grade level	District council area: Fermanagh	Dungannon	Ballymena
DP	14	3	46
SO	37	8	88
EOI	75	22.	170
EOII	72	52	64
AO	127	73	179
AA	61	39	93

Note:
Staff on career break are excluded from this analysis.

Departmental Travel

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much has been spent by his Department on taxi travel in the 2005–06 financial year; and what proportion of such travel was undertaken in each nation and region of the UK, including London. [37476]

Mr. Woodward: The amount spent on taxi travel in the 2005–06 financial year (up to and including November 2005) by the Northern Ireland Office, excluding its Agencies and NDPBs, was £15,224.

Disability Symbols

Mr. Dodds: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the criteria are for use by an organisation in Northern Ireland of the two tick disability symbol; in what circumstances organisations lose the right to use the symbol; and how many organisations have lost the right to use the symbol in each of the last five years. [38444]

Angela E. Smith: The two tick disability symbol is an initiative administered by Jobcentre Plus in Great Britain, under the control of the Department of Work and Pensions and does not operate in Northern Ireland.

District Police Partnerships

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people applied to be members of each District Police Partnership in the most recent selection process; and how many were deemed to be appointable candidates. [37602]

Mr. Woodward: The Policing Board has advised me that a total of 705 people applied to be members of the District Policing Partnerships in the most recent selection process and that 463 were deemed to be appointable candidates. The breakdown for each DPP is as follows:

District	Total number of applicants	Total number of candidates deemed suitable to be considered for appointment
Antrim	20	18
Ards	34	18
Armagh	26	21
Ballymena	39	26
Ballymoney	20	16
Banbridge	28	14
Belfast	45	21
Carrickfergus	21	15
Castlereagh	28	19
Coleraine	38	19
Cookstown	15	11
Craigavon	36	19
Derry	33	14
Down	27	17
Dungannon	17	15
Fermanagh	29	19
Larne	24	20
Limavady	16	14
Lisburn	30	21
Magherafelt	18	15
Moyle	21	15
Newry and Mourne	29	23
Newtownabbey	38	24
North Down	36	20
Omagh	22	19
Strabane	15	10
Total	705	463

Drinking By-laws

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how many occasions the Police Service of Northern Ireland has brought cases regarding the breach of drinking by-laws to Belfast city council in each year since November 2001. [37581]

Mr. Woodward: Only three out of four Belfast district command units record referrals to Belfast city council. They are listed as follows:

	West Belfast	North Belfast	South Belfast
2001	[1]1	21	[1]39
2002	5	14	474
2003	6	18	175
2004	17	8	156
2005 (to date)	72	16	138

[1] November to December.

Emergency Contraception

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland who has the authority to prescribe hormonal emergency contraception in Northern Ireland other than general practitioners. [37582]

Mr. Woodward: In Northern Ireland the only person who has authority to prescribe emergency hormonal contraception is a registered medical practitioner. However, emergency hormonal contraception, namely Levonelle(r) is available for purchase over the counter under the supervision of a pharmacist in accordance with a professional protocol. Levonelle 2 is the prescription only equivalent that, as well as being prescribed by a doctor, can be supplied by nurses and other health professionals under a patient group direction (PGD) signed by a doctor and a pharmacist.

Extra Curricular Activities

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what percentage of schoolchildren

in Northern Ireland take extra curricular activities necessitating their remaining on school property after normal school finishing time. [37802]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Education does not currently hold the information about the participation levels of school children in extra curricular activities.

Fisheries

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if the Minister with responsibility for Agriculture and Rural Development will meet fishermen from the fishing villages of Portavogie, Kilkeel and Ardglass in the spring of 2006. [37721]

Angela E. Smith: Yes, subject to other pressing diary commitments.

Free Travel Scheme

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many senior citizens in Northern Ireland have used the free public transport scheme in each year since its introduction. [37881]

Mr. Woodward: Translink has advised that the information requested is not readily available. However, in the following table I have set out the number of Senior SmartPasses issued together with the number of journeys undertaken since the introduction of Smart cards in May 2002. Details of the free travel undertaken prior to the introduction of SmartPasses in May 2002 are unavailable.

Period	*Senior SmartPasses issued*	*Passenger journeys*
May 2002 to March 2003	154,733	7,035,518
April 2003 to March 2004	16,373	7,520,275
April 2004 to March 2005	11,044	7,613,642
April 2005 to 15 December 2005	8,284	4,998,778

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what operational issues are being discussed by officials in the Department of Regional Development with their counterparts in the Republic of Ireland regarding the All Ireland Free Travel Scheme. [38141]

Mr. Woodward: The main operational issues being discussed are those of identification of eligible people, ticketing and recording of journeys and the reimbursement of transport operators.

Guest Speakers

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to his answer of 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1993–42W, on guest speakers, who the Irish Football Association nominated in advance as speakers at the reception held at Hillsborough Castle on Monday 14 November 2005; and what guidelines were issued about the content of contributions. [38545]

Mr. Hanson: The Irish Football Association nominated, in advance, their President to speak. No guidelines issue on the content of contributions.

Hospital Car Parking

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the amount charged by local health trusts for visitors to park their cars in dedicated car parks affiliated to the hospitals they visit is; whether in respect of each hospital these car parks are *(a)* private finance initiative operated and *(b)* solely the responsibility of the respective trust; and if he will make a statement. [37785]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is set out in the following table. Visitor parking at the Royal Group of Hospitals is operated by private finance initiative. Visitor parking at the other hospitals listed is operated by the trusts.

Hour	*£*
Belfast City Hospital	
0–1	0.50
1–2	1.00
2–4	2.00
4–6	4.00
6–24	8.00
Lost cards	8.00
Mater Infirmorum Hospital	
0–24	1.00
Royal Group of Hospitals	
0–4	1.00
4–6	1.80
>6	3.60
Lost cards	3.60
Ulster Hospital	
0–1	0.60
1–4	1.20
4–6	2.40
6–8	3.00
8–24	4.00
Lost cards	5.00

Housing

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many housing associations in Northern Ireland have been engaged in new build housing schemes in the last 12 months. [38337]

Mr. Hanson: Twenty-nine registered housing associations have projects in the 2005–06 social housing programme.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average cost to a housing association in Northern Ireland of a newly constructed two bedroom dwelling has been in 2005. [38338]

Mr. Hanson: The average cost of provision of a new build three person, two bedroom dwelling in 2005 has been £83,392.

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total rental income earned from their housing stock by each housing association in Northern Ireland was in the last 12 months. [38339]

Mr. Hanson: The total rental income earned by all registered housing associations in Northern Ireland for the period 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005 excluding the Northern Ireland Co-Ownership Housing Association Ltd. is listed in the following schedule.

Housing associations	*Actual rent collected (less rates and service charges) (£)*
Abbeyfield	1,261,216.00
Abode	570,721.00
Ark	538,298.00
Ballynafeigh	475,150.11
Belfast Community	877,463.00
BIH	8,556,558.00
Broadway	71,342.83
Choice	807,375.00
Clanmil	3,292,930.00
Clonard	75,059.45
Connswater	710,451.82
Coral Crescent	15,882.00
Corinthian	487,967.00
Covenanter	33,775.00
Craigowen	746,476.00
Donacloney	95,530.00
Dungannon	593,265.78
Filor	731,271.00
Flax	723,611.00
Fold	6,216,598.00
Gosford	309,229.30
Grove	403,060.00
Habinteg	3,263,923.00
Hearth	211,510.88
Larne	456,880.00
Newington	811,590.45
North and West	7,493,289.00
Oaklee	6,270,678.00
Open Door	702,003.00
Presbyterian	1,204,392.00
Rural	886,196.00
SHAC	763,164.36
South Ulster	1,415,457.49
St. Matthews	305,630.00
Triangle	553,432.00
Ulidia	911,985.61
Wesley	224,721.00
Woodvale	976,864.05

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland on how many occasions in 2005 it was established that temporary premises offered by the Northern Ireland Housing Executive to tenants while refurbishment work was carried out at their permanent homes were unfit for habitation. [37805]

Mr. Hanson: No properties owned by the Housing Executive which have been used for temporary housing in the past year have been found to be unfit. However, one mobile home used for temporary rehousing was classified as unfit due to dampness. The tenant was moved to another mobile home.

Maladministration Payments

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many payments for maladministration have been made by *(a)* his Department, *(b)* its agencies, *(c)* its non-departmental public bodies and *(d)* other bodies for which his Department has responsibility in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [32239]

Mr. Hain: It is the policy of the Northern Ireland Office, its agencies, non-departmental public bodies and, where appropriate, its sponsored organisations to make financial redress in accordance with the guidance set out in Chapter 18.7 and Annexes 18.1 and 18.2 of Government Accounting.

The information you requested is set out in the following table:

NIO	*2000-01*	*2001-02*	*2002-03*	*2003-04*	*2004-05*
Department	—	—	—	1	1
Agencies	—	—	—	—	1
NDPB	—	—	—	—	—
Other bodies	—	—	—	—	—

Neighbourhood Partnerships

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the elected representatives on each Neighbourhood Partnership in the four Belfast constituencies; and which political party each represents. [37584]

Mr. Hanson: To date Neighbourhood Partnerships have been established in seven of the 13 Neighbourhood Renewal Areas in Belfast. Information on the elected representatives on each Neighbourhood Partnership in the four Belfast constituencies and which political party each represents has been set out.

It should be noted that the boundary of the Colin Neighbourhood Renewal Area also falls into the Lagan Valley constituency.

Inner North Belfast Partnership

Members	*Who they represent*
Carol Ni Chuilin	Sinn Fein
Ian Crozier	Democratic Unionist Party

Tullycarnet Neighbourhood Partnership

Members	*Who they represent*
Tommy Jeffers	Democratic Unionist Party
Gareth Robinson	Democratic Unionist Party
Judith Cochrane	Alliance Party

Inner East Belfast Neighbourhood Partnership

No elected representatives sit on the Partnership board.

Inner South Neighbourhood Partnership

No elected representatives sit on the Partnership board.

South West Belfast Partnership

No elected representatives sit on the Partnership board.

Lenadoon Neighbourhood Partnership

Members	*Who they represent*
Tim Attwood	SDLP
Michael Ferguson	Sinn Fein
Gerard O'Neill	Sinn Fein

Colin Neighbourhood Partnership

Members	*Who they represent*
Cllr Patricia Lewsley	Social Democratic and Labour Party
Cllr Michael Ferguson	Sinn Fein
Cllr William Ward	Ulster Unionist Party
Cllr Angela Nelson	Sinn Fein

Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill

Lady Hermon: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list the *(a)* meetings, *(b)* discussions and *(c)* correspondence he has had with the (i) Police Service of Northern Ireland Chief Constable, (ii) Northern Ireland Victims Commissioner and (iii) Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission about the Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill. [37426]

Mr. Hanson: On 7 November I met with the Chief Constable of the PSNI regarding the Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill prior to its introduction to Parliament.

On 9 November I wrote to the Victims Commissioner and the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commissioner to inform them of the Bill's introduction.

I discussed the proposals within the Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill at a meeting with the Northern Ireland Human Rights Commission on 15 November 2005. The Commission have offered to write to me following their consideration of the Bill.

The proposals were originally published in May 2003.

Northern Ireland Employer Champions

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will make a statement on the work of the four Northern Ireland Employer Champions appointed in 2004 to help increase the number of employers addressing essential skills issues in the workplace. [38584]

Angela E. Smith: The four Employer Champions are helping the Department implement Essential Skills in the Workplace by demonstrating their commitment to the strategy in their own organisations and, where possible, influencing others to take action, raising the profile of Essential Skills in the press and attending employer-focused events.

PricewaterhouseCoopers

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland for which Departments of the Northern Ireland Office PricewaterhouseCoopers have been working on e-business strategies; on what date each contract with PricewaterhouseCoopers commenced; on what date the final documents were published; and what the cost was to each Department of each contract with Pricewaterhouse Coopers. [36183]

Angela E. Smith: The Government Departments in Northern Ireland that received advice from PricewaterhouseCoopers on their e-business strategies over the last five years and details of the relevant contracts are set out in the following table:

Department	*Date commenced*	*Date final report published*	*Cost (£)*
Department for Regional Development	February 2001	Published on departmental website—August 2001.	39,187
Department of the Environment	February 2001	Not published.	32,175
Department of Finance and Personnel	April 2001	Published on departmental website—February 2002.	45,750
Department of Culture, Arts and Leisure	April 2001	Not published.	34,912
Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister	June 2001	Published on departmental website—30 November 2002.	39,500
Department of Enterprise, Trade and Investment	July 2003	Published on departmental website—11 June 2004.	29,700
Department of Education	November 2002	Not published.	12,100
	May 2003	Updated report published on departmental website—February 2004.	24,000
	February 2004	Report for Education Service not published.	10,000

Prisoners (Surgical Waiting Times)

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average time prisoners in Northern Ireland waited before having *(a)* hip and *(b)* knee replacement surgery was in each of the last five years. [37801]

Mr. Woodward: There are no prisoners in Northern Ireland Prison Service establishments currently on waiting lists for hip and knee replacement surgery and no prisoners have undergone such surgery within the past five years.

Prosecutions

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many motorists from the Republic of Ireland were *(a)* stopped by the Police Service for Northern Ireland for motoring offences and *(b)* were prosecuted for motoring offences in each of the last 10 years. [36518]

Mr. Woodward: The Police Service of Northern Ireland does not hold a central record which would identify the number of motorists from the Republic of Ireland who were stopped for motoring offences in each

of the last 10 years. To obtain this information would involve a manual trawl of records at disproportionate cost.

Statistics relating to prosecutions are available for the period 2000 to 2003 and are contained in the following table:

Prosecutions of motorists from the Republic of Ireland for motoring offences 2000–03

	Number of prosecutions
2000	244
2001	194
2002	263
2003	345

Psychologist Assessments (Children)

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary school children in each (i) constituency and (ii) council district in Northern Ireland are on the waiting list for assessment by an educational psychologist; and what the average waiting time was in each case in the last period for which figures are available. [36981]

Angela E. Smith: This information is not readily available from the Education and Library Boards. I will write to the hon. Gentleman as soon as possible.

Data is not collected by constituency and district council area as Education and Library Board areas do not correspond to either constituency or district council areas. The response will therefore be by Education and Library Board and by primary and secondary sector.

Research and Development Grants

Kitty Ussher: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many research and development grants have been awarded to companies in Northern Ireland under the *(a)* SMART Micro, *(b)* SMART, *(c)* START-company only, *(d)* START-partnership, *(e)* COMPETE-Phase 1 and *(f)* COMPETE-Phase 2 programmes in each year for which figures are available; what the total value was of such grants in each year; what the total value is of private sector contributions to funded projects in each year and category; and what the equivalent information is for predecessor schemes in each of the previous five years. [35499]

Angela E. Smith: The following table details the total value of the grants awarded from 1 April 2002 (inception of Invest NI) to date. Prior to that, records were held by individual organisations and are not readily available.

	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06 to 7 December 2005*
SMART Micro				
Number of grants awarded	0	3	1	0
Total grant awarded (£)	0	28,000	10,000	0
Private sector contribution (£)	0	30,440	23,000	0
SMART				
Number of grants awarded	4	16	10	8
Total grant awarded (£)	264,937	671,538	478,932	379,457
Private sector contribution (£)	369,502	496,629	409,840	269,155
START—company only				
Number of grants awarded	3	1	6	2
Total grant awarded (£)	4,465,670	1,725,000	5,703,965	2,675,787
Private sector contribution (£)	8,705,561	1,867,423	11,398,328	3,604,887
START—partnership				
Number of grants awarded	1	2	0	2
Total grant awarded (£)	160,557	520,149	0	965,868
Private sector contribution (£)	240,836	945,404	0	1,448,892
COMPETE Ph 1				
Number of grants awarded	89	61	33	12
Total grant awarded (£)	1,039,489	696,014	375,511	139,509
Private sector contribution (£)	1,115,971	756,835	439,789	139,503
COMPETE Ph 2				
Number of grants awarded	58	52	43	13
Total grant awarded (£)	6,188,496	5,103,581	4,584,297	2,108,304
Private sector contribution (£)	13,789,014	11,999,447	9,172,070	4,456,818

Royal Victoria Hospital (Waiting Times)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the waiting list for neurosurgery at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Northern Ireland. [37598]

Mr. Woodward: The Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety has carried out an analysis of the capacity within each trust to meet waiting time targets for 2005–06. Neurosurgery at the Royal Victoria Hospital was identified as a regional specialty in which there is insufficient capacity locally to meet the target. As a result, the trust has developed an action plan with

Commissioners that will utilise additional independent sector capacity in Northern Ireland, Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland. By March 2006 no one will be waiting longer than 12 months for neurosurgery in Northern Ireland.

Royal Group of Hospitals (Neurosurgery Nurses)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many nurses were recruited to work in neurosurgery at the Royal Group of Hospitals in Northern Ireland in each of the last five years. [37597]

Mr. Woodward: The information requested is provided in the following table.

Number of nurses recruited to work in neurosurgery at the Royal Group of Hospitals in each of the last five years

	Headcount	*Whole-time equivalent*
2001	4	4.00
2002	2	2.00
2003	13	13.00
2004	13	13.00
2005	12	12.00

Note:
The nursing figures include both qualified and unqualified nurses.
Source:
Royal Group of Hospitals HSS Trust.

Suicide

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many people aged between 15 and 24 committed suicide in Northern Ireland in each of the last 20 years. [37601]

Angela E. Smith: The following table gives the number of deaths registered in Northern Ireland, in each year between 1985 and 2004, due to 'suicide and self-inflicted injury'[1] and 'undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted'[2] of people aged 15 to 24 years.

[1] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes X60-X84, Y87.0 for years 2001–04 and Ninth Revision codes E950-E959 for years 1985–2000.

[2] International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision codes Y10-Y34, Y87.2 for years 2001–04 and Ninth Revision codes E980-E989 for years 1985–2000.

Table: Number of registered deaths by year in Northern Ireland due to 'suicide and self-inflicted injury' and 'undetermined injury whether accidentally or purposefully inflicted' of persons aged 15–24, 1985–2004

Registration year	*Number of registered deaths of persons aged 15–24 due to 'suicide' or 'undetermined injury'*
1985	25
1986	30
1987	29
1988	45
1989	23
1990	24
1991	27
1992	25
1993	37
1994	31
1995	34
1996	26
1997	31
1998	32
1999	40
2000	44
2001	34
2002	24
2003	23
2004	24

Tennis

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much public funding has been spent on *(a)* tennis and *(b)* coaching young tennis players in the Province in each of the last 10 years. [33272]

Mr. Hanson: The Sports Council for Northern Ireland (SCNI) is responsible for the development of Sport in NI including the distribution of funding to individual sports. The main sources of funding it provides are Exchequer and lottery.

The Sports Council for Northern Ireland (SCNI) has given the following Exchequer and lottery funding to tennis activities in each of the last ten years.

SCNI Exchequer funding

£

	Exchequer	*Lottery*
1995–96	[1]—	222,600
1996–97	[1]—	187,750
1997–98	[1]—	583,473
1998–99	[1]—	346,260
1999–2000	3,747.50	227,573
2000–01	6,112	0
2001–02	16,226.50	112,200
2002–03	11,320	111,700
2003–04	44,304	63,958
2004–05	55,300	0

[1] No information available.

In addition the Department of Finance and Personnel (DFP), Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (DARD) and Department for Social Development (DSD) have provided the following funding:

DFP funding

£

	Tennis	*Tennis and other sports*
1996–97	2,500	0
1997–98	0	12,000
1998–99	3,040	0
1999–2000	5,000	0
2000–01	0	0
2001–02	0	0
2002–03	0	0
2003–04	0	0
2004–05	10,000	0
2005–06	0	0

Includes Peace II funding to other sports projects.

DARD funding

£

	Amount of funding	*Reason for funding*
1995–96	0	n/a
1996–97	0	n/a
1997–98	94	2nd instalment of Woodland Grant Scheme (0.3ha planted in 1992 Loughgall Tennis Club)
1998–99	0	n/a
1999–2000	0	n/a
2000–01	0	n/a
2001–02	0	n/a
2002–03	48	3rd and final instalment of Woodland Grant scheme as above
2003–04	0	n/a
2004–05	0	n/a

DSD funding

£

	Amount of funding
1996–97	0
1997–98	0
1998–99	0
1999–2000	82,854
2000–01	92,945
2001–02	0
2002–03	0
2003–04	0
2004–05	0
2005–06 (to date)	0

Unmanned Railway Crossings

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many unmanned crossings there are on the rail line between Ballymena and Ballykelly; and how regularly they are checked for safety purposes. [37882]

Mr. Woodward: Translink has advised that the Belfast to Londonderry railway line has 27 unmanned public road crossings and 92 private crossings between Ballymena and Ballykelly. The private crossings are checked at least twice a week by track patrol staff with a full inspection carried out by infrastructure engineering staff twice each year and a risk assessment every five years.

Public road crossings are checked at least twice a week by track patrol staff to ensure that all equipment is intact and functioning, and are also subject to a monthly inspection and maintenance regime by signalling technicians. There is also an annual safety examination of all public road crossings by a combined group of inspectors from NI Railways, PSNI and DRD Roads Service.

In addition to the routine inspections carried out by Northern Ireland Railways, a 'Crossings Management Group' consisting of experts from within NI Railways and the Northern Ireland Transport Holding Company meets bi-monthly and prioritises crossings for additional inspection and surveys based on a combination of risk and reports of misuse.

Water Service

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many water connections to consumers in Northern Ireland are metered; and how many of these connections also serve a domestic pipeline. [38560]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Water Service (Mrs. Katharine Bryan) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Katharine Bryan, dated 19 December 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about how many water connections to consumers in Northern Ireland are metered and how many of these connections also serve a domestic pipeline (38560). I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Water Service.

Water Service's current policy is to fit water meters to properties which are not used exclusively for domestic purposes. These include industrial, commercial, agricultural, public buildings and dwelling houses, which are also used for business purposes. 73,650 properties are currently metered.

50,181 of these properties currently attract the free domestic allowance of 200 cubic metres per annum, since they are deemed to include an element of domestic usage. Our metering records do not at present identify how many of these are dwelling houses.

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the standing charge was for each diameter of water supply pipe in each of the last five years. [38600]

Mr. Woodward: The chief executive of Water Service (Mrs. Katharine Bryan) has been asked to write to the hon. Gentleman in response to this question.

Letter from Katharine Bryan, dated 19 December 2005:

You recently asked the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland a Parliamentary Question about what the standing charge was for each diameter of water supply pipe in each of the last five years. (38600). I have been asked to reply as this issue falls within my responsibility as Chief Executive of Water Service.

The table below lists the standing charges for all water supply pipe sizes for the past five years.

£

Pipe size (mm)	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Up to 15	46	46	46	46	47
16–20	69	69	69	69	71
21–25	92	92	92	92	94
26–40	173	173	173	173	177
41–50	289	289	289	289	296
51–75	578	578	578	578	593
76–100	1,040	1,040	1,040	1,040	1,066
>100	1,502	1,502	1,502	1,502	1,540

Standing charges are not payable where the internal diameter of the supply pipe is 20 millimetres or less, provided that (i) consumption for the period is less than the domestic allowance of 200 cubic metres per year where the allowance applies; or (ii) consumption is nil if the domestic allowance does not apply.

School Building

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he expects the building

work on the new Foyle and Londonderry college and Ebrington school to *(a)* begin and *(b)* be concluded. [38341]

Angela E. Smith: A master plan is currently being produced for the Clooney lands which will inform decisions on the utilisation of the site to accommodate education and other facilities. Foyle and Londonderry College, Ebrington Primary School and the Western Education and Library Board will be involved in this exercise. At this stage of the process it would be premature to indicate a commencement date for building work.

HEALTH

Accident and Emergency Services

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will assess the demand on accident and emergency services at Southampton General Hospital between midnight and 4 am on 4 December compared with the corresponding time and date in 2004. [37564]

Caroline Flint: This information is not held centrally.

Alcohol

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many finished consultant episodes relating to alcohol there have been in England in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* patients aged under 18 years and *(b)* patients aged 18 years and over, (i) in total and (ii) broken down by strategic health authority. [34207]

Caroline Flint: The information in the following table gives finished consultant episodes relating to alcohol in England in each year from 1997 to 2004, for patients under 18 years and patients aged 18 years and over. This is by strategic health authority and by total.

Counts of finished consultant episodes where there was a primary diagnosis code for selected alcohol related diseases

	1997–98			*1998–99*		
Strategic health authority of residence	*Aged under 18*	*Aged 18 and over*	*Age not known*	*Aged under 18*	*Aged 18 and over*	*Age not known*
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic HA	152	1,188	—	115	1,385	1
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic HA	159	785	1	148	843	—
Essex Strategic HA	56	871	1	48	798	—
North West London Strategic HA	52	1,796	5	47	1,847	14
North Central London Strategic HA	43	1,060	4	28	1,034	4
North East London Strategic HA	47	1,117	2	48	1,129	1
South East London Strategic HA	72	1,441	2	48	1,364	—
South West London Strategic HA	110	905	4	91	860	1
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Strategic HA	240	1,428	9	195	1,886	1
County Durham and Tees Valley Strategic HA	282	1,156	—	214	1,252	2
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire Strategic HA	110	583	2	199	1,492	3
West Yorkshire Strategic HA	225	1,609	3	207	1,464	2
Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic HA	263	2,421	2	222	2,339	1
Greater Manchester Strategic HA	280	2,995	1	252	2,833	1
Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic HA	345	4,069	2	299	3,774	3
Thames Valley Strategic HA	89	1,106	3	102	1,028	5
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Strategic HA	112	1,351	2	119	1,579	2
Kent and Medway Strategic HA	125	692	1	125	725	1
Surrey and Sussex Strategic HA	173	1,629	7	173	1,581	8
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Strategic HA	141	1,482	—	150	1,505	2
South West Peninsula Strategic HA	151	1,257	—	108	1,154	—
Dorset and Somerset Strategic HA	95	835	—	95	839	1
South Yorkshire Strategic HA	128	953	—	148	1,016	—
Trent Strategic HA	247	2,006	—	205	2,400	1
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland Strategic HA	122	878	2	116	1,111	—
Shropshire and Staffordshire Strategic HA	182	1,344	—	142	1,256	1
Birmingham and the Black Country Strategic HA	212	2,550	5	208	2,222	1
West Midlands South Strategic HA	183	1,472	1	175	1,292	6
Scotland	4	21	—	2	29	—
England—Not Otherwise Specified	10	462	14	—	—	—
Wales	17	157	1	23	235	50
Foreign (incl. Isle of Man and Channel Islands)	4	37	—	10	41	—
Not known	94	1,392	711	20	1,021	43
Northern Ireland	—	7	—	—	17	—
Total	4,525	43,055	785	4,082	43,351	155

	1999–2000			*2000–01*		
Strategic health authority of residence	*Aged under 18*	*Aged 18 and over*	*Age not known*	*Aged under 18*	*Aged 18 and over*	*Age not known*
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic HA	145	1,574	—	147	1,695	30
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic HA	158	916	2	124	774	—
Essex Strategic HA	58	902	—	61	955	2
North West London Strategic HA	60	1,445	11	59	1,231	3
North Central London Strategic HA	53	1,044	7	51	966	2
North East London Strategic HA	56	1,244	1	32	1,072	1
South East London Strategic HA	73	1,516	2	53	1,308	1
South West London Strategic HA	100	1,021	2	114	996	3
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Strategic HA	201	1,931	2	220	1,872	1
County Durham and Tees Valley Strategic HA	239	1,274	1	242	1,269	1
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire Strategic HA	253	1,592	2	225	1,412	2
West Yorkshire Strategic HA	238	1,660	3	168	1,874	—
Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic HA	315	2,216	3	296	2,239	2

Strategic health authority of residence	1999–2000 Aged under 18	1999–2000 Aged 18 and over	1999–2000 Age not known	2000–01 Aged under 18	2000–01 Aged 18 and over	2000–01 Age not known
Greater Manchester Strategic HA	295	3,032	—	343	3,094	2
Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic HA	331	3,976	3	322	4,317	2
Thames Valley Strategic HA	112	1,027	2	70	1,113	10
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Strategic HA	140	1,616	—	137	1,619	2
Kent and Medway Strategic HA	129	808	3	102	805	2
Surrey and Sussex Strategic HA	211	1,439	9	238	1,407	13
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Strategic HA	127	1,513	3	123	1,296	—
South West Peninsula Strategic HA	137	1,239	1	112	1,513	—
Dorset and Somerset Strategic HA	90	1,066	1	98	890	1
South Yorkshire Strategic HA	171	1,042	—	142	1,193	—
Trent Strategic HA	260	2,754	—	236	2,679	—
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland Strategic HA	126	1,084	1	101	1,003	—
Shropshire and Staffordshire Strategic HA	169	1,219	1	136	1,167	—
Birmingham and the Black Country Strategic HA	287	2,240	6	274	2,303	—
West Midlands South Strategic HA	204	1,410	—	196	1,324	1
Scotland	6	42	—	4	31	—
England—Not Otherwise Specified	—	—	—	5	573	8
Wales	26	266	8	16	113	—
Foreign (incl. Isle of Man and Channel Islands)	13	51	—	10	50	2
Not known	37	1,154	15	32	581	26
Northern Ireland	—	9	—	—	9	—
Total	4,820	45,322	89	4,489	44,743	117

Strategic health authority of residence	2001–02 Aged under 18	2001–02 Aged 18 and over	2001–02 Age not known	2002–03 Aged under 18	2002–03 Aged 18 and over	2002–03 Age not known
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic HA	133	1,759	1	116J	1,885	—
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic HA	177	916	2	148	979	1
Essex Strategic HA	43	970	—	54	1,013	—
North West London Strategic HA	76	1,423	28	60	1,637	3
North Central London Strategic HA	48	1,032	3	59	1,141	2
North East London Strategic HA	52	1,199	2	65	1,279	1
South East London Strategic HA	48	1,229	—	63	1,578	1
South West London Strategic HA	128	866	2	147	987	1
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Strategic HA	172	1,950	—	161	1,950	—
County Durham and Tees Valley Strategic HA	186	1,328	—	123	1,224	—
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire Strategic HA	225	1,443	4	170	1,437	1
West Yorkshire Strategic HA	195	1,888	1	204	1,927	—
Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic HA	291	2,653	3	275	2,584	4
Greater Manchester Strategic HA	289	3,310	—	273	3,266	2
Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic HA	325	4,921	3	335	5,039	—
Thames Valley Strategic HA	132	1,102	10	91	1,181	—
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Strategic HA	120	1,687	1	153	1,837	—
Kent and Medway Strategic HA	154	798	1	117	948	1
Surrey and Sussex Strategic HA	300	1,501	7	255	1,748	11
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Strategic HA	144	1,460	1	127	1,591	1
South West Peninsula Strategic HA	111	1,661	—	132	1,797	—
Dorset and Somerset Strategic HA	97	895	1	87	928	1
South Yorkshire Strategic HA	104	1,069	5	90	1,235	4
Trent Strategic HA	260	2,548	—	226	2,517	—
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland Strategic HA	92	943	—	87	1,148	1
Shropshire and Staffordshire Strategic HA	154	1,223	—	145	1,303	—
Birmingham and the Black Country Strategic HA	248	2,574	1	188	2,797	2
West Midlands South Strategic HA	142	1,205	—	143	1,473	—
Scotland	2	38	—	6	29	—
England—Not Otherwise Specified	7	627	6	8	676	11
Wales	23	140	—	18	125	—
Foreign (incl. Isle of Man and Channel Islands)	7	63	1	11	67	—
Not known	43	671	42	28	549	37
Northern Ireland	—	9	—	—	13	—
Total	4,528	47,101	125	4,165	49,888	85

Strategic health authority of residence	2003–04 Aged under 18	Aged 18 and over	Age not known
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic HA	147	2,206	—
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic HA	134	1,140	—
Essex Strategic HA	64	1,238	1
North West London Strategic HA	87	1,771	4
North Central London Strategic HA	62	1,213	2
North East London Strategic HA	86	1,508	1
South East London Strategic HA	89	1,736	—
South West London Strategic HA	150	1,225	1
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Strategic HA	119	2,068	2
County Durham and Tees Valley Strategic HA	143	1,554	—
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire Strategic HA	253	1,661	—
West Yorkshire Strategic HA	186	2,076	—
Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic HA	253	2,836	1
Greater Manchester Strategic HA	345	3,860	—
Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic HA	366	5,388	1
Thames Valley Strategic HA	119	1,260	—
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Strategic HA	186	1,842	1
Kent and Medway Strategic HA	148	1,037	1
Surrey and Sussex Strategic HA	269	1,825	6
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Strategic HA	173	1,808	1
South West Peninsula Strategic HA	203	2,012	10
Dorset and Somerset Strategic HA	86	1,022	—
South Yorkshire Strategic HA	102	1,506	—
Trent Strategic HA	227	3,049	—
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland Strategic HA	97	1,484	1
Shropshire and Staffordshire Strategic HA	185	1,572	—
Birmingham and the Black Country Strategic HA	241	2,849	5
West Midlands South Strategic HA	152	1,447	1
Scotland	6	60	—
England—Not Otherwise Specified	17	831	7
Wales	12	151	—
Foreign (incl. Isle of Man and Channel Islands)	9	79	6
Not known	30	518	39
Northern Ireland	—	24	—
Total	4,746	55,856	91

Note:
Alcohol related diseases defined as following ICD-10 codes recorded in primary diagnosis:
F10: Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol
K70: Alcoholic liver disease
T51: Toxic effect of alcohol
NHS Hospitals, England 1997–98 to 2003–04

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many admissions to hospital via accident and emergency departments had an alcohol-related diagnosis in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* those aged 18 and over and *(b)* those aged under 18 (i) in total and (ii) broken down by strategic health authority area. [34215]

Caroline Flint: The information in the table gives the number of admissions to hospital via accident and emergency departments with an alcohol-related diagnosis in each year from 1997 to 2004 broken down by those aged 18 and over and those aged under 18. This is broken down by strategic health authority area and in total.

Counts of finished admission episodes where there was a primary diagnosis code for selected alcohol[1] related diseases and admission methods[2]

Strategic health authority (SHA) of residence	1997–98 Aged under 18	Aged 18 and over	Age not known	1998–99 Aged under 18	Aged 18 and over	Age not known
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic HA	135	413	—	98	483	1
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic HA	152	381	1	143	454	—
Essex Strategic HA	49	464	—	42	395	—
North West London Strategic HA	51	736	4	44	888	9
North Central London Strategic HA	43	648	3	28	607	3
North East London Strategic HA	40	780	2	44	788	1
South East London Strategic HA	70	703	2	47	686	—
South West London Strategic HA	94	447	4	78	436	1
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Strategic HA	220	606	7	184	759	1
County Durham and Tees Valley Strategic HA	260	465	—	200	479	1
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire SHA	100	282	2	190	960	1
West Yorkshire Strategic HA	222	879	3	203	833	2
Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic HA	231	1,035	2	196	977	1
Greater Manchester Strategic HA	265	1,211	1	239	1,269	1
Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic HA	331	1,798	2	290	1,756	3

Counts of finished admission episodes where there was a primary diagnosis code for selected alcohol[1] related diseases and admission methods[2]

Strategic health authority (SHA) of residence	*1997–98*			*1998–99*		
	Aged under 18	*Aged 18 and over*	*Age not known*	*Aged under 18*	*Aged 18 and over*	*Age not known*
Thames Valley Strategic HA	82	528	3	93	477	5
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Strategic HA	102	491	1	110	554	2
Kent and Medway Strategic HA	108	341	1	107	382	1
Surrey and Sussex Strategic HA	156	668	2	162	670	2
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Strategic HA	108	433	—	137	493	2
South West Peninsula Strategic HA	138	491	—	97	398	—
Dorset and Somerset Strategic HA	87	416	—	85	416	1
South Yorkshire Strategic HA	122	515	—	144	528	—
Trent Strategic HA	233	855	—	195	874	1
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland SHA	109	251	2	108	294	—
Shropshire and Staffordshire Strategic HA	168	544	—	134	506	1
Birmingham and the Black Country Strategic HA	204	1,112	4	201	1,052	1
West Midlands South Strategic HA	172	806	1	161	740	2
Scotland	4	15	—	2	20	—
England—Not Otherwise Specified	9	318	11	—	—	—
Wales	15	58	1	22	128	26
Foreign (incl. Isle of Man and Channel Islands)	4	23	—	9	29	—
Not known	89	478	616	18	613	19
Northern Ireland	—	4	—	—	7	—
Total	4,173	19,195	675	3,811	19,951	88

Strategic health authority (SHA) of residence	*1999–2000*			*2000–01*		
	Aged under 18	*Aged 18 and over*	*Age not known*	*Aged under 18*	*Aged 18 and over*	*Age not known*
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic HA	134	528	—	134	526	9
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic HA	152	458	2	117	405	—
Essex Strategic HA	57	442	—	57	499	1
North West London Strategic HA	49	676	7	54	781	3
North Central London Strategic HA	50	661	7	48	661	2
North East London Strategic HA	50	887	1	30	732	1
South East London Strategic HA	68	733	1	51	696	1
South West London Strategic HA	86	471	2	101	508	2
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Strategic HA	187	778	2	203	653	1
County Durham and Tees Valley Strategic HA	229	519	1	224	503	1
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire SHA	246	957	2	213	751	—
West Yorkshire Strategic HA	231	929	3	163	1,049	—
Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic HA	276	970	2	252	929	—
Greater Manchester Strategic HA	281	1,370	—	334	1,358	1
Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic HA	314	1,809	3	313	1,925	2
Thames Valley Strategic HA	101	520	2	66	597	10
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Strategic HA	132	551	—	130	528	2
Kent and Medway Strategic HA	122	379	3	92	410	2
Surrey and Sussex Strategic HA	198	652	2	229	720	7
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Strategic HA	120	548	3	107	407	—
South West Peninsula Strategic HA	123	432	1	104	465	—
Dorset and Somerset Strategic HA	83	489	1	93	299	1
South Yorkshire Strategic HA	168	524	—	137	518	—
Trent Strategic HA	252	1,012	—	228	1,034	—
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland SHA	123	360	1	97	370	—
Shropshire and Staffordshire Strategic HA	161	521	1	130	482	—
Birmingham and the Black Country Strategic HA	275	1,086	4	263	1,144	—
West Midlands South Strategic HA	191	845	—	183	772	1
Scotland	6	33	—	3	26	—
England—Not Otherwise Specified	—	—	—	5	389	8
Wales	22	150	5	14	69	—
Foreign (incl. Isle of Man and Channel Islands)	13	24	—	10	29	2
Not known	33	661	14	30	321	15
Northern Ireland	—	3	—	—	4	—
Total	4,533	20,978	70	4,215	20,560	72

Strategic health authority (SHA) of residence	*2001–02*			*2002–03*		
	Aged under 18	*Aged 18 and over*	*Age not known*	*Aged under 18*	*Aged 18 and over*	*Age not known*
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic HA	122	529	1	106	487	—
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic HA	169	430	1	141	400	—
Essex Strategic HA	42	457	—	51	441	—
North West London Strategic HA	60	797	20	58	823	3
North Central London Strategic HA	44	631	3	57	692	2

Strategic health authority (SHA) of residence	2001–02 Aged under 18	2001–02 Aged 18 and over	2001–02 Age not known	2002–03 Aged under 18	2002–03 Aged 18 and over	2002–03 Age not known
North East London Strategic HA	49	815	2	61	859	1
South East London Strategic HA	38	658	—	58	781	1
South West London Strategic HA	114	471	1	125	515	1
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Strategic HA	147	618	—	151	696	—
County Durham and Tees Valley Strategic HA	178	487	—	119	499	—
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire SHA	219	814	4	165	810	1
West Yorkshire Strategic HA	190	1,078	1	200	1,028	—
Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic HA	252	1,110	2	239	1,081	4
Greater Manchester Strategic HA	278	1,401	—	262	1,331	—
Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic HA	314	2,253	3	319	2,243	—
Thames Valley Strategic HA	125	614	10	86	636	—
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Strategic HA	112	572	1	144	628	—
Kent and Medway Strategic HA	146	485	1	115	504	1
Surrey and Sussex Strategic HA	283	706	4	243	819	4
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Strategic HA	133	570	1	118	537	1
South West Peninsula Strategic HA	102	499	—	122	565	—
Dorset and Somerset Strategic HA	92	274	1	80	246	1
South Yorkshire Strategic HA	102	417	1	87	536	1
Trent Strategic HA	246	878	—	204	960	—
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland SHA	90	264	—	79	327	—
Shropshire and Staffordshire Strategic HA	143	528	—	131	628	—
Birmingham and the Black Country Strategic HA	242	1,146	1	181	1,246	2
West Midlands South Strategic HA	140	686	—	136	788	—
Scotland	1	27	—	6	19	—
England—Not Otherwise Specified	7	437	6	8	423	10
Wales	21	70	—	17	52	—
Foreign (incl. Isle of Man and Channel Islands)	6	39	—	10	30	—
Not known	39	368	12	25	303	9
Northern Ireland	—	4	—	—	6	—
Total	4,246	21,133	76	3,904	21,939	42

Strategic health authority (SHA) of residence	2003–04 Aged under 18	2003–04 Aged 18 and over	2003–04 Age not known
Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire Strategic HA	138	664	—
Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic HA	128	501	—
Essex Strategic HA	63	607	1
North West London Strategic HA	84	1,054	4
North Central London Strategic HA	61	741	2
North East London Strategic HA	81	1,000	1
South East London Strategic HA	86	972	—
South West London Strategic HA	133	682	1
Northumberland, Tyne and Wear Strategic HA	109	758	2
County Durham and Tees Valley Strategic HA	134	625	—
North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire SHA	249	840	—
West Yorkshire Strategic HA	185	1,118	—
Cumbria and Lancashire Strategic HA	225	1,118	1
Greater Manchester Strategic HA	331	1,673	—
Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic HA	348	2,569	1
Thames Valley Strategic HA	113	694	—
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Strategic HA	173	609	1
Kent and Medway Strategic HA	142	532	1
Surrey and Sussex Strategic HA	261	861	2
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Strategic HA	164	659	1
South West Peninsula Strategic HA	187	646	2
Dorset and Somerset Strategic HA	82	263	—
South Yorkshire Strategic HA	100	562	—
Trent Strategic HA	215	1,109	—
Leicestershire, Northamptonshire and Rutland SHA	89	475	—
Shropshire and Staffordshire Strategic HA	167	784	—
Birmingham and the Black Country Strategic HA	233	1,437	4
West Midlands South Strategic HA	148	674	1
Scotland	6	41	—
England—Not Otherwise Specified	17	580	7
Wales	11	76	—
Foreign (incl. Isle of Man and Channel Islands)	9	46	5
Not known	29	337	22
Northern Ireland	—	8	—
Total	4,501	25,315	59

[1] Alcohol related diseases defined as following ICD-10 codes recorded in primary diagnosis:
F10: Mental and behavioural disorders due to use of alcohol
K70: Alcoholic liver disease
T51: Toxic effect of alcohol
[2] Selected Methods of Admission:
Emergency (via accident and emergency services including the casualty department of the provider)
Emergency (other means, including patients who arrive via accident and emergency department of another healthcare provider)
NHS Hospitals, England 1997–98 to 2003–04

Alzheimer's Disease

Chris Huhne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will estimate the cost of *(a)* treating sufferers of Alzheimer's disease with drugs according to National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidelines and *(b)* providing such sufferers with residential care in lieu of drug treatment. [37796]

Mr. Byrne: The Department has not made such an estimate in the difference in costs between treating sufferers of Alzheimer's disease with drugs according to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence guidelines and providing such sufferers with residential care in lieu of drug treatment.

Ambulance Service

John Mann: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many times East Midlands ambulance response times in North Nottinghamshire have been in excess of 30 minutes in each of the last 10 years. [36233]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* The information requested is not centrally collected. The data which the Department does collect on ambulance response times is published in the statistical bulletin, "Ambulance services, England: 2004–05". This is available in the Library and on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/11/36/79/04113679.pdf.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many assaults were recorded on Ambulance Service staff in each trust while on duty in each of the last 10 years; how many prosecutions resulted; and if she will make a statement. [32630]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally in the format requested.

Estimated violent or abusive incidents in NHS ambulance trusts for 2000–01, 2001–02 and 2002–03 are shown in the table. Information relating to the number of physical assaults for NHS ambulance trusts in England for 2004–05 will be published shortly.

Information about the number of prosecutions resulting from reports of assaults on ambulance staff was not collected centrally for the period 1995 to 2003. For 2004–05, the number of prosecutions identified involving assaults on ambulance staff in England totalled 100.

Ambulance trust name	*Violent incidents*		
	2002–03	*2001–02*	*2000–01*
Avon Ambulance Service NHS Trust	163	31	17
Bedfordshire and Herts Ambulance and Paramedic Service NHS Trust	75	48	45
Coventry and Warwickshire Ambulance NHS Trust	39	37	14
Cumbria Ambulance Service NHS Trust	54	34	13
Dorset Ambulance NHS Trust	72	39	55
East Anglian Ambulance NHS Trust	119	89	103
East Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust	290	233	161
Essex Ambulance Service NHS Trust	66	28	18
Gloucestershire Ambulance Services NHS Trust	60	30	7
Greater Manchester Ambulance Service NHS Trust	277	304	119
Hampshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	75	81	168
Hereford and Worcester Ambulance Service NHS Trust	101	18	8
Kent Ambulance NHS Trust	55	N/A	59
Lancashire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	104	161	112
Lincolnshire Ambulance and Health Transport Services NHS Trust	86	67	46
London Ambulance Service NHS Trust	2,211	2,158	N/A
Mersey Regional Ambulance Service NHS Trust	67	60	75
North East Ambulance Service NHS Trust	167	229	544
Oxfordshire Ambulance NHS Trust	72	35	39
Royal Berkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	33	39	46
South Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	52	173	96
Staffordshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	78	26	30
Surrey Ambulance Service NHS Trust	131	122	120
Sussex Ambulance Service NHS Trust	301	221	7
Tees East and North Yorkshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	129	105	87
Two Shires Ambulance NHS Trust	88	81	134
West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Trust	186	154	171
West Yorkshire Metropolitan Ambulance Service NHS Trust	183	65	68
Westcountry Ambulance Services NHS Trust	70	110	94
Wiltshire Ambulance Service NHS Trust	8	N/A	1
Total	5,412	4,778	2,457

Source:
Department of Health (DH)

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what estimate she has made of the cost of *(a)* IT, *(b)* redundancies, *(c)* property and *(d)* other costs of merging the Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire ambulance services; [35708]

(2) what estimate she has made of the *(a)* short, *(b)* medium and *(c)* long-term savings of merging the Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire ambulance services. [35709]

Caroline Flint: It is for the local national health service to make estimates into costs of reconfiguring local NHS services.

However, Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Strategic Health Authority (SHA) has informed the Department that the independent consultants who reviewed the options for the ambulance service reconfiguration, set out broad estimates of costs and savings in a report published on the Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire SHA public website at: www.agwsha.nhs.uk/pdf/pricewaterhouserep05.pdf

The report sets out costs for some redundancies at senior level. However, as planned structure and siting has not yet been finalised, savings and other costs such as property costs and transitional costs cannot yet be estimated.

Mr. Gray: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many incident prioritisation systems are in operation in the Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire ambulance services; how they would be unified in the event of a merger of the ambulance services; and what estimate she has made of what the unification would cost. [35710]

Caroline Flint: I am informed by Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire strategic health authority that there are two incident prioritisation systems in operation in the Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire ambulance services. Two of the three trusts operate the same system.

It has not yet been agreed how these systems would be unified or what the cost of unification would be as the planned structure of the new ambulance trust has not yet been finalised.

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will assess the level of demand on Hampshire Ambulance Trust for ambulance services between midnight and four am on 4 December 2005 compared with the corresponding time and date in 2004. [37563]

Caroline Flint: This information is not collected centrally. The data which the Department does collect on ambulance response times is published in the statistical bulletin, "Ambulance services, England: 2004–05". This is available in the Library and on the Department's website at:

http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/11/36/79/04113679.pdf

Bone Fractures

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the incidence of fractures in *(a)* the UK population and *(b)* in the under fives was in each of the last five years; [37136]

(2) what the incidence of fractures was in the under fives in each year from 1970 to 1975. [37137]

Caroline Flint: Information on the incidence of all fractures is not collected centrally. Information is collected centrally on people with fractures admitted to hospital as an in-patient, but this excludes a large proportion of fractures that are treated without requiring in-patient admission.

Carers

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to promote a better understanding of the Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 in England with respect to *(a)* individual assessments for carers and *(b)* the role of local authorities in working in partnership. [37627]

Mr. Byrne: The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 has been warmly welcomed by carers and the organisations that represent them.

The Act requires local authorities to inform carers that they may be entitled to an assessment of their needs. The Act also requires that when a local authority requests another pubic authority, such as an education, housing or health body, for assistance in planning services for a carer, that authority must give due consideration to that request.

Monitoring is being undertaken through the Commission for Social Care Inspection's performance assessment framework and data on carers' services is being collected. However, it is too early to have hard data on the effect of the new Act on carers at this stage.

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps her Department is taking to enhance the rights of carers; [37907]

(2) if she will meet care organisations to discuss the merits of a carers' commissioner. [38013]

Mr. Byrne: We have supported legislation which gives new rights to carers. The Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000 strengthens the rights of carers to an assessment of their own needs as carers and involves a new right to a carers assessment. It gives local councils mandatory duties to support carers by providing services to carers directly and in the provision of breaks, and as well, directly supporting carers by providing direct payment for carers services.

The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 builds on previous legislation and makes changes to the existing law around carers services.

There is now a duty on councils to inform carers of their right to an assessment of their needs. When assessing carers councils must also take into account whether the carer works or wishes to work, undertakes or wishes to undertake education, training or leisure activities. The Act also facilitates co-operation between authorities in relation to the provision of services that are relevant to carers.

Further proposals will be brought forward in the forthcoming White Paper on social care and health.

I would be happy to meet with care organisations to discuss the merits of a carers' commissioner.

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* strategies and *(b)* policies her Department is developing to enhance the rights of carers; and what discussions she has had with local government representatives on this topic. [38019]

Mr. Byrne: This Government are the first ever to recognise the contribution and concerns of all carers formally and are supporting carers on a number of fronts through the work of several departments.

We have supported two pieces of legislation which give new rights to carers. The Carers and Disabled Children Act 2000 strengthens the rights of carers to an assessment of their own needs as carers and involves a new right to a carer's assessment. It gives local councils mandatory duties to support carers by providing services to carers directly and in the provision of breaks, and as well, directly supporting carers by providing direct payment for carers' services.

The Carers (Equal Opportunities) Act 2004 builds on previous legislation and makes changes to the existing law around carers services.

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Further proposals will be brought forward in the forthcoming White Paper on social care and health.

I will continue to meet with local government representatives in the future as appropriate.

Children's Hospices

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make it her policy to enforce passporting of funding by primary care trusts to children's hospices. [30393]

Mr. Byrne: In line with our guidance "National Standards, Local Action" in the three years to March 2008 80 per cent. of national health service funding will go direct to primary care trusts (PCTs) to give them control in shaping services to meet local needs. PCTs, along with their local partners and stakeholders, are in the best position to judge how the available funding can be used effectively in providing a range of palliative care services for children and young people.

On the 29 November, we launched a guide for the commissioners of palliative care for children and young people "Commissioning Children's and Young People's Palliative Care Services". This practical guide will stimulate improvements in commissioning and promote quality care for children, young people and their families, in a range of settings, for example, palliative care at home, in hospital or in a hospice.

Chiropodists (Registration)

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on what date it will become a requirement for health care practitioners working as chiropodists to be registered with the Health Professions Council in order to use the title chiropodist; and whether exemption will be given after this date for health care practitioners whose applications to be placed on the register are waiting to be processed. [36748]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* The date from which it became a requirement for health professionals working as a chiropodist or podiatrist to be registered with the Health Professions Council (HPC) was 9 July 2005. Health professionals whose application was received by the HPC before the deadline can continue to use the protected title while their application is being processed. Applications received after this deadline will not be dealt with as part of the grandparenting process.

Cholesterol

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps are being taken to treat adults who suffer from high cholesterol; [36612]

(2) what measures the Government are taking to encourage adults to take responsibility for their cholesterol levels. [36613]

Caroline Flint: The Government provides practical guidance on how consumers can reduce the saturated fat in their diets through healthy eating advice, and increase physical activity. The "Choosing Health" White Paper, food and health action plan and physical activity plan all set out actions to deliver improvements in diet and physical activity.

The first route of managing raised cholesterol levels is through lifestyle modification. If required, this can be followed by medication in the form of statins. The quality and outcomes framework of the new general practitioner (GP) contract also includes indicators that encourage GPs to measure and control cholesterol in patients with cardiovascular disease, including diabetes.

The Government are also committed to support people by a new kind of personal health resource in the form of national health service health trainers, who will work with individuals to develop personal health plans as a tool to identify their own priorities for health to make necessary lifestyle changes.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to communicate the risk factors for heart disease to the general public. [36614]

Caroline Flint: The Department, working with other non-governmental organisations, has strong communications programmes that highlight the risk factors for heart disease. These include messages to promote a healthy, balanced diet, becoming more physically active, moderating alcohol intake and highlighting the dangers of smoking and second hand smoke.

The Department produces a family of free consumer magazines, which give health messages and regularly feature articles that communicate the risk factors for heart disease and promote a healthier lifestyle. It has also supported the production of a toolkit for health professionals to develop a strategy to reduce hypertension. The Food Standards Agency has also

launched a high profile consumer awareness campaign to bring the 6 gram per day target on salt consumption to people's attention.

Dentistry

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the written ministerial statement of 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 17WS, on national health service dentistry, if she will break down the dentists recruited from 'local international recruitment' by country of origin; and how many *(a)* are registered with the General Dental Council and *(b)* have been offered places in (i) general dental service practices, (ii) salaried primary care dental services and (iii) the hospital dental service. [31967]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* This information was not collected by country of origin. However, we are aware that the majority of the dentists were recruited from Poland, with smaller numbers from Germany, Spain and Portugal.

Of the local international recruits, all are registered with the General Dental Council; otherwise, they would not be able to work in dental practice and so would not have been eligible to be included in the Department's data collection for the 1,000 dentist target, which only counted newly recruited dentists in practice on 31 October 2005.

We do not collect routine information about the type of national health service dental services in which international recruits are working.

However, the 1,000 dentists targets covered primary care dental services and none of the 1,000 dentists were employed in the hospital dental service. The vast majority were employed under a personal dental services (PDS) contract and a much smaller number under general dental services. A small number of the PDS dentists were employed in the community dental service as salaried PDS dentists.

Sir Paul Beresford: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the written ministerial statement of 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 17WS, on national health service dentistry, what schemes were used in the domestic recruitment of 88 new dentists. [31968]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* Domestic recruitment was undertaken via the keeping in touch scheme, which provides advice and support for dentists returning from a career break. The Department has a network of retaining and returning advisers, located in each of the post graduate dental deaneries, offering advice to returning dentists and arranging returning to practice schemes. The 88 dentists is a whole-time equivalent figure and was compiled from returns submitted by the retaining and returning advisers to the Department.

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people in Beverley and Holderness were registered with an NHS dentist in each of the last 10 years for which records are available. [37438]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is in the table.

Number of people registered with an NHS dentist in Beverley and Holderness constituency in September each year

	Number of patients
1997	38,019
1998	34,290
1999	36,411
2000	44,170
2001	44,171
2002	43,639
2003	42,256
2004	38,258
2005	37,488

Note:
This information was provided by the Dental Practice Board and relates to patients registered with dentists whose practice address postcodes are within the constituency boundary.
Source:
Dental Practice Board

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many NHS dentists there were in Beverley and Holderness in each of the last 10 years for which records are available. [37440]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is set out in the table.

General dental services (GDS) and personal dental services (PDS), number of dentists in Beverley and Holderness parliamentary constituency as at 30 September each year

	Beverley and Holderness
1997	24
1998	27
1999	33
2000	33
2001	32
2002	34
2003	30
2004	30
2005	31

Notes:
1. Data includes all notifications of dentists joining or leaving the GDS or PDS, received by the Dental Practice Board, up to 19 October 2005. Figures for the numbers of dentists at specified dates may vary depending upon the notification period, e.g. data with a later notification period will include more recent notifications of dentists joining or leaving the GDS or PDS.
2. Dentists include principals, assistants and trainees. Prison contracts have been excluded from the data.
3. The postcode of the Dental Practice was used to allocate dentists to specific geographic areas. Constituency areas have been defined using the Office for National Statistics All Fields Postcode Directory.
Source:
Dental Practice Board

Mr. Cox: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what representations she has received from dentists who have indicated their intention to leave the NHS if the new contract is introduced; and what steps her Department is taking to retain them. [34169]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has received a number of representations from dentists who are considering whether or not to take up a new national health service dental contract.

The Department has taken a range of steps to promote the benefits of the new contracts to dentists.

The acting chief dental officer and other professional dental officers have attended a large number of local meetings with dentists to discuss the reforms. The reforms are designed to make the NHS a more attractive place for dentists to work by removing the 'treadmill' effect caused by the current fee-per-item system of remuneration, providing a guaranteed annual NHS income with earnings guaranteed for three years at the level of dentists' current NHS commitment, reducing the number of courses of treatment expected over a 12-month period by 5 per cent. for general dental services dentists, and freeing up time to allow a more preventative approach to dental care. Dentists will also continue to benefit from access to the NHS pension scheme.

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many dentists in *(a)* the East of England, *(b)* Suffolk and *(c)* the constituency of Bury St. Edmunds are registering NHS patients and how many were so doing in each case in each of the last five years. [35465]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The number of national health service dentists with an open general dental services (GDS) or personal dental services (PDS) contract are in the following table.

Number of GDS and PDS dentists in the specified geographic areas as at 30 September each year

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
East of England Government Office Region	2,159	2,141	2,179	2,261	2,459
Suffolk County	255	265	268	272	279
Bury St. Edmunds constituency	50	57	62	63	67

Notes:
1. Data includes all notifications, received by the Dental Practice Board, up to 19 October 2005. Figures for the numbers of dentists at specified dates may vary depending upon the notification period, e.g. data with a later notification period will include more recent notifications of dentists joining or leaving the GDS or PDS.
2. Dentists include principals, assistants and trainees. Prison contracts have been excluded from the data.
3. The postcode of the dental practice was used to allocate dentists to specific geographic areas. County and constituency areas have been defined using the Office for National Statistics All Fields Postcode Directory. The Government office region has been defined by summing the totals for Norfolk, Suffolk and Cambridgeshire, Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire and Essex strategic health authority areas.
Source:
Dental Practice Board.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients have been registered with an NHS dentist in Lancashire in each year since 1997. [36239]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information given for the Cumbria and Lancashire strategic health authority area and its primary care trusts is set out as follows:

Residents in the Cumbria and Lancashire strategic health authority registered with an NHS dentist as at September each year

Number

	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004[1]	2005[1]
Cumbria and Lancashire SHA	1,056,559	954,656	971,111	979,663	950,697	947,978	941,747	941,438	925,864
Blackburn with Darwen	82,825	72,283	75,695	75,662	74,674	75,093	73,379	69,688	62,463
Blackpool	86,093	74,874	78,450	78,200	78,750	76,943	74,241	73,009	72,360
Burnley, Pendle and Rossendale	142,493	127,786	126,366	122,466	96,813	94,043	96,361	104,778	100,415
Carlisle and District	64,518	64,767	62,087	63,454	66,335	63,990	62,779	64,468	63,679
Chorley and South Ribble	94,090	86,767	89,759	92,145	94,928	98,421	96,486	104,012	105,018
Eden Valley	35,055	30,451	29,179	27,879	27,936	26,775	29,663	24,622	26,011
Fylde	46,788	42,388	43,679	43,904	41,959	42,763	43,122	52,001	52,168
Hyndburn and Ribble Valley	63,409	54,942	56,097	54,772	54,018	51,917	53,110	46,901	35,388
Morecambe Bay	169,887	153,164	156,103	161,534	159,572	159,007	155,009	147,428	148,160
Preston	82,426	75,437	73,610	72,016	65,752	66,163	66,709	68,147	72,572
West Cumbria	67,517	63,323	69,727	72,794	72,532	73,930	70,538	67,095	64,924
West Lancashire	55,526	48,306	49,393	51,708	50,313	52,575	53,608	55,231	60,640
Wyre	65,932	60,168	60,966	63,129	67,115	66,358	66,742	68,058	62,066

[1] 2004 and 2005 data includes GDS and PDS registrations/PDS patients seen (counts patients seen in the past 15 months for some PDS schemes).
Notes:
1. Data for 2003 and earlier comprise GDS and PDS registrations. They do not include those PDS schemes that do not have any registrations (e.g. Dental Access Centres), and is therefore not directly comparable with 2004 and 2005 data.
2. Prison contracts have been excluded.
Source:
Dental Practice Board.

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average retention rate of NHS dentists within Lancashire was in each of the past 10 years. [36240]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information is not available in the requested format. However, the following table shows national health service dentists with a general dental services (GDS) or personal dental services (PDS) contract who have left the GDS or PDS during each specific year as a percentage of total dentists as at 30 September each year within Cumbria and Lancashire strategic health authority area. It should be noted that these figures include dentists who leave for a variety of reasons including retirements and career breaks or maternity leave.

	Percentage of complete leavers to dentists
1997	4.5
1998	3.9
1999	5.0
2000	8.4
2001	3.8
2002	5.8
2003	6.4
2004	2.8
2005	3.4

Note:
Complete leaver means the dentist had an open GDS or PDS contract in September of the previous year but no GDS or PDS contract in September of the specified year.
Source:
Dental Practice Board.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* land and *(b)* property her Department owns in Southend West constituency. [35965]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not own any land or property in the Southend West constituency.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* building and *(b)* refurbishment projects are planned by her Department in (i) 2005–06 and (ii) 2006–07; and what the expected costs are of each project. [37386]

Jane Kennedy: No building projects are planned in either 2005–06 and 2006–07. The following refurbishment projects are planned or have been completed during the years in question:

Building	*Cost (£) (excluding valued added tax)*
Quarry House, Leeds	2,361,776
Wellington House, London, SE1	2,572,000
New Kings Beam House, London, SE1	3,015,000
Richmond House, Whitehall	964,500
Skipton House, London, SE1	530,000

Departmental Property

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* land and *(b)* her property her Department owns in West Lancashire constituency. [37321]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not own any land and property in the West Lancashire constituency.

Departmental Single Assessment Team

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will set out the progress made by her Department's single assessment change agent team on *(a)* long-term conditions, *(b)* care programme approach, *(c)* person centred planning, *(d)* individual budgets, *(e)* the IT programme and *(f)* other related work programmes. [37298]

Mr. Byrne: We will consider in the forthcoming White Paper how to ensure greater consistency in approach to assessing the needs of all people with health and social care needs and how needs assessment processes could be better supported by IT.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how the single assessment process contributes to the *(a)* recording and *(b)* commissioning of non-care services. [37299]

Mr. Byrne: The single assessment process (SAP) for older people does not extend to non-care services, although the guidance on implementing the SAP (LAC (2002) 1) makes it clear that the framework could support links with housing, benefits and transport, which all make important contributions to independence and wellbeing. Where possible local national health service bodies and councils are encouraged to engage with these wider interests as they implement the single assessment process.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to promote the development and delivery of joint training on the single assessment process to health, care and housing staff. [37300]

Mr. Byrne: There are currently no plans in place to support joint training on the single assessment process (SAP) for health, social care and housing staff at a national level but such arrangement may exist locally.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to revise single assessment process guidance to give carers *(a)* housing-related needs and *(b)* housing-related service options. [37421]

Mr. Byrne: Carers have a right to approach social services for an assessment of their individual needs, in recognition of the fact that many people with caring responsibilities have, or are at risk of developing, a social care need. Where a carer is an older person they should be assessed in accordance with the single assessment process (SAP), which includes consideration of risks to an individual's independence from their immediate environment. The SAP does not currently extend to housing-related support, but the Department and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister are committed to exploring development of an integrated assessment process, which covers health, care and housing-related support.

Disability

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what progress has been made towards piloting individualised budgets to bring together sources of funding for services, equipment and adaptations to meet disability needs; and if she will make a statement; [37096]

(2) what steps her Department has taken to extend self-directed control to young disabled people; and if she will make a statement. [37101]

Mr. Byrne: The Department is working with the Department for Work and Pensions and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister to take forward a programme of individual budget pilots in 13 local authorities across England. The pilots cover older people, people with physical disabilities or sensory impairments, people with learning disabilities and people with mental health needs.

An individual budget would give the individual being supported a transparent resource allocation which could then be used flexibly in the best way to meet that person's needs. The individual budget pilots will bring together different combinations of funding from a number of sources. The income streams being included in the pilots are:

Council-provided community care services,

Independent living fund,

Supporting people,

Disabled facilities grants,

Access to work and

Integrated community equipment services.

The first pilot, in West Sussex, will focus on older people and will begin in December this year. The remaining pilots will come on stream during the first half of 2006 and will last for between 18 months and two years. The pilots are being comprehensively evaluated by a consortium of academic research teams in order to provide Ministers with evidence to inform national roll out.

At least three of the 13 pilots will include a focus on young people undergoing transition into adulthood. The Department for Education and Skills will be working closely with us during the piloting activity and considering options for piloting individual budgets for disabled children, young people and families.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her Department's definition is of disabled persons for the purpose of community care services; and when this definition was last *(a)* consulted on and *(b)* reviewed. [37097]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not have a definition of disability. The term, together with other terms, is used in primary legislation, the National Assistance Act 1948, but is not defined. The word therefore bears its ordinary meaning for the purpose of community care services, which are provided based on an assessment of need and locally determined eligibility.

There is generally no legal requirement to consult before making primary legislation; however, the eligibility criteria for community care services set out in the National Assistance Act 1948, as amended, were considered as part of the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit report, Improving the life chances of disabled people (2005).

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what consultation she has undertaken on the merits of a right for disabled persons to request not to live in a residential or nursing care setting; and if she will make a statement. [37098]

Mr. Byrne: A right for disabled persons to request not to live in a residential or nursing care setting was consulted on in the 'Independence, Well-being and Choice' Green Paper, between 21 March and 28 July 2005.

Responses to the consultation were mixed and no clear view emerged.

Elderly Care

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assistance her Department provides for elderly people leaving hospital who live in rural areas. [37233]

Mr. Byrne: It is for individual national health service organisations and local authorities, to ensure that the health and social care needs of all patients are met following discharge from hospital.

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent by the NHS on *(a)* medicines, *(b)* community health services and *(c)* outpatient services for elderly mentally impaired patients in (i) 1997 and (ii) the latest year for which figures are available. [38052]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 15 December 2005.]:* The information requested is shown in the following table. The latest year for which data is available is 2003–04.

£ million

	1997–98	*2003–04*
Medicines	5,173	9,272
Community health services	3,612	6,197
Mental health out-patients for elderly (65 plus)	107	328

Notes:

1. Medicines figures are NET expenditure and includes family health service (FHS) drugs and hospital and community health service (HCHS) drugs.
2. The medicines figure for 1997–98 is in cash terms, in comparison the 2003–04 figure is based on resource terms.

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* acute and *(b)* long stay (i) NHS and (ii) private and voluntary sector beds for elderly mentally impaired people there were in England (A) in 1997 and (B) on the latest date for which figures are available. [38051]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* The information requested is shown in the following table. This covers the number of hospital beds and places in residential and nursing care homes for elderly people with mental illness in England for 1996–97 and 2003–04[1]. However, data on private hospitals and clinics is not available in a comparable form, due to service definitional issues. Data on places in care homes from 2002–03 is not comparable to data for earlier years.

[1] Data is not available in a comparable form, due to service definitional issues.

Beds in NHS facilities:

	1996–97	*2003–04*
Average daily number of available beds	38,780	34,440
Elderly: short stay	7,370	7,510
Elderly: long stay	8,230	4,610

Beds in private facilities[1]:

	1996–97	*2003–04[2]*
Number of available beds	28,510	[3]__
Elderly: any length of stay	21,450	[3]__

Places in staffed residential homes for elderly mentally infirm[1]:

	1996–97	*2003–04[2]*
Local authority	3,190	[3]__
Voluntary	2,280	[3]__
Private	13,800	[3]__

[1] Count of beds/places at 31 March.
[2] Data is not available in a comparable form, due to service definitional issues.
[3] Denotes not available.

Note:
Figures have been rounded to the nearest 10.
Sources:
K036, RAC5, RAC5(S), RAU1, KH03, RHN (A) and RA (Form A), Department of Health

Hugh Bayley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent by English local authorities on *(a)* residential and *(b)* community care services for the elderly mentally impaired in (i) 1997 and (ii) the latest year for which figures are available. [38053]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* The information requested is not collected centrally.

Extra Care Schemes

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what discussions her Department has had with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on the extension of the single assessment process to include housing-related support in respect of Extra Care schemes; [37294]

(2) what discussions her Department has had with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on the relationship between the requirements of the single assessment and the supporting people quality assessment framework in respect of Extra Care schemes. [37295]

Mr. Byrne: The Department has held early discussions with the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister about the possibility of extending the domains of the single assessment process for older people to include housing-related support. In principle, both Departments believe that a single assessment process covering health and social care and housing-related support would be in the interests of individuals who may have a need for support. These discussions are at an early stage.

Foundation Hospitals

Jim Sheridan: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what criteria are used for hospitals in England to move from acute status to foundation hospital. [34310]

Mr. Byrne: To apply for national health service foundation trust (NHSFT) status applicants must be an acute, specialist or mental health NHS trust and hold a three or two star performance rating.

The Health and Social Care (Community Health and Standards) Act 2003 provides that an NHS trust may make an application to Monitor, the statutory name of which is the independent regulator of NHS Foundation Trusts, for consideration for authorisation as an NHSFT, if the application is supported by the Secretary of State.

To be considered by the Secretary of State, applicants are required to develop a five-year strategic business plan, show strong leadership and commitment to modernising services, demonstrate the involvement of staff and other key stakeholders for their vision for reform, undertake a public consultation and be subject to an independent due diligence review of their business plan. To be authorised as an NHSFT by Monitor, applicants must meet the criteria laid down in the Health and Social Care Act 2003 and Monitor's own criteria. The criteria reflect the need for an NHSFT to be legally constituted, well governed and financially viable.

General Practitioners

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many general practitioner referrals have been made using the choose and book system in each month since July 2004; and how many of those referrals were *(a)* telephone-only bookings and *(b)* online bookings. [29832]

Mr. Byrne: Prior to April 2005, choose and book was available in only a small number of early adopter sites. The number of general practitioner referrals made using choose and book in each month since April 2005 is shown in the table. In addition to the figures given, a total of 2,328 additional transactions have been made successfully through the choose and book system. This includes re-booked appointments that were made by patients who, for example, chose to change the date and/or time of their appointment.

Number of referrals using choose and book

Month/year	*New bookings*
April 2005	285
May 2005	339
June 2005	367
July 2005	644
August 2005	1,597
September 2005	4,227
October 2005	12,813
November 2005	21,969

The breakdown by channel of the appointment bookings is collected only for those primary care trusts (PCTs) associated with the national choose and book appointments line. A number of PCTs run their own local appointments lines for which data is not collected centrally. The Department is currently validating data from the national appointments line and I will write to you with this data once it is available.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what plans the Government have to extend the opening hours of NHS primary care trusts; [30104]

(2) what representations the Government have received on making general practitioner surgeries become more accessible; [30105]

(3) what incentives will be provided for doctors to have longer surgery opening hours; [30106]

(4) she plans to make longer opening hours a requirement in general practitioner contracts. [30107]

Mr. Byrne: It is clear from the recent 'Your Health, Your Care, Your Say' public consultation that patients would prefer general practice to offer extended opening hours. We will set out proposals to respond to that challenge in our forthcoming White Paper and in doing so we will want to work with general practitioners, nurses, the British Medical Association and others. The general practice contract framework includes incentives for improved access and these are being renewed.

Keith Vaz: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether she plans to encourage nurse-led practices, mainly staffed by senior nurses with a general practitioner acting in an overseeing capacity; and what steps she will take to secure a good quality of care in such circumstances. [30108]

Mr. Byrne: Provision of primary medical services by nurse led practices has been available to the national health service for some time, having been introduced under personal medical services.

With the introduction of the new primary medical services arrangements in 2004, primary care trusts now have a range of flexibilities over what services they commission and from whom in order to better meet the needs of patients locally. Common requirements and safeguards apply to all providers of primary care to ensure minimum standards are met and encourage high quality care.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps are being taken to recruit general practitioners in rural areas. [37232]

Mr. Byrne: It is the responsibility of primary care trusts (PCTs) to assess and make provision for the healthcare needs of their local communities. PCTs have the resources to commission services and identify the number of professional staff that they need to deliver those services.

A range of recruitment and retention initiatives are in place to help expand the national health service workforce across England. These include improving pay and conditions, encouraging the NHS to become a better, more flexible and diverse employer, help with accessing child care, increasing training, attracting back returners and running national and international recruitment campaigns. More recently, the new primary care development scheme will allow local employers to use funding for innovative approaches to boost recruitment to local primary care services.

As a result of these measures, the primary care workforce has expanded. Between September 1997 and June 2005, the number of general practitioners, excluding retainers and registrars, employed by the NHS has increased by 4,372 (15.6 per cent.) and between September 1997 and September 2004 the primary care nursing workforce has increased by 25,115 (32.5 per cent.).

Health Bill

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what estimate she has made of the number of public houses in Gravesham constituency likely to be exempt from a smoking ban under the provisions of the Health Bill; [36959]

(2) what assessment she has made of the likely impact of the Health Bill on health inequalities within Gravesham constituency. [36960]

Caroline Flint: The Health Bill has not been assessed on the basis of its likely impact on the constituency of Gravesham. No estimate has been made of the number of public houses in Gravesham in this context.

A partial regulatory impact assessment for the Health Bill has been published and is available in the Library.

Health Services

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the Leader of the House's statement of 17 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1118, on health services, *(a)* what the cost is of the 168 more NHS consultants and *(b)* what proportion of the staff to which she refers work part-time. [32001]

Mr. Byrne: Information as to the annual cost of the additional national health service consultants is not held centrally. However, the information in the table shows the number of Hospital and Community Health Services consultants for each year since 1997 in Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic Health Authority.

HCHS consultants within Bedfordshire and Hertfordshire Strategic Health Authority: 1997–June 2005

Number (headcount)

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*
All consultants	477	499	511	524	575	593
of which:						
Full-time	422	436	444	460	498	500
Part-time	55	63	67	64	77	93

				Increase	
	2003	*2004*	*June 2005*	*1997–2004*	*1997–June 2005*
All consultants	601	645	678	168	201
of which:					
Full-time	506	548	577	126	155
Part-time	95	97	101	42	46

Note:
Data as at 30 September 1997–2004 and 30 June 2005
Source:
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre Medical and Dental Workforce Census

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when her Department last discussed with local hon. Members proposals for future provision of health care services at *(a)* Royal Liverpool University hospital and *(b)* Liverpool Women's hospital; and if she will make a statement. [37996]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* The process of discussing any proposals for the future provisions of health care services at the Royal Liverpool University hospital and the Liverpool Women's hospital with local hon. Members falls within the remit of Cheshire and Merseyside strategic health authority.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average length of time to make an appointment with a general practitioner was in the Northamptonshire primary care trust area in each year since 1997. [36140]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department does not collect the data in the format requested. However, as at September 2005, 100 per cent. of patients in the Northamptonshire and Heartlands primary care trust area were able to be offered an appointment with a general practitioner or primary health care professional within one working day.

Hepatitis C

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects that home tests for hepatitis C will receive CE registration and be available for sale over the counter in England. [38154]

Jane Kennedy: Since December 2003, in vitro diagnostic devices placed on the United Kingdom market have to conform to the requirements of the In Vitro Diagnostic Devices Directive (98/79/EEC) which has been transposed into UK law by the Medical Devices Regulations 2002 (SI2002 No.618).

In vitro diagnostic test kits for hepatitis C attract the highest level of control and need to have their compliance with the directive assessed by an independent certification body known as a Notified Body. The manufacturer also needs to register with the regulatory authority in the member state where the device is to be placed on the market.

In so far as can be determined, no such registrations have been made for this type of test kit with the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency in the UK, and we are not aware of any hepatitis C home test kits that are in development.

Mr. Gale: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to promote testing for hepatitis C; and if she will make a statement. [38155]

Caroline Flint: The Department has published information and guidance for health professionals and for the public, highlighting those considered to be at risk of hepatitis C infection and who should consider being tested, or should be offered testing, for hepatitis C infection. This forms part of the hepatitis C awareness campaign and there is currently a continuing programme to raise awareness of hepatitis C among the public and those groups at risk.

In addition, a new national health service hepatitis C awareness website was launched and has been published at www.hepc.nhs.uk and a new national hepatitis C freephone information line at 0800 451451.

HIV (Staffordshire)

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people were recorded as HIV positive in Staffordshire in each of the last 10 years. [35657]

Ms Rosie Winterton: HIV data is not available by county, but by strategic health authority (SHA) or region. The latest data on HIV diagnoses for Shropshire and Staffordshire SHA can be found on the Health Protection Agency's website at:

www.hpa.org.uk/infections/topics_az/hiv_and_sti/hiv/epidemiology/hars_tables.htm

Hospices

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the written answer to the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland, of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 258W, on hospices, what percentage of total funding she estimates was provided to *(a)* adult hospices and *(b)* children's hospices from NHS budgets in (i) 1997 and (ii) the most recent period for which figures are available. [36347]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member for Middlesbrough, South and East Cleveland (Dr. Kumar) on 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 258W. The Department does not routinely collect data on national health service funding for adult and children's hospices. We are not aware of published data Help the Hospices prior to 2004.

Hospitals (West Sussex)

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost per patient treated at *(a)* foundation hospitals and *(b)* hospitals in West Sussex was in the most recent year for which figures are available. [35163]

Caroline Flint: There are no data collected centrally at individual patient level. However, data are collected on a finished consultant episode (FCE) basis. An FCE is defined as a period of admitted patient care under one consultant within one health care provider. The latest cost data available is for 2003–04.

It is not possible to assess the average cost per FCE for foundation trusts, as they did not become operational until 2004–05 and cost data for that year are not yet available.

In 2003–04, the average cost per FCE for hospitals in West Sussex, was as follows:

£

	Average cost per FCE
Royal West Sussex National Health Service Trust	1,164
Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust	1,482
Worthing and Southlands Hospitals NHS Trust	1,006

Source:
Reference costs 2003–04. Admitted patient care—trusts' own data.

Independent Sector Treatment Centre

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what services to NHS patients in South Gloucestershire will be provided by the proposed Independent Sector Treatment Centre; where the centre will be located; and if she will make a statement. [35201]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* The exact nature of the facilities are subject to the outcome of the current procurement process. They will, however, be located so that patients have limited travel times and easy access. The services provided may include orthopaedics, general surgery, urology, ear, nose and throat, gynaecology and plastic surgery.

Influenza Vaccinations

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate her Department has made of the number of people in at-risk groups who have been unable to obtain a seasonal influenza vaccination in Gravesham constituency. [36952]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is not collected centrally.

McKinsey's

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the *(a)* length, *(b)* terms and *(c)* cost are of the contract for the project being undertaken by McKinsey's into the structural and service reconfiguration of

(a) Merseyside and Lancashire Acute Trusts and *(b)* North Cheshire, Warrington, St. Helens and Knowsley hospitals; [37316]

(2) how much has been paid by Merseyside and Cheshire strategic health authority to McKinsey's for work carried out in *(a)* 2002, *(b)* 2003, *(c)* 2004 and *(d)* so far in 2005. [37317]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally and can instead be obtained via Cheshire and Merseyside strategic health authority.

Medicine Reviews (Older People)

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) pursuant to the answer of 14 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1198W, on older people (medication review), if she will publish Part Two of the Taskforce on Medicine Partnership's evaluation of Room for Review; and what the reasons are for the delay in publication of the evaluation; [32547]

(2) pursuant to the answer of 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1220W, on Taskforce on Medicine reviews, why in the answer of 14 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 1198W on older people (medicine review), she stated that the evaluation would be published in the summer of 2005; when the need for ethics approval was *(a)* identified and *(b)* obtained; and if she will make a statement; [33170]

(3) pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 261W, on medicine reviews (older people), what methodology was used to make the assessment that good progress has been made. [34524]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the statement given by the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health (Mr. Byrne) on 6 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 847–48.

Mental Health

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many representations she has received from *(a)* staff employed by Oxfordshire Mental Health NHS Trust and *(b)* other interested parties on proposed changes to the services the trust offers; and what the content of these representations was. [25103]

Caroline Flint: A search of the Department's correspondence and parliamentary questions databases shows that since 27 June 2005, there have been three letters received from staff employed by Oxfordshire Mental Health Trust. There have also been six private offices cases. Nigel Crisp, chief executive of the national health service has received a letter from the director of the Centre for Suicide Research based at the University of Oxford. No parliamentary questions have been tabled to the Department.

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many adolescent mental health beds there are in *(a)* Shropshire and Staffordshire strategic health authority and *(b)* Burntwood, Lichfield and Tamworth primary care trust. [35656]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The latest available data shows that in 2004–05, there were ten beds available in wards classified as mental illness: children: short stay or mental illness: children: long stay within Shropshire and Staffordshire strategic health authority. These categories include adolescents.

None of these beds were within Burntwood, Lichfield and Tamworth primary care trust.

Source:
Department of Health form KH03.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answers of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 272W and 31 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 842W, in what year data on the number of hospital bed days of patients aged *(a)* under 16 and *(b)* under 18 on admission on adult psychiatric wards started being collected. [36968]

Mr. Byrne: The data was first collected in 2001–02. The data is currently collected on a quarterly basis in connection with local delivery plan returns. The Mental Health Act Commission also collects information on bed occupancy.

Mr. Binley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether the review of the tribunal model and assessment of the workforce prior to the introduction of the Mental Health Bill has been completed; [35424]

(2) what assessment she has made of the conclusion of the Mental Health Bill working group on the viability of the proposed new mental health tribunal. [35425]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Joint Parliamentary Committee welcomed our proposals for a new mental health tribunal, but expressed concerns about its practicability. We have consulted with key stakeholders, in particular through the medium of the tribunals project group. We will ensure that our proposals improve the accessibility of the tribunal system, but do so in a way which is practicable and affordable.

Microbiology Water Specialists

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many Health Protection Agency teams have appointed microbiology water specialists, broken down by region. [35793]

Caroline Flint: The Health Protection Agency (HPA) has six specialist water microbiologists in post. Four of these are employed at the Centre for Infections, at Colindale; one is at the Newcastle regional laboratory; and one is at the South East regional laboratory.

Midwife-led Birthing Centres

Mr. Hoban: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the role of midwife-led birthing centres. [37423]

Mr. Byrne: Midwife-led birth centres offer a comfortable, low-tech environment for women who have been assessed as being at low risk of developing complications during birth.

Midwife-led care should be provided within a framework that enables easy and early transfer of women and babies who unexpectedly require specialist care. As with other options, the outcome of these types of care should be regularly audited.

The maternity standard of the national service framework for children, young people and maternity services requires national health service maternity care providers and primary care trusts to ensure that the range of services available locally constitutes real choice for women. Local options for midwife-led care may include midwife-led units in the community or on a hospital site.

Mobile Phone Masts

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will commission an independent study of epidemiology in relation to mobile telephone masts and their possible impacts on health; and if she will make a statement: [31165]

(2) if the Government will carry out epidemiological research into cancer clusters around mobile phone masts that have been in place for 10 years or more; and if she will make a statement. [38335]

Caroline Flint: The independently managed mobile telecommunications and health research (MTHR) programme, jointly funded by Government and industry, has supported about 30 individual studies to investigate the potential health effects of radiofrequency (RF) exposures from mobile phone technology. The programme has commissioned a study of cancer incidence in pre-school children living near mobile phone base stations compared with those living further away. Infants and young children are more likely to be home-based and this is the reason why the MTHR childhood cancer study has, to date, been the only scientifically viable option for epidemiology around base stations. Studies of older children and adults have not been recommended because proximity to base stations has been shown to be a poor representation of exposure to RF fields. The MTHR studies concentrate largely on the exposures from the mobile phone handsets because these exposures are considerably higher than those from base stations. A description of the programme and the individual studies can be found on its web site www.mthr.org.uk.

The report entitled Mobile Phones and Health 2004 published by the National Radiological Protection Board (now the Radiation Protection Division of the Health Protection Agency, HPA) noted that there are continuing concerns about the impact of base stations on health and well-being

> "despite the current evidence which shows that exposures of individuals are likely to be only a small fraction of those from phones".

This report is published as Documents of the NRPB, Vol 15, No 5 and can be found on the HPA's website at: www.hpa.org.uk/radiation. The report recommended

> "studies focused on ascertaining the exposure of people to RF fields".

In line with this recommendation, the MTHR programme has supported an assessment of a prototype RF exposure meter for the possible use in future epidemiological studies in relation to base stations.

Morecambe Primary Care Trust

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will assess the proposal by the Morecambe primary care trust to close the mental health wards that it rents at Westmorland General hospital. [37876]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* This is a matter for the Morecambe Bay primary care trust in discussion with interested stakeholders.

MRSA

James Brokenshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many official complaints were made during the last eight years from people or relatives of people who contracted MRSA living in *(a)* London, *(b)* the London borough of Havering and *(c)* Hornchurch constituency in connection with hygiene conditions at the hospital or health centre where they or their family member contracted MRSA. [35306]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 14 December 2005]:* The information requested is not collected centrally.

Neurology

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many full time equivalent medical staff there were within neurological specialty practising in the NHS in each year since 2001; and how many were *(a)* consultants, *(b)* registrars and *(c)* senior house officers. [31927]

Mr. Byrne: The requested information is shown in the following table.

Hospital, public health medicine and community health services: Medical staff within the neurology and neurosurgery specialties by specified grade—England[1]

Full time equivalents

	2001	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Neurology	624	631	702	774
of which:				
Consultant	298	309	355	403
Registrar group	147	152	166	183
Senior house officer	119	119	144	150
Other staff	60	51	37	38
Neurosurgery	405	455	471	518
of which:				
Consultant	141	153	157	171
Registrar group	131	147	162	185
Senior house officer	115	130	140	152
Other staff	18	25	12	10

[1] 2001 to 2004, data as at 30 September.

Source:
NHS Health and Social Care Information Centre medical and dental workforce census

NHS Administration

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the average number of hours each week a *(a)* nurse and *(b)* doctor spent on administrative tasks in (i) 1997, (ii) 2000 and (iii) the most recent period for which figures are available. [29831]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is not held centrally.

NHS Commissioning

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps she plans to take to consult local communities and other stakeholders about proposals to outsource the commissioning function of primary care trusts; [20964]

(2) whether as part of her plans for a patient-led NHS local authorities will be able to bid to discharge the commissioning function of primary care trusts. [21047]

Mr. Byrne: As part of the proposals for primary care trust (PCT) reconfiguration, one strategic health authority (SHA) has proposed to procure an external management team to run one of their newly proposed PCTs. However, this proposal will not be considered during the forthcoming local consultation as it is for the new PCTs, not the current SHAs, to decide how best to manage their responsibilities after reconfiguration.

NHS Finance Data

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her written statement of 1 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 37WS, on publication of NHS finance data, what criteria she is setting in selecting which NHS trusts will be supported by turnaround teams; and whether any NHS trusts in Worcestershire are planned to be so supported. [34995]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* The turnaround teams will undertake an assessment of organisations that are forecasting the most significant deficits, to ensure that there is an agreed understanding of the local financial problem and that the necessary immediate actions are in hand to address it. Following this there will be the opportunity to agree tailored packages of support with the strategic health authority (SHA) and the organisation. It is planned that there is an assessment with West Midlands South SHA of the financial position of Worcestershire Acute Hospitals National Health Service Trust.

NHS Reconfiguration

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many job losses she expects as a result of the merger of primary care trusts in Lincolnshire; what budget has been allocated for severance payments; and if she will make a statement. [36701]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Ministers have given the go-ahead for all 28 strategic health authorities (SHAs) to begin local consultations on boundary changes to SHAs and primary care trusts. Consultations will start on 14 December for a period of 14 weeks (until 22 March). No decisions on boundary changes will be taken until these local consultations have been completed and their outcomes considered by Secretary of State. Until any boundary changes are agreed, it is not possible to calculate the impact on jobs in any one area.

There will be no central budget to finance any cost of severance. Guidance to SHAs is that severance costs should be minimised and, where necessary, financed from in-year management cost savings in 2005–06, 2006–07 and 2007–08.

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether *(a)* her Department and *(b)* the relevant strategic health authority plans to support a merger of Alder Hey NHS Trust with Liverpool Women's Hospital Foundation Trust. [37315]

Mr. Byrne: Any proposals to merge national health service trusts need to be considered by the local NHS. Once a set of proposals has been produced, the relevant NHS organisation will, as is their duty, consult patients, the public and their representatives.

NHS Records

Andrew Stunell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to ensure all NHS patients are made aware of their rights as set out in the NHS Care Records Guarantee; and if she will make a statement. [34982]

Mr. Byrne: A major public information campaign will be launched in 2006. Its purpose will be to advise patients and the wider public about the implications of the NHS Care Records Service (NHS CRS) for the way in which information about them is held and used. The campaign will provide the information people need to make choices about sharing and accessing their health information. This will cover controls on access by health professionals; how access will be monitored and policed; options people have to further limit access; access in an emergency; and what happens when someone is not able to make decisions for themselves.

We intend to provide front-line national health service staff, including the Patient Advice and Liaison Service and NHS Direct, and also key voluntary sector organisations, with briefing materials and web resources to enable them to answer questions. In addition, a simple explanatory leaflet will be sent to every household in England, available in a range of formats and languages, with an easy-read version for people with learning disabilities and limited literacy.

Other planned initiatives include a series of roadshows to give information face to face and to act as a focus for local publicity, and a short video/DVD to be played in waiting rooms at NHS sites, backed by posters and leaflets.

Preparatory work to inform front-line NHS staff about the NHS CRS has already begun. Some one million leaflets have been distributed, along with posters and DVDs.

Final details of timing and phasing of the campaign have yet to be determined, but the main period of activity is expected to be in mid 2006.

NHS Staff

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her most recent estimate is of the total number of staff who have left employment in the NHS in a year. [36435]

Mr. Byrne: Information on numbers of staff leaving the national health service is not collected centrally.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has had with the independent and voluntary sectors about their

willingness and preparedness to absorb staff from the primary care trusts as they divest themselves of their provider responsibilities. [21875]

Mr. Byrne: None. Any such discussions would be a local matter for primary care trusts.

NHS Superannuation Scheme

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will estimate the cost of equalising widowers' entitlement with widows entitlement for pre-1988 members of the NHS superannuation scheme. [35175]

Mr. Byrne: The cost of backdating entitlement to widower's pension before 1988, in respect of active female members of the NHS pension scheme for England and Wales is estimated to lie in the range of £300 to £400 million.

Nurses

Anne Main: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many nursing vacancies there are, broken down by grade. [32068]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the number of vacancies in the national health service lasting three months or more is collected in the NHS vacancy survey. As at March 2005, there were 5,801 three month vacancies for qualified nurses, which represents a rate of 1.9 per cent. This represents the fourth successive annual fall in vaccines for qualified nurses.

Information on vacancies for qualified nurses is not collected by grade.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* agency and *(b)* NHS nurses were employed by the NHS in Gravesham constituency in the last year for which figures are available; and what the cost was in each case. [36957]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average time taken to process NHS nurses' bursary applications was in *(a)* 2004–05 and *(b)* 2005–06 to date; and if she will make a statement. [29705]

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many students have applied for bursaries for nursing courses which started in September; and to date how many applications have not been processed. [30574]

Mr. Byrne: The following information has been provided by the NHS Pensions Agency who are responsible for the student grants unit.

The average waiting time for nurses' national health service bursary payments in 2004–05 was five days from the start of the course. Bursary payments in academic year 2004–05 were made on receipt of a provisional list of students who were expected to enrol at the university. Payment was made by cheque, which was sent to the university for collection by the student.

The average waiting time for nurses' NHS bursary payments in 2005–06 is 11 days from the course start date. Bursary payments in academic year 2005–06 are made on receipt of confirmation of enrolment from the university and by the banks automated clearing system payment into students' bank account.

There could be several reasons for delayed payment:

internal handling by the NHS Student Grants Unit;

the university has not advised the unit that the student has actually started the course;

Universities are required to notify the student grants unit within five working days of the student starting the course. The unit aims to pay students within 10 working days of the start of the course;

there is a query with the student regarding their application form;

late application submitted by the student.

11,941 students have applied for bursaries for nursing courses which started in September 2005, all of which have now been processed.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what pay increases have been awarded to auxiliary nurses in each year since May 1997. [34134]

Mr. Byrne: The information requested is in the table.

Percentage

As at 1 April	*Pay increase awarded*
1997–98	
As at 1 April 1997	2.8
As at 1 December 1997	[1]4.11
1998–99	3.8
1999–2000	4.7
2000–01	3.4
2001–02	3.7
2002–03	[2]3.6
2003–04	3.225
2004–05	3.225

[1] Relative to 1 April 1996 national scales.
[2] Or £400, whichever is greater.

Obesity

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether the Obesity Care Pathway being produced by her Department will include appropriate references to slimming on referral programmes. [36991]

Caroline Flint: The draft Obesity Care Pathway is currently out for consultation until 3 January 2006. Consultation responses, including those on slimming on referral programmes, will be evaluated in the light of the evidence before a final text is produced.

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on *(a)* progress made to date and *(b)* the timetable for future action in relation to obesity initiatives in the Implementation Programme of the White Paper on Public Health, with particular reference to (i) the Weight Loss Guide, (ii) the Obesity Care Pathway and the Obesity Tool Kit, (iii) the National Partnership for Obesity, (iv) establishment of the Obesity Programme Board, (v) the development of a job description and management structure for health

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trainers and (vi) the work of the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence in assessing weight loss options. [36993]

Caroline Flint: The Obesity Care Pathway and the Weight Loss Guide are currently out for consultation until 3 January 2006. They will be published in the new year.

The Obesity Tool Kit has been circulated in draft to consultees, and is expected to be published in the new year by the National Heart Forum and Faculty for Public Health.

The National Partnership for Obesity will no longer be established. However, relevant groups will be included in the stakeholder consultation list for the delivery of the Obesity PSA Target.

The Obesity Programme Board had its first meeting on 27 August 2005.

A draft job description for health trainers has been sent to all the partnerships involved in the early adopter phase for review, to be agreed by the end of March 2006. Management structures for health trainers will be agreed and implemented at a local level.

The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's draft guidance on assessing weight loss options will be going out for full consultation next year with publication expected in early 2007.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children were suffering with obesity in *(a)* Southend, *(b)* Essex, *(c)* Hertfordshire, *(d)* Greater London and *(e)* England in (i) 1994 and (ii) 2004. [35970]

Caroline Flint: The data are not available in the exact format requested. We are unable to supply the data for Southend, Essex, Hertfordshire and Greater London. Data is available by Government office region (GOR) for 2001–02 and we have provided the areas that most closely match those requested; London GOR (for Greater London) and the East of England GOR (for Southend, Essex and Hertfordshire).

The 2003 data are the most recent available. Comparable data for 1994 are not available; therefore, we have provided 1995 data. The information requested is in the following table, using the estimated obesity prevalence results of the Health Survey for England (HSE) for 2002 and 2003.

Prevalence of obesity among children aged 2 to 10 (with a valid BMI), by gender, England, 1995 and 2003

	1995	*2003*
Male		
Percentage	9.6	14.9
Bases (weighted)	1,261	876
Bases (unweighted)	1,113	864
Female		
Percentage	10.3	12.5
Bases (weighted)	1,266	897
Bases (unweighted)	1,114	869

Notes:
Figures from Obesity among children under 11, 2005 for children aged 2 to 10 based on the UK National BMI percentile classification
Source:
Obesity among children under 11, 2005. Department of Health and the Health and Social Care Information Centre

Operation Costs

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total cost was of *(a)* sex change, *(b)* bunion and *(c)* cosmetic surgery operations for the last year for which figures are available; how many of each category of operation took place; and if she will make a statement. [32187]

Mr. Byrne: The cost information requested is not collected centrally.

The table on activity shows the number of finished consultant episodes (FCEs) where the main operation was one of the operative procedures requested.

Count of finished consultant episodes for sex change, bunion and cosmetic surgery operative procedures in national health service hospitals in England 2003–04

Selected procedures	*FCEs*
Sex change operations	95
Bunion operations	17,796
Cosmetic surgery operations	67,804

Source:
Hospital Episode Statistics, Health and Social Care information centre

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average cost is of *(a)* each operation provided at independent treatment centres and *(b)* the same operation undertaken by an NHS trust. [35649]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 8 December 2005]:* The average cost of operations provided at independent sector treatment centres is commercially confidential.

National health service (NHS) tariff data has been placed in the Library and is also available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/09/15/31/04091531.pdf.

These data are not comparable with independent sector contracts as they have to cover a range of costs, which are not applicable to the NHS but we know that overall costs in the independent sector contracts in 2004–05 was estimated to be less than the NHS equivalent.

Ophthalmic Services

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total expenditure on general ophthalmic services has been in each year since 1997–98. [4224]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Total expenditure on general ophthalmic services in England from 1997–98 to 2004–05 is shown in the table.

Expenditure on General Ophthalmic Service: England

£ million[1]

	Gross resource expenditure
1997–98	243.1
1998–99	242.2
1999–2000	286.0
2000–01	289.9
2001–02	302.3
2002–03[2]	303.9
2003–04	321.6
2004–05	340.0

[1] Expenditure is on an accruals basis.
[2] The consistency of data may have been affected by the changeover in accounting responsibilities from strategic health authorities to primary care trusts from 1 October 2002.

Palliative Care (Children)

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what weighting is applied to palliative care for children in the primary care trust capitation formula. [36735]

Mr. Byrne: There is no specific weighting in the weighted-capitation formula, used to inform revenue allocations to primary care trusts (PCTs), but the formula is the best available measure of need for all aspects of health care.

The components of the weighted-capitation formula are used to weight each PCTs population according to their relative need (i.e. age, and additional need) for health care and geographical differences in the cost of providing health care (i.e. market forces factor).

Parliamentary Questions

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to answer the Question on the emergency bed service (18771) tabled by the hon. Member for Romsey on 12 October. [30998]

Mr. Byrne: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1709W.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will answer question reference 30777 tabled by the hon. Member for Pendle on 16 November 2005, on primary care trusts. [35208]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* I refer my hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on Monday 12 December, *Official Report*, column 1816W.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to reply to the questions tabled by the hon. Member for Billericay relating to overseas nurses for answer on *(a)* 24 October, references 21223 and 21224 and *(b)* 17 November, reference 29318. [36234]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* I refer the hon. Member to the replies I gave him on Monday 12 December 2005.

Patient Appointments

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what the average cost of a missed general practitioner appointment was in 2004–05; and what assessment she has made of the merits of primary care trusts using text message reminder systems for patient appointments; [18567]

(2) how much has been saved by hospitals using text message reminder systems for patient appointments; and if she plans to encourage all NHS trusts to use this technology; [18569]

(3) what assessment she has made of the impact on patient outcomes of schemes that use text messages to remind patients to take their medication; [18571]

(4) what assessment she has made of the use of mobile handset remote monitoring systems that allow doctors to monitor patients in their own home rather than having them stay in hospital. [18595]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the cost of missed general practice appointments is not collected or held centrally. However, there is evidence from the work of the National Primary Care Development Team that better management of patient access arrangements, including the use of telephone technology can reduce the incidence. More than 5,000 practices, some 60 per cent. of the total, have taken part in the team's Advanced Access programme. Information on savings made by hospitals using text messaging reminder systems is similarly not collected or held centrally. However, the Department is currently undertaking a strategic review of assistive technology, including text messaging reminder and remote monitoring systems, which will inform the forthcoming White Paper.

Patient Forums

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list each patient and public involvement forum in England; and what the funding body is for each forum. [37118]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 14 December 2005]:* There is a patient and public involvement forum for every national health service trust, foundation trust and primary care trust in England.

The Commission for Patient and Public Involvement in Health (CPPIH) provides funding for forums via forum support organisations. There are around 140 of these organisations, each supporting several forums.

A list showing all patient and public involvement forums in England and the forum support organisations that support them has been placed in the Library.

Pesticides

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if the Chief Medical Officer will report on the evidence received from the Royal College of Physicians following the oral submission given by the Health Protection Agency to the Royal Commission on Environmental Pollution on its investigation of non-NHS clinics visited in relation to the impact of pesticides. [33896]

Caroline Flint: The Department of Health is not aware of any evidence received from the Royal College of Physicians to the Royal Commission of Environmental Pollution (RCEP), in the preparation of its report on crop spraying and the health of resident

and bystanders. Also, we are not aware that the RCEP in its investigations carried out any visits to non-national health service clinics, and can find no reference to this in the RCEP report.

Physiotherapy

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what estimate she has made of the number of new graduate physiotherapists who have not found employment as physiotherapists in 2005; [33182]

(2) how many overseas nationals are working as physiotherapists within the NHS; [33242]

(3) what steps she is taking to increase the number of physiotherapists in the NHS; [33243]

(4) what representations she has received on the number of posts available in the NHS for newly-qualified physiotherapists; [33245]

(5) how many new graduate physiotherapists will qualify in 2005. [33244]

Mr. Byrne: The latest available figure shows that at September 2004, there were 19,139 physiotherapists employed by the national health service. It is the responsibility of local NHS employers and strategic health authorities to ensure there are sufficient numbers of physiotherapists to meet service needs.

There were 2,157 NHS physiotherapy training places in England in 2002–03. It is not possible to identify the number of these who successfully graduated in 2005. Data regarding the level of overseas nationals working as physiotherapists is not collected centrally.

We are working closely with the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, the NHS workforce review team and NHS organisations to help physiotherapy graduates find opportunities. As a result of this collaborative work, there is an action plan in place to ensure local managers have access to a range of strategies across recruitment, commissioning and skill mix. In addition, NHS employers have extended the NHS jobs service from December, which will enable physiotherapy graduates to register their details and be automatically alerted to NHS vacancies.

Podiatrists

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what steps her Department is taking to increase the number of podiatrists in *(a)* England and *(b)* Weston-Super-Mare; [36395]

(2) how many podiatrists per 100 people there are in *(a)* England and *(b)* Weston-super-Mare. [36396]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the number of podiatrists per 100,000 population in England and Avon Gloucestershire and Wiltshire strategic health authority is shown in the table.

Information is not available specifically for the Western-Super-Mare area.

National health service hospital and community health services: qualified chiropody/po-liatry staff in England and each specified strategic health authority (SHA) area and organisation per 100,000 population as at 30 September 2004[1]

	Headcount
	Per 100,000 population
England	7.9
of which	
Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire SHA area	5.9

Notes:
1. Population figures are as at June each year. England and SHA figures are for 2004, the latest available PCT figures are at 2003. Staff in post figures are at 30 September 2004.

Sources:
Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census
Office for National Statistics Population Census

A range of workforce supply initiatives are in place to ensure the NHS workforce continues to meet service needs. These include: improving pay and conditions; encouraging the NHS to become a better, more flexible and diverse employer; increasing training; investing in child care and continuing professional development; attracting back returners and running national and international recruitment campaigns.

It is the responsibility of primary care trusts and SHAs to analyse their local situation and assess the needs of the local population and to secure services to meet those needs including podiatry services.

Primary Care Trusts

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether primary care trusts will face financial penalties or suffer any form of detriment if they choose to remain direct providers of clinical services. [30778]

Mr. Byrne: If primary care trusts choose to do this, they will face no financial penalties.

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health why Mr. John Bacon's letter of 30 November 2005 to Pearse Butler of the Cumbria and Lancashire strategic health authority does not refer to Pendle in the latest proposals for primary care trust reconfiguration. [35202]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* The letter from John Bacon to Pearse Butler of Cumbria and Lancashire strategic health authority omitted reference to Pendle in error. The option to consult on six primary care trusts (PCTs) should read as follows:

"Option 3-6 PCTs: Blackpool PCT, Blackburn with Darwen PCT, Cumbria PCT, Lancaster, Fylde and Wyre PCT, Burnley, Rossendale, Pendle, Hyndburn and Ribble Valley PCT and West Lancashire, South Ribble, Chorley and Preston PCT".

Mr. Gordon Prentice: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will rank by population the proposed re-configured primary care trusts in England which are now to go out to public consultation. [35207]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* No decisions will be taken on the population size of reconfigured primary care trusts until after the 14 week local consultation exercise.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether strategic health authorities will have further powers to determine whether primary care trusts can exercise financial autonomy and control their own budgets under the proposals for reconfiguration of strategic health authorities and primary care trusts. [28656]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 15 November 2005]:* There are no plans to give strategic health authorities (SHAs) further powers to determine whether primary care trusts can exercise financial autonomy and control their own budgets under proposals for reconfiguration of SHAs and primary care trusts. SHAs will continue to undertake performance management functions in relation to local national health service bodies.

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reasons she is seeking to restructure primary care trusts; and what estimate she has made of the costs of restructuring. [31719]

Mr. Byrne: The reasons for reconfiguration are set out in "Commissioning a Patient Led NHS", published 28 July 2005 and the written ministerial statement by the Secretary of State of 27 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 15WS.

Since proposals on restructuring are subject to local consultation, at this stage we have not made an estimate of the costs.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what allocation of funding was made to each Essex primary care trust at the start of the current financial year, what the projected outturn is in each case; and how deficits will be funded. [35809]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 8 December 2005]:* The information requested is provided in the tables. Table 1 shows the revenue allocations made to primary care trusts (PCTs) in Essex for 2005–06 as part of the 2003–04 to 2005–06 revenue allocations. Table 2 shows the 2005–06 Month 6 (unaudited) forecast of PCTs in Essex.

Strategic health authorities (SHAs) are responsible for delivering overall financial balance for their local health economy. If the SHA as a whole overspends, it requires underspending elsewhere to allow the Department to live within its overall spending limit.

Table 1

£000

	Allocation		
PCT	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
Basildon	97,468	102,530	114,813
Billericay, Brentwood and Wickford	110,867	120,876	131,581
Castle Point and Rochford	130,401	143,260	157,017
Chelmsford	95,614	104,247	113,482
Colchester	125,696	138,152	151,451
Epping Forest	92,149	100,471	109,463
Harlow	76,440	83,343	90,727
Maldon and South Chelmsford	58,828	64,507	70,647
Southend on Sea	153,413	167,594	182,986
Tendring	128,228	143,975	161,452
Thurrock	117,395	129,330	144,805
Uttlesford	52,071	56,772	61,798
Witham, Braintree and Halstead Care Trust	100,623	110,770	122,397

Table 2

Organisation name	*2005–06 Month 6 Forecast Outturn (£000)*
Basildon PCT	706
Billericay, Brentwood and Wickford PCT	2,633
Castle Point and Rochford PCT	1,600
Chelmsford PCT	(11,202)
Colchester PCT	637
Epping Forest PCT	600
Harlow PCT	(769)
Maldon and South Chelmsford PCT	(3,196)
Southend on Sea PCT	2,562
Tendring PCT	1,400
Thurrock PCT	860
Uttlesford PCT	(1,164)
Witham, Braintree and Halstead Care PCT	(5,418)

Public Health (Control of Disease) Act

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding was allocated to local authorities to meet their responsibilities under section 46 of the Public Health (Control of Disease) Act 1984 in relation to funeral provision in each of the past five years; and how much was spent by each local authority in England on section 46 funeral provision in each year. [35358]

Mr. Woolas: I have been asked to reply.

The information is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Public Interest Reports

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the NHS bodies that have been issued with public interest reports in each year since 2001; and if she will make a statement. [29971]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* Public interest reports are made, by the auditors of national health service bodies, under section 8 of the Audit Commission Act 1998. Since 2001, they have been made in respect of the following NHS bodies. They are listed by year of publication.

During 2004–05, the Audit Commission developed, consulted on and revised guidance to auditors—which is published on their website—about how they should report their concerns about financial standing, initially to the boards of NHS bodies, but ultimately escalating to use of their special powers to report publicly and refer bodies to the Secretary of State. This revised guidance has prompted auditors to issue significantly more public interest reports.

2001

No reports issued

2002

Bedfordshire Shared Services

2003

Avon, Gloucestershire and Wiltshire Strategic Health Authority

West Yorkshire Metropolitan Ambulance Service NHS Trust

2004

Hammersmith and Fulham Primary Care Trust

Mid Yorkshire Hospitals NHS Trust

2005 (to date)

Bedfordshire Heartlands Primary Care Trust
Hampshire and Isle of Wight Strategic Health Authority
Hillingdon Primary Care Trust
Hounslow Primary Care Trust
Kennet and North Wiltshire Primary Care Trust
New Forest Primary Care Trust
North Somerset Primary Care Trust
Royal West Sussex NHS Trust
Scarborough and North East Yorkshire NHS Trust
Selby and York Primary Care Trust
Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust
South Tees Hospitals NHS Trust
Southampton University Hospitals NHS Trust
Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust
Thames Valley Strategic Health Authority
The Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust
Trafford Healthcare NHS Trust
West Wiltshire Primary Care Trust
Weston Area Health NHS Trust

Rehabilitation Services (Visually Impaired People)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what advice she provides to *(a)* primary care trusts and *(b)* acute trusts on the provision of rehabilitation services for the visually impaired, with particular reference to the recently diagnosed; and how many rehabilitation staff for visually impaired people are employed by each (i) primary care trust and (ii) acute trust; [37840]

(2) if she will provide funding for training centres run by Guide Dogs for the Blind. [37841]

Mr. Byrne: It is for local authorities to determine how best to provide services to meet the needs of individuals in their populations, in the light of local priorities. This includes the assessment and provision of appropriate support and rehabilitation services for blind and partially sighted people and decisions on the number of staff necessary.

The Association of Directors of Social Services published national standards of social care for visually impaired adults in October 2002. The Department funded the improving lives coalition, from 2003 to 2005, to help them to raise awareness and to publicise the standards. The final report is available at: www.adss.org.uk/eyes.shtml.

The Department no longer directly commissions services or training facilities.

Residential Care

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 273W, on residential care, on what legal basis local authorities can set cash limits on the amount they will pay for residential placements to meet assessed needs. [34712]

Mr. Byrne: The Department allocates funding to local authorities (LAs) to enable them to carry out their social service functions. It is for LAs to decide how they spend this money, taking account of the need to balance their overall budgets and meet their statutory obligations.

Under section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970, the Secretary of State may issue guidance to local authorities on how they carry out their social services functions and LAs are required to act in accordance with such guidance, unless they have good reason for departing from it but without freedom to take a substantially different course. The latest guidance is contained in local authority circular LAC(2004)20, which is available in the Library.

Under that guidance, LAs should set the amount they would usually expect to pay for accommodation having regard to assessed care needs-the 'usual cost'. This cost should be set by LAs at the start of a financial or other planning period, or in response to significant changes in the cost of providing care, to be sufficient to meet the assessed care needs of supported residents in residential accommodation. LAs should set more than one usual cost where the cost of providing residential accommodation to specific groups is different. When placing people in residential care, councils are not required to pay more than they would usually pay, having regard to the usual cost.

Scanning Services (Alliance Medical Ltd.)

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether concerns about Alliance Medical and the provision of scanning services were raised at the meeting between her Department and County Durham and Tees Valley strategic in early June. [19088]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 18 October 2005]:* The operational performance and take-up rates of the Alliance Medical contract were discussed with strategic health authority representatives as part of the contract management arrangements.

Screening Services

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to receive advice from the National Committee on Screening on the screening of older men for abdominal aortic aneurysms. [36716]

Mr. Byrne: The UK National Screening Committee considered screening for abdominal aortic aneurysms at its meeting on 29 November 2005 and will provide advice in the new year.

Smoking/Alcohol

Mr. Jeremy Browne: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reasons the Health Bill proposes to ban smoking in public houses which serve food where the owners do not employ any staff. [34585]

Caroline Flint: The smoke-free provisions of the Health Bill will protect the health of the public from the harm done by second-hand smoke. Under these provisions 99 per cent. of people's enclosed workplaces will become smoke-free.

The extensive public consultation that we conducted before publishing the Choosing Health White Paper demonstrated enormous support for a ban on smoking in restaurants and pubs where meals are served. People clearly want to be able to enjoy their meal without smoke over their food and in their face.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what diseases and conditions are associated with *(a)* smoking and *(b)* passive smoking; and if she will make a statement; [36180]

(2) if she will list the studies undertaken by her Department which demonstrate the diseases and conditions caused by *(a)* smoking and *(b)* passive smoking; and if she will place such studies in the Library. [36181]

Caroline Flint: The White Paper "Smoking Kills" sets out in Chapter 1 some of the major fatal diseases and conditions caused by smoking and passive smoking. For each disease and cause of death quoted there is a reference to relevant studies and/or source documents.

The 1998 Report of the Scientific Committee on Tobacco and Health (SCOTH) provided fuller information on fatal and other disease caused by smoking and second hand smoke.

The 2004 Report by SCOTH states that new evidence reinforces and strengthens the conclusion in the 1998 report that second hand smoke is a substantial public health hazard. Copies of these documents are available in the Library.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps are being taken to discourage the consumption of alcohol by pregnant women; and what progress has been made. [34877]

Caroline Flint: The Department's advice can be found in the leaflet "Drinking for Two?" and in the "Pregnancy Book", copies of which have been placed in the Library, and also on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/PolicyAndGuidance/HealthAndSocialCareTopics/AlcoholMisuse/AlcoholMisuseGeneralInformation/AlcoholMisuseGeneralArticle/fs/en?CONTENT_ID=4062199&chk=J782BY The advice says women who may be pregnant should not drink more than one to two units of alcohol once or twice a week and should avoid being intoxicated. This guidance is based on advice form medical experts to the sensible drinking working group who reviewed a range of studies and found little evidence of harm when such low levels of alcohol are consumed.

Information is also available from the charity Foetal Alcohol Syndrome Aware UK.

However, we know that some people have raised concerns that consuming any alcohol during pregnancy is unsafe. It is vital that public health messages are based on sound evidence and retain the credibility and confidence of health professionals.

That is why we have commissioned a research scoping exercise on the effects of alcohol on the developing foetus. This will look at existing and new evidence of the effects of very low levels of alcohol consumption during pregnancy on the developing embryo, foetus and child. The report is due in the new year.

Southport and Ormskirk NHS Trust

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health for what reasons Southport and Ormskirk NHS Trust is required to pay interest on the money it has borrowed. [37318]

Mr. Byrne: There is a well established carry-forward regime in the national health service, whereby over spends in one year are repaid in the following year. The strategic health authority (SHA) surplus incentive scheme includes an uplift to the amount that organisations must repay if they overspend in 2005–06.

The aim of the scheme is to support good financial management. The scheme is being managed by the NHS Bank. Arrangements with trusts or primary care trusts are for individual SHAs to manage.

Tuberculosis

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many reported cases of tuberculosis there were in *(a)* Northamptonshire and *(b)* England in each of the last 10 years. [34875]

Caroline Flint: Tuberculosis notification numbers for Northamptonshire and from England from 1994 to 2004 are shown in the table.

Tuberculosis infections, Northamptonshire and England: 1994 to 2004

Number

	Northamptonshire	*England*
1994	47	5,410
1995	57	5,428
1996	43	5,493
1997	58	5,664
1998	66	5,915
1999	77	5,939
2000	66	6,379
2001	70	6,571
2002	84	6,628
2003	70	6,383
2004	80	6,544

Note:
Data as at 2 December 2005.
Source:
Statutory Notifications of Infectious Diseases (NOIDs), Health Protection Agency Centre for Infections.

The tuberculosis notification rates (per 100,000 population) for Northamptonshire remained similar to the overall rate for England during this 10-year period.

Turnaround Teams

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* terms of reference, *(b)* powers and *(c)* expected costs are of the turnaround teams she is sending into Southport and Ormskirk Hospital. [37314]

Mr. Byrne: Following the initial assessment the teams will agree a tailored package of turnaround support with each organisation and the strategic health authority. The teams will then support the chief executives of the organisations in delivering turnaround. The type and length of engagement will be tailored to the needs of specific organisations. The chief executives will remain responsible for delivery in their organisations.

The initial assessment was awarded in accordance with departmental tendering arrangements. The amount of the contract is to be treated as commercial in confidence.

The cost of the turnaround support will be dependant on the type of engagement.

Velcade

Dr. Julian Lewis: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will list the criteria according to which a district prescribing committee in England can overrule the recommendation of a consultant haematologist that Velcade should be prescribed to a patient suffering from multiple myeloma; [35100]

(2) what advice she has received about the use of Velcade as a treatment for multiple myeloma in comparison with other possible treatments for that condition; [35101]

(3) what discretion is available to consultant haematologists in England *(a)* to arrange bone marrow transplants and *(b)* to prescribe Velcade to treat multiple myeloma without reference to a (i) district prescribing committee and (ii) any other body; [35102]

(4) what account her Department took of the procedures in place in other parts of the UK for prescribing Velcade to treat multiple myeloma before deciding that district prescribing committees in England could overrule the recommendations of consultant haematologists that it should be prescribed in individual cases; [35103]

(5) what assessment she has made of the comparative *(a)* cost and *(b)* effectiveness in treating multiple myeloma of (i) a course of Velcade authorised by a district prescribing committee and (ii) a bone marrow transplant authorised by a consultant haematologist. [35104]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answers 8 December 2005]:* Velcade is licensed for the treatment of adults with cancer of the bone marrow (multiple myeloma) who have received at least one prior treatment and whose disease is worsening on their last treatment.

Velcade has been referred to the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) for appraisal. Velcade is one of the first five drugs to be appraised under NICE'S new single topic appraisal process announced by my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State for Health (Ms Hewitt) on 3 November 2005. Guidance resulting from the new process is expected as early as mid 2006.

In the interim, there are no national restrictions on or guidelines for prescribing Velcade on the national health service for patients who fit the licensed indication.

How best to treat patients with multiple myeloma will be a matter for local decision. The mechanisms used for making such decisions are also be local arrangement.

Funding for licensed treatments should not be withheld because guidance from NICE is unavailable. In these circumstances, we expect primary care trusts to take full account of available evidence when reaching funding decisions. This is confirmed in "Health Service Circular 1999/176", which asks NHS bodies to continue with local arrangements for the managed introduction of new technologies where guidance from NICE is not available at the time the treatment or technology first became available.

No assessment has yet been made of the comparative cost and effectiveness of Velcade and bone marrow transplants in treating multiple myeloma. NICE may look at this as part of the appraisal process.

Vitamin D

Dr. Gibson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what plans she has to review *(a)* the available information on vitamin D daily intake level for different age groups and *(b)* recommended levels of vitamin D; [37130]

(2) what plans she has to improve vitamin D levels in the UK population. [37132]

Caroline Flint: The Scientific Advisory Committee on Nutrition (SACN) is considering a draft report on the nutritional health of the population, based on evidence from the national diet and nutrition surveys. This report is due to be published by mid-2006 and will include evidence on vitamin D.

In the United Kingdom, reference nutrient intakes (RNI-the amount of the nutrient which is enough to meet the dietary needs of around 97 per cent. of the population) have only been set for certain age groups considered to be at risk of vitamin D deficiency, which is not common in the UK. Hence there is no RNI for people aged between four and 64-years-old, other than for pregnant and lactating women; it is considered that most people will get the vitamin D they need from exposure to sunlight, which aids synthesis of vitamin D in the skin.

Waiting Times

Mr. Andrew Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress the Government have made towards its aim to eliminate waiting times of over six months for in-patient treatment by the end of 2005; and if she will make a statement. [36903]

Mr. Byrne: The national health service has made substantial progress in reducing waiting lists and eliminating waits of over six months for in-patient treatment. As shown in the table, in October 2005 the number of patients waiting more than six months was 24,812, down 8,690 (25.9 per cent.) on the previous month and down 45,079 (64.5 per cent.) from October 2004. Waiting lists are now at an all-time low and below 800,000 for the first time.

		Patients waiting over:					
Data ending	*Total waiting*[1]	*18 months*[2]	*15 months*[2]	*12 months*[2]	*9 months*[2]	*6 months*[2]	*3 months*[2]
March 1997	1,158,004	143	5,733	30,245	118,915	283,866	570,237
May 1998	1,308,634	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—	[3]—
December 2003	973,126	6	8	25	34,295	149,307	400,545
March 2004	905,753	0	3	67	223	80,125	323,510

Data ending	Total waiting[1]	Patients waiting over: 18 months[2]	15 months[2]	12 months[2]	9 months[2]	6 months[2]	3 months[2]
October 2004	857,221	[3]	[3]	59	57	69,891	293,710
November 2004	843,923	[3]	[3]	173	347	62,016	268,082
December 2004	858,020	[3]	[3]	50	125	66,309	285,271
January 2005	861,884	[3]	[3]	37	93	69,210	292,616
February 2005	845,167	[3]	[3]	29	76	60,451	287,244
March 2005	821,686	[3]	[3]	24	41	40,806	259,213
April 2005	827,349	[3]	[3]	5	28	45,395	257,979
May 2005	826,265	[3]	[3]	0	17	49,604	257,761
June 2005	823,949	[3]	[3]	3	16	43,132	243,092
July 2005	813,670	[3]	[3]	2	15	40,669	241,327
August 2005	805,096	[3]	[3]	4	24	38,270	236,543
September 2005	804,638	[3]	[3]	9	69	33,502	231,878
October 2005	792,251	[3]	[3]	8	92	24,812	207,873

[1] Provider based.
[2] Commissioner based
[3] Commissioners data not collected in this period.
Note:
From April 2004, 15 and 18 month waits are not collected.
Source:
Department of Health monthly returns by primary care trusts

Ward Closures

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which hospitals are planning ward or capacity closures. [32188]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not routinely collect and hold centrally operational management information on proposals to change wards or capacity.

Warrington Primary Care Trust

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what briefings have been given to members of Warrington primary care trust on possible changes to acute services in the area; and what options have been considered during those briefings. [37877]

Mr. Byrne *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* The responsibility for briefing members of the Warrington primary care trust on any possible changes to acute services in the area resides with the local national health service.

Wind Turbines

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research she has evaluated on the impacts on health of wind turbines. [37242]

Caroline Flint: The Department has not undertaken work on wind turbines. Defra has undertaken studies and officials in this Department are in contact with the leading United Kingdom authority on low frequency noise (LFN), a frequent subject of complaint. There is currently very little or no evidence to suggest that exposure to noise generated by wind turbines is damaging to health though it may cause annoyance.

Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust

Dr. Richard Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the oral statement of the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Health of 15 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 226WH, on Worcestershire Acute Hospitals Trust, when she will write to the hon. Member for Wyre Forest (Dr. Taylor) on trusts that are in the upper quartile in relation to length of stay. [34690]

Caroline Flint: The Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Public Health wrote to the hon. Member on 13 December 2005.

Your Health, Your Care, Your Say

Dr. Murrison: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance she issued to strategic health authorities for the conduct of the "Your Health, Your Care, Your Say" consultation exercise; and if she will make a statement. [26381]

Mr. Byrne: The Department wrote to chief executives of strategic health authorities (SHAs) on 23 August 2005 inviting a nominated contact who could co-ordinate activity across their area in partnership with local authority colleagues. The Department and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister jointly wrote to a range of stakeholder organisations, including the chief executives of SHAs on 8 September 2005 giving details of a website which provided guidance on running local events and about the importance of working with local partners. Nominated contacts in SHAs were also copied into a letter to stakeholders dated 27 September 2005 encouraging the organisation of local events for staff and service users.

A resource pack website was set up to support those organisations running or facilitating local deliberative consultation events. SHA nominated contacts were invited to a briefing event on the website's use and the consultation process in general on 8 September 2005.

Copies of all three letters have been placed in the Library.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Written Answers to Questions

Tuesday 20 December 2005

PRIME MINISTER

Consultants

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Prime Minister how many civil servants in each grade have left his Office in each of the last three years to join consultancy firms; and which firm each joined. [37361]

The Prime Minister: For these purposes my office forms part of the Cabinet Office. I have therefore asked my hon. Friend the Parliamentary Secretary for the Cabinet Office (Mr. Murphy) to reply. A copy of the reply will be placed in the Library of the House.

Meetings

David Simpson: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 6 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1129W, on meetings, if he will list the dates of each meeting he has had with *(a)* each party and *(b)* the Prime Minister of the Republic of Ireland during the last 18 months. [38489]

The Prime Minister: I have nothing further to add to my answer of 6 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1129W.

Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill

David Simpson: To ask the Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 5 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1038–39W, on Northern Ireland (Offences) Bill, on how many occasions he consulted *(a)* the political parties in Northern Ireland, *(b)* church representatives, *(c)* the Police Service of Northern Ireland, *(d)* victims groups and *(e)* healthcare professionals before the Government introduced the Bill. [38490]

The Prime Minister: I have nothing further to add to my answer of 5 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1038–39W.

Public Appointments

Mrs. Ellman: To ask the Prime Minister (1) to what position in Government Departments *(a)* Mr. Ahmed Thompson and *(b)* Mr. Inyat Bungawala has been appointed; when the appointment was made; what the remit is; and what process was used in making the appointment; [37993]

(2) what advice the Government have been given by the unit Engaging with the Muslim World concerning *(a)* the Muslim Brotherhood, *(b)* the Muslim Association of Britain and *(c)* Hamas; and what the accountability arrangements for the unit are; [37995]

(3) what the Government's policy is on *(a)* employing and *(b)* appointing to public appointments people who may have made anti-semitic statements. [37994]

Paul Goggins: I have been asked to reply.

Neither Mr. Ahmad Thompson nor Mr. Inyat Bungawala has been appointed to any positions within Government Departments.

In the formulation of policy, the Government receives advice and information from a wide range of sources. The Engaging with the Islamic World Group is a part of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO). Like all departments, groups and teams within the FCO, the Group is accountable to Ministers and works to help achieve the international priorities, aims and objectives set out in the FCO Annual Report.

The Government adheres to the Commission for Public Appointments' code of practice when considering individuals for either employment or public appointments. Individuals from all sections of society and diverse backgrounds have much to offer public bodies. In consulting and working with a diverse range of people we inevitably deal with people with whose views we do agree. When this involves discriminatory statements by an individual decisions are made on a case by case basis, taking account of such factors as severity, context and the time elapsed since they were made.

CULTURE, MEDIA AND SPORT

Anschutz Entertainment Group

Mr. Moss: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport (1) when *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials have held meetings with the Anschutz Entertainment Group; where each meeting took place; and which potential sites for casinos were discussed; [38049]

(2) what meetings *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials have held in the last four months with casino operators interested in securing licences under the Gambling Act 2005. [38050]

Mr. Caborn: DCMS Ministers and officials have met representatives of the Anschutz Entertainment Group and Kerzner International, its partner in the development of the Millennium Dome site, as they have representatives of many companies that may be interested in securing one of the 17 new casino licences permitted by the Gambling Act 2005. The meetings that have been identified are listed in table 1. All these meetings took place in the United Kingdom. Where available, minutes of meetings up to July 2005 have been published on the DCMS website, following requests made under the Freedom of Information Act.

Table 1

	DCMS Minister and/or official(s) present	*Who attended the meeting*
15 March 2003	Official(s)	Anschutz Entertainment Group
22 January 2004	Lord McIntosh and official(s)	Kerzner International
24 May 2004	Lord McIntosh and officials)	Kerzner International
23 June 2004	Lord McIntosh and official(s)	Overseas casino operators including Kerzner International
8 July 2004	Official(s)	Kerzner International
22 July 2004	Official(s)	Kerzner International
12 August 2004	Lord McIntosh and official(s)	Overseas casino operators
24 February 2005	Lord McIntosh and official(s)	Overseas casino operators including Kerzner International
21 March 2005	Lord McIntosh and official(s)	Overseas casino operators including Kerzner International
18 May 2005	Official(s)	Kerzner International, MGM Mirage, Caesars
18 July 2005	Richard Caborn and official(s)	Kerzner International, MGM Mirage, Ameristar, Packer Organisation and Aspinall Group, Sun International
13 September 2005	Official(s)	Kerzner International, MGM Mirage, Caesars
30 October 2005	Secretary of State	Private dinner hosted by Matthew Freud at which Philip Anschutz and another representative of AEG were present
31 October 2005	Richard Caborn and official(s)	Dinner hosted by Lord Heseltine at which Philip Anschutz was present
14 December 2005	Official(s)	Kerzner International, MGM Mirage, Harrahs

In addition to the meetings listed in table 1, DCMS Ministers and officials with responsibility for gambling issues have also held meetings with other casino operators or their representatives during the last four months. Relevant meetings that have been identified are listed in table 2. Competitions for the 17 new casino premises are not expected to begin until mid-2007, and the identities of the bidding companies will not be known until then.

Table 2

	DCMS Minister and/or official(s) present	*Who attended the meeting*
6 September 2005	Secretary of State and official(s)	British Casino Association
21 September 2005	Official(s)	British Casino Association
27 September 2005	Official(s)	British Casino Association
5 October 2005	Richard Caborn and official(s)	Dinner including representative of Casino Association of South Africa
6 October 2005	Richard Caborn and official(s)	Sun International
19 October 2005	Richard Caborn and official(s)	Business in Sport and Leisure, including a representative of Gala plc
4 November 2005	Official(s)	London Clubs International
10 November 2005	Secretary of State and official(s)	British Casino Association Annual General Meeting
14 November 2005	Official(s)	Representatives of gambling industry, including the British Casino Association
16 November 2005	Richard Caborn and official(s)	Meeting with Bingo Association, including representative of Gala plc
21 November 2005	Official(s)	Rank Group
7 December 2005	Official(s)	British Casino Association

BBC Charter

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make it a requirement under BBC Charter renewal that the BBC publish in its annual accounts *(a)* itemised costs, *(b)* overheads information and *(c)* average hourly (i) viewing figures and (ii) costs of production for each channel. [34511]

Tessa Jowell *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* The Green Paper published in March this year makes clear that the new Trust will be expected to demand the highest standards of financial transparency from the BBC in its annual reporting to ensure that the BBC complies with best practice in other public and commercial bodies. Further detail on the new governance arrangements will be set out in the forthcoming White Paper.

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what recent discussions she has had on the BBC Charter Review. [38534]

Tessa Jowell: Throughout the Charter Review process, I have had various discussions with a wide range of stakeholders regarding all aspects of the BBC Charter Review.

Citygate Public Affairs Ltd.

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what meetings the Department has held with Citygate Public Affairs Ltd. since July. [36755]

Mr. Lammy: The Department does not maintain a central list of such contacts. Ministers and civil servants, including special advisers meet many people as part of the process of policy development and business delivery. All such contacts are conducted in accordance with the requirements of the Ministerial Code, Civil Service Code, Code of Conduct for Special Advisers and Guidance for civil servants on contacts with lobbyists and people outside Government

Compulsory Purchase Orders

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will make a statement on the use of compulsory purchase orders in cases involving historic buildings. [38976]

Mr. Lammy: The Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 allows the Secretary of State to confirm a compulsory purchase order (CPO) served by a local authority where reasonable steps are not being taken by an owner to properly preserve a listed building. The Act also allows the Secretary of State to compulsorily acquire a listed building herself though such powers are only exercised in exceptional circumstances. The Act requires the Secretary of State to consult English Heritage before she exercises the powers to confirm or make a CPO.

Correspondence

Graham Stringer: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she will reply to the letter of 4 October from the hon. Member for Manchester, Blackley, to her concerning the Licensing Act 2003. [30469]

James Purnell *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* I replied to the letter of 4 October from my hon. Friend today.

Departmental Research

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what research projects commissioned by her Department are being undertaken; and what the publication arrangements are in each case. [32994]

Mr. Caborn: The DCMS currently has commissioned 13 research projects which are in the process of being completed, or have been completed and are scheduled for publication.

A brief summary of each piece of research, including publication plans, is given as follows.

1. "Taking Part Survey": The DCMS, working in partnership with our NDPB partners, commissioned the "Taking Part" survey with the aim of improving our current knowledge base of users and non-users of our sectors.

Findings from the survey are being published quarterly on the DCMS website, and the first quarter's findings were published on 15 December.

2. "Sport and Social Capital in the United Kingdom: Statistical Evidence from National and International Survey Data": This research looks at the links between different types of sporting participation and individual measures of social capital.

The research will be published on the website of the DCMS, and the Institute of Public Policy Research. Publication is planned for January 2006.

3. "Public Libraries: assessment of performance against Annual Library Plans 2004/05": Assessment of authorities' performance against the newly developed Public Library Impact Measures to create a baseline to be assessed against in future years.

Publication will be on the website of the Museums, Libraries and Archives Council, and is scheduled for February 2006.

4. "Enquiring into attitudes towards gambling—a scoping study": This is a study looking at how quantitative surveys can be used to capture accurate data on public attitudes towards gambling and gambling behaviour. The work will be completed early in 2006, and will be published on the DCMS website in due course.

5. "Enquiring in to expenditure on gambling—a scoping study": A study looking at quantitative surveys can be used to capture accurate data on expenditure on gambling. The project is due for completion at the end of February 2006. Publication will be on the DCMS website in due course.

6. "Research into risk and protective factors related to problem gambling": This work is due to report by the end of January 2006. The report will be published on the DCMS website in due course.

7. "Economic impact of cultural investment": This research is part of the development of a framework for understanding the impact of cultural investment by Government. It is due for completion in April 2006, and will be published on the DCMS website in due course.

8. "Arts and Criminal Justice: feasibility study": This research project looks at the practicalities of assessing the impact of arts interventions in prisons. It is due for completion in January 2006, with publication on the DCMS website soon after.

9. "Arts and Mental Health: study of effective practice": This research looks at the effectiveness of arts interventions with people with mental health problems. The research is due for completion in October 2006. A report on the research will be published on the DCMS website in due course.

10. "Review of literature on impact on young people of the computer/video games with a 'Violent' content": We commissioned the University of Stirling to investigate whether allegations of a link between playing violent computer games and violent behaviour in real life can be substantiated. The work is complete, and the report will be published on the DCMS website in January 2006.

11. "National Lottery, 'Good Causes' research": This projects looks at the views of the general public on how lottery money should be shared between the good causes of arts and film, heritage and sport, and what the policies should be governing how lottery money is spent for each of these good causes. It will support the public consultation currently under way on the DCMS website and is being commissioned now to be carried out by the end of February 2006.

Results will be published on the DCMS website, along with the main consultation results, in late spring 2006.

12. "BBC Charter Review": Research exploring public opinion of the Green Paper proposals for the future governance and accountability of the BBC and the collection and enforcement of the licence fee.

This research will be published on the BBC Charter Review website, alongside the White Paper, once it is published in the new year.

13. Access to finance by small and medium sized companies in the music business: This project looks at the barriers to accessing financial investment by small and medium sized music businesses in the UK. The work should be completed in January 2006, and will be published on the DCMS website in due course.

Elite Athletes (Funding)

Hugh Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport by what process the transfer of responsibility for elite sport from Sport England to UK Sport will be effected; how much of the budget will be transferred; and how much of that money will pass straight to *(a)* the British Olympic Association and *(b)* Olympic Sport national governing bodies. [38360]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 19 December 2005]:* UK Sport and Sport England are working together to ensure that responsibility for the English Institute of Sport, the Talented Athlete Scholarship Scheme (including 2012 scholarships) and performance pathway programmes

for Olympic and Paralympic sports (for which Sport England is currently responsible), will transfer to UK Sport by 1 April 2006. Furthermore a service level agreement is being drawn up to govern UK Sport's performance advisory role to Sport England for the performance elements of their funded English sports. A project team has been set up to manage the process.

UK Sport and Sport England are working closely to identify the required budgetary transfer in respect of these areas which will—as now—be directed at Governing Body and Institute delivery of services to World Class athletes.

We expect that the National Governing Bodies will benefit from an enhanced relationship with UK Sport. Money will not be passed to the British Olympic Association, as it is not an investment vehicle for World Class funding.

English Heritage

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer of 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1619W, on English Heritage, which sites owned and run by English Heritage she has visited in her official capacity as Secretary of State in the last 12 months. [37816]

Mr. Lammy: My right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, has not been able to visit an English Heritage historic site in the last 12 months in her official capacity. However, since May I have visited in my official capacity Stonehenge, Eltham Palace and Kenilworth Castle and English Heritage's offices in Swindon. I have also visited a number of historic properties owned or managed by other organisations or individuals.

Licensing Act

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what progress has been made in reviewing the guidance on the Licensing Act 2003 to enable local ward councillors to speak at hearings for applications affecting their ward without the need to have first received representations from residents; and if she will make a statement. [35030]

James Purnell: It is the 2003 Act and the regulations that set out who may make representations, and other matters about hearings. It is, therefore, not possible for the Guidance to licensing authorities to amend such statutory provisions.

However, we are currently reviewing the Guidance and, as part of that process, will consider whether there is a need to provide further clarification around this issue. We will also consider it as part of our wider monitoring of the Act, including the detailed review with the 10 Scrutiny Committee.

Our review of the Guidance commenced on 1 December and will be in two stages. An initial review, focussing on issues where there is a high degree of consensus among stakeholders, will be completed and supplementary Guidance laid before Parliament in early spring 2006.

A comprehensive formal review of the Guidance, including a full public consultation will be completed by summer 2006 and a revised version will be laid before Parliament by the end of 2006. This comprehensive review will include consideration of matters that cannot be easily resolved during the initial review.

Licensing Committees

Annette Brooke: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport if she will issue guidance to local authorities on the circumstances when councillors *(a)* may and *(b)* may not make representations to a licensing committee dealing with a licensing application in their ward. [37039]

James Purnell *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* Local councillors who themselves live in the vicinity of premises applying for the grant or variation of a premises or club premises certificate are clearly entitled to make representations to the licensing authority in their own right as interested parties.

Paragraph 5.32 of the Guidance issued under Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 makes it clear that interested parties can specifically request a representative such as a local ward councillor to make a representation on their behalf. This could include making written representations, applying for a review or by speaking on their behalf at a hearing.

We are currently reviewing the Guidance and, as part of that process, will consider whether there is a need to provide further clarification on this issue.

Licensing/Gambling Laws

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport by what means the Government's new licensing regime ensures that village hall managers and other responsible persons are informed of the number of applications for temporary event notices for events to be held in their premises; and if she will make a statement. [37676]

James Purnell: Village hall managers and other responsible persons seeking to inform themselves about the number of temporary event notices (TENs) given for events to be held in their premises can consult their licensing authority's register.

A person with a property interest in a premises, such as a freeholder, leaseholder or occupier, can, on submission of the prescribed form and fee (£21), give the licensing authority notice of their interest. The licensing authority must then notify them forthwith of any changes to the entry for that premises on the register. Such a notice has effect for 12 months.

No-one would be able to use a village hall without the permission of the hall management. Managers of village halls can make their own arrangements to require potential users to inform them of their proposed use of TENs and might wish to include this as a requirement in their hire or booking agreement.

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what assessment she has made of the implications of the interaction between changes to licensing and gambling laws. [38511]

Mr. Caborn: The reform of licensing and gambling laws share many of the same guiding principles. These include better protection for children, the prevention of

crime and disorder and a generally tougher regime to deal with rogue operators. Changes also provide for increased local decision making, and will deliver more choice for the citizen. We therefore consider the reforms in each area to be mutually supportive.

Of course, as with all major reforms, we will closely monitor and evaluate the impact of the changes in the coming months and years.

London Development Agency

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport pursuant to the answer of 16 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1250W, on the London Development Agency (Vendors), what criteria the London Development Agency (LDA) will use to decide whether to publish shortlists for contracts; and if she will ask the LDA to publish either a shortlist or the reasons for not publishing a shortlist in relation to each contract. [38938]

Mr. Caborn: The decision as to whether shortlists will be published will be considered on a case by case basis and ultimately depend on if it helps or hinders effective and fair competition between suppliers.

These decisions are, and will be, a matter for the London Development Agency and for the Olympic Delivery Authority once it is established.

Ministerial Visits

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what ministerial visits have been undertaken since May by *(a)* the Minister for Sport, *(b)* the Minister for Culture and *(c)* the Minister for Creative Industries and Tourism; what the purpose was of each; and if she will make a statement. [24119]

Tessa Jowell: I am arranging for a list of ministerial visits undertaken since May by *(a)* the Minister for Sport, *(b)* the Minister for Culture and *(c)* the Minister for Creative Industries to be placed in the Libraries of both Houses.

Olympics (Procurement Strategy)

Mr. Betts: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she will publish the initial draft of the procurement strategy drawn up by the Olympic Delivery Authority team; and whether it will include criteria for determining which contracts shortlists will be published. [39234]

Mr. Caborn: The interim Olympic Delivery Authority (ODA) published procurement principles in September 2005 which underpin the development of the ODA's procurement strategy. The procurement strategy for the ODA is currently being drafted. The strategy will be published when it has been approved by the newly-appointed chair and chief executive of the ODA and its board. This is likely to be in spring 2006.

Parliamentary Questions

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport when she will reply to the letter of 23 September (ref: 23821) from the hon. Member for West Worcestershire. [29793]

Mr. Caborn *[holding answer 21 November 2005]:* I am sorry for not replying sooner to the written question from the hon. Member. I replied to the hon. Member's letter of 23 September yesterday 19 December.

Tourism

Mr. Graham Stuart: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport how much has been spent in promoting tourism in rural areas in England in each of the last five years. [38932]

James Purnell: My Department funds the overseas marketing and promotion of all parts of Britain through VisitBritain. VisitBritain also markets England's tourism industry to the British under the auspices of the England Marketing Advisory Board. The promotion of rural areas is a significant part of this work.

Much of VisitBritain's international work is generic marketing of the British offer, and it is not possible to put precise figures on the proportion of its marketing spend which directly relates to the promotion of rural areas.

In the domestic market, VisitBritain's Enjoy England and Outdoor England marketing campaigns have clear rural themes. A total of £1 million was spent on directly promoting rural areas through these campaigns in 2004–05. Further rural promotion was carried out through the Taste, Waterside England, and Just Relax campaigns, on which a total of £750,000 was spent in 2004–05.

In view of the generic nature of much of VisitBritain's marketing work, which is intended to attract visitors to Britain and England rather than to specific locations, it is not possible to provide figures for years prior to 2004–05.

In addition, as part of the Tourism Reform Programme, since 2003, the regional development agencies have undertaken significant tourism promotion of England's rural areas and of course many councils covering rural areas invest in promoting local tourism as well.

Village Halls

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport what steps are being taken to encourage the greater use of village halls; and what funding streams are available for this purpose. [38902]

Mr. Caborn: To date the lottery has awarded over £258 million to village and community halls. The Big Lottery Fund is building on this success and has recently announced that it will make £50 million available over three years through a community buildings programme to benefit projects across England. The new programme, to be launched in 2006, will focus on civil renewal as well as enhance community involvement and cohesion.

ENVIRONMENT, FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

Biodiversity (Planning Applications)

Mrs. Moon: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will incorporate a question about biodiversity interests into the standard planning application form. [37570]

Yvette Cooper: I have been asked to reply.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is currently working with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, English Nature and the Association of Local Government Ecologists (ALGE) to examine how the issue of biodiversity interests could be considered in the standard planning process.

Biofuels

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many hectares in Northamptonshire have been used to grow biofuels in each year since 1997. [38124]

Mr. Morley: Detailed information on the end-use of potential biofuel crops is only available where farmers claim the Energy Aid payment. This was introduced in 2004 and 2826 ha of oilseed rape were planted on non set-aside land for biodiesel production in Northamptonshire in that year.

In addition, 36 ha of miscanthus in 2003 and 45 ha in 2004 were planted under the Energy Crops Scheme for the production of heat or electricity. There were no plantings under the scheme in Northamptonshire from 1997–2002.

Central Heating Installations (Pensioners)

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many pensioners in the Middlesbrough South and East Cleveland constituency will be eligible for free installation of central heating announced in the pre-Budget report. [37739]

Mr. Morley: It was announced in the pre-Budget report that an additional £300 million would be made available to tackle fuel poverty across the UK.

In England, this means that an additional £250 million will be made available to boost the delivery of central heating measures to pensioner households, and particularly those on pension credit through the Warm Front Scheme.

In Middlesbrough, there are 8,400 pension credit claimants and in Redcar and Cleveland there are some 8,000 claimants[1]. Assistance from Warm Front is available for homeowners and tenants in the private sector, so a number of these claimants could be eligible for support from Warm Front.

Those not in receipt of a qualifying benefit at the time of application to Warm Front are offered a benefit entitlement check, which is designed to provide both the potential of increasing household income and to establish eligibility of households to benefit from measures under Warm Front.

[1] Information taken from latest available DWP statistics on number of pension credit claimants by local authority area.

Climate Change

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what plans she has to announce the findings of the Climate Change Review; and if she will make a statement. [39051]

Mr. Morley: We are aiming to publish the revised Climate Change Programme well in advance of the Easter recess.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what representations she has received regarding the climate change review; and whether she plans to make these findings public. [39052]

Mr. Morley: The review of the UK climate change programme was launched in September 2004. A consultation as part of the review was launched on 8 December 2004 at a stakeholder event. Around 300 written responses were received as a result.

IPA Energy Consulting was asked to complete an independent analysis of the responses. Their report can be found at the DEFRA website:

(http://defraweb/environment/climatechange/uk/ukccp/review.htm).

Coastal Erosion

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what steps her Department is taking to ensure that the Environment Agency fulfills its contractual obligations to maintain the sea defences at Unit 20 of the Beachy Head to Selsey bill shoreline management plan. [37905]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency is not generally contractually bound to undertake sea defence works. There are instances where, historically, the Environment Agency's predecessors have entered into agreements with individuals or organisations regarding the maintenance of sea defences.

The first review of the Beachy Head to Selsey bill shoreline management plan (SMP) Unit 20 recommends a policy of managed re-alignment for the River Arun to Poole Place Groyne frontage, Littlehampton. It is proposed that this policy will enable the shape of the coastline to be realigned slightly to enable a more naturally functioning coastline to develop. The exact details of any realignment scheme, including the need for any secondary defences, will be developed in due course following agreement of the SMP.

There are historical agreements that cover the western 1.5km of this 3.5km frontage. These agreements relate to the maintenance of the shingle beach and groynes that were in place when the agreements were made. The Environment Agency has had dialogue with the landowner and is due to meet him in the new year to discuss the long-term plans for the frontage. The Environment Agency is also continuing with operations

to maintain the shingle defence by recycling material along the frontage, and will undertake some work on the timber groynes early in 2006.

Damson Trees

Mark Tami: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what estimate she has made of the number of damson trees in the UK in each of the last five years; and what steps she is taking to preserve them. [37444]

Jim Knight: Defra does not collect data on the number of damson trees in the UK, though the hectarage of plums is recorded annually within the Orchard Fruit Survey for England and Wales. As an important feature of certain rural landscapes, damson orchards have been targeted for restoration through funding under agri-environment schemes, including the new Environmental Stewardship Scheme.

Departmental Buildings

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of the Department's buildings are powered by renewable energy; and what plans she has to increase this proportion. [37958]

Jim Knight: Of the sites for which DEFRA and its Executive Agencies have a contractual responsibility for electricity supplies, 44 percent. are powered from renewable sources. This represented 52 percent. of the total electricity used in 2004–05, 83 percent. at DEFRA buildings and 48 percent. at buildings occupied by agencies.

At contract renewal, opportunities are sought to secure renewable supplies for further sites. We are also actively promoting self-generation of electricity at a number of our sites.

Departmental Consultants

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many civil servants in each grade have left her Department in each of the last three years to join consultancy firms; and which firm each joined. [37363]

Jim Knight: Staff leaving the Department are not required in all circumstances to state the organisation that they are expecting to join. However, civil servants are required to familiarise themselves with, and as appropriate abide by, the rules on the acceptance of outside appointments by Crown servants set out in the Civil Service Management Code. Therefore, civil servants may have to obtain approval before taking up certain types of employment within two years of leaving the service. Records of such requests for approval are not held electronically and therefore the information requested could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Departmental Estate

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what *(a)* land and *(b)* property her Department (i) owns and (ii) rents in each constituency; and if she will make a statement. [33260]

Jim Knight: Lists containing the names and addresses of land and property owned (freehold) and rented (leasehold) by the Department in each constituency are given in the tables which have been placed in the Library.

Departmental Staff

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many and what proportion of each Civil Service grade in her Department is located in each *(a)* region and *(b)* nation of the UK; what the average salary is for each grade; and if she will make a statement. [35918]

Jim Knight: My hon. Friend, the Parliamentary Secretary at the Cabinet Office (Mr. Murphy) will write to the hon. Member with details for the civil service of the percentage of staff in post by region and grade responsibility and the median salary of staff in post by region and grade responsibility as at 1 April 2004. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library.

Entry Level Scheme

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will make a statement on the production of maps to be used for applications under the entry level scheme. [37904]

Jim Knight: Entry level stewardship (ELS) maps are produced by the Rural Development Service when the applicant requests a pre-application pack; the maps are based upon data contained within the Rural Land Register.

The information contained within the map forms a fundamental component of the legal agreement and in particular supports the on site compliance inspections that we are required to undertake.

There have been some problems with incomplete registrations of land on the Rural Land Register, as a backlog of cases developed at the Rural Payments Agency. This occurred when registration requests relating to single payment scheme and environmental stewardship increased to an unprecedented level. However, earlier in the year, outstanding cases that were identified as being linked to an environmental stewardship application were prioritised. Registration for this group of applicants has now been largely completed by the Rural Payments Agency, as part of the on-going efforts to deal with the backlog generated earlier in the year.

Nationally there are now more than 11,000 entry level scheme agreements in place.

EU Environment Council

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what *(a)* matters were discussed and *(b)* decisions were taken at the EU Environment Council on 2 December; on which decisions a vote took place; and how matters affecting the environment in Wales were represented. [35775]

Mr. Morley: A written ministerial statement on the outcome of the council was made on 13 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 135–37WS, in line with the procedures introduced in May 2005.

The Welsh Assembly Government interests were fully involved in agreeing UK positions, where these had a bearing on devolved matters, in the usual way.

EU Sugar Regime

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the likely impact on jobs in London of the proposed EU draft changes to the European Union sugar regime; and if she will make a statement. [31449]

Jim Knight: As my right hon. Friend, the Secretary of State, has separately reported to the House, agreement on reform of the EU sugar regime was successfully concluded under the UK Presidency at the Agriculture and Fisheries Council on 24 November.

The Regulatory Impact Assessment prepared by DEFRA following the publication of the Commission's proposals for reform in June this year included consideration of the likely impact on employment in both the sugar production and processing sectors in the UK as well as in companies using sugar as a raw ingredient.

A significant employer in London in the sugar sector is Tate and Lyle. Assessing the impact on its business of the decisions now reached is a commercial matter for the company itself. In a press release issued following the Council agreement the company made the following statement,

> "Whilst the long-term impact on Tate & Lyle remains significant, the final decision to make the cut in the sugar reference price of 36% (instead of the 39% previously proposed) and to delay the implementation of the price reduction is very welcome."

Expert Advisory Committees

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what account she takes of advice from *(a)* toxicologists working in industry, *(b)* academics funded by agrochemical companies and *(c)* employees of contract research organisations whose income is dependent on agrochemical companies who sit on expert advisory committees. [36743]

Mr. Morley: The Secretary of State takes advice from the independent Advisory Committee on Pesticides (ACP) on matters relating to the control of pests, including advice on the approvals of pesticides. Members of the ACP declare any interests in the agrochemical industry in accordance with their published code of practice. These interests are published in the ACP's annual report.

Farm Payments

Sir Michael Spicer: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs when the farm mapping in respect of the deadline for single payments for farmers of 14 February 2006 is expected to be completed. [37737]

Jim Knight: The Rural Payments Agency is planning to have completed digitising and uploading data into its computer system by the end of January.

Farm Subsidies

Mr. Dunne: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much interest she expects will have accumulated on Single Payment Scheme funds between December 2005 and February 2006; and what proportion of that interest she expects will be distributed to farmers. [R] [38740]

Jim Knight: Common Agricultural Policy funding is reimbursed by the Commission two months in arrears after payment to claimants. No interest will therefore accumulate on Single Payment Scheme funds between December 2005 and February 2006.

Flooding

Lembit Öpik: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the effect on flooding in the Severn Basin of the strategy to reduce water levels in the Clywedog Dam, and if she will make a statement. [37111]

Mr. Morley: The Environment Agency is the principal authority with responsibility for flood risk management in England. The extent to which both the Clywedog and Vyrnwy Reservoirs can help mitigate the effects of flooding in the Severn Basin is limited as any beneficial effect to alleviate flooding rapidly diminishes downstream. Other parts of the catchment also contribute floodwater and the proportion that the reservoir "holds back" becomes smaller as the total catchment area gets bigger.

The catchment area above Clywedog Dam is 2 per cent. of the entire catchment draining to Shrewsbury and 1 per cent. of the catchment draining to Bridgnorth. Previous studies have indicated that the influence of floodwater storage at Llyn Clywedog has extended only as far as Buttington.

A study in 1999 for the Environment Agency confirmed that existing reservoir flood drawdown controls, in place for many years, adequately maximise the opportunity for local flood alleviation. The findings of this study have been reviewed as part of the Fluvial Severn Flood Risk Management Strategy, which was issued for public consultation (including to local MPs) in the summer of 2005.

The Environment Agency's strategy to lower water levels in these reservoirs means more storage being available to hold water during periods of heavy rainfall. This assists flood risk management in the Severn Basin insofar as the reservoirs influence this. However, it should be remembered that the primary function of the reservoirs is to maintain flow in the River Severn during dry periods.

GM Crops

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what proportion of her Department's funding in 2005–06 of research on GM crops and food was allocated to products aimed at benefiting developing countries. [38009]

Mr. Morley: My department does not fund any such research on GM crops and food. Any such work would be the responsibility of the Department for International Development.

DEFRA does fund research into the environmental safety of GMOs to underpin our regulatory responsibilities for the regulation of GMOs within a European context.

Details of our current research programme are available through the DEFRA website:

http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/gm/research/index.htm

Lyons Review

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many departmental officials will be moved from London offices to York; and whether this represents a reduction in overall numbers employed by the Department under the Lyons Review recommendation. [38371]

Jim Knight: To date 22 posts have relocated from London and the South East to York. Around 115 additional posts are planned for relocation to York by March 2008. These relocations all form part of wider transformation programmes, some of which include staff reductions, in line with the Department's Spending Review 04 efficiency targets .

Markets

Mr. Davidson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of the likely impact on environmental regulation of the EU directive on services in the internal market. [35746]

Mr. Morley: The economic benefits of the proposed services directive are likely to be substantial. The Department is discussing the impact of the draft directive on a number of our areas of responsibility, including environmental regulation, with the Department for Trade and Industry as the negotiations progress.

National Parks Authority

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (1) how many prosecutions were brought by National Parks Authority in each year since 1995; [37006]

(2) how many prosecutions have been brought by National Parks against landowners for impeding access to footpaths in the last 10 years. [37225]

Jim Knight: This information is not held centrally.

Mr. Crabb: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what powers national parks have to *(a)* investigate and *(b)* prosecute landowners for impeding access to footpaths; and what the legislative basis is for these powers. [37231]

Jim Knight: National Park Authorities may exercise 1980 Highways Act powers under delegation from the highways authority. The extent of that delegation is variable, depending on what agreement each National Park Authority has reached with its highways authority about rights of way work.

Nuclear Power Stations

Daniel Kawczynski: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what *(a)* assessment she has made of and *(b)* research she has (i) commissioned and (ii) evaluated on the impact on surrounding agricultural land of (A) building, (B) operating and (C) decommissioning nuclear power stations. [35174]

Mr. Morley: No assessments or research of this kind have been commissioned by DEFRA. Environmental impact assessments are required for both the construction and decommissioning of nuclear power stations. Measurements of radioactivity in the environment, including around nuclear power stations, are given in the annual Radioactivity in Food and the Environment report published by the Environment Agency, Scottish Environment Protection Agency, Environment & Heritage Service of Northern Ireland and the Food Standards Agency.

Pesticides

Mr. Meacher: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will require the members of *(a)* the Advisory Committee on Pesticides (ACP) and *(b)* the ACP's Medical and Toxicology Panel to update their declarations of interests within a fortnight of any change; and if she will publish the declarations on the internet. [35801]

Mr. Morley: The current arrangements provide a substantial amount of information about the interests of the ACP and its Medical and Toxicology Panel. Members of the ACP are required to make their declarations of interest on appointment and annually thereafter, as set out in the ACP code of practice. This annual register of interests is published in the annual report both in hard copy and on the website.

Interests are also required to be declared at ACP meetings. Members are asked to identify any personal specific interests in advance of papers being distributed for meetings (those with personal interests do not receive the papers and leave the meeting for discussion of that specific item) and to declare any of these interests ahead of discussion at ACP meetings. Where a member declares an interest in an item for discussion at the ACP this is recorded in the minutes which are published on the website.

Membership of the ACP's panels, including the Medical and Toxicology Panel, is published in the ACP annual report. Members of the panels are not appointed as independent experts but include representative organisations and officials as well as members of the ACP. The interests of the ACP members are declared and the affiliations of the other members are published in the ACP annual report.

Private Members Bills

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will list those Private Members' Bills introduced under *(a)* Standing Order No.14(6), *(b)* Standing Order No.23 and *(c)* Standing Order No.57 which were (i) supported and (ii) opposed by her Department in each session since 1997–98. [35979]

Jim Knight: The information requested by the hon. Member could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Rural Crime

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what recent discussions she has had with the Home Secretary on measures to tackle rural crime, with particular reference to the theft of agricultural equipment. [38209]

Jim Knight: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, (Margaret Beckett) met with the Home Secretary (Charles Clarke) on 15 November 2005 to discuss Home Office measures to tackle rural crime.

On 30 November 2005, I also met with the Home Secretary (Charles Clarke) and my right hon. Friend the Minister of State (Hazel Blears) to discuss recent Home Office policies to tackle rural crime.

In addition, DEFRA officials have met with Home Office officials on a number of occasions to discuss measures to tackle rural crime, including the theft of agriculture equipment.

Rural Payments Agency

Mr. Maples: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what assessment she has made of whether the Rural Payments Agency will begin processing applications under the Fresh Fruit and Vegetable scheme in time for Producer Organisations to meet the registration deadline of 15 December 2005. [37282]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 13 December 2005]:* Applications for recognition as new Producer Organisations are being processed by the Rural Payments Agency and will be completed by the 15 December 2005.

A similar deadline operates for decisions on operational programmes and funds from these new Producer Organisations and for amendments to existing operational programmes. Commission Regulation (EC) No 2190/2004 allows member states to take these decisions not later than 20 January 2005 following the date of application. The UK has decided to implement this option and extend the approval deadline for new operational programmes and amendments to existing operational programmes to 20 January 2006. Existing and potential Producer Organisations were informed of this revised date on 7 December 2005.

Single Farm Payment Scheme

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what tests have been applied to applications under the 2005 Single Farm Payment Scheme in England to ensure that applicants are in legal occupation of the holdings used for the claim. [36629]

Jim Knight: There is no requirement in the European Regulations governing the Single Payment Scheme that the farmer claiming aid has to be in legal occupation of the land supporting the claim. However, to receive payment the farmer must carry out an agricultural activity or maintain the land in good agricultural or environmental condition and the land has to be at the farmer's disposal for 10 months of the year between prescribed dates. Compliance monitoring inspections, including checks on the 10 month provision, are undertaken on a proportion of claims. Where two or more claims are made on the same land parcel claims will be investigated and resolved.

Spiders

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how many venomous spiders that do not naturally live in the United Kingdom have been found in the United Kingdom in each of the last five years, broken down by type. [37951]

Jim Knight: All spiders have the ability to produce venom with which they immobilise their prey, but not all spiders are considered to be venomous in the sense that they may pose a threat to human health.

No one agency collates all the recorded finds of non-native spiders found in the UK. Specimens are sent to a variety of organisations including local environmental health officers, pest control companies, local and national museums and universities for examination and identification. It is therefore impossible to put an absolute figure on the number of non-native spiders recorded in the UK on an annual basis.

The Central Science Laboratory, an executive agency of DEFRA, provides an invertebrate identification service primarily for plant health quarantine purposes and does receive a limited number of spider specimens each year. During the last five-year period this service saw an average of 26 spiders per annum, almost all collected off plant material with some import connection. Approximately 90 per cent. of these were non-native species. Of these, only one species, the Melbourne trap-door spider (Stanwellia grisea), is considered to be venomous to man. One confirmed, and two unconfirmed, specimens of this species were intercepted on tree ferns imported from Australia in 2004. This spider has very large fangs and can inflict a painful, but not dangerous bite. Since this find, tree ferns have been subject to greater control prior to export from Australia and New Zealand and so live invertebrates such as this are less likely to be encountered on this commodity.

Another traditional means of spiders entering the country in an uncontrolled way has been via bananas, although this is now very rare since not only are banana crops increasingly sprayed with pesticides during growth, but refrigeration kills any travellers who escape that. Similarly, arrival on uncut timber is much reduced, since the amount of 'raw' timber imported has fallen, replaced by processed timber.

Taxi Travel

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs how much has been spent by her Department on taxi travel in the 2005–06 financial year; and what proportion of such travel was undertaken in each nation and region of the United Kingdom, including London. [37470]

Jim Knight: The Department does not hold centrally information on the cost of travel by taxi, this could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Unlawful Activities

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what activities have been made unlawful by legislation introduced by her Department since 1 May 2001; and if she will make a statement. [35980]

Jim Knight: The following Acts created criminal offences in the 2002–03 session of Parliament

Animal Health Act 2002 (c.42)

Created several criminal offences including the offence of deliberately infecting an animal with any one of 15 diseases specified in the Act, including foot-and-mouth disease. The schedule created an offence of failing to comply with a restriction notice preventing the use for breeding of sheep that are of a genotype that is susceptible to transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSE) and also offences of obstructing an inspector carrying out duties under the Act.

The Waste and Emissions Trading Act 2003 (c.33)

Provided powers to make offences by regulation for failures to comply with the scheme to be created.

The Water Act 2003 (c.37)

Made it an offence under Part 1 to fail to comply with a notice served by the Environment Agency requiring work to be carried out on facilities for impounding water or a licence application to be made for unlicensed impounding works.

Where abstraction or impounding takes place without a licence or does not comply with the terms of a licence, the Act made it an offence to fail to comply with an enforcement notice issued by the Environment Agency.

Part 2 created the offence of introducing water to or supplying water from a water undertaker's supply system without being a water undertaker or a licensed supply person. Under Part 3 it is an offence for an owner of manager of a large raised reservoir to fail to prepare a flood plan when required to do so. Part 3 also extended the offence of supplying water unfit for human consumption to apply to persons including employees of the water undertaker and self-employed people involved with the supply of water.

During the 2003–04 session the following Acts created criminal offences:

The Gangmasters (Licensing) Act 2004 (c.11)

Makes it an offence for any person to act as an unlicensed gangmaster and for any other person to enter into arrangements with an unlicensed gangmaster.

The Act also created other offences in relation to forgery of documents.

The Highways (Obstruction by Body Corporate) Act 2004 (c.29)

Extended the offence of obstructing a highway under the Highways Act 1980 so that the directors, managers and other company officers of a guilty company may also be found guilty of the obstruction if it was committed with their consent, connivance or attributable to their neglect.

The Hunting Act 2004 (c.37)

Made it an offence under Part 1 to hunt a wild mammal with a dog, except in some circumstances such as where the dog is being used for stalking and flushing-out only, or to participate in, attend or knowingly facilitate a hare-coursing event.

Part 1 also makes it an offence for the owner of a dog to permit it to be used for hunting or hare-coursing or for the owner of land to allow the land to be entered or used for hunting or hare-coursing.

During the 2004–2005 session the following Act created criminal offences:

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 (c. 16)

Created offences in relation to "nuisance parking" which is the selling or repairing of vehicles on a road by persons in business. Part 6 of the Act created offences in relation to breach of "dog control orders", which in relation to specified land may exclude dogs from the land, or prohibit the fouling of the land, or require dogs to be kept on leads when on the land or may limit the number of dogs a person may take onto the specified land. In relation to certain premises in an "Alarm Notification Area" Part 7 of the Act created offences of failing to nominate a key-holder where an audible intruder alarm is present.

The Act also made many existing offences punishable by a fixed penalty notice.

Upland Farmers

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs if she will ensure that Entry Level Stewardship takes into account the special character of the English uplands in relation to payment options. [38156]

Jim Knight *[holding answer 19 December 2005]:* The creation of Environmental Stewardship (of which Entry Level Stewardship is a part), involved extensive consultations with stakeholders and other interested groups. Entry Level Stewardship, as the 'whole farm' scheme open to all farmers and land managers, has been designed to cover the vast majority of landscapes and farming systems in England, including those found in upland areas.

The uplands have a specific range of options, such as those relating to moorland and rough grazing which take into account farming systems in those areas. Entry Level Stewardship has a national payment rate of £30 per hectare, per year, however land parcels of 15 hectares or more in the Less Favoured Area, are eligible for payments of £8 per hectare, per year. This lower payment rate reflects the reduced management input required for these options.

Water Consumption

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what her

estimate is of the number of litres of *(a)* sparkling and *(b)* still water consumed in the United Kingdom in (i) 2001 and (ii) 2002. [37638]

Jim Knight: It is estimated that 747 million litres of mineral water were consumed by household members in the UK in the period from April 2001 to March 2002 and 793 million litres in the period from April 2002 to March 2003. These estimates are based upon records of consumer purchases from the Expenditure and Food Survey which doesn't distinguish between still and sparkling mineral water. Figures published by Mintel in its bottled water report of June 2005 indicate that 20 per cent. of bottled water in 2001 was sparkling.

Zoonotic Disease

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs what research her Department has evaluated on the zoonotic disease risks arising from the intensification of *(a)* meat and *(b)* dairy production in other countries. [38166]

Mr. Bradshaw: Defra has not specifically evaluated or commissioned work on the zoonotic disease risks arising from the intensification of meat or dairy production in other countries. However, Defra's veterinary surveillance strategy has the detection of new and emerging animal disease threats as one of its aims.

Defra collaborates closely with the Department of Health on zoonotic risks through the National Expert Panel on New and Emerging Infections. This body has within its remit the identification of emerging and potential infectious threats to public health both nationally and internationally.

INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT

Administrative Savings

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what administrative savings have been made by his Department in each of the last eight years. [34936]

Mr. Thomas: The administration costs outturn figures for DFID for the past eight years are set out in the following table:

£

	Running costs outturn	*Administration costs outturn*
1997–98	52,000,000	—
1998–99	59,000,000	—
1999–2000	75,000,000	—
2000–01	73,000,000	—
2001–02	82,000,000	—
2002–03	94,000,000	—
2003–04	—	197,000,000
2004–05 (DFID resource account 2004–05)	—	212,000,000

Sources:
[Figures for 1997–98 to 2003–04 from DR 2000, 2004, 2005. Figure for 2004–05 from DFID resource accounts 2004–05]

Comparisons between administration budgets in 2003–04 and earlier years are not possible, due to the adoption of a new administration definition which included administration related items previously recorded within programme expenditure. The new definition improves transparency and management of administration costs.

Since 1997 the overseas budget has increased significantly, DFID's resource Departmental Expenditure Limit (DEL) increased by 50.8 per cent. between 1998–99 and 2004–05. Over the same period, the administration budget has grown modestly to support the expanding programme.

Under the SR04 Efficiency Programme, DFID will be saving £20 million in administration costs by 2007–08 (in 2007–08 prices) over a baseline of the 2005–06 budget. Headcount reductions and relocations contribute towards this, as does a reduction of the support services budget by £4.2 million, taking into account inflation, by 2007–08, over the same baseline. Further details can be found in DFID's Efficiency Technical Note, available on the DFID website address at www.dfid.gov.uk

Afghanistan

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development what steps the Government are taking in Afghanistan to provide alternative poppy cultivation; and what progress is being made. [38893]

Hilary Benn: DFID leads the Government's efforts to develop alternative livelihoods in Afghanistan. In financial year 2005–06, DFID is spending over £45 million on alternative livelihoods. This is almost a tenfold increase on the amount spent in 2003–04.

DFID's assistance is closely aligned with the Government of Afghanistan's leadership on alternative livelihoods. DFID has invested a £27 million in quick impact alternative livelihoods this year. This is going through the Afghan Government's National Priority Programmes. This support will provide over 3 million labour days; access to microfinance for over 20,000 new clients including opium debt refinancing; and support for local infrastructure development to 150 villages.

DFID funding also helps improve long-term agricultural opportunities for Afghan farmers. DFID is contributing a joint US$30 million nationwide programme with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), to increase access for over 500,000 farmers to seeds and fertiliser as an alternative to poppy. Innovative ways for farmers to make a living are also being pursued, including apricot drying, honey bee keeping, tailoring and weaving and the introduction of fruit tree nurseries and greenhouses for vegetable production.

At the same time as developing agricultural opportunities, it is important to develop non-farm alternative livelihoods if we are to ensure longer term sustainability. DFID activities in Badakshan and Eastern Hazarajat provinces are developing sustainable economic alternatives and social incentives to enable farmers to stop growing poppy.

Food Emergencies

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development pursuant to the answer of 27 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 513W, on food emergencies, what recent assessments his Department

has made of food emergencies in *(a)* Angola, *(b)* Burkina Faso, *(c)* Burundi, *(d)* Chad, *(e)* the Central African Republic, *(f)* the Democratic Republic of Congo, *(g)* Cote d'Ivoire, *(h)* Eritrea, *(i)* Ethiopia, *(j)* Guinea, *(k)* Kenya, *(l)* Lesotho, *(m)* Liberia, *(n)* Malawi, *(o)* Mali, *(p)* Mauritania, *(q)* Niger, *(r)* Sierra Leone, *(s)* Somalia, *(t)* Sudan, *(u)* Swaziland, *(v)* Tanzania, *(w)* Uganda and *(x)* Zimbabwe. [37433]

Hilary Benn: DFID routinely monitors the humanitarian situation across Africa, and follows up on reports of significantly changes with more detailed assessments. In most of these countries the situation remains largely unchanged since our October analysis, with the exception of Southern Africa and Somalia, where the situation has recently deteriorated.

In Southern Africa, DFID's assessment is that 11.4 million people are facing food shortages and are in need of assistance. As a result, our humanitarian commitment to the affected countries in the region has recently increased to £64 million. This includes £18.2 million to Malawi, £41 million to Zimbabwe, £350,000 to Lesotho, and £300,000 to Swaziland.

In Somalia, the drought continues to intensify, affecting up to 400,000 people and resulting in very high rates of malnutrition in some areas. To respond, DFID has recently allocated £1 million to the World Food Programme's emergency operation in Somalia.

Angola, which was not covered in the response provided on 27 October 2005, is not facing a food emergency, having benefited from a record harvest in 2005. However, pockets of vulnerable and food-insecure people remain, particularly recently repatriated refugees, and aspects of DFID's £6 million humanitarian assistance to Angola over the last two years have been geared to meeting their needs.

GM Crops

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development (1) what assessment he has made of the effects on developing countries of golden rice; [38757]

(2) what assessment he has made of the economic impact of growing genetically modified crops in developing countries; [38758]

(3) what assessment he has made of the impact of biotechnology companies' contracts on seed sharing and saving in developing countries. [38759]

Hilary Benn *[holding answer 19 December 2205]:* The Nuffield Council on Bioethics report (2004) provided a review of the actual and potential benefits of genetically modified (GM) crops for developing countries. The Government shares the report's conclusions that achieving food security and reducing poverty in developing countries are complex issues, that GM crops are unlikely to feed the world, but that in some circumstances they could make a useful contribution to improving the livelihoods of poor people in developing countries.

In 2000, DFID funded a study on the development of methodologies for assessing the impacts of modern agricultural biotechnology on poor people. DFID has not made specific assessments on the benefits or potential problems of golden rice or the impact of biotechnology companies on seed sharing and saving in developing countries.

DFID takes genetic modification in crops and foods and its potential impacts on developing countries very seriously. Our approach is based on the principle that the health of people and their environment is of primary concern. We recognise that GM technology in itself will not solve the problem of world hunger. It can, however, be used safely and effectively to promote development and reduce poverty, if managed responsibly and applied to those crops on which the poor rely.

Recognising that there are both potential benefits and risks associated with GM crops, developing countries should be able to make their own informed choices about whether to adopt GM technologies. To this end, DFID worked with The Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) and other Government Departments to establish the Cartagena Protocol on Biosafety, under the Convention on Biological Diversity.

The Protocol aims to ensure that countries are provided with the information necessary to make informed decisions before agreeing to the import of genetically modified organisms. It also facilitates the exchange of information on living modified organisms and assists countries in the implementation of the Protocol. The Protocol has a strong precautionary approach. This means that importing countries are able to make a decision to avoid or minimise potential adverse effects of GM organisms, even if there is a lack of scientific certainty on the extent of such potential adverse effects.

Ministerial Travel

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development on how many occasions since 7 July he has used the London Underground in connection with his official duties. [35021]

Hilary Benn: This information is not recorded.

World Water Forum

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for International Development who from his Department will attend the World Water Forum in Mexico City in March 2006; and what his Department's role will be at the forum. [37496]

Hilary Benn: The Fourth World Water Forum that is due to be held in Mexico City from 16 to 22 March 2006 will be attended by senior officials from the Department for International Development. DFID will use the forum to re-confirm the main outcomes of the 14th session of the Commission for Sustainable Development and to push for more effective implementation of the work of the UN agencies involved with water and sanitation. The Minister of State for the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA), will represent the UK at the high level segment of the forum.

SOLICITOR-GENERAL

Consultants

Martin Horwood: To ask the Solicitor-General if he will list departmental projects conducted by consultants in each year since 2000; what the cost was in each case; and what the total cost of employing consultants was in each year. [29084]

The Solicitor-General: Detailed information on the use and total cost of consultants for the Law Officers' Departments in the years in question could be ascertained only at disproportionate cost. The following data identifies projects where the Law Officers' Departments have brought in special skills and expertise to provide an independent assessment on significant business areas.

£

	2000–01	2001–02	2002–03	2003–04	2004–05	2005–06
Crown Prosecution Service						
Equality and diversity review of CPS	9,143	116,755	—	—	—	—
Research assessment of how CPS manages diversity issues in the prosecution process	—	257,491	346,553	139,553	—	—
Review of governance and communications	—	—	47,685	16,866	—	—
Value for money assessment of the COMPASS contract	—	—	—	64,085	—	—
Review of internal and external communications	—	—	—	—	26,781	—
Review of the CPS Equality and Diversity Complaints Procedure	—	—	—	—	19,153	—
HM CPS Inspectorate						
Review of, and provide advice on, HMCPSI's Risk Register	—	—	—	7,500	—	—
Provision of advice on development of service level agreements for support services within HMCPSI	—	—	—	5,422	—	—
Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Service	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	[1]—	
Consultancy in support of the Department's pay system	—	—	—	—	—	8,500
Serious Fraud Office						
Operational effectiveness—electronic presentation of evidence	—	—	9,000	38,000	40,000	16,000
Docman	78,000	107,000	514,000	389,000	858,000	177,000
Advice on strategic effectiveness	—	—	—	—	26,000	16,000
Finance Systems	—	40,000	80,000	12,000	77,000	45,000
Finance functional review	—	—	—	45,000	6,000	—
Human resources	—	24,000	3,000	—	45,000	45,000
Information technology security	42,000	111,000	12,000	3,000	—	—
Information technology infrastructure	63,000	—	82,000	155,000	155,000	293,000
Accommodation	—	24,000	51,000	14,000	23,000	20,000
Treasury Solicitor's Office						
Pay and grading, competency framework and job evaluation	45,300	47,383	16,683	4,250	—	—
Quinquennial Review	—	60,000	—	—	—	—
360 degree feedback	—	22,709	13,848	—	—	—
Staff survey	—	—	10,000	35,100	28,552	—
Equal pay review	—	—	19,000	2,000	12,161	—
Diversity issues	—	—	3,224	6,866	—	—
Review of business process targets and PRACAMs development	—	—	93,860	—	—	—
Review of costs	—	—	—	—	—	5,500
Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers						
Financial Management and Human Resources	—	—	—	—	9,867	—
Human Resources and Website development	—	—	—	—	—	8,418

[1] RCPS was established on 18 April 2005.

Departmental Building

Mr. Amess: To ask the Solicitor-General what *(a)* building and *(b)* refurbishment projects are planned by his Department in (i) the current and (ii) the next financial year; and what the estimated costs are of each project. [34538]

The Solicitor-General: None of the Law Officers' Departments has any building projects planned in either 2005–06 or 2006–07.

The Crown Prosecution Service and HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate have no refurbishment projects planned in either 2005–06 or 2006–07.

The Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office was established on 18 April 2005 and has a project underway to refurbish its office accommodation in accordance with the Gower Hammond, Butterfield and HMCPSI reports. The work is due for completion by March 2006 at an estimated cost of £850,000. They have no refurbishment plans for 2006–07.

The Serious Fraud Office will upgrade its office accommodation at Elm House at an estimated cost of £500,000 in 2005–06 and £1,500,000 in 2006–07.

The Treasury Solicitor's Office relocated its office in 2005–06 to accommodation rented from the Civil Aviation Authority, refurbishment of which was undertaken by the CAA. TSol has no other plans for refurbishment in either 2005–06 or 2006–07.

The Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers expects to re-locate its offices in 2006–07 or 2007–08 and refurbishment of the new location may be necessary but no decision has yet been made nor any project costs estimated.

Departmental Expenditure

Martin Horwood: To ask the Solicitor-General how much the Law Officers Department and its agencies have spent on *(a)* the design and production of new logos and *(b)* employing external (i) public relations and (ii) graphic design agencies in each year since 2000, broken down by project. [33199]

The Solicitor-General: The Attorney-General's Office does not sponsor any agencies but the Law Officers superintend the Crown Prosecution Service, HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate, the Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office, Serious Fraud Office and the Treasury Solicitor's Office.

None of the Departments have employed external public relations agencies.

The CPS has not incurred expenditure on the design and production of new logos. Expenditure has been incurred nationally on graphic design agencies to assist in the production of internal and external communication material about the role and work of the CPS is shown in the following table. Records are not kept centrally on expenditure on external graphic design by CPS areas but it would be minimal.

Project	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*
'Inform'/'CPS News'	10,108	14,060	15,490	39,870	46,750	42,360
Area Annual Reports	20,204	11,999	8,473	15,546	21,080	7,108
CPS Annual Report	4,381	[1]6,120	[1]6,433	6,552	9,653	10,123
Intranet design work	—	80,345	20,562	—	—	—
CPS Business Plan	—	—	—	6,392	5,699	7,508
'Charging' project	—	—	—	13,625	5,888	1,287
Network Newsletter	—	—	—	—	14,353	—
'COMPASS' Annual Report	—	—	—	—	10,918	—
Prosecution College	—	—	—	—	1,800	—
Law Scholarship Scheme	—	—	—	—	10,340	—
HR design work	—	—	—	—	48,694	4,818
'No Witness, No Justice' project	—	—	—	—	176	6,033
Invest project	—	—	—	—	—	8,200
	34,693	112,524	50,958	81,985	175,351	87,437

[1] estimated.

HMCPSI has not incurred expenditure on the design and production of new logos. On graphic design services it has spent:

Project	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Design of Report covers	2,251	—	—
Design of HMCPSI Annual Report 2002–04 and 2004–05	—	8,807	10,535

RCPO came into being on 18 April 2005 and employed the Central Office of Information to develop its first logo and design corporate material to establish its identity. Final invoices have not yet been received but the budget for all the design and logo work is under £40,000.

In 2004, SFO spent £3,290 on the design of new logos. Its graphic design expenditure is integral to a small publications programme and the cost cannot be separately identified.

In 2004–05, the Treasury Solicitor's Office employed a design consultancy to create and develop a new corporate identity and supply final artwork and implementation guidelines for a cost of £18,900.

Departmental Research

Bob Spink: To ask the Solicitor-General what research projects commissioned by his Department are being undertaken; and what the publication arrangements are in each case. [33002]

The Solicitor-General: Currently none of the Law Officers' Departments[1] is undertaking any research project.

[1] The Law Officers' Departments are the Crown Prosecution Service, HM Crown Prosecution Service Inspectorate, Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office, Serious Fraud Office and Treasury Solicitors' Office (including the Legal Secretariat to the Law Officers).

Departmental Tendering Policy

Martin Horwood: To ask the Solicitor-General what the Law Officer's Departments' policy is on including *(a)* ethical and *(b)* environmental factors in tenders for services. [33325]

The Solicitor-General: The Law Officers' Departments expect to let their contracts in accordance with moral principles and consider the suitability of any contractor to perform services on their behalf, including any instance where evidence to the contrary was presented, before awarding the contract.

Letting of the Departments' contracts complies with the Government's procurement principles and Community law. Where relevant, the approach taken by contractors to minimising impact on the environment when performing services on behalf of the Departments forms part of the evaluation criteria used to award contracts.

Equitable Life

Dr. Cable: To ask the Solicitor-General pursuant to his answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*,

column 502W, on Equitable Life, what account he takes of the completion of relevant civil actions on 2 December; and when the Serious Fraud Office will report on its examination of Equitable Life, commissioned by his Department in January 2004. [38745]

The Solicitor-General: On 19 December 2005 the Serious Fraud Office reported that it will not open an investigation into the Equitable Life Assurance Society.

After careful consideration of the available evidence, including the penrose report and material held by the Society and following the result of the Society's civil action against its previous auditors and some of its former directors. The Serious Fraud Office confirmed that nothing has emerged which would justify a full criminal investigation into the affairs of the Equitable Life Assurance Society.

Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act

Pete Wishart: To ask the Solicitor-General (1) what discussions the Attorney General has had with the Scottish Executive on the commencement of sections 25 to 29 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1990; [38633]

(2) what assessment the Attorney General has made of the implications for the legal services sector in Scotland of the non-commencement of sections 25 to 29 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1990. [38634]

The Solicitor-General: The Attorney General has not any discussions or carried out any assessment of the implications for the legal services sector in Scotland of the non-commencement of sections 25 to 29 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1990.

Media Monitoring

Philip Davies: To ask the Solicitor-General how much the Law Officers' Department has spent on media monitoring activities in each of the last eight financial years. [35626]

The Solicitor-General: The Law Officers Departments have spent the following amounts on media monitoring services, for those years where departmental records have not been destroyed or identification would not incur disproportionate cost.

£

Department	*1998–89*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*
Legal Secretariat to Law Officers		4,694	12,699	13,802
Crown Prosecution Service	—	—	—	—
HMCPS Inspectorate	0	0	0	0
Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office[2]	—	—	—	—
Serious Fraud Office	9,285	8,581	6,984	4,677
Treasury Solicitor's Office	0	0	0	0

Department	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*	*2005–06*[1]
Legal Secretariat to Law Officers	15,905	16,020	23,159	29,378
Crown Prosecution Service	25,097	78,823	15,872	31,626
HMCPS Inspectorate	0	0	0	0
Revenue and Customs Prosecutions Office[2]	—	—	—	0
Serious Fraud Office	11,457	13,369	11,289	7,691
Treasury Solicitor's Office	0	0	0	0

[1] 2005–06 to date.
[2] RCPO was established on 18 April 2005

SCOTLAND

Cold Weather Payments

Mr. David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland how much was paid in cold weather payments in winter 2004–05 to households in *(a)* Midlothian and *(b)* Scotland. [35308]

Mr. Timms: I have been asked to reply.

The available information is in the table.

Area	*Amount of cold weather payments made last winter (£)*
Midlothian	0
Scotland	[1]47,000

[1] Approximately

Notes:
1. If the average temperature has been recorded as, or is forecast to be, 0 C or below over seven consecutive days at a weather station, then a cold weather payment is "triggered" for all eligible customers whose postcode is linked to that weather station.
2. The weather station associated with postcodes in Midlothian did not trigger last winter.
3. The amount for Scotland is based on the number of people who were estimated to qualify because the weather station linked to their postcode triggered last winter. The number of estimated qualifiers was obtained from the benefit systems at the end of October before last winter. It excludes people on income support and income-based jobseeker's allowance who qualified because they had a disabled child aged five or over and who received support for that child via child tax credit.

Departmental Staff

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland what steps are taken by his Department to support staff with mental ill-health. [36272]

David Cairns: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 19 December 2005 *Official Report*, column 2370W.

Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Scotland (1) what discussions the Advocate-General has had with the Scottish Executive on the commencement of sections 25 to 29 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1990; [38631]

(2) what assessment the Advocate-General has made of the implications for the legal services sector in Scotland of the non-commencement of sections 25 to 29 of the Law Reform (Miscellaneous Provisions) (Scotland) Act 1990. [38632]

David Cairns: The commencement of these sections is a matter for Scottish Executive Ministers. It is for Scottish Executive Ministers to assess the implications of non-commencement.

HEALTH

Alzheimer's Disease

2. **Michael Connarty:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice she has issued to general practitioners on drugs which are suitable for the treatment of the early onset of Alzheimer's disease. [38391]

Jane Kennedy: The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence issued guidance in 2001 on the clinical and cost effectiveness of drugs for the treatment of Alzheimer's disease. That guidance is currently under review.

22. **Lynne Featherstone:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her Department's policy is on treatment for Alzheimer's disease. [38413]

Mr. Byrne: The Department's policy on the treatment of Alzheimer's disease is clearly stipulated in the mental health standard of the Older People's National Service Framework (NSF).

This policy statement has been recently reinforced with the publication of our service development guide, "Everybody's Business", which outlines the key components of a comprehensive older people's mental health service including dementia care.

Waiting Lists

14. **Andrew George:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what advice she has given in respect of the management of hospital waiting lists. [38405]

Mr. Byrne: The Department has published a wide range of advice to help the NHS improve the service it provides to patients, including reducing waiting times.

Guidance on the management of waiting times is available on the Department's website.

NHS Complaints Procedure

15. **Mr. Simon:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to improve the NHS complaints procedure. [38406]

Jane Kennedy: We are working closely with stakeholders to develop a more patient-focused system. This will build on the transfer of responsibility for independent review of complaints which is now undertaken by the Healthcare Commission.

Private Health Providers

16. **Dr. Pugh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was spent by acute trusts on directly and indirectly commissioning and subcontracting private health providers in 2004–05. [38407]

Ms Hewitt: This information is not collected.

However, in 2004–05 NHS spending on non-NHS healthcare was over £3.6 billion. This includes expenditure on services provided by all non-NHS bodies, including local authorities, other statutory bodies, and the independent sector.

NHS spending on the nationally procured independent sector services was £78.8 million in 2004–05 and is included in the above figure.

Mental Health

17. **Mr. David Jones:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects to be in a position to publish the Mental Health Bill. [38408]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Mental Health Bill was in the Queen's Speech for this Session. We plan to introduce it when the legislative timetable permits.

20. **David Howarth:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the prospects for mental health care. [38411]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The national service framework (NSF) for mental health (1999) has produced demonstrable improvements in specialist care, hospital accommodation, suicide prevention, research, clinical guidance, primary care, access, finance and workforce development.

23. **James Duddridge:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the effect of the delay in the introduction of the Mental Health Bill. [38414]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Our intention remains, as previously stated, to introduce the Bill in this session when the legislative timetable permits.

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients were treated for mental ill-health in Hackney North and Stoke Newington in each of the last three years for which figures are available, broken down by ethnic origin. [37624]

Jane Kennedy: Information is not held in the format requested.

Ms Abbott: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was allocated for mental health services in Hackney North and Stoke Newington in each of the last three financial years for which figures are available. [37625]

Jane Kennedy: The funding allocations are made to primary care trusts (PCTs) and the City and Hackney PCT funding allocations for the last three financial years are shown in the table.

	Funding (£ million)
2003–04	266.2
2004–05	295.1
2005–06	326.1

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what funding was allocated in Coventry South for mental health services in each of the last three years. [38768]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Primary care trusts do not receive a separate funding stream for mental health services.

Disability Nurse Specialists

18. **Bob Russell:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what progress has been made on the appointment of disability nurse specialists at general hospitals. [38409]

Mr. Byrne: There are no national targets for disability nurse specialists working in general hospitals. It is for the NHS locally to determine skill mix within the nursing work force. The Government have supported the development of a range of specialist roles within nursing, and hospitals must deploy them as they see fit.

General Ophthalmic Services Contract

19. **Mr. Caton:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health what assessment she has made of the effectiveness of the General Ophthalmic Services contract in England. [38410]

Ms Rosie Winterton: Current arrangements provide ready access to a choice of providers for patients who are eligible for NHS-funded sight tests. The Review of General Ophthalmic Services provides an opportunity to review ways in which we and the NHS can build on these successful arrangements.

Primary Care Trusts (North Yorkshire)

21. **Miss McIntosh:** To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the restructuring of primary care trusts in North Yorkshire. [38412]

Mr. Byrne: In North Yorkshire, the SHA is consulting on two options for PCT reconfiguration. Consultations began on 14 December, and will run for 14 weeks until 22 March.

No decisions on reconfiguration will be made until the consultation is complete.

Abortion

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1798W, to the hon. Member for Romford, (Andrew Rosindell), on abortions, if she will make a statement on the increase in expenditure on terminations. [34393]

Caroline Flint: The increase in expenditure by the national health service on abortions is likely to be due to a number of factors. The NHS is now funding more abortions than in 1997 (from 123,886 to 152,385 in 2004, a 23 per cent. increase) and the cost of performing an abortion has increased since 1997, as has been the case for most other treatments.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when her Department last undertook an evidence review into the use of *(a)* RU486 (mifepristone) and *(b)* the morning-after pill that drew on (i) UK and (ii) international research; and if she will make a statement. [34601]

Jane Kennedy: In the United Kingdom mifepristone (RU486) and the emergency contraceptive pill (as Levonelle-2) have been available as prescription-only medicines since 1991, following advice from the then Committee on Safety of Medicines (CSM) that was based on a review of all the available evidence for safety, efficacy and quality.

The safety of mifepristone and the emergency contraceptive pill are also monitored by the Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) on a continual basis using both UK and international data. Thus, yellow card reports of suspected adverse drug reactions, periodic safety update reports submitted by marketing authorisation holders and new research published in the medical literature are reviewed regularly. In the event that these processes identify information that changes the balance of risks and benefits of a medicine, advice is sought from the Commission on Human Medicines, formerly the Committee on Safety of Medicines, and its expert advisory groups.

When a medicine is on the market, the Department will (re-)review its use in response to a specific stimulus, such as a safety concern, a proposed change in policy or a proposal to change the dose, indication or legal classification. Such reviews take into consideration all relevant data, regardless of whether it was generated in the UK or elsewhere.

The MHRA, in consultation with the wider Department, reviewed the use of the emergency contraceptive pill in 2001, when Levonelle-2 was made available for sale in pharmacies as Levonelle; in 2003, when the dosing regimen was changed from taking two tablets 12 hours apart to taking them at the same time; and in relation to this, when the strength of the pill was doubled in 2004. Advice from the CSM was sought on all occasions.

The use of mifepristone was most recently reviewed by the MHRA in September 2005. This followed the receipt of new information about the reporting of serious suspected adverse reactions in the United States of America. No new safety concerns were identified and

no action considered necessary. We are also aware that the Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists reviewed the use of mifepristone when producing the 2004 edition of its evidence-based guideline 'The Care of Women Requesting Induced Abortion'.

As with all licensed medicines, the safety of the emergency contraceptive pill and mifepristone will continue to be monitored by the MHRA.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) which *(a)* Government Departments and *(b)* stakeholders outside Government were consulted by her Department when producing the Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment on the Prohibition of Abortion (England and Wales) Bill; how many of the outside bodies consulted (i) support and (ii) oppose legalised abortion; and if she will make a statement; [36376]

(2) what evidential basis her Department used for the estimate of the number of illegal abortions in Table 1 of the Partial Regulatory Impact Assessment on the Prohibition of Abortion (England and Wales) Bill; and if she will make a statement. [36377]

Caroline Flint: When developing the partial regulatory impact assessment (PRIA) on the proposed Prohibition of Abortion (England and Wales) Bill we contacted a range of Government Departments and stakeholders to get the best possible understanding of the Bill. Whilst we are aware that some of these stakeholders have strong views on abortion we did not seek information on where organisations stand on the broader issue. A list of those consulted is as follows:

Government Departments

Department for Education and Skills
United Kingdom Passport Office
Home Office
Scottish Executive
Welsh Assembly

Professional bodies and other stakeholders

British Medical Association
General Medical Council
Nursing and Midwifery Council
Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists
British Association for Adoption and Fostering
British Pregnancy Advisory Service
Brook
Doctors For a Woman's Choice on Abortion
Family Planning Association
Fraterdrive Limited
Irish Embassy
LIFE
Marie Stopes International
Society for the Protection of the Unborn Child

The number of possible illegal abortions contained in table 1 in the PRIA was estimated from information provided by those responding to the consultation and from examining what happened in other countries where access to abortion is restricted or illegal. The PRIA highlights that any outcomes would evolve over time, requiring around five years to become established.

Administrative Savings

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what administrative savings have been made by her Department in each of the last eight years. [34949]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has completed a programme of change which has transformed the Department into a smaller more strategically focused organisation. This was reflected in the Department's Spending Review 2004 settlement, and is reflected in planned spending as transitional costs are completed. The following table shows that, in real terms, over the period 1998–99 to 2004–05 the Department's administration costs reduced by 9 per cent., the planned spend in 2007–08 is 29 per cent., below the 1998–99 level.

	Outturn					
	1998–99	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*
Cash (as published in Department reports) (£ million)	256	268	259	278	296	283
Real terms (GDP deflator, 2007–08 prices) (£ million)	316	324	309	324	334	311
Year on year increase (+) or reduction (-) (percentage)	—	+3	-5	+5	+3	-7
Cumulative increase (+) or reduction (-) (percentage)	—	+3	-2	+3	+6	-1

	Actual outturn	*Forecast outturn*	*Planned*	
	2004–05	*2005–06*	*2006–07*	*2007–08*
Cash (as published in Department reports) (£ million)	268	246	227	225
Real terms (GDP deflator, 2007–08 prices) (£ million)	289	259	233	225
Year on year increase (+) or reduction (-) (percentage)	-7	-10	-10	-3
Cumulative increase (+) or reduction (-) (percentage)	-9	-18	-26	-29

Note:
Figures may not sum due to rounding.

Avian Influenza

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her oral answer of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column, 632W, on avian influenza, what definition of healthcare worker she plans to use for the purposes of treatment for pandemic influenza; and which categories of worker will be eligible for priority supplies of antivirals. [37533]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* We have purchased 14.6 million courses of oseltamivir (Tamiflu) to treat the 25 percent. of the

population that may fall ill. We are aware of the possibility that a pandemic may strike before the antiviral stockpile is complete. The guidance we have published on antiviral storage and distribution takes this into account. Access to antivirals will need to be prioritised, initially to healthcare workers, and to those who fall into one of the 'clinical at risk' groups, as defined for seasonal flu. We have already received 3.3 million treatment courses, so the issue of prioritisation of healthcare workers should not arise.

Final decisions regarding prioritisation for vaccine and antivirals will be made on the basis of information emerging from the early stages of the pandemic about the virus and those groups most at risk. The UK National Influenza Pandemic Committee, chaired by the chief medical officer, will provide additional advice as required during the pandemic.

Breast Cancer

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to ensure that extra funding for Herceptin will be made available if it is required. [37925]

Jane Kennedy: The cost of Herceptin will need to be met from the existing settlement agreed for the national health service.

We understand that some trusts are already under financial pressures and may have to make difficult decisions in allocating resources. However, we have greatly increased the amount of money going into the NHS and those trusts with deficits have financial recovery plans in place.

Funding of the NHS has increased from £34.7 billion in 1997–98 to £69.7 billion in 2004–05. By 2007–08 spending on the NHS will have increased to £92 billion.

Care Standards

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what assessment her Department has made of the effect of the decision in R *v.* Leonard Cheshire Foundation [2002] H.R.L.R.30 on the enforceability of provisions of the Human Rights Act 1998 by those using services provided by organisations registered under the Care Standards Act 2000; [20258]

(2) what assessment she has made of the implications of the decision in R *v.* Leonard Cheshire Foundation [2002] H.R.L.R.30 for NHS services provided by independent sector providers. [20259]

Mr. Byrne: Consideration has been given to the application of the Human Rights Act to independent sector bodies carrying out national health service services, and to organisations registered under the Care Standards Act 2000. My noble Friend, Baroness Ashton recently said in parliamentary debate:

> "On the issue of public authority ... we share the disappointment about the way 'pubic authority' in the Human Rights Act has been interpreted by the courts. The narrow construction of the definition has not fulfilled our hopes and expectations. The Government are following the advice of the Joint Committee and adopting two strategies to approach the problem. First, ... we are actively seeking a suitable case in which to intervene to argue for a wider definition of public authority. That would include the point ... on local authority-funded residents in private care homes, such as the Leonard Cheshire case.
>
> Furthermore, we are issuing guidance on how the contracts between public authorities and private organisations for the provision of services may seek to protect convention rights. This is a very important area; noble Lords have referred to the need to think about it very carefully. It will benefit from careful consideration and will therefore be a matter for the discrimination law review to consider."

Childhood Epilepsy

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many children had epilepsy in the UK in each year since 1997. [38765]

Mr. Byrne: Information on the number of children suffering from epilepsy each year is not collected.

Cholesterol

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what incentives she plans to offer to pharmacists to offer *(a)* body mass index tests, *(b)* cholesterol tests, *(c)* blood pressure tests and *(d)* other health checks. [36615]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave my hon. Friend the Member for Dartford (Dr. Stoate) today.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost to the national health service of treating the effects of high cholesterol levels was in each of the last five years. [36925]

Caroline Flint: The Department has introduced dietary measures such as the 5-A-Day fruit and vegetable scheme that will impact on the general population with high cholesterol levels, but it is not possible to estimate their proportional effect and costs. The most effective way to treat the effects of high cholesterol is with the prescribing of lipid regulating drugs including statins. This is shown in the table.

Lipid regulating drugs dispensed in England

	Cost (£)
2000	326,110,476
2001	438,845,026
2002	570,973,440
2003	715,002,862
2004	769,236,688

Note:
Prescription information is taken from the prescription cost analysis (PCA) system, supplied by the Prescription Pricing Authority (PPA), and is based on a full analysis of all prescriptions dispensed in the community, that is, by community pharmacists and appliance contractors, dispensing doctors, and prescriptions submitted by prescribing doctors for items personally administered in England. Also included are prescriptions written in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and the Isle of Man but dispensed in England. The data do not cover drugs dispensed in hospitals, including mental health trusts, or private prescriptions.
Source:
Prescriptions (Statistics and Analysis), Department of Health.

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will estimate the number of pharmacists who are planning to offer health checks including Body Mass

Index tests, cholesterol tests and blood pressure tests in response to the Choosing Health through Pharmacy contract; [36761]

(2) whether the Government plan *(a)* to measure and *(b)* to estimate the number of health checks carried out under the Choosing Health through Pharmacy contract; [36762]

(3) what estimate the Government has made of how many health checks have taken place so far under the Choosing Health through Pharmacy contract; [36763]

(4) what measures the Government are taking to improve access testing under the Choosing Health through Pharmacy contract in areas of deprivation and poverty. [36764]

Jane Kennedy: New community pharmacy contractual arrangements provide the framework for pharmacy to make a positive contribution to tackling key health priorities such as obesity and coronary heart disease and to improving the health of the public, including where health inequalities persist.

Some pharmacies offer blood pressure testing, cholesterol testing or a range of other screening tests. Such testing should be in accordance with relevant national screening guidelines, where they exist, and in line with local primary care trust (PCT) programmes for prevention and management of risk factors and with robust quality assurance processes.

We published "Choosing Health through Pharmacy—A programme for pharmaceutical public health" in April 2005, which aims to maximise the contribution of pharmacists, their staff and the premises in which they work to improve health and reduce health inequalities. This strategy will enable pharmacists and their staff to make better use of their skills and it will open up opportunities for pharmacy to make a bigger difference to improving the health of people in England. PCTs can commission local enhanced services to meet identified health needs.

Although we do not hold details centrally on the number of pharmacists planning to offer health checks or the numbers of such checks, we have developed an assurance framework for PCTs to use in monitoring pharmacy's implementation of new contractual requirements, and also strategic tests for strategic health authorities to monitor how PCTs are using the new framework to deliver key health priorities and objectives locally.

Community Hospitals (Wiltshire)

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she has taken to monitor proposals to close inpatient beds in community hospitals in Wiltshire. [38260]

Caroline Flint: The Department does not monitor proposals to close inpatient beds. Changes to services are the responsibility of the local national health service as they are best placed to make decisions about how to provide health services to people in the local community.

Coventry Teaching Primary Care Trust

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions her Department has had with Coventry Teaching primary care trust regarding their predicted cash shortfall. [38163]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has not discussed the matter with Coventry primary care trust. It is the responsibility of strategic health authorities (SHAs) to deliver both overall financial balance for their local health communities and to ensure each and every body achieves financial balance. This is now a matter for West Midlands South SHA.

Dentistry

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average cost per patient episode is at *(a)* a dental access centre and *(b)* a dental surgery operating under the general dental services contract. [31910]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department only holds information on its central contribution to dental access centres and does not hold full cost information, which includes any primary care trust (PCT) contribution and patient charge revenue. The Department does not have complete data from PCTs on patient throughput in dental access centres. However, based on the Department's total central contribution to the cost of dental access centres and the available data on patient throughput, the estimated average cost per patient episode in 2004–05 was a maximum of £141.

For the quarter ending September 2005, the average cost per patient episode, at a dental surgery operating under the general dental services contract was £41.77.

Source:
Dental Practice Board

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many *(a)* dental nurses, *(b)* dental hygienists and *(c)* dental therapists there are in Tamworth. [32037]

Ms Rosie Winterton: As at 30 September 2004 there were no qualified dental therapists employed by Burntwood, Lichfield and Tamworth Primary care trust (PCT). There are two dental therapists employed by PCTs within the Shropshire and Staffordshire strategic health authority area. The number of dental therapists employed privately by dentists is not held by the Department.

Information about the number of dental nurses and dental hygienists is not held centrally.

Source:
Health and Social Care Information Centre Non-Medical Workforce Census

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people are on the waiting list for an NHS dentist in Coventry South. [38767]

Ms Rosie Winterton: This information is not held centrally.

Departmental Costs

Mr. Salmond: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the *(a)* salary bill was and *(b)* administrative costs were for her Department in (i) each region and (ii) London in 2004–05. [35874]

Jane Kennedy: The Department operates in England only. The Public Expenditure Outturn White Paper (Cm 6639) gives the provisional 2004–05 departmental administration costs outturn for England, and the Departmental Report 2005 (Cm 6524), figure 8.1, contains estimated 2004–05 pay bill outturn.

Information for each region of the United Kingdom, or London, is not available.

Departmental Estate

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which buildings and sites used by her Department and related agencies *(a)* have ceased to be used in the last year and *(b)* will be closed under current plans for relocation. [31767]

Jane Kennedy: Three London buildings, Eileen House and Hannibal House in Central London and Canons Park in Stanmore, have been closed during 2005. No other properties are due to be closed under plans for relocation.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what *(a)* land and *(b)* property her Department (i) owns and (ii) rents in each constituency; and if she will make a statement. [33262]

Jane Kennedy: The properties owned or leased by the Department and its executive agencies together with the constituency in which they lie is shown in the table.

Property	*Department of Health*	*Agency*	*Executive Agency*	*Constituency*
Belgrave Road, London	MOTO	MOTO	Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA)	Cities of London and Westminster
Bury St. Edmunds	—	Leased	National Health Service Purchasing and Supply Agency (NHS PASA)	Bury St. Edmunds
Crown House, Hitchin	—	MOTO	MHRA	Harpenden
Eastway Business Village, Preston	Leased	—	—	Ribble Valley
Flockton House	Leased	—	—	Sheffield, Central
Highcroft Lodge	Leased	—	—	Winchester
Hinchley Wood	MOTO	Leased	MHRA	Esher and Walton
Hunter House, Leeds	—	Leased	MHRA	City of York
Lightfoot Street, Chester	—	Leased	NHS PASA	City of Chester
Market Towers, London	—	Leased	MHRA	Battersea
Millennium A, Warrington	Leased	—	—	Warrington, North
Millennium House, Sheffield	—	Leased	NHS PASA	Sheffield, Central
Newbridge Hill	Leased	—	—	Bath
New Court, London	—	MOTO	MHRA	Westminster
NKBH, London	MOTO	—	—	North Southwark and Bermondsey
Plymouth	Leased	—	—	Plymouth, Sutton
Premier Buildings, Nelson	Leased	—	—	Pendle
Premier House	—	Leased	NHS PASA	Reading East
Princess Marina Hospital, Northampton	—	Leased	NHS PASA	Northampton, South
Quarry House, Leeds	MOTO	—	—	Leeds, Central
Richmond House, London	Freehold	—	—	Westminster
Skipton House, London	Leased	—	—	North Southwark and Bermondsey
WEC, Blackpool	—	Leased	MHRA	Blackpool, North and Fleetwood
Wellington House, London	Freehold	—	—	Vauxhall
Westward House, Bristol	MOTO	—	—	South Gloucester

Note:
MOTO is an agreement between Crown Bodies to lease space.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what use is being made of each former community health council building in England on which her Department is paying rent; and how much rent her Department is paying on each property. [35576]

Jane Kennedy: There were approximately 175 properties occupied by community health councils. The Department's interest in the majority has been disposed of. The Department is currently paying rent on the following former community health council properties in England. Unless otherwise stated they are vacant. Having established that there was no national health service interest they have been actively marketed.

22–24 High Road, Willesden—annual rent £29,375. A notice to break the lease from June 2006 has been served.

42 Fulham Palace Road, Fulham—annual rent £28,000. The lease expires in December 2005.

45–47 Praed Street, Paddington—annual rent £130,000. The property is part sub-let at £72,000 per annum.

Riverside House, Bristol—annual rent £32,500. Negotiations with a new occupier recently fell through.

Heathervale House, Tunbridge Wells—annual rent £19,500. An assignment of the lease is being finalised.

1 Mill Court, Slough—annual rent £29,500. An assignment of the lease is expected shortly.

Walsh Court, Bells Square, Sheffield—annual rent £21,216 per annum. The lease expires March 2006, early surrender being negotiated.

348 High Street, Lincoln—annual rent £18,500. The lease expires March 2006. The licencee pays the rent.

41/43 Mill Street, Bedford—annual rent £21,600. The property is part sub-let at £5,000 per annum.

3/5 New Street, Chelmsford—annual rent £21,070. An assignment of the lease is expected shortly.

17/18 High Street, Stockton on Tees—annual rent £10,500. The lease is being surrendered.

Lancaster Buildings, Deansgate, Manchester—annual rent £36,150. The property is being marketed.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much was paid by her Department in rent for properties in *(a)* total, *(b)* each region and *(c)* London in 2004–05. [35938]

Jane Kennedy: The Department and its executive agencies during 2004–05 paid £18,042,254 in total rent. This comprises regional totals of:

	£
North West	245,580
North East	37,200
West Midlands	70,000
East Midlands	861
Eastern	86,000
South West	294,700
South East	328,986
Yorkshire and Humberside	5,438,666

All properties are located in England. Rent of £11,540,261 was paid for our London properties.

Departmental Expenditure

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much the Department and its agencies have spent on *(a)* the design and production of new logos and *(b)* employing external (i) public relations and (ii) graphic design agencies in each year since 2000, broken down by project. [33219]

Jane Kennedy: This information could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the total value is of *(a)* catering and *(b)* entertainment contracts let by her Department; and what value of such contracts has been let in each nation and region of the UK, including London. [37485]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has a catering contract with Quadrant for restaurant, hospitality and vending services. The overall value of contract for the year 2004–05 was £1.2 million. The catering contract covers the Department of Health's London Estate that covers three main sites for restaurant facilities and hospitality services. Hospitality services are extended to some of our minor sites. The contract is run at nil subsidy and is therefore at no direct cost to the Department.

The Department spent £592,000 during 2004–05 on entertainment.

Departmental Guidance (Evidence/Documentary Access)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her policy is with regard to *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials in her Department giving evidence to the (i) Scottish Parliament, (ii) National Assembly for Wales and (iii) Northern Ireland Assembly committees; and to what categories of document she gives (A) full access, (B) restricted access and (C) no access to the (1) Scottish Parliament, (2) National Assembly for Wales, (3) Northern Ireland Assembly and (4) House of Commons select committees. [37385]

Jane Kennedy: Requests for the attendance of Ministers or officials to give evidence to the devolved legislatures, and for the provision of information to the assemblies, will be considered on a case by case basis. This consideration will reflect: the principles set out in the Cabinet Office guidance "Departmental Evidence and Response to Select Committees "(July 2005); the policy outlined in the Department for Constitutional Affairs' Devolution Guidance Note number 12 "Attendance of UK Ministers and Officials at Committees of the devolved legislatures", and the requirements of the Freedom of Information Act. The principles underlying the provision of information to House of Commons Select Committees are set out in "Departmental Evidence and Response to Select Committees", particularly sections 4B and 4C.

Departmental Publications

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many publications were issued by her Department in each of the last five years; and what the production cost of each was. [34763]

Jane Kennedy: Between 1 October 2004 and 31 September 2005, the Department produced 697 publications. The cost of producing these, including design, typesetting and print services, totalled £6,781,780.

For all other printed publications produced prior to 1 October 2004, the Department has no central record of this information and could not obtain this without incurring disproportionate cost.

Departmental Staff

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many staff are employed by her Department in each region; and if she will make a statement. [35902]

Jane Kennedy: The figures requested are published in Civil Service Statistics, Table D which covers permanent staff numbers (full-time equivalent basis) in each Department and agency. Civil Service Statistics are available in the Library and at the following address on the Cabinet Office Statistics website:

www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_of_the_civil_service/statistics/civil_service_statistics/index.asp

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps are taken by the Department to support staff with mental ill-health. [36273]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has a number of procedures already in place to support staff with mental ill health. These include a specific staff policy, 24-hour confidential counselling service and occupational health. In addition, we are currently looking at reviewing human resource policies and considering further interventions particularly around awareness sessions, and employee health and well-being initiatives.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of staff in her Department are *(a)* directly employed by the Department and *(b)* agency and non-permanent staff. [37215]

Jane Kennedy: The most recent figures, as at 30 June 2005, were published on 6 October 2005. The data for this period is shown in the following table.

	Number	Percentage
Directly employed by the Department	2,317	97
Agency and non-permanent staff	72	3
Total	2,389	—

Note:
Figures shown are full time equivalent.

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what initiatives are being taken in her Department to help civil servants with chronic back pain. [34986]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has several processes in place to support staff who are ill such as workplace assessments and occupational health. The Department is also about to introduce a new maximising attendance policy which takes a much more proactive approach to absence management. Muscular-skeletal disorders such as chronic back pain have been flagged up within this policy as something that requires early referral to occupational health.

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many departmental staff have been seconded to industry in each of the last seven years. [35157]

Jane Kennedy: Since 2002 there has been a total of five Department of Health staff seconded to industry. We are unable to provide details before this date.

Departmental Tendering Policy

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what her policy is on including *(a)* ethical and *(b)* environmental factors in tenders for services. [33333]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has a strong commitment to the principles of sustainable development, and this is reflected in the new United Kingdom strategy for sustainable development.

Through this policy, the Department and its agencies are committed to considering the environmental, social and economic impacts of its procurement activities. Where directly relevant to the subject matter of the tender, environmental and social issues are included. Environmental factors in contracts let by the Department are considered on a case by case basis relative to the subject matter of the contract, and the requirements of community law.

The NHS Purchasing and Supply Agency (NHS PSA) works with the Department and other Government Departments to increase awareness of sustainable development within the national health service supply chain, and to ensure that wherever possible NHS PSA support the achievement of sustainable development objectives, and support the improvement of the nation's health and well being.

Departmental Websites

Charles Hendry: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to ensure the Department's websites attain the W3C AAA standard of accessibility for people with visual and other disabilities; and if she will set a target date for this standard to be achieved by. [30961]

Jane Kennedy: The Department's policy is to follow the 'Guidelines for UK Government websites' and 'Web Content Accessibility Guidelines: Version 1' published by the e-Government Unit within the Cabinet Office. These guidelines currently require UK Government websites to meet W3C 'A' standard. In addition, certain guidelines from W3C 'AA' and 'AAA' standards are recommended as best practice. However, to date, neither these Guidelines, e-Accessibility communications from the European Union nor advice from the Royal National Institute of the Blind have suggested that United Kingdom Government websites should attain and maintain level 'AAA'.

The Department is acutely aware that to be accessible a website must be as easy to use and understand for as many visitors as possible. Committed to the principle of accessibility, the Department completely redeveloped its website in 2004 to ensure it complies with the World Wide Web Consortium's (W3Cs) level A guidelines for accessibility and works with screen readers. This year, it has achieved 75 per cent. compliance with the 'AA' guidelines. The website also complies with the following guidelines from 'AAA' standard:

ensuring that there is sufficient contrast between foreground and background colours (P3 checkpoint 2.2)

the provision of a site map (P3 checkpoint 13.3)

the provision of search facilities (P3 checkpoint 13.7)

the speech-enablement of your website (P3 checkpoint 14.2)

use of consistent presentation across all pages (P3 checkpoint 14.3).

The Department is committed to ongoing improvements in the accessibility of its website, and will continue to work with its internet service providers to achieve compliance with emerging accessibility standards.

Diabetes

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of people with diabetes have been offered retinal screening to test for signs of diabetic retinopathy as part of a systematic retinal screening programme in the past 12 months. [36068]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 8 December 2005]:* Latest performance data from local delivery plan monitoring shows that at September 2005 57.3 per cent. of people with diabetes had received screening for diabetic retinopathy over the past 12 months. National figures are not yet available on the numbers of patients offered screening. However, it is expected that at least 70 per cent. of people offered screening will receive it.

2004–05 data from general practices participating in the quality outcomes framework of the new general medical services contract records 85 per cent. of people with diabetes as screened. These two sources produce different information because the two data collections have different purposes and definitions.

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects the National Screening Committee to issue its guidance on a national programme for the early identification of diabetes. [36069]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 8 December 2005]:* The United Kingdom National Screening Committee considered screening for type II diabetes at its meeting on 29 November 2005 and I expect to receive its advice on the next steps shortly.

Dr. Ann David

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will publish the result of the inquiry commissioned by the Basildon and Thurrock Hospital Trust under the HC90–9 procedure, into the conduct of Dr. Ann David; and if she will make a statement. [32005]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* I have no plans to publish the results of the disciplinary investigation commissioned by the Basildon and Thurrock Hospital National Health Service Trust under HC(90)9 procedure, into the conduct of Dr. Ann David. The investigation and report is an internal matter for the trust as the employer of an individual. It is a matter for the trust whether it wishes to publish a summary of the findings of its investigations.

Elderly Care Costs

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will commission research to establish the cost of providing all care for the elderly free of charge. [29580]

Mr. Byrne: In England, the Government have accepted each of the recommendations of the Royal Commission on Long Term Care except the recommendation to provide free personal care in all settings.

Making personal care free for everyone carries a very substantial and increasing cost, but would not raise the standard or range of services available. The cost for 2005–06, estimated by the Department, is £1.7 billion.

Providing free bed and board costs in care homes, estimated by the Department, is around £2.3 billion for England. This does not assume any reduction in state pensions or other social security benefits.

An estimated overall total for free care in care homes and free personal care at home, is around £4 billion at current prices for the current year.

Foundation Trusts

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what health standards foundation trusts are required to meet by the Healthcare Commission. [35792]

Jane Kennedy: The Health and Social Care (Community Care and Standards) Act 2003 provides a power for the Secretary of State to publish statements of standards in relation to the provision of health care by and for English national health service bodies, which includes NHS foundation trusts. The Secretary of State published the standards as 'Standards for Better Health' in July 2004. All English NHS bodies are required to take these standards into account in discharging the duty of quality placed on them in the 2003 Act.

In addition, NHS foundation trusts are bound to comply with the standards under their terms of authorisation.

The Healthcare Commission takes these standards into account when undertaking the annual assessment and rating of English NHS bodies, including NHS foundation trusts. The Commission publishes details of its assessment process on its website at: www.healthcarecommission.org.uk.

Freedom of Information Act

Mr. Garnier: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many requests for information have been received by her Department since the Freedom of Information Act 2000 came into force; how many requests have had their deadline extended beyond 20 working days to allow consideration of where the public interest lies; and how many requests have been refused on public interest grounds. [37645]

Jane Kennedy: The Department received 900 freedom of information (FOI) applications between the period 1 January and 30 September 2005. Of these, 31 had their deadline extended beyond 20 working days to allow consideration of the balance of public interest. There were 147 requests where the balance of public interest favoured withholding the information.

The Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA) is committed to publishing quarterly updates in relation to departmental performance under FOI, including information on both the volume and outcomes of requests. The bulletin for the third quarter was published on 15 December 2005 and can be found on the DCA's website at: www.foi.gov.uk/statsjul-sep05.htm and is available in the Library.

General Opthalmic Services

Mr. Caton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she expects the recently announced review of the General Ophthalmic Services to be completed. [35061]

Ms Rosie Winterton: When we announced the review in August 2005, we indicated that we expected the review to report in early 2006. However, to take into account arguments put forward by the main representative bodies, we are extending the time scale to ensure full consideration of the issues. It is now likely that the review will report later in 2006. It will also ensure that the review is able to reflect the forthcoming White Paper on services outside hospital.

GM Food

Alan Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent international experience she has assessed in relation to the withdrawal of GM products for health reasons. [36425]

Caroline Flint: In the United Kingdom, genetically modified (GM) food and feed products may only be marketed if they have undergone a rigorous safety assessment and been granted an EU-wide authorisation. If new information comes to light concerning the safety of a GM product, there are a range of measures that can be taken to protect consumers at national and EU level. We are not aware of any withdrawal of GM products in other countries for health reasons that has implications for GM food or feed products that are authorised in the EU.

Health Act 1999

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people aged *(a)* 18 to 24, *(b)* 25 to 30, *(c)* 31 to 40 and *(d)* over 40 years have been prosecuted under the Health Act 1999 for wrongful claims for free prescriptions in (i) Southend, (ii) Essex, (iii) Hertfordshire and (iv) England in each year since 2000. [36177]

Jane Kennedy: Since August 2001, a penalty charge system has been in place in respect of those falsely claiming exemption to national health service pharmaceutical charges. Since its introduction, more than 160,000 penalty notices have been issued. The total amount recovered to date is over £2,950,000. These figures are national and are not broken down into the age categories and regions as requested. Penalties are sanctioned through the civil courts as criminal prosecution of offenders would not be a cost-effective way of dealing with such high volume but low-value frauds.

The introduction of the penalty charge system has enabled the money recovered to be re-invested in providing better patient care within the NHS.

Health Bill

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials have had with the World Health Organisation about part I of the Health Bill; and if she will make a statement. [36179]

Caroline Flint: Since publication of the Health Bill on 27 October 2005 there have been no formal discussions with the World Health Organisation (WHO) of part I of the Bill at either ministerial level or official level.

However, the content of the Bill is informed by the WHO International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC) classification of second-hand smoke as a human carcinogen in 2002. The United Kingdom has also, along with some 114 other countries, ratified the WHO Framework Convention on Tobacco Control (FCTC). The WHO FCTC states:

> "Recognising that scientific evidence has unequivocally established that tobacco consumption and exposure to tobacco smoke cause death, disease and disability".

Healthcare Commission

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on which subjects the Healthcare Commission has commissioned clinical audits; and when she expects each audit will be published. [35369]

Jane Kennedy: The Healthcare Commission's latest programme of clinical audits, is shown in the following table. Some of the Healthcare Commission's latest programmes have yet to start. For current clinical audits information is provided on the latest, and where appropriate, next expected publication.

Healthcare Commission clinical auditsv

	Last report	*Next report*	*Type*
Cancer—Bowel cancer (NBOCAP)	June 2005	July 2006	Findings
Head and neck cancer (DAHNO)	n/a	March 2006	Early findings
Lung cancer (LUCADA)	n/a	March 2006	Early findings
Oesophago-gastric (stomach) cancer	n/a	April 2007	Early findings
Mastectomy and breast reconstruction	n/a	n/a	Yet to start
Child and Maternity—Neonatal intensive care	n/a	December 2006	Early findings
Maternity care	n/a	March 2006	Scoping report[1]
Emergency care, critically ill or injured child	n/a	n/a	Yet to start
Emergency—Head injury patients	n/a	n/a	Yet to start
Severely injured patients	n/a	n/a	Yet to start
Heart—Adult cardiac surgery	October 2004	—	Public website
Paediatric cardiac surgery and interventions	n/a	April 2006	Findings
Cardiac interventions (e.g. opening up heart artery)	October 2004	—	Not yet fixed
Myocardial infarction (MINAP) (heart attack)	June 2005	June 2006	Findings
Rhythm management (pacing/implantable defibrillators)	March 2003	December 2005	Findings
Heart failure	n/a	n/a	Yet to start
Cardiac ambulance services	n/a	—	Not yet fixed
Cardiac patients' pathway and outcomes	n/a	—	Not yet fixed
Long-term conditions—Diabetes	September 2005	September 2006	Findings
Renal services (kidney disease)	n/a	March 2006	Scoping report[1]
Rheumatoid arthritis	March 2005	April 2006	Findings
Asthma	n/a	n/a	Yet to start
Long-term neurological conditions	n/a	n/a	Yet to start
Violence in mental health—Mental health settings	May 2005	April 2006	Findings
Psychological therapies	n/a	n/a	Yet to start
Eating disorders	n/a	n/a	Yet to start
Older people—Continence (NACC)	November 2005	December 2006	Findings
Stroke: hospital services	March 2005	March 2007	Findings
Carotid endarterectomy (UKCEA) (stroke prevention)	n/a	February 2006	Early findings
Services for people who have fallen	n/a	March 2006	Findings
Venous leg ulcers	n/a	March 2006	Findings
Dignity and care in hospital and other settings	n/a	n/a	Yet to start
Stroke: patients' pathway, focussing on primary care	n/a	n/a	Yet to start
Patients with co-morbidities in primary care	n/a	n/a	Yet to start
Dementia services and prescribing	n/a	n/a	Yet to start
Reproductive health—Control of heavy menstrual bleeding	n/a	n/a	Yet to start

[1] Scoping reports set out the improvements in patient care that a full audit could achieve, and the scale and likely costs were a full audit to be commissioned.

Herceptin

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will meet the North Stoke Primary Care Trust to discuss extra funding for the NHS prescription of Herceptin in this financial year. [20754]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The national health service is already benefiting from the increased investment in the NHS which between 2003 and 2008 will increase on average by 7.5 per cent. each year. It is for primary care trusts (PCTs) to decide on how best to use these resources based on the needs of their local populations. Therefore it would not be appropriate for the Secretary of State or a member of the ministerial team to meet this particular PCT.

We have taken steps to ensure that breast cancer patients who could benefit from Herceptin can be identified and treated. On 5 October we announced that all breast cancer patients would be tested for suitability for treatment with Herceptin. The national cancer director is working with cancer networks to ensure that testing arrangements are in place so that once Herceptin is licensed for early breast cancer those patients who would benefit are quickly identified.

On 3 November, we launched a new rapid process for assessing drugs and other treatments to sit alongside the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence's (NICE) global standard process. This new single technology appraisal (STA) will be used to produce faster guidance on life-saving drugs which have been licensed.

Roche, the manufacturer of Herceptin, has announced that its application for a licence will be made to the European medicines agency for the evaluation of medical products in February 2006, with a decision anticipated by July 2006 at the earliest. The new STA will allow NICE to react as soon as possible after the drug is licensed.

These steps mean that any breast cancer patient who might benefit from Herceptin should get the drug by next summer, after they have received their other treatments.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to make extra resources available for primary care trusts to fund the provision of Herceptin for women with early stage breast cancer. [34569]

Jane Kennedy: The cost of Herceptin will need to be met from the existing settlement agreed for the national health service.

We understand that some trusts are already under financial pressures and may have to make difficult decisions in achieving this. However, we have greatly increased the amount of money going into the NHS and those trusts with deficits have financial recovery plans in place.

Funding of the NHS has increased from £34.7 billion in 1997–98 to £69.7 billion in 2004–05. By 2007–08 spending on the NHS will have increased to £92 billion.

Home Deaths

Angela Browning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance is given to primary care services in respect of people who die at home. [37972]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* The National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidance on supportive and palliative care, published in 2004, gives recommendations to improve the care provided to people with cancer, including responding to patients' wishes about where they are cared for, and die. The guidance endorses three tools: the gold standards framework, the Liverpool care pathway, and the preferred place of care; which are being rolled out nationally through the end of life care programme and are applicable to the care of people at the end of life, regardless of their condition.

The end of life care programme has been given funding of £12 million over three years (2004–07), and provides training for staff in acute, community and care home settings so that all patients near the end of life have access to high quality palliative care and are able to choose where they receive care.

Hospital Discharge (Terminally Ill Patients)

Angela Browning: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance is given to primary care trusts on the discharge from hospital of people who are terminally ill. [37970]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* The discharge of terminally ill patients from hospital is based on the clinical decision of the health service staff responsible for that patient's care. Decisions on discharge are informed by the recommendations in the National Institute for Clinical Excellence guidance on supportive and palliative care, published in 2004. The guidance endorses the use of three key tools: the gold standard framework, the Liverpool care pathway and the preferred place of care, which support clinicians and patients to plan how and where services are provided that best meet the wishes of the patient. The national roll-out of these tools is a key part of the end of life care programme, which is a three-year Government programme to provide patients with the choice to die at home.

Incentive Packages

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the value is of *(a)* pay supplements, *(b)* bonuses and *(c)* other incentive packages that are payable in her Department on the basis of geographic location; how many people are in receipt of each payment; and what the total cost to her Department of each payment was in 2004–05. [35904]

Jane Kennedy: The Department does not pay any supplements, bonuses, or incentive packages on the basis of geographic location, as part of its existing reward strategy.

Influenza Vaccine

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate her Department has made of the number

of people in Tamworth constituency in at-risk groups who have been unable to obtain a seasonal influenza vaccination. [37827]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Mr. Duncan Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what evidence she has collated on whether general practitioners have been vaccinating people for influenza as a priority who are outside the at-risk groups. [32461]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* As in previous years, data is being collected on the number of people in the at risk groups who have been vaccinated, and the full data will not be available until the new year. Sufficient vaccine was however ordered to vaccinate all those in the at risk groups.

Mr. Duncan Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions she has had with the British Medical Association on whether its members have been prescribing influenza vaccinations to the 'worried well'. [32462]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* The Secretary of State for Health, special advisers and officials have had several conversations with representatives of the British Medical Association about seasonal flu vaccination. We are working together to ensure that all those in the at risk groups who want to be vaccinated, will be.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many doses of influenza vaccine her Department has *(a)* ordered, *(b)* taken delivery of and *(c)* supplied to general practitioners in the last 12 months for which figures are available; and on what dates. [32481]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* General practitioners (GPs) purchase their own supply of vaccine from any of a range of suppliers, based on the number of eligible patients on the practice register. GPs organise and carry out flu clinics between September and January.

The Department ordered 1.2 million doses of influenza vaccine for its contingency stockpile in the last 12 months, 400,000 doses of which had been received by 25 November. Between 25 November 2004 and mid-December 2004, 1,598 doses had been delivered to GPs, between 8 November 2005 and 25 November 2005, 93,898 doses had been delivered to GPs.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information *(a)* is routinely collected as part of the seasonal influenza vaccination programme and *(b)* was collected as part of this year's special audit; and if she will place in the Library a copy of the data her Department has collected in each of the last three years. [32486]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* Since 2000, the Department has collected data from each primary care trust (PCT) on the number of over 65s, and since 2004 other younger, at risk groups, who receive the seasonal influenza vaccine. Details of this year's survey of vaccine uptake can be found in the guide for PCTs available at http://194.200.241.125/pctguides/.

The data on 2003–04 vaccine uptake is available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assestRoot/04/09/95/77/04/099577.pdf.

Data on 2004–05 vaccine uptake is also available on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assestRoot/04/ll/96/50/04119650.pdf. They are also available in the Library.

This year's special audit asked general practitioners:

whether they had sufficient flu vaccine to complete their influenza vaccination programme;

if they needed more flu vaccine, how many doses they would require to complete their influenza vaccination programme; and

if they had already completed their influenza vaccination programme, did they have surplus flu vaccine available that could be re-distributed to other practices within their area or PCT. And, if so, how many.

Mr. Duncan Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her oral statement of 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1371–82, on seasonal influenza vaccine supplies, whether the number of doses of vaccine intended to be supplied was increased from 13.4 million when carers were added to the recommended groups for vaccination; and what action her Department took when informed in October by a manufacturer that it had run out of supplies of vaccine. [32518]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* Details of the current recommendations regarding carers receiving flu immunisation was given to all general practitioners (GPs) in the chief medical officer's communication dated 9 August 2004 with reference to the Green Book, and 25 July 2005.

Discussions with manufacturers at the start of the year to secure flu vaccine were on the basis of an additional 2.3 million doses than was used in the previous year for further expansion of coverage and incorporation of new risk groups and carers.

Some manufacturers delayed delivery of their flu vaccine due to problems with the manufacturing process. We wrote to all GPs on 3 November with details of how to order vaccine purchased as part of our contingency measures and by the 23 December, we will have distributed 400,000 doses of vaccine from this stock.

Mr. Duncan Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to her oral statement of 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1371–82, on seasonal influenza vaccine supplies, when her Department ascertained the new figures on uptake of vaccine amongst risk groups; and what estimate she has made of the number of people who qualify for immunisation who will not be immunised by the end of this immunisation season. [32519]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 28 November 2005]:* The figures on influenza vaccine uptake were received by the Department on 14 November. It is impossible to estimate how many people who qualify for immunisation but will not be immunised this season, because not all of those who fall within the risk groups seek vaccination. Based on previous uptake data there is

enough vaccine in the national health service as a whole to vaccinate everyone in the at risk groups that is expected to want flu vaccination.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what estimate she has made of the number of people in *(a)* each London borough and *(b)* England who have requested an influenza vaccination this winter but have not yet received one. [37956]

Caroline Flint: The information requested is not collected centrally.

Media Monitoring

Philip Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much her Department has spent on media monitoring activities in each of the last eight financial years. [35638]

Jane Kennedy: The current arrangements for regular national and regional media monitoring started in October 2004.

Costs since then have been:

	£
2004–05	50,040
2005–06	57,334

Before October 2004, media evaluation was undertaken in a more ad-hoc way, often combined with other research. These costs can not be extracted from the previous finance system without a great deal of work and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health whether her Department has *(a)* undertaken and *(b)* commissioned research into the presence and reporting in the (i) broadcast and (ii) print media of the hon. Member for Northavon since 5 May. [36983]

Jane Kennedy: The Department has not undertaken nor commissioned research specifically into the presence and reporting in either broadcast or print media, of the hon. Member for Northavon.

Medical Instruments

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how much money was spent by each primary care trust (PCT) on medical instruments in each year since 1998; and what the projected spend in each PCT is in *(a)* 2006, *(b)* 2007 and *(c)* 2008. [34214]

Jane Kennedy: Expenditure by primary care trusts (PCTs) has been placed in the Library.

Information relating to projected expenditure is not available.

Medicines

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will make a statement on the provision of safe and effective medicines for the NHS at reasonable prices. [30991]

Jane Kennedy: The prices of branded prescription medicines and the profits that companies are allowed to make on their sales to the national health service (NHS) are controlled by the pharmaceutical price regulation scheme (PPRS). It aims to achieve a balance between reasonable prices for the NHS and a fair return for the industry to enable it to develop and market new and improved medicines. The 2005 PPRS included a price reduction of 7 percent., which will deliver expenditure savings of some £2 billion over the next five years for the NHS in England.

New arrangements to set the reimbursement of generic medicines were introduced from 1 April 2004. These reflect the underlying market price of these medicines and will reduce the cost of the medicines by £300 million per annum. This money is being used to fund the new pharmacy contractual framework. The new framework gives primary care trusts the opportunity to work with local pharmacists to develop a range of high quality community pharmacy services. This will make them an integral part of local primary care provision.

Mental Capacity Advocate Service

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the result of the consultation was on the proposed independent mental capacity advocate service; and what pilot projects are planned ahead of its introduction. [30583]

Ms Rosie Winterton: We are in the process of analysing the responses to the consultation on the independent mental capacity advocate (IMCA) service which ended on 30 September. We received 174 written responses to the consultation. In addition, some 450 people attended regional road shows to put forward their views on the consultation in a more informal way.

We want to look at the detail of the arguments made in the consultation process to gauge public opinion before deciding how to proceed, in particular about how the regulation making powers on the IMCA should be used and on the operation and implementation of the service. The aim will be to keep statutory regulation to the minimum. The Government will publish the results of the consultation.

As part of the development work for the IMCA service we are setting up some IMCA pilots to help identify the practical issues involved in implementing it.

The objective of the Independent Mental Capacity Act (IMCA) pilots is to test how this new service will work, in advance of it becoming a national requirement in April 2007. The pilots will test different ways of setting up this service—for example with full-time IMCA advocates and with sessional advocates. They will test systems for recording, referral and for monitoring. The outcome will be good practice guidance which will be useful both for the commissioners of this service when it becomes a national requirement and also for the future IMCA advocacy providers, many of whom may be small and will benefit from access to information about good practice in other advocacy services.

The budget for the pilots is £500,000. The pilots will take place in Cambridgeshire, Cheshire, Croydon, Dorset, Hertfordshire, Merseyside, Newcastle, and Southwark. The pilots will be evaluated by an

external researcher who will work with the advocacy organisations to develop protocols such as monitoring systems and reflective diaries.

Morecambe Bay Primary Care Trust

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients are on the waiting list of the Morecambe Bay Primary Care Trust (PCT) for allocation to an NHS dentist; and how many patients of Morecambe Bay PCT are being treated in other PCT areas. [29319]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The information relating to the number of patients on the waiting list of Morecambe Bay primary care trust for allocation to a national health service dentist is not held centrally.

The number of patients living in the Morecambe Bay PCT area registered with a dentist outside the PCT area is 4,521.

Note:
These areas have been defined using the Office of National Statistics all field postcodes Directory May 2005.

Source:
Dental Practice Board.

MRSA

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patients in each strategic health authority contracted MRSA in each year since 1995. [34135]

Jane Kennedy: Information on methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus (MRSA) blood stream infections by strategic health authority is not available in the format requested.

NHS Complaints

Frank Dobson: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether NHS complaints procedures apply to NHS patients treated in private *(a)* diagnostic and treatment centres and *(b)* cataract operation units; [34269]

(2) whether an NHS patient seeking compensation following mistreatment in a private *(a)* diagnostic and treatment centre and *(b)* cataract operation unit can sue the NHS. [34270]

Jane Kennedy *[holding answer 5 December 2005]:* National health service patients who are referred for treatment in independent sector treatment centres have the same right to complain as patients who are treated by NHS providers. The responsibility for handling complaints from NHS patients rests with the appropriate NHS primary care trust or acute trust that referred the patient. Such complaints are handled through the NHS complaints process. In addition, independent sector treatment centre providers that have NHS patients referred to them for treatment are also required to have their own patient complaints procedures in place.

Healthcare professionals treating referred NHS patients are covered by NHS Indemnity for any negligent act or omission.

NHS Computers

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether she plans to replace the current stock of NHS computer *(a)* keyboards, *(b)* mice and *(c)* keyboard readers with washable versions; [33748]

(2) what assessment she has made of *(a)* the role of (i) computer mice, (ii) keyboards and (iii) keyboard readers in the spread of MRSA in hospitals and *(b)* the contribution which could be made by washable versions of each to its prevention; [33749]

(3) what guidance is given to NHS staff on the sterilisation of computer *(a)* keyboards, *(b)* mice and *(c)* keyboard readers. [33750]

Jane Kennedy: The supply of computer equipment is a local responsibility.

Computer keyboards and other equipment can become contaminated with methicillin-resistant Staphylococcus aureus and other bacteria capable of causing infections and regular cleaning is recommended by infection control experts. Regular cleaning will reduce the risk of infection from these sources, but as they may become contaminated between cleaning episodes it is essential that staff clean their hands before touching patients. This is why we have the national "cleanyourhands" campaign.

NHS Finance

Andrew Selous: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which NHS hospital trusts and primary care trusts serving South West Bedfordshire constituency are forecasting a significant financial deficit at the 2005–06 year end; and if she will set out the forecast deficit in each case. [35648]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 8 December 2005]:* The primary care trusts (PCTs) and national health service trusts covered by South West Bedfordshire constituency that are forecasting a deficit at Month 6 2005–06 are set out in the table:

Organisation name	*2005–06 Month 6 forecast under(over) spend £000*
Bedfordshire Heartlands PCT	20,000
Bedford Hospitals NHS Trust	12,056

NHS Staff (Assaults)

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information her Department collects concerning assaults on NHS workers; and what recent changes her Department has made to data collected regarding violence towards staff. [35418]

Jane Kennedy: In November 2003, the national health service introduced a comprehensive range of measures to tackle violence against NHS staff. This included two legally based definitions for the reporting of physical and non-physical assaults to ensure that appropriate action is taken following such incidents.

The NHS security management service currently collects information relating to incidents of physical assaults against NHS staff, through its national reporting system, which became fully operational from April 2004.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what information the NHS Security Management Service collects concerning the sentences handed down as a result of prosecutions involving physical assaults on staff. [35419]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is not currently collated centrally.

NHS Treatment (Eligibility)

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the rules are on eligibility for NHS treatment for *(a)* students from EU countries and *(b)* other foreign students, broken down by (i) pre-16 years, (ii) 16 to 19 years and (iii) adult; and whether in each case charges are applicable. [35791]

Jane Kennedy: The rules on eligibility for free national health service hospital treatment were published in 'Implementing the Overseas Visitors Hospital Charging Regulations: Guidance for NHS Trust Hospitals in England' in April 2004. This document provides guidance on how to interpret the NHS (charges to overseas visitors) regulations 1989, as amended. It is available in the Library and on the Department's website at: www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/10/60/24/04106024.pdf.

It is these regulations which govern who is entitled to free NHS hospital treatment in England.

Nurses

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to ensure that nurses are issued with more than three uniforms. [38242]

Jane Kennedy: The Department does not stipulate the number of uniforms that should be issued to nursing staff. It is for national health service trust chief executives to ensure that nurses have enough suitable clothing and equipment to carry out their work effectively.

The Department is currently undertaking a review of current uniform policy is under way which will clarify the expectations of NHS organisations and staff in terms of wearing, changing and laundering uniforms.

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will take steps to ensure that nursing staff uniforms can be laundered at a temperature high enough to destroy *(a)* MRSA and *(b)* other viruses. [38243]

Jane Kennedy: Health Service Guidance 95(18) sets out the arrangements for the handling and laundering of linen and states the importance of securing the disinfection of used and infected linen, including uniforms. The guidance recommends that a wash at 65 degrees Celsius (^{0}C) for not less than 10 minutes, or at 71^0 C for not less than three minutes, is more than adequate for uniforms. Most uniforms can be safely processed at this temperature; indeed white garments manufactured to a correct specification can safely be processed at 85^0 C provided a cool down facility is incorporated within the washing process.

In relation to washing uniforms at home, the advice from microbiologists is that a wash at a domestic clothes washer's temperature of 60^{0}C, followed by a rinse cycle, is more than adequate. The main point is the enormous dilution factor of the wash rather than the actual killing of the bacteria. The use of detergent will dislodge soil containing bacteria.

Health Service Guidance 95(18) is currently under review which will clarify the expectations of NHS organisations in terms of laundering uniforms. This work is being supported by scientific research, and will include recommendations on temperatures for washing uniforms and other linen.

Obesity

Mr. Burns: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) if she will list the organisations which she has invited to comment upon the draft Obesity Care Pathway; by when comments have been invited from those selected organisations; whether it is her intention that this document should reflect a consensus on the most effective treatment options; and when she intends openly to consult with the *(a)* wider scientific community, *(b)* commercial weight loss sector and *(c)* patient and practitioner organisations about the details of the draft pathway; [21080]

(2) what assessment she has made of the compatibility of the consultation process being followed in relation to the development of the Obesity Care Pathway with the principles set out in *(a)* the Cabinet Office Code of Practice on Consultation and *(b)* the Code of Good Practice in Consultations and Policy Appraisal, supporting the Compact on Government's Relations with the Voluntary and Community Sector; and if she will make a statement. [21891]

Caroline Flint *[holding answer 26 October 2005]:* The National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence has been commissioned to prepare definitive guidance on the prevention, identification, management and treatment of obesity. This is expected to be published in February 2007, after full consultation. The Department's interim Obesity Care Pathway is intended for use by frontline health professionals in primary care to help manage patients who are overweight and/or obese. As part of the process of developing the draft Obesity Care Pathway, early drafts were shared with some interested stakeholders between September and November, to ascertain their views on how the care pathway might be implemented.

A consultation on the content is currently under way on a more advanced draft of the Obesity Care Pathway and related documents, and a draft weight loss guide. Consultees have been asked to respond by 3 January 2006.

List of selected organisations/potential users invited to comment

Diabetes UK

Department for Education and Skills

Royal College of Physicians

British Dietetics Association
Blackwater Valley & Hart PCT
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
Royal College of Nursing
Faculty of Public Health
National Obesity Forum
Strategic Health Authorities
National Heart Forum
Regional Directors of Public Health—Government Office Regions
Royal College of General Practitioners
Department for Culture, Media and Sport
BHF National Centre for Physical Activity and Health
Sport England
Central Council for Physical Recreation
Fitness Industry Association
British Hypertension Society
The Obesity Awareness and Solutions Trust
Food Standards Agency
Community Practitioners' and Health Visitors' Associations
The Nutrition Society
Infant and Dietetic Foods Association
Herbalife
Rosemary Conley Diet and Fitness Clubs
Slimming World
Weightwatchers
Cambridge Health Plan
Abbot Laboratories
White House Consultancy
Faculty of Medicine
Chiltern and South Bucks PCT
British Retail Consortium
Move4Health
St. Thomas' Hospital
University College London
Barts Hospital
Essex Rivers Health Authority
MRC Resource Centre for Human Nutrition Research
Unilever Slimfast
Health Food Manufacturers' Association
United Kingdom Very Low Calorie Diet Industry Group
UK Dieticians in Obesity Management

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the rates of *(a)* overweight and *(b)* obesity have been among (i) children under 11 years, (ii) children aged between 11 and 18 years and (iii) adults in each year since 1997. [31902]

Caroline Flint: The available information is shown in the tables.

Table 1: Rates for overweight and obesity for children aged 2 to 10[1]
Trends in overweight and obesity prevalence, by survey year (1995–2003) and sex
Aged 2 to 10 with valid BMI

Percentage

BMI status	Survey year 1995	1996	1997	1998	1999–2000	2001	2002	2003
Males								
Obese	9.6	11	11.1	10	14.3	13.5	15.2	14.9
Overweight including obese	22.5	24.8	24.3	22.6	28.1	29.1	28.1	29.6
Females								
Obese	10.3	10.2	10.7	9.8	12.4	12.7	15.8	12.5
Overweight including obese	22.9	21.2	22.6	20.7	25	26.7	28.9	25.9
Bases (weighted)								
Males	1,261	1,418	2,007	1,469	1,204	1,035	2,364	876
Females	1,266	1,365	2,082	1,365	1,152	1,094	2,290	897
Bases (unweighted)								
Males	1,113	1,234	2,159	1,307	1,145	913	2,036	864
Females	1,114	1,178	2,222	1,217	1,072	980	1,948	869

Note:
Figures based on UK National BMI percentile classification.
Source:
Obesity among children under 11
Department of Health, Health and Social Care Information Centre
Produced by: National Centre for Social Research, Department of Epidemiology and Public Health at the Royal Free and University College Medical School.
Prepared for the Department of Health and the Health and Social Care Information Centre.

Table 2: Rates for overweight and obesity for children aged 11–15
Overweight and obesity prevalence trends from 1995 to 2003 (National BMI percentiles classification), by age and sex.
Aged 11–15 with a valid BMI measurement

Percentage

BMI status	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999–2000	2001	2002	2003
Males aged 11–15								
Overweight	13.6	15.2	12.4	14.2	11.8	15.2	14	13
Obese	12.3	13.1	15.2	15.3	18.1	16.8	19.1	19
Overweight including obese	25.9	28.4	27.6	29.5	29.8	32	33.1	32

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Table 2: Rates for overweight and obesity for children aged 11–15
Overweight and obesity prevalence trends from 1995 to 2003 (National BMI percentiles classification), by age and sex.
Aged 11–15 with a valid BMI measurement

Percentage

BMI status	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*1999–2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
Bases (weighted)								
Male 11–15	658	714	1056	645	650	579	1381	533
Bases (unweighted)								
Male 11–15	584	640	1116	569	576	577	1214	553
Females Aged 11–15								
Overweight	13.9	13.3	14.7	14.7	13.7	18.1	14.9	14
Obese	14.4	15	15.5	17.3	16.3	17.4	18.7	19
Overweight including obese	28.3	28.3	30.2	32.0	29.9	35.6	33.7	34
Bases (weighted)								
Females 11–15)	635	649	987	656	640	551	1346	547
Bases (unweighted)								
Females 11–15)	558	580	1,066	575	563	552	1,192	547

Note:
Figures based on UK National BMI percentile classification.
Source:
Health Survey for England 2002 & 2003

Table 3. Rates of overweight and obesity for adults
Adults aged 16 and over

Percentage

	1997	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003 (unweighted)*	*2003 (weighted)*
Men								
BMI over 25 (overweight, including obese)	62.2	62.8	62.5	65.5	67.7	65.5	67.4	65.4
BMI over 30 (obese)	17	17.3	18.7	21	21	22.1	22.9	22.2
BMI over 40 (morbidly obese)	0.8	0.6	0.8	0.6	0.6	0.8	1	1
Mean BMI	26.5	26.5	26.5	26.8	27	26.9	27.1	26.9
Standard error of the mean	0.07	0.05	0.07	0.08	0.05	0.08	0.06	0.06
Women								
BMI over 25 (overweight, including obese)	52.5	53.3	53.9	55.1	56.4	56.5	56.8	55.5
BMI over 30 (obese)	19.7	21.2	21.1	21.4	23.5	22.8	23.4	23
BMI over 40 (morbidly obese)	2.3	1.9	1.9	2.3	2.5	2.6	2.9	2.9
Mean BMI	26.2	26.4	26.4	26.6	26.7	26.7	26.8	26.7
Standard error of the mean	0.08	0.06	0.09	0.09	0.06	0.09	0.07	0.07

Notes:
1. The Health Survey for England classifies adults as those aged 16 and over.
2. Weighted data provide the best estimate for 2003. Unweighted data for 2003 are provided for consistency with previous years which were also unweighted.
Source:
Health Survey for England 2003

Bob Russell: To ask the Secretary of State for Health pursuant to the answer of 12 September 2005, *Official Report*, columns 2742–2743W, on obesity, when the obesity programme board was set up; who the members of the board are; on what dates the board has met; what was discussed during those meetings; and if she will make a statement. [32306]

Caroline Flint: The obesity programme board was set up on 22 July 2005. The members of the board are:

Chair, Head of Programme Delivery, Department of Health

Obesity Public Service Agreement Programme Manager, Department of Health/Department for Culture, Media and Sport /Department for Education and Skills

Director of Sport, Department for Culture, Media and Sport

Director of Strategy, Every Child Matters, Department for Education and Skills

Director Public Services, HM Treasury

Director Food Industry and Crops, Department for Environment, Food and Environmental Affairs

Director of Neighbourhood Renewal Operations, Office of Deputy Prime Minister

Regional Director of Public Health, E of England. Regional Director of Public Health

Director Consumer Choice and Dietary Health, Food Standards Agency

Director for General Roads Regional and Local Transport Group, Department for Transport.

The first board meeting took place on 27 September. Meetings are scheduled quarterly.

At its first meeting, the obesity programme board discussed:

Terms of reference, governance and membership;

Evidence and analysis on obesity;

Delivery plan for the obesity public service agreement;

National audit office/healthcare commission/audit commission draft report and

Progress on projects within the obesity programme.

Tim Loughton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what research she has *(a)* commissioned and *(b)* evaluated on the effect of obesity on the number of patients who receive treatment for each of the conditions which feature as a clinical domain in the Quality and Outcomes Framework. [33138]

Caroline Flint: To date no specific research has been commissioned and evaluated by the Department on the effect of obesity on the number of patients who receive treatment for each of the conditions which feature as a clinical domain in the current quality and outcomes framework. However, the Department has evaluated a range of research on the effect of obesity on disease conditions in adults, including summary research evidence reported by the National Audit Office, the World Health Organisation, and the Health Committee, as well as 2003 Health Survey for England.

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Secretary of State for Health on what basis the original consultees on the draft obesity care pathway were chosen; who those consultees were; and which additional organisations have subsequently been consulted. [36992]

Caroline Flint: A consultation is currently under way on the obesity care pathway and related documents, including the draft weight loss guide. Consultees have been asked to respond by 3 January 2006 and a list of consultees is shown in the following list.

As part of the process of developing the draft obesity care pathway, it was shared with some stakeholders earlier in development on 28 September, and additional stakeholders on 15 November. Those invited to comment at this early stage are as follows.

Organisations invited to comment through formal consultation on 2 December

Royal College of Paediatric and Child Health
Royal College of Physicians
Royal College of General Practitioners
National Obesity Forum
Royal College of Nursing
Community Practitioners' Health Visitors Association
British Dietetics Association
The Nutrition Society
Infant and Dietetic Foods Association
Herbalife
Rosemary Conley Diet and Fitness Clubs
Slimming World
Weightwatchers
Cambridge Health Plan
Abbott Laboratories
Whitehouse Consultancy
The Obesity Awareness and Solutions Trust
Faculty of Public Health
Faculty of Medicine
British Retail Consortium
British Hypertension Society
Central Council for Physical Activity
Fitness Industry Association
British Heart Foundation National Centre for Physical Activity
National Heart Forum
Move4Health
Food Standards Agency
Department of Culture, Media and Sport
Department Education and Skills
Sport England
National Director for Cancer
Directors of Public Health, strategic health authorities
Regional Directors of Public Health
National Clinical Director for Diabetes
Diabetes UK
National Clinical Director for Primary Care
National Director for Heart Disease
Health Food Manufacturers' Association
Slim Fast Medical and Public Affairs
MRC Human Nutrition Research

Selected organisations/potential users invited to comment on the early draft of the Obesity Care Pathway on 28 September and 15 November

On 28 September:

Diabetes UK
Department for Education and Skills
Royal College of Physicians
British Dietetics Association
Blackwater Valley and Hart Primary Care Trust
Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
Royal College of Nursing
Faculty of Public Health
National Obesity Forum
Strategic health authorities
National Heart Forum
Regional Directors of Public Health—Government Office Regions
Royal College of General Practitioners
Department for Culture, Media and Sport
BHF National Centre for Physical Activity and Health
Sport England
Central Council for Physical Recreation
Fitness Industry Association
British Hypertension Society
The Obesity Awareness and Solutions Trust
Food Standards Agency
Community Practitioners' and Health Visitors' Associations

On 15 November:

Infant and Dietetic Foods Association (IDFA)
Herbalife
Rosemary Conley Diet and Fitness Clubs
Slimming World
WeightWatchers
Cambridge Health Plan

Ostomy Products

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans she has to restrict the supply of ostomy products and related care services. [38404]

Mr. Byrne: We have no plans to restrict the supply of ostomy products and related care services.

Ostomy, Incontinence and Wound Care

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list the suppliers to the NHS of *(a)* ostomy, *(b)* incontinence and *(c)* wound care products. [34053]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested has been placed in the Library.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Walker: To ask the Secretary of State for Health when she will reply to questions *(a)* 26127 and *(b)* 26193 tabled on 3 November by the hon. Member for Broxbourne. [31837]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the replies I gave on 24 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2269W, and on 12 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1799–1800W.

Patient Forums

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what guidance her Department issues to patient and public involvement forums on working with local authority overview and scrutiny committees. [37119]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 14 December 2005]:* In June 2005, the Centre for Public Scrutiny published "Health overview and scrutiny committees and patient and public involvement forums: working together—a practical guide" in response to a request from the Department.

A copy of this guide has been placed in the Library.

Mr. Baron: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many patient forum members participated in the MORI poll on patient and public involvement in health commissioned by her Department and active between 10 and 24 October. [36235]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* 307 patients' forum members participated in the Market and Opinion Research International poll on patient and public involvement in health. This was 35 per cent. of the total response.

Primary Care Trusts

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what plans the Government have to change the role and structure of primary care trusts. [28600]

Mr. Byrne: As set out in "Commissioning a Patient Led NHS", primary care trusts (PCTs) will be required to strengthen their commissioning function. They will need to ensure access and choice to a range of high quality health services and to ensure that the Government's commitments to health, reducing health inequalities and health services are delivered for local people. They will also be required to manage contracts on behalf of their practices and public, engage with local people and other local service providers to ensure patients' views are properly heard, and to be responsible for emergency planning.

The policy, in relation to service-provision, is that this will be a matter for PCTs to determine locally. Any move away from direct provision of services will be a decision for the local national health service within the framework set out in the forthcoming White Paper and after local consultation, including staff.

Mr. Kevan Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the cost was of setting up primary care trusts in *(a)* England and *(b)* Durham under the Health Act 1999. [29438]

Mr. Byrne: The Department does not hold information on the costs of setting up primary care trusts under the Health Act 1999.

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will list each primary care trust with a budget deficit, in order of the size of deficit, indicating in each case the *(a)* unweighted budget allocation per person to the trust and *(b)* primary parliamentary constituency served by the trust. [32358]

Mr. Byrne: The table lists primary care trusts (PCTs) with deficits in 2004–05 in descending order of deficit size, showing their 2004–05 deficit, their 2004–05 allocation per unweighted head of population and the parliamentary constituency where the majority of their population is resident. PCT allocations increased by £4.6 billion in 2005–06 to 9.3 percent. extra for the two years, 2006–07 and 2007–08, PCTs have been allocated a further £11.5 billion, a further 19.5 percent. increase.

PCT	*Primary parliamentary constituency*	*2004–05 allocation per head (£)*	*2004–05 under/(over) spend against revenue resource limits £000*
Kensington and Chelsea	Kensington and Chelsea	1,148	-17,976
Bedfordshire Heartlands	South West Bedfordshire	793	-14,536
Hillingdon	Hayes and Harlington	1,000	-13,470
Suffolk West	West Suffolk	813	-12,510
Kennet and North Wiltshire	North Wiltshire	825	-10,159
Ipswich	Ipswich	960	-10,119
New Forest	New Forest East	935	-8,592
Wandsworth	Tooting	1,125	-8,237
Cambridge City	Cambridge	852	-7,621
Southern Norfolk	South Norfolk	829	-7,152
Chelmsford	West Chelmsford	852	-7,144
North Stoke	Stoke-on-Trent North	1,140	-6,810
Fareham and Gosport	Fareham	863	-6,757
North and East Cornwall	South East Cornwall	926	-6,668
Selby and York	City of York	863	-6,598
Suffolk Coastal	Suffolk Coastal	899	-6,174
Hounslow	Brentford and Isleworth	1,085	-6,171

PCT	Primary parliamentary constituency	2004–05 allocation per head (£)	2004–05 under/(over) spend against revenue resource limits £000
Yorkshire Wolds and Coast	East Yorkshire	934	-6,116
Luton	Luton North	928	-6,038
Guildford and Waverley	Guildford	899	-5,887
West of Cornwall	St. Ives	1,026	-5,669
North Norfolk	North Norfolk	962	-5,294
Central Cornwall	Truro and St. Austell	933	-5,294
North Devon	North Devon	946	-5,263
North Somerset	Weston-Super-Mare	874	-5,202
East Hampshire	Havant	963	-5,199
South West Oxfordshire	Wantage	797	-5,172
Vale of Aylesbury	Aylesbury	807	-4,916
Hertsmere	Hertsmere	960	-4,897
Milton Keynes	Milton Keynes South West	821	-4,860
Dacorum	Hemel Hempstead	873	-4,840
Cotswold and Vale	Stroud	911	-4,809
East Lincolnshire	Louth and Horncastle	949	-4,483
Broadland	Norwich North	851	-4,444
Cherwell Vale	Banbury	805	-4,404
North Hertfordshire and Stevenage	Stevenage	903	-3,860
Central Suffolk	South Suffolk	811	-3,837
South Western Staffordshire	Stafford	844	-3,750
Staffordshire Moorlands	Staffordshire Moorlands	974	-3,725
Maidstone Weald	Maidstone and The Weald	835	-3,714
Havering	Hornchurch	998	-3,258
Witham, Braintree and Halstead	Braintree	798	-3,141
West Gloucestershire	Gloucester	938	-3,110
West Wiltshire	Westbury	824	-2,803
Bexley	Old Bexley and Sidcup	957	-2,749
Blackwater Valley and Hart	Aldershot	779	-2,676
South Cambridgeshire	South Cambridgeshire	798	-2,583
East Elmbridge and Mid Surrey	Epsom and Ewell	919	-2,563
Waltham Forest	Walthamstow	1,096	-2,538
South and East Dorset	Christchurch	972	-2,424
Canterbury and Coastal	Canterbury	967	-2,276
Burntwood, Lichfield and Tamworth	Tamworth	863	-2,111
Wyre Forest	Wyre Forest	888	-1,968
North East Oxfordshire	Banbury	752	-1,938
Watford and Three Rivers	Watford	970	-1,928
Kingston	Kingston and Surbiton	943	-1,853
Sussex Downs and Weald	Surrey Heath	879	-1,819
South Stoke	Stoke-on-Trent South	1,049	-1,719
South Wiltshire	Salisbury	891	-1,535
Waveney	Waveney	993	-1,533
St Albans and Harpenden	St. Albans	883	-1,526
Huntingdonshire	Huntingdon	781	-1,516
Chiltern and South Bucks	Chesham and Amersham	819	-1,494
Maldon and South Chelmsford	Maldon and East Chelmsford	773	-1,489
West Norfolk	North West Norfolk	935	-1,482
Colchester	Colchester	830	-1,470
North Birmingham	Sutton Coldfield	932	-1,339
Eastleigh and Test Valley South	Eastleigh	798	-1,283
Cannock Chase	Cannock Chase	890	-1,235
Charnwood and North West Leicestershire	Loughborough	867	-1,200
Billericay, Brentwood and Wickford	Brentwood and Ongar	875	-1,123
Dartford, Gravesham and Swanley	Dartford	950	-1,086
Harrow	Harrow East	993	-969
South Leicestershire	Blaby	813	-966
Eastbourne Downs	Eastbourne	1,142	-964
Leicester City West	Leicester West	1,002	-957
North Hampshire	Basingstoke	855	-890
Mid-Hampshire	Winchester	841	-826
Thurrock	Thurrock	873	-755
Newcastle-under-Lyme	Newcastle-under-Lyme	991	-597
Cheshire West	City of Chester	941	-548
Swale	Sittingbourne and Sheppey	893	-449
South East Hertfordshire	Broxbourne	803	-446
Wycombe	Wycombe	858	-429
Isle of Wight	Isle of Wight	1,046	-361
Medway	Gillingham	857	-196
Oldbury and Smethwick	Warley	1,096	-179
Welwyn Hatfield	Welwyn Hatfield	930	-128
Newbury and Community	Newbury	802	-114
Norwich	Norwich South	1,004	-108

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for Health which Essex primary care trusts will have their final funding for the current financial year reduced against initial allocation; and where reallocated funding will be spent. [35810]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The following Essex primary care trusts will have their 2005–06 initial allocations reduced by the amounts indicated:

	£ million
Witham, Braintree and Halstead Care Trust	3.148
Maldon and South Chelmsford Primary Care Trust (PCT)	1.492
Thurrock PCT	0.227
Chelmsford PCT	7.137

The reductions are necessary to recover overspends which occurred in these organisations in the 2004–05 financial year. This funding will be returned to those national health service organisations delivering under spends in 2004–05.

Pro-choice

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) whether the letter she sent to the pro-choice meeting chaired by Baroness Gould on 26 October represents Government policy; if she will place a copy of the letter in the Library; and if she will make a statement; [32747]

(2) what discussions she had with *(a)* ministerial colleagues and *(b)* officials in her Department before sending her letter to the pro-choice meeting chaired by Baroness Gould on 26 October; and if she will make a statement; [32748]

(3) for what reasons she sent a letter to the pro-choice meeting chaired by Baroness Gould on 26 October; and if she will make a statement. [34291]

Caroline Flint: The letter was sent in response to an invitation to attend the abortion rights public meeting "Defend the limit—Defend a woman's right to choose", held at the House of Lords on 26 October 2005. The letter, which was sent by a departmental official on 14 October 2005, stated

> "Unfortunately, due to pressure on her diary the Secretary of State is unable to attend. She has asked me to pass on her apologies."

Psychiatry (Waiting Times)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average waiting time was to see a psychiatrist in Coventry South in the last 12 months. [38766]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The table shows the estimated average waiting time from general practitioner written referral to first outpatient appointment with a consultant psychiatrist within Coventry primary care trust (PCT) between September 2004 to September 2005 (provider based).

	Median wait (weeks)
September 2004	5.9
December 2004	4.5
March 2005	6.0
June 2005	5.4
September 2005	6.3

Notes:
1. Due to small numbers, the calculation of the median wait is prone to fluctuation at PCT and strategic health authority level. Care should be taken when interpreting these figures.
2. Waiting times apply to consultant-led appointments only. Services in many areas are now run by multi-disciplinary teams.

Source:
Department of Health form QM08

Public Appointments Annual Report

Mr. Spellar: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will publish an up to date edition of the Public Appointments annual report. [36571]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Secretary of State has delegated the majority of her appointments functions to the National Health Service Appointments Commission. The commission intends to make information about the public appointments it makes available on its website www.appointments.org.uk in the early spring next year.

Retinopathy Programmes

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what measures are in place to ensure the delivery of independent and external quality assurance of local retinopathy programmes. [36070]

Ms Rosie Winterton *[holding answer 8 December 2005]:* Quality assurance is an integral part of all screening programmes. Quality assurance standards have been developed and piloted by the UK National Screening Committee's national screening programme for sight threatening retinopathy. A full list of the quality assurance standards can be found on the National Screening Programme's website at: www.nscretinopathy.org.uk. Screening programme managers are responsible for ensuring that programmes meet overall quality requirements. Strategic health authorities are responsible for ensuring action is taken on quality assurance recommendations.

RU-486

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent assessment her Department has made of the safety of the RU-486 abortion drug; and if she will make a statement. [34213]

Jane Kennedy: As with all marketed medicines, the safety of mifepristone, an antiprogestogenic steroid that is used for the medical termination of intra-uterine pregnancy, is continuously monitored by the Medicines and Healthcare products Regulatory Agency (MHRA).

Mifepristone was first authorised in the United Kingdom as a prescription only medicine for use under specialist care in July 1991. This followed advice from the then Committee on Safety of Medicines. Since 1991, the safety of mifepristone has been monitored through review of reports of suspected adverse drug reactions and through periodic safety reports submitted by the manufacturer. Following new advice from the US FDA,

where this product is used in combination with another medicine that is not licensed for this purpose in the UK, serious adverse reactions, including cases of serious bacterial infection, associated with mifepristone have been reviewed. The regulatory authorities within Europe, including the UK, did not identify any new safety issues as a consequence of this review.

As with all marketed medicines, the MHRA will continue to monitor the safety of Mifegyne and will take any action to ensure patient safety is maintained.

Rural Pharmacies

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to assist and secure the future of rural pharmacies. [37266]

Jane Kennedy: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave on 24 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 188–89W.

Secondments

Mr. Lansley: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many people are on secondment from other organisations to her Department; and which organisations they have been seconded from in each case. [34223]

Jane Kennedy: There are currently 49 staff on secondment or loan into the Department.

The Department's human resource system does not show where a person has been seconded to or from.

Sick Leave

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many of her Department's employees who are within one year of the official retirement age are on extended sick leave. [32598]

Jane Kennedy: There are currently two departmental employees, who are within one year of the official retirement age, on extended sick leave.

Situation Reports

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many situation reports have been delivered to her Department from local NHS bodies in each of the last five years; what the frequency of such reports was; and what issues were covered. [24521]

Mr. Byrne: Daily Situation Reports (SitReps) are collected from acute trusts on weekdays during the winter months on an exception basis. They are required if any of the following operational problems occur:

- Accident and Emergency (A&E) closures
- A&E diversions
- Trolley waits of over 12 hours
- Urgent operations cancelled for the second or subsequent time
- Non-medical critical care transfers out of an approved critical care transfer group
- Unplanned reductions in elective workload because of pressures and
- Difficulties with ambulance queuing.

Weekly SitReps currently cover the following topics:

- A&E attendances
- Time spent in A&E
- Wait from decision to admit to admission
- Emergency admissions
- Cancelled operations
- Delayed transfers of care
- Beds available and occupied
- Non-medical critical care transfers and
- Ambulance calls responded to.

The number of SitReps collected in each of the last five years is shown in the table.

	Daily SitReps	*Weekly SitReps*
2000–01	116	31
2001–02	67	53
2002–03	71	52
2003–04	90	52
2004–05	96	53

Smoking

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the proportion of smokers are aged *(a)* 16 and under, *(b)* 17 to 24, *(c)* 25 to 30, *(d)* 31 to 40 and *(e)* over 40 years, broken down by sex; and what the equivalent figures were in (i) 1976, (ii) 1979, (iii) 1983, (iv) 1987, (v) 1992, (vi) 1997 and (vii) 2000. [36178]

Caroline Flint: The information is not available in the form requested.

Estimates of the prevalence of smoking among adults aged 16 and over are obtained from the general household survey. Although the GHS covers Great Britain, the data presented here are for England only.

Data on smoking among young people are available from a series of surveys of secondary school children in years seven-11, mainly aged 11–15.

The available information is presented in three tables, using the results of the general household survey 1980 to 2003 and Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in England in 2004.

Table 1: Prevalence of smoking cigarette among adults aged 17 and over, by age and gender, England, 1992, 2000 and 2003

Percentage/numbers of current cigarette smokers

	17–24	*25–30*	*31–40*	*Over 40*	*All adults aged 17 and over*
Men					
Unweighted					
1992	36	37	31	25	29
Weighted					
2000	35	41	33	24	29
2003	34	39	33	23	27
Women					
Unweighted					
1992	33	34	27	24	27
Weighted					
2000	33	33	31	20	25
2003	31	33	28	20	24

Note:
In 2000, weighting to compensate for non-response was introduced to the GHS. This is described in detail in the 2000 report. The effect of weighting on the smoking data is slight, increasing the estimated overall prevalence by one percentage point.

Source:
General Household Survey 1992, 2000 and 2003 (Office for National Statistics)

Table 2: Prevalence of smoking cigarettes among adults aged 16 and over, by age and gender England, 1980 to 2003

Numbers/percentages

	All	*16–19*	*20–24*	*25–34*	*35–49*	*50–59*	*60 and over*
Men							
Unweighted							
1980	42	33	44	47	45	45	34
1982	37	31	39	40	39	41	32
1984	35	28	39	39	38	38	29
1986	34	30	41	37	37	34	28
1988	32	28	37	37	36	32	25
1990	31	28	39	37	34	27	24
1992	29	29	39	35	31	27	20
1994	28	28	42	34	31	26	17
1996	28	25	43	38	30	27	17
1998	28	30	42	37	32	26	15
Weighted							
1998	29	30	40	38	33	27	16
2000	29	30	36	39	31	27	16
2001	28	24	39	38	31	25	16
2002	27	22	38	36	29	26	16
2003	27	26	38	37	31	25	15
Women							
Unweighted							
1980	36	32	40	43	41	42	24
1982	32	31	39	36	37	38	23
1984	32	31	35	35	35	40	22
1986	31	31	38	35	33	34	22
1988	30	27	37	33	34	33	21
1990	28	33	39	34	32	27	19
1992	27	24	37	32	28	28	19
1994	25	28	38	30	28	26	16
1996	27	32	37	33	30	26	18
1998	26	33	40	33	28	26	16
Weighted							
1998	26	33	40	32	28	27	16
2000	25	28	35	32	27	26	15
2001	25	31	35	30	27	24	17
2002	25	28	38	33	27	24	14
2003	24	24	34	31	28	22	14

Note:
The unweighted base for 2003 is of similar size to the unweighted base for earlier years. In 2000, weighting to compensate for non-response was introduced to the GHS. This is described in detail in the 2000 report. The effect of weighting on the smoking data is slight, increasing the estimated overall prevalence by one percentage point.
Source:
General Household Survey, 1980 to 2003. Office for National Statistics

Table 3: Prevalence of regular smokers, in school years seven-11 years, by gender, England, 1982 to 2004

Percentage

Smoking behaviour	*1982*	*1984*	*1986*	*1988*	*1990*	*1992*	*1993*	*1994*
Boy regular smoker	11	13	7	7	9	9	8	10
Girls regular smoker	11	13	12	9	11	10	11	13
Total regular smoker	11	13	10	8	10	10	10	12

	1996	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Boy regular smoker	11	9	8	9	8	9	7	7
Girls regular smoker	15	12	10	12	11	11	11	10
Total regular smoker	13	11	9	10	10	10	9	9

Notes:
1. The survey from which the results are taken from questions secondary pupils years seven to 11.
2. The majority of pupils questioned are therefore from the ages 11–15
3. A regular smoker is defined as usually smoking at least one cigarette a week

Source:
Smoking, drinking and drug use among young people in England in 2004 (Health and Social Care Information Centre)

We are not able to give the 'proportion of smokers' but are able to supply the 'prevalence of smoking' for particular years and age ranges.

Table 1. We have been able to provide prevalence data for ages 17–24, 25–30, 21–40, over 40 and all adults aged 17 and over, for years 1992, 2000 and 2003 using the general household survey. We have been unable to provide data for the above age groups for years 1976, 1979, 1983 and 1987.

Table 2. As we have been unable to provide all years requested in the PQ, we have included smoking prevalence (based on GHS tables) for a range of other years (1980, 1982, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002 and 2003). However, this is not readily available in the age groups requested. Instead the data is grouped by those aged 16–19, 20–24, 25–34, 35–49, 50–59, 60 and over and all ages 16 and over.

We have not included adult data prior to 1980 as this is only available at Great Britain level and not for England.

Table 3. The PQ asks for data on those aged under 16. The closest smoking prevalence data for children we are able to provide is for pupils in school years seven-11, where the majority of students will be aged 11–15. However, the only exact year that we can provide data, for is 1992 and 2000. Nonetheless, we have provided prevalence figures in close proximity to the years requested (1982, 1984, 1986, 1988, 1990, 1992, 1993, 1994, 1996, 1998, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2003 and 2004).

The first survey of secondary school children was conducted in 1982, hence the absence of earlier prevalence data.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what discussions *(a)* Ministers and *(b)* officials had with (i) Action on Smoking and Health and (ii) FOREST about part I of the Health Bill; and if she will make a statement. [36182]

Caroline Flint: Since publication of the Health Bill on 27 October 2005 there have been no formal discussions with Action on Smoking and Health or FOREST at either ministerial level or official level.

However, both organisations responded to the public consultation on the smokefree elements of the Bill, which was held between 20 June and 5 September 2005.

An analysis has been published and is available in the Library.

Staff Uniforms

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what steps she is taking to reduce the laundry turn-around time at hospitals and the risks of cross infection in homes and hospitals caused by hospital staff laundering uniforms at home. [35262]

Jane Kennedy: National health service trusts management are required to adopt procedures that ensure that patients and staff are not put at risk of infection from used and infected linen. It is also their responsibility to establish with their laundry provider appropriate performance measures.

The decision as to whether nurses' uniforms are laundered through the hospital laundry services, or whether nurses wash their uniforms themselves, is made locally.

Advice and guidance on hospital laundry arrangements was issued to NHS trusts in "Health Service Guidance HSG (95)18". This sets out the arrangements for the handling and laundering of linen and states the importance of securing the disinfection of used and infected linen, including uniforms. This guidance is being reviewed to ensure it reflects current research evidence.

Statutory Instruments

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many statutory instruments introduced by her Department had to be *(a)* withdrawn, *(b)* amended by a further statutory instrument and *(c)* reprinted because of defective drafting in each session since 1997; and what steps she (i) is taking and (ii) plans to take to prevent further such instances. [34530]

Jane Kennedy: Information is not available in the format requested. The information in the table gives the number of statutory instruments (SI) issued free of charge because of an error or defect in an earlier instrument.

	Number of SIs
1997–98	4
1998–99	4
1999–2000	6
2000–01	1
2001–02	4
2002–03	4
2003–04	7
2004–05	3

We have identified one occasion when an instrument was withdrawn. This was in the 2004–05 parliamentary Session. The Department lays in the order of 150 SIs a year and any errors are regretted. We have a range of measures in place to provide expert advice and training to lawyers and officials involved in the process and aim to ensure that lessons are learned.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what training is given to *(a)* policy officials and *(b)* lawyers in her Department responsible for drafting statutory instruments; and if she will make a statement. [34531]

Jane Kennedy: Statutory Instruments (SIs) are drafted by departmental lawyers based on instructions from policy divisions. Where SIs amend primary legislation, parliamentary counsel are consulted.

As members of the Government Legal Service (GLS), departmental lawyers receive extensive training on the preparation and drafting of statutory instruments. This consists of a combination of lectures and practical exercises run by experienced practitioners in the GLS, coupled with training given by legal advisers who advise the parliamentary scrutiny committees. In addition, senior managers in the GLS take a close interest in the quality of SIs and provide frequent feedback and on the

job training to those with lead responsibility for drafting. This is an ongoing process and part of the continuing education of Government legal advisers.

Strategic Health Authorities

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what capital allocations she expects to be made available to the Shropshire and Staffordshire strategic health authority over the next three years; and for what purpose each allocation will be made. [32009]

Ms Rosie Winterton: No decisions have yet been made on national health service capital allocations for 2006–07 onwards.

The last round of capital allocations was announced in January 2003, covering 2003–04, 2004–05 and 2005–06.

Temporary Staff

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Health how many temporary staff were employed by her Department in each year since 1997. [35199]

Jane Kennedy: The figures requested are published in civil service statistics. Table A in civil service statistics covers permanent and temporary staff numbers on a full-time equivalent basis in the Department. Civil service statistics are available in the Library and on the Cabinet Office statistics website at:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_of_the_civil_service/statistics/civil_service_statics/index.asp

Kelvin Hopkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Health if she will break down the number of *(a)* agency staff, *(b)* contractors and *(c)* consultants currently employed within the Department by (i) pay band and (ii) length of contract. [36919]

Jane Kennedy: The information is not collected centrally and can be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Velcade

Mr. Kidney: To ask the Secretary of State for Health (1) what progress has been made in the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence review of the drug Velcade; [37786]

(2) what guidance she has issued to primary care trusts concerning the use of the drug Velcade for the treatment of myeloma. [37787]

Jane Kennedy: Preparatory work on the National Institute for Health and Clinical Excellence (NICE) appraisal of Velcade has commenced. Velcade is one of the five drugs in the first tranche of appraisals in NICE'S single topic appraisal process. The first guidance from this new process is expected to be published in mid 2006.

In 1999, the Department issued Health Service Circular 1999/176, which asks national health service bodies to continue with local arrangements for the managed introduction of new technologies where guidance from NICE has not yet been issued. These arrangements should include an assessment of the available evidence.

Waiting Times

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what the average length of time was to make an appointment with a general practitioner in North Yorkshire in the last period for which figures are available. [35453]

Mr. Byrne: The requested data are not collected or held centrally. Since 2001, data have been collected each month from primary care trusts and general practitioners (GPs) on the availability of access to a GP. These data show whether access is or is not available in line with 'The NHS Plan' target that patients should be able to be seen within 48 hours but do not provide information on actual waiting times. In November in North and East Yorkshire and Northern Lincolnshire strategic health authority, primary care trusts reported that 100 per cent. of patients were able to be offered a GP consultation within two working days.

Walsgrave Hospital

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what recent discussions her Department has had with the chief executive of Walsgrave hospital regarding its predicted monetary shortfall in 2005–06. [38164]

Ms Rosie Winterton: The Department has not discussed the matter with the chief executive of University hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire National Health Service Trust. It is the responsibility of strategic health authorities (SHAs) to deliver both overall financial balance for their local health communities and to ensure each and every body achieves financial balance. This is now a matter for West Midlands South SHA.

X-ray Equipment

Mr. Bone: To ask the Secretary of State for Health what percentage of NHS X-ray equipment was *(a)* condemned and *(b)* repaired in 2004–05. [33604]

Jane Kennedy: The information requested is not held centrally.

EDUCATION AND SKILLS

Education Services

Mr. Andrew Turner: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills which of the local authorities referred to in the answer of 11 November 2003, *Official Report*, columns 217–1W, subsequently employed private contractors or partners to deliver education services. [38998]

Jacqui Smith: The following authorities have all been directed to outsource some or most of their education functions to a private contractor as a result of independent inspection evidence of failure of those services. Other authorities may have chosen to employ private contractors or partners to deliver some of their education services, but have not been required to do so. We expect local authorities to take responsibility for improving their own services, and would not intervene and direct a particular solution unless the authority demonstrates it is unable to do so.

Bradford (directed in 2001)

Hackney (directed in 1999 and 2002)

Haringey (directed in 2001)

Isles of Scilly (directed in 2004)

Islington (directed in 2000)

Leeds (directed in 2001)

North East Lincolnshire (directed in 2005)

Southwark (directed in 2001 and 2003)

Swindon (directed in 2002)

Walsall (directed in 1999 and 2002)

Waltham Forest (directed in 2001)

Employer Training Pilots

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 601W, what criteria she uses to decide whether information in relation to the employer training pilots should be treated as commercial-in-confidence. [36392]

Phil Hope: Decisions about the learning required by individual employers taking part in the employer training pilots are reached after discussions with skills brokers and help with identifying and assessing the training needs of low-skilled employees. As such decisions are business-related, we feel it is not appropriate to give information about the training and funding received by individual employers participating in ETP without first obtaining permission to do so from each employer. As of the end of November 2005, 26,434 employers had participated in employer training pilots.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many meetings of the EU *(a)* Coordination Group to promote uniformity of application of the general system for the recognition of higher education diplomas (first general system) and *(b)* Advisory Committee on medical training have taken place during the UK presidency of the EU; who presided over each meeting; what other UK representatives were present; what provision was made for representation of the devolved governments; and if she will make a statement. [38782]

Jacqui Smith: No meetings of the Coordination Group (first general system) or the Advisory Committee on medical training were held during the UK presidency.

Examination Results

Edward Miliband: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the *(a)* A-level and *(b)* GCSE results for each school in Doncaster North constituency were in each year since 1995; and what the average results were for all schools in (i) Doncaster North, (ii) Yorkshire and (iii) England. [35680]

Jacqui Smith: The data requested up to 2004 can be found in the following tables, 2005 data has not been provided as school and constituency level data is not yet available.

Percentage of 15 year old pupils achieving 5+ A-C at GCSE or equivalent in schools 1996–2004*

	1995	1996	1997[1]	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004[2]
North Doncaster technology college	18	31	29	25	24	15	25	40	28	47
Thorne trammar	19	25	27	22	30	29	31	34	30	33
Don Valley high school	21	26	20	22	17	21	24	30	34	35
Campsmount technology college	23	24	19	29	32	33	33	22	26	21
North Doncaster	20.8	26.2	22.7	24.2	25.3	25.7	28.5	30.0	29.2	32.6
Yorkshire	—	37.3	38.2	38.9	40.6	42.3	43.3	44.5	45.9	47.5
England	43.5	44.5	45.1	46.3	47.9	49.2	50.0	51.6	52.9	53.7

[1] Percentages from 1996/97 include GNVQ equivalencies.
[2] Percentages for 2003/04 include GCSE and Equivalents which have been approved for pre-16 use.
Notes:
1. Regional figures exclude independent schools. England figures include all schools.
2. Figures for individual schools are published in the secondary school achievement and attainment tables as integer percentages, and the overall England figure is published to one decimal place. Regional figures are conventionally quoted to one decimal place.
3. Prior to 2002 North Doncaster technology college was known as Adwick school. Prior to 2004 Campsmount technology college was known as Campsmount school.
4. 1995 figures for Yorkshire are not available because some schools in Yorkshire were under the control of the then Humberside local education authority which was reorganised in 1996.

Average point score per candidate at A level or equivalent 1995–2004

	1995	1996	1997	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004
North Doncaster technology college	15.4	19.5	14.3	13.7	11.9	11.3	10.1	160.9	152.3	157.8
Thorne grammar	16.3	11.8	11.9	11.6	15.3	15.9	14.6	213.0	170.0	160.9
Don Valley high school	9.3	13.2	12.8	15.4	10.4	14.6	12.8	151.2	190.9	196.3
Campsmount technology college	9.8	7.5	10.0	10.2	8.0	14.8	16.0	174.0	247.6	205.7
North Doncaster	13.3	14.5	12.7	13.0	11.6	13.8	13.1	172.2	185.6	182.3
Yorkshire	—	17.3	17.4	16.2	16.8	16.9	16.7	244.7	250.5	262.3
England	16.0	16.8	17.3	16.7	17.1	17.3	17.4	254.7	258.9	269.2

Notes:
1. Prior to 2002 North Doncaster technology college was known as Adwick school.
2. Prior to 2004 Campsmount technology college was known as Campsmount school.
3. 1995 figures for Yorkshire are not available because some schools in Yorkshire were under the control of the then Humberside local education authority which was reorganised in 1996.

Point score calculations

1995/96–1999/2000: The average GCE A/AS point score per student entered for the equivalent of two or more A/AS examinations (figures from 1997/98 include Advanced GNVQs), with a point score based on the following tariff:

Table 1

GCE A level		*GCE AS level*		*Advanced GNVQ*	
Grade	*Points*	*Grade*	*Points*	*Grade*	*Points*
A	10	A	10	Distinction	18
B	8	B	8	—	—
C	6	C	6	Merit	12
D	4	D	4	—	—
E	2	E	2	Pass	6

2000/01: The average point score per student entered for at least one A level or Advanced GNVQ, based on the points tariff shown in Table 1.

2001/02: The average GCE/VCE A/AS point score per student. The point score for each grade are as follows (based on the UCAS points tariff).

Table 2

GCE/VCE AS level	*GCE VCE A level*	*VCE Double Award*	*Points*
—	—	AA	240
—	—	AB	220
—	—	BB	200
—	—	BC	180
—	—	CC	160
—	—	CD	140
—	A	DD	120
—	B	DE	100
—	C	EE	80
A	D	—	60
B	—	—	50
C	E	—	40
D	—	—	30
E	—	—	20

2002/03–2004/05: The average GCE/VCE A/AS and key skills point score per candidate. Points are as in Table 2 but with a key skill at Level 3 pass equivalent to 20 points.

Foundation Schools

Mr. Davey: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what research her Department has conducted on the impact on other local schools of the admissions procedures of foundation schools. [36894]

Jacqui Smith: We are analysing existing data to examine the relationship, if any, between admission authority status of school and levels of social segregation. This work is not yet complete. The results will be made available when it is complete.

Gifted/Talented Pupils

Mr. Michael Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the benefits to pupils in Worcestershire of membership of the academy for gifted and talented pupils. [39126]

Jacqui Smith: The National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY) currently has 925 members in Worcestershire. Members can participate in NAGTY activities including e-learning, summer schools and outreach events. Full details of NAGTY's services to student members may be found on their website at www.nagty.ac.uk/student_ academy/index.aspx.

Feedback to NAGTY from its members suggests that those who participate fully receive the greatest benefits. Members report improved motivation and ability to meet challenges leading to increased aspiration and improved self esteem. This has been endorsed by independent evaluations of NAGTY summer schools by Ofsted and by Cedar, the research body based at the university of Warwick. My Department will be commissioning a full, external evaluation of NAGTY services during 2006.

Herefordshire Council

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much funding has been awarded to Herefordshire council to provide for new buildings in each school in Herefordshire in each of the last three years; how much was awarded in each case; if she will make a statement. [38925]

Jacqui Smith: Funding awarded to Herefordshire council to provide for new buildings and other capital works in each school in Herefordshire in each of the last three years is set out in the following table, to the nearest £0.1 million:

	£ million
2003–04	27.6
2004–05	8.4
2005–06	8.7

The figure of £27.6 million in 2003–04 includes an allocation of £19.5 million for a PFI building scheme.

No records are held centrally on how much is being spent on new buildings in each school. This is because expenditure on each school, and between new building and other capital works, is determined by the local authority in accordance with priorities set out in the local asset management plan.

Learning and Skills Council

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 124W, on Learning and Skills Council, whether "further savings" means savings within the projected administration budgets for 2006–07 and 2007–08; and in what circumstances these savings (i) would and (ii) would not be released to the sector. [35736]

Bill Rammell: The LSC is currently consulting on the detail of its restructuring exercise which will result in savings in administration costs. I expect that these savings will start to become available from 2007–08. Once the consultation is completed my department and the LSC will agree where these savings should be directed to meet our priorities and a full profile for the release of savings.

Literacy Teaching

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills whom she has asked to carry out the review of the framework for teaching literacy; which experts have been invited to submit evidence to this review; how many responses she has received to the Department's consultation on the review; and whether the recommendations of the Rose review will be adopted by the framework for teaching literacy. [38606]

Jacqui Smith: The Primary National Strategy has been asked to renew and update its framework for the teaching of literacy.

A period of informal consultation is currently under way. Discussions are being held with consultancy groups drawn from national samples of head teachers, teachers, local authority representatives, subject and professional organisations and higher education institutions. A consultation forum has been set up on the DfES website. To date, well over 100 contributors have taken part in consultancy group discussions and the website consultation forum has had 14 contributions posted on it, some of which are from local authorities feeding back comments from their meetings with local teachers.

The Strategy will continue to hold discussions with experts across the English community to elicit their views on proposed content and structure of the revised framework and will post documentation on the website for wider comment. After Easter 2006, a draft revised framework will be published for more formal consultation. The Secretary of State made clear when she announced the Rose review and the renewal of the literacy framework in June 2005 that the findings of the Rose review would inform the development of the revised framework.

National Employer Training Programme

John Penrose: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the answer of 9 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 601W, on the National Employer Training Programme, how many employees participated in the employer training pilots in each local learning and skills council area involved in *(a)* 2002–03, *(b)* 2003–04 and *(c)* 2004–05. [38121]

Phil Hope: Employer Training Pilots (ETP) were introduced in September 2002 to encourage employers to invest in skills and qualifications, particularly for low skilled employees.

Pilots have been running since September 2002 in the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) areas of Birmingham and Solihull, Derbyshire, Essex, Greater Manchester, Tyne and Wear and Wiltshire and Swindon. From September 2003, six additional pilots have been running in Berkshire, East London, Kent, Leicester, Shropshire and South Yorkshire. From September 2004, additional pilots have been running in Black Country, Cambridgeshire, Devon and Cornwall, Lancashire, West Yorkshire, and Northumberland, County Durham and Tees Valley joined the Tyne and Wear pilot to create a whole region pilot.

The numbers of learners starts in each local Learning and Skills Council area involved were:

ETP learner starts by pilot area—years 1,2 and 3

	Learners 1 September 2002 to 31 August 2003	*Learners 1 September 2003 to 31 August 2004*	*Learners 1 September 2004 to 31 August 2005*	*Total learners 1 September 2002 to 31 August 2005*
Berkshire	25	3,982	2,808	6,815
Birmingham and Solihull	1,562	4,461	6,098	12,121
Black Country	—	11	3,540	3,551
Cambridgeshire	—	—	3,616	3,616
Co. Durham[1]	—	1	2,116	2,117
Derbyshire	1,715	5,378	4,397	11,490
Devon and Cornwall	—	—	4,236	4,236
Essex	4,169	10,152	6,652	20,973
Greater Manchester	4,268	11,572	9,354	25,194
Kent and Medway	2	4,563	4,361	8,926
Lancashire	—	1	4,219	4,220
Leicestershire	—	5,120	7,732	12,852
London East	302	5,177	4,030	9,509
Northumberland[1]	—	—	1,741	1,741
Shropshire	—	5,351	4,736	10,087
South Yorkshire	57	7,786	4,418	12,261
Tees Valley[1]	—	—	2,893	2,893
Tyne and Wear[1]	2,702	6,091	9,148	17,941
West Yorkshire	—	—	5,394	5,394
Wiltshire and Swindon	2,801	5,250	3,669	11,720
Total	17,603	74,896	95,158	187,657

[1] North East Regional Pilot

Nurseries (Child Abuse)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many convictions there have been for child abuse at nurseries in each of the last 10 years. [37050]

Paul Goggins: I have been asked to reply.

It is not possible from the court proceedings database held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform, to identify those offenders convicted for child abuse at nurseries, as the circumstances of an offence are not centrally collected.

Out-of-classroom Educational Experiences

Tim Farron: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what plans she has to increase financial support for high quality out-of-classroom educational experiences; and if she will make a statement. [39233]

Jacqui Smith: The consultation on the Education outside the Classroom Manifesto, which endorses all pupils having the opportunity for high quality out-of-classroom educational experiences, will finish at the end of January 2006. The 10 working groups will make proposals for action early next year. No decisions have yet been made on funding.

Parent Support Advisers

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills if she will make a statement on the piloting of new parent support advisers referred to in paragraph 1.23 of the pre-Budget report; and what their intended role is. [38712]

Jacqui Smith: The pre-Budget report announced £20 million to support the piloting of a new school-based outreach role—parent school advisers—in over 600 primary and secondary schools in the most deprived areas. These advisers will offer early preventative support for children and families where there are signs that they could benefit from additional help. Parent school advisers will work with families to identify the most effective support for them. This might include a parenting programme, mentoring for the parent of child, or one-to-one tuition for the child.

We also want to use the pilots to consider the most effective means of enabling parent school advisers to have sufficient leverage over, and ensure delivery of, the additional services children and their families might need.

School Meals

Mr. Byers: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how many *(a)* primary and *(b)* secondary schools had more than 20 per cent. of pupils entitled to free school meals in the last year for which figures are available; and what this represents as a percentage of the total number of schools in each sector. [38941]

Jacqui Smith: The information requested is shown in the table.

Maintained primary and secondary schools[1]: number of schools with 21 per cent. or more of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals—January 2005—England

	Maintained primary	*Maintained secondary*
Total number of schools	17,642	3,385
Schools with 21 per cent. or more of pupils known to be eligible for free school meals[2]		
Number of schools	5,018	844
As a percentage of all schools	28	25

[1] Includes middle schools as deemed.
[2] Based on percentages rounded to the nearest whole number.
Source:
Annual Schools' Census

School Standards and Framework Act

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what assessment she has made of the operation of the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. [37778]

Jacqui Smith: The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 has had a very significant impact. In 1997, a third of children left primary schools without having mastered the basics in English and maths. Now three-quarters achieve in maths and even more in English. Many 5 to 7-year-olds were in classes of more than 30. That experience is a thing of the past.

There have been sustained and substantial improvements in attainment at 14,16 and 18. There are many fewer failing schools. In 1998, 616 secondary schools secured 5 A*-Cs at GCSE for fewer than 25 per cent. of their pupils. Now that figure is 131. These achievements are important but we must now go further. Our White Paper "Higher Standards, Better Schools For All" sets out our plans to do so.

Schools (Fire Risks)

Mark Williams: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills when she plans to publish the findings of the public consultation on building bulletin 100, "Designing and Managing Against the Risk of Fires in Schools". [39344]

Jacqui Smith: Public consultation on the draft guidance Building Bulletin 100 (BB 100), "Designing and Managing Against the Risk of Fire in Schools", concluded on 18 November 2005. An analysis of the responses to the consultation is under way and we expect to publish the findings on the Department's website by 31 March 2006. We anticipate publishing the final, agreed version of BB 100 in the summer of 2006.

Schools White Paper

Judy Mallaber: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills pursuant to the Schools White Paper, if she will ensure that local authorities will in future be able to provide services to *(a)* community schools, *(b)* trust schools, *(c)* foundation schools, *(d)* academies, *(e)* voluntary-controlled schools and *(f)* voluntary-aided schools. [38389]

Jacqui Smith: Local authorities will retain their ability to offer services to all categories of maintained schools and academies under the White Paper proposals.

Skills for Life

Mr. Boswell: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent assessment she has made of *(a)* the Skills for Life programme and *(b)* the report of the Adult Learning Inspectorate on the programme. [36731]

Phil Hope: The Adult Learning Inspectorate Chief Inspector's report published on 7 December highlighted the need to improve the quality of adult basic skills provision. The Department is already tackling the issues raised through a coherent Quality Initiative which includes teaching training, workforce development and initiatives which will increase the quality of teaching and

learning. This will form part of the Quality Improvement Strategy lead by the Quality Improvement Agency. Recent ALI and Ofsted reports have highlighted improvements in quality, eg improved diagnostic assessment and better use of teaching and learning materials. The number of unsatisfactory or weak inspections in further education colleges has halved in the last year. Two colleges have now been awarded beacon status for Skills for Life.

Since the launch of the strategy in 2001, 3.7 million learners have taken up 7.8 million learning opportunities, and 1,130,000 of these learners went on to achieve at least one first literacy, language or numeracy qualification. We are on track to meet our PSA target to help 2.25 million learners achieve qualifications by 2010.

A report by the National Audit Office, published December 2004, reported that

> "The Department has led the development of lasting improvements in literacy, language and numeracy learning. There are more ways for people to improve their skills and the Department has raised awareness by advertising and working with other Government Departments to reach their clients".

Spin-off Companies

Mr. Iain Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what recent assessment she has made of the effects on the UK economy of spin-off companies from English universities. [36203]

Barry Gardiner: I have been asked to reply.

For the years 1999 to 2003 the total number of spin-outs from English universities is 726. There was an initial huge increase though this has now levelled off, and in the 2002–03 year, the number of spin-outs reported was 158.

Spin-out companies from English universities have reported £252 million in turnover and over 10,000 FTE staff, in 2002–03.

In the past two years, 20 spin-outs from UK universities have floated on stock exchanges in the UK and USA, with a combined IPO value of over £1 billion.

This information is gathered by University Companies Organisation on a UK- wide basis, and the England only figures, are not easily obtainable.

Teachers' TV Channel

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average hourly cost of providing programming on the Teachers' TV channel has been since its launch. [38691]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 19 December 2005]:* Teachers' TV was successfully launched on 8 February 2005. It aims to help raise standards in classrooms by helping to share good practice, support continuing professional development, offer classroom resources, and provide education news and information.

The channel has a high 'repeat rate' where the same hours programming is broadcast a number of times within the schedule. The average cost for each commissioned programming hour is £2,819.

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how much has been spent on the Teachers' TV channel since its launch. [38692]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 19 December 2005]:* Teachers' TV was successfully launched on 8 February 2005. It aims to help raise standards in classrooms by helping to share good practice, support continuing professional development, offer classroom resources, and provide education news and information.

Since its launch, the Department has spent £17.8million on Teachers TV.

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what the average hourly viewing figures for Teachers' TV have been in each month since its launch. [38693]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 19 December 2005]:* We currently estimate that 240,000 households watch Teachers TV on a monthly basis. Of these, almost 90,000 are from the school work force. At least 637,000 people watched Teachers' TV (on digital TV) between launch and the end of July 2005. Channel viewers watch 40 to 50 minutes on average (which equates to roughly three programmes that can help support their continuing professional development) each week.

Trust Schools

Helen Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills (1) what arrangements she plans to put in place to dispose of the assets of a trust school if such a school should close; [38056]

(2) whether assets will be transferred from local authority control to the control of a trust when a trust school is set up. [38061]

Jacqui Smith *[holding answer 19 December 2005]:* I can confirm that all land and buildings held by a local authority for the purposes of a school becoming a trust school would normally transfer to and vest in the trust. The trustees would need to notify the school's maintaining local authority if they wished to dispose of any non-playing field land and, in the case of playing field land, they would need to obtain the prior consent of the Secretary of State for Education and Skills before disposing, or changing the use, of such land.

The existing arrangements that deal with land issues when a foundation or voluntary school closes will also apply to trust schools. They will require the trustees of a closing trust school to apply to the Secretary of State for Education and Skills to exercise her powers and direct that the land either be returned to the local authority or to pay her or the authority the whole or part of the value of the land. Where the discontinuance of a trust school is connected with proposals for the establishment of a new school she may direct that the land transfer to and vest in the governing body or trustees of the new school.

Union Modernisation Fund

Mr. Stephen O'Brien: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what changes in funding to the Union Modernisation Fund have been proposed as a result of priorities for success. [35612]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I have been asked to reply.

None.

WorldSkills Competition

Mr. Marsden: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills how the Government plan to prepare for the UK WorldSkills bid. [39310]

Phil Hope: The preparation work for the bid is already well advanced, and is being shared between the UK Government and skills partners in the business, voluntary and public sectors. This will help to build an enduring social partnership which will promote a higher level of skills investment across the UK as an important legacy effect. A national coalition of skills partners, including the Learning and Skills Council (LSC), Sector Skills Development Agency (SSDA), Confederation of British Industry (CBI), Investors in People UK (IiP UK), the Department of Trade and Industry (DTI) and the devolved Administrations, is working hard to secure the funding we need.

We have put in place a Project Board and a UK-wide steering group chaired by myself to manage the bid process. At its first meeting on 7 December, the steering group endorsed the partnership approach as the best way forward and approved the plans for the Pre-Qualification Visit in January.

In January a team from the WorldSkills Executive Board will visit us to validate our Expression of Interest against their essential criteria for hosting the event. If these criteria are met, we will be invited to submit a full bid. Our task will be to showcase the best that London can offer and convince the WorldSkills assessors that we mean business. We will then work with the LSC, the SSDA, IiP UK, UK Skills and the devolved Administrations to submit a full bid by 31 March 2006.

Our bid will eventually be presented to the WorldSkills Council in Melbourne in May, where we will find ourselves competing against France, Sweden and Australia. If successful, we will then build the national organisation and funding model we need to deliver the event.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what representations she has received on the UK's bid to host the 2011 WorldSkills Competition. [38713]

Phil Hope: The Expression of Interest that we submitted to WorldSkills in September included letters of "in principle" support from Allan Wilson (Deputy Minister for Enterprise and Lifelong Learning, Scottish Executive) and Angela Smith MP (Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Department for Employment and Learning, Northern Ireland). We have also received written "in principle" support from Jane Davidson, the Minister for Education and Lifelong Learning, Welsh Assembly, as well as letters from Sir Digby Jones, Director General of the CBI, Brendan Barber, General Secretary of the TUC, Sir Roy Gardner, Chief Executive of Centrica plc, and Garry Hawkes, Chair of Edge. Discussions are also on-going with various bodies to provide sponsorship (both in cash and in kind) for the bid as well as the event itself, should we be successful. These include the Corporation of London, City & Guilds, the Honda Institute, and various media organisations.

Mr. Sheerman: To ask the Secretary of State for Education and Skills what skills areas she has identified for targeting in the 2011 WorldSkills Competition, should the UK win the bid. [38714]

Phil Hope: The UK put forward 18 competitors at the 2005 WorldSkills competition in Helsinki. In 2011 we aim to field a full team comprising over 40 competitors in skills ranging from welding and autobody repair, to beauty therapy and restaurant service. We will use the Japan 2007 and Canada 2009 competitions to build our capacity to do this. By 2011 we hope to have a pool of young people trained to a world class standard from which to select the UK team.

If our bid for 2011 is successful we will also be able to showcase a number of "demonstration skills" reflecting our developing skills priorities as the host nation. Discussions about these priorities are still at an early stage, as we have yet to submit our bid, but current ideas include customer service, dance (traditional, modern and ethnic based), IT skills for use in the City, or updated versions of traditional skills (i.e. construction skills). Our final choice will not be made until 2007–09.

CABINET OFFICE

Ministerial Car Fleet

Chris Grayling: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster how many vehicles are in the ministerial car fleet, broken down by type of fuel used. [39253]

Mr. Jim Murphy: The responsibility for the provision of ministerial cars and drivers has been delegated under the terms of the framework document to the Government Car Despatch Agency. I have asked its chief executive Mr Roy Burke to write to the hon. Member. Copies of his letter will be placed in the Library.

Parliamentary Questions

Greg Clark: To ask the Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster in what circumstances Ministers may cease to answer parliamentary questions concerning the performance of a particular public service institution when its status has changed as a result of public sector reforms. [38168]

Mr. Jim Murphy: In accordance with Section 1 of the ministerial code, Ministers have a duty to Parliament to account, and be held to account, for the policies, decisions and actions of their departments and agencies.

WALES

2012 Olympics

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with *(a)* the Welsh Assembly Government, *(b)* the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport and *(c)* the Disability Rights

Commission on the impact of the 2012 London Olympics and Paralympics on Wales; and if he will make a statement. [37611]

Mr. Hain: I regularly discuss matters affecting Wales both with Cabinet colleagues and with Ministers in the Welsh Assembly Government. This has included the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic games.

I have had no discussions on these matters with the Disability Rights Commission (DRC). However, the DRC has been involved in the preparations for the Games through their membership of London 2012's London Disability Organisations Forum.

The Government are committed to ensuring that the huge economic, sporting and social benefits of the 2012 games are spread across the whole of the UK, and I intend, along with Ministers in the Welsh Assembly Government, to ensure that we in Wales can maximise those benefits.

The games will provide an outstanding showcase for disabled sport—both in Britain and abroad. The UK was a pioneer in disabled sport, with London hosting the first ever Paralympic games in 1948.

Aerospace Industry

David Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what financial support his Department has provided to help the growth of the aerospace industry in Wales since 1997. [39130]

Nick Ainger: None.

Ancient Woodlands

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales what discussions he has had with the Welsh Assembly Government on the protection of ancient woodlands in Wales; and if he will make a statement. [38343]

Mr. Hain: I meet the First Minister regularly to discuss a range of issues, including forestry matters in Wales.

"Woodlands for Wales", published in 2001, sets out the Assembly Government's strategy for the sustainable management of woodlands in Wales for the next 50 years. The strategy includes commitments on the conservation of trees and woodlands. Specific actions underpinning those commitments in respect of protection of ancient woodlands are set out in the Forestry Commission Wales Corporate Plan for the period 2006–06–2007–08, a copy of which is on the Assembly Government website.

In July this year, the Assembly Government announced a £2.3 million project to restore ancient woodlands in Wales.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much was spent on external consultants and advisers by his Department in each year since May 1997. [39095]

Mr. Hain: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave to the hon. Member for Hemel Hempstead (Mike Penning) on 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 2068W.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how much was spent on advertising by his Department in each year since May 1997. [39097]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office was established in July 1999 and there were no payments on advertising during July 1999 and June 2003.

In June 2003 the Wales Office became a separate entity within the Department for Constitutional Affairs (DCA).

We have adopted the DCA corporate policy for advertising and since this period, the Wales Office has made no payment on advertising.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales how many widescreen televisions have been purchased by his Department for use in London Headquarters in each of the last five years; and what the cost was in each year. [39147]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office has purchased no widescreen televisions.

Disability

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales whether a Minister in his Department is planned to be nominated to take responsibility for liaison with the Office for Disability Issues; and if he will make a statement. [37083]

Mr. Hain: My hon. Friend, the Minister for Disabled People (Mrs McGuire), has overall responsibility for the Office for Disability Issues (ODI). She chairs a cross-government steering group which includes ministerial representatives from the Department of Health, Department for Education and Skills, Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, Department for Transport, and Department of Trade and Industry. My Hon Friend, the Parliamentary Under Secretary of State (Nick Ainger) will take responsibility for Wales Office liaison with the ODI.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on the initial activity undertaken by his Department in response to those recommendations in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit Report, Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People, where lead responsibility was assigned to all Government Departments. [37084]

Mr. Hain: The Strategy Unit's report "Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People" focuses on four key aspects of disabled people's life chances and includes a number of recommendations for all Government Departments. Many of the recommendations relate to services which are the responsibility of the National Assembly in Wales. In exercising its functions, the Assembly is under a statutory duty to have due regard to the principle of equality of opportunity for all people.

While my Department is not directly responsible for the delivery of services, we have recently undertaken a number of measures to improve accessibility for disabled employees and visitors.

PR Companies

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will list the public relations companies that have had contracts with his Department since May 1997. [39096]

Mr. Hain: The Wales Office was established in July 1999. The Wales Office has had no contracts with any public relations companies.

Rail Passenger Access

Dr. Francis: To ask the Secretary of State for Wales if he will make a statement on rail passenger access for disabled travellers *(a)* in Wales and *(b)* at Port Talbot Parkway. [37623]

Mr. Hain: Arriva Trains Wales manage 235 stations and I understand that the majority are accessible for customers with disabilities, including wheelchairs. All Arriva trains are fitted with a ramp, and train crew receive training in how to respond to the needs of customers with disabilities. The company also operates a helpline which provides support and assistance to customers with disabilities.

At Port Talbot Parkway station, I understand that the eastbound platform is fully accessible to disabled travellers. Wheelchair users arriving at or departing from the westbound platform require staff assistance in opening a level crossing gate. Arriva advise customers to contact the helpline at least one day before travelling so that they can ensure every assistance can be given. However, the train company will aim to assist customers even where no notice is given.

Arriva are aware that the arrangements at Port Talbot Parkway are not wholly convenient for some passengers. They are currently undertaking an audit of disability access to all stations and, following this, they intend to consult disability groups on priorities for action.

NORTHERN IRELAND

2012 Olympics

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many individuals in Northern Ireland are in receipt of funding for preparation for the next Olympic games. [37596]

Mr. Hanson: Under the Recreation and Youth Services Order (Northern Ireland) 1986 the Sports Council for Northern Ireland (SCNI) is statutorily responsible for the development of Sport in Northern Ireland including the distribution of public funding to sport. At present two individuals in Northern Ireland are in receipt of funding from the SCNI directly in respect of preparation for the next Olympic games.

Anti-poverty Strategy

Mr. McGrady: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland pursuant to the answer of 23 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1974W, on the anti-poverty strategy, on what date the Anti-Poverty Strategy for Northern Ireland will be published. [38132]

Angela E. Smith: In Priorities and Budget 2006–08, published in December 2005, Government identify the resources they are allocating with the aim of reducing poverty and tackling social need in Northern Ireland. This includes increased spending in health and education budgets along with a significant allocation to two new "ring-fenced funds" which focus respectively on giving children and young people the best possible start in life and investing in skills and reducing economic inactivity.

Government will publish further details of their priorities for tackling poverty and social exclusion in the new year, alongside further details of how these new ring-fenced funds will be allocated.

Civil Servants

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many civil servants are employed in the Office of the First and Deputy First Ministers. [38589]

Angela E. Smith: As at 1 December 2005, there were 344 staff in post in the Department.

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the average sickness absence rate was among civil servants for each Government Department in Northern Ireland in each of the last 10 years; and what percentage of the sick leave was for periods of five working days or less. [38590]

Angela E. Smith: Sick absence statistics for the Northern Ireland Departments are analysed by financial year as opposed to calendar year. The information sought is readily available for the 11 Departments of the NI Administration and their agencies for the period 1999–2000 to 2004–05. Published statistics for Northern Ireland Departments for the financial years 2000–01 to 2004–05 are accessible on the Department's website at www.dfpni.gov.uk/publications.

The following tables detail:

1. The average number of days lost during the period 2000–01 to 2004–05 for the 11 Departments of the NI Administration and their agencies.

2. The percentage of the sick leave attributable to periods of five working days or less.

Table 1

Department	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
DSD	18.6	18.4	19.1	19.7	19.4
DEL	17.9	19.0	18.7	17.7	14.7
DFP	12.8	13.4	13.6	14.3	13.7
DE	15.7	13.2	12.5	11.7	12.8
DOE	14.6	14.1	14.5	13.4	12.0
DARD	12.2	11.8	13.4	12.4	11.5
DCAL	14.7	14.6	13.8	15.1	11.0
DRD	12.2	11.4	10.7	12.0	10.2
DETI	12.4	13.0	12.7	11.8	9.9
DHSSPS	12.9	14.6	13.2	12.3	9.5
OFMDFM	9.7	11.6	12.2	12.6	8.6
Total	14.0	14.1	14.0	15.5	14.2

Table 2

Department	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
DSD	16.6	16.5	16.5	16.3	14.3
DEL	21.6	20.4	18.6	16.6	14.8
DFP	25.0	20.6	23.0	20.2	17.9
DE	19.7	21.3	21.6	21.8	18.2
DOE	23.8	24.5	25.4	26.4	22.5
DARD	20.8	21.9	22.1	21.1	17.5
DCAL	29.3	32.5	32.1	33.2	32.6
DRD	23.7	25.2	26.8	22.5	17.2
DETI	26.6	25.3	26.8	26.6	24.5
DHSSPS	24.5	22.8	25.1	24.6	24.0
OFMDFM	28.5	22.6	23.8	24.0	26.8
Total	20.6	20.2	20.6	19.7	17.0

Notes:
1. Staff from the Parliamentary Commissioner for Complaints and the Planning Appeals Commission are included in the DFP figures.
2. Staff from HSENI and OFREG are included in the DETI figures.

Farmers

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many farmers in Northern Ireland have left the industry in each of the last 10 years. [38581]

Angela E. Smith: Information on the number of farmers in Northern Ireland is collected as part of the June Agricultural and Horticultural Census. For the purposes of the census, farmers are considered to be those individuals who are legally and financially responsible for the farm or who are responsible for the day-to-day management of the farm business. Business partners of the above are also considered farmers.

	Farmers	*Change from previous year*
1995	39,805	-1,302
1996	39,914	+109
1997	39,237	-677
1998	38,832	-405
1999	37,609	-1,223
2000	35,920	-1,689
2001	35,955	+35
2002	34,532	-1,423
2003	33,993	-539
2004	33,363	-630
2005	32,526	-837

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many farmers in Northern Ireland have been convicted of offences under cattle identification legislation in each of the last five years, broken down by constituency. [38582]

Angela E. Smith: The information requested is not held by parliamentary constituency, but is available by Divisional Veterinary Office (DVO) as follows:

DVO	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*	*2005*	*Total*
Armagh	1	0	0	0	1	2
Ballymena	0	0	2	2	2	6
Coleraine	0	0	0	1	0	1
Dungannon	3	2	3	3	1	12
Enniskillen	1	0	4	2	0	7
Larne	3	0	1	1	0	5
Londonderry	2	0	0	0	1	3
Newry	1	0	0	3	1	5
Omagh	3	0	7	2	1	13
Total	—	—	—	—	—	54

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many farmers in Northern Ireland have received cattle bonus payments introduced under the Less Favoured Area Compensatory Allowances scheme, broken down by constituency. [38583]

Angela E. Smith: The Department of Agriculture and Rural Development does not hold subsidy details on a constituency basis. The number of farmers in Northern Ireland who have received a cattle bonus payment under the Less Favoured Area Compensatory Allowances (LFACA) scheme is as follows:

	Number of farmers
2004	10,748
2005	10,495

Invest Northern Ireland (Grant Criteria)

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what criteria are used by Invest Northern Ireland to assess whether a grant application by *(a)* a large company and *(b)* a small or medium-sized enterprise is eligible for funding. [38949]

Angela E. Smith: Invest NI does not distinguish between projects brought forward by large companies and those from small and medium-sized enterprises (SME's).

A grant application for funding from Invest NI must satisfy the following criteria:

(i) Economic Efficiency—the project must generate a satisfactory economic return for both Northern Ireland and the UK economy as a whole;

(ii) Viability—the project must be self-sustaining having received funding on a once and for all basis, and

(iii) Additionality—there must be a genuine need for public funds to enable the project to proceed in the nature, scale and timing proposed by the promoter(s).

Minimum Wage

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many employers in Northern Ireland have been found to be paying employees less than the minimum wage. [38591]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

The Inland Revenue started recording the information requested from April 2001 and can provide the following statistical data.

	Employers not complying
2001–02	244
2002–03	213
2003–04	218
2004–05	204
2005–06 (to 30 November 2005)	101

Golfing Strategy

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland when he plans to publish the Golfing

Strategy for Northern Ireland; and if he will make a statement. [38887]

Angela E. Smith: Northern Ireland Tourist Board (NITB) commissioned a Golf Strategy for autumn 2005. Consultation is currently under way. Workshops and seminars were held with key stakeholders in October and November. The Draft Strategy is available from www.nitb.com. The final strategy is due to be released in early 2006.

Non-departmental Public Bodies

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what nominations are expected to be made to non-departmental public bodies in Northern Ireland within the next six months. [37807]

Angela E. Smith: In the next six months the Northern Ireland Administration and the Northern Ireland Office intend to invite nominations to some board positions on the non-departmental public bodies listed in the following table.

Name of public body	*Name of nominating bodies*
Eastern Health and Social Services Council	Belfast City Council Lisburn City Council
Laganside Corporation	Belfast Harbour Commissioners
Pig Production Development Committee	Ulster Farmers' Union
Drainage Council	District Councils
Staff Commission for Education and Library Boards	Association of NI Education and Library Boards Association of Chief Librarians Association of Chief Executives
Belfast Education and Library Board	Presbyterian Church
Northern Ireland Policing Board	Political parties—selected in proportion to the 2003 election results using the d'Hondt formula

Northern Ireland Ombudsman

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how many treatment-related complaints have been made to the Northern Ireland Ombudsman by people suffering from *(a)* mental health-related illnesses and *(b)* general medical health-related illnesses in each health board area in Northern Ireland in the last five years; and how many and what percentage of those complaints have been upheld by the Ombudsman, broken down by health board area. [37281]

Angela E. Smith: I understand that the Northern Ireland Ombudsman has written to the hon. Gentleman. A copy of the letter has been placed in the Library.

Secondments

Mark Durkan: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland if he will list secondments from Fujitsu Services to the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister in the last five years; what the *(a)* commencement and *(b)* completion date was in each case; and what the nature of the work undertaken was in each case. [38145]

Angela E. Smith: During the last five years, two individuals were seconded from Fujitsu to the eGovernment Unit (formerly known as the Central Information Technology Unit of Northern Ireland) within the Office of the First Minister and Deputy First Minister.

Secondment 1

The secondment arrangement commenced on 1 December 2000 and was completed on 31 March 2002. The nature of the work was to assist with the development of eGovernment strategy.

Secondment 2

The secondment arrangement commenced on 15 August 2005 and is ongoing, although responsibility for the eGovernment Unit transferred to the Department of Finance and Personnel on 1 December 2005. The nature of the work is to assist with a number of projects designed to improve NI citizens' access to electronic information.

Students from outside the EU

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland, how many students at each university in Northern Ireland come from countries from outside the European Union. [38952]

Angela E. Smith: The information is as follows.

Non-EU domiciled enrolments at Northern Ireland higher education institutions by institution: 2003-04

Institution	*Enrolments 2003-04*
Queen's University Belfast	936
University of Ulster	617
Total	1,553

Source:
HESA.

Teachers

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what assessment he has made of the merits of providing a scheme which will ensure that newly trained teachers in the Province can have a guaranteed full year of teaching after completing their training. [38622]

Angela E. Smith: The Depart ent of Education and the Department for Employme. d Learning have been carrying out a joint review o teacher education in Northern Ireland. Arising from that review, the Departments will be considering a number of options to provide greater continuity in professional development for teachers. This will also address the need for newly qualified teachers to have greater stability in employment during their early years of teaching.

Tourism

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what discussions he has had with the Northern Ireland Tourist Board regarding the promotion and development of the tourism potential on the North Coast. [38748]

Angela E. Smith: My right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland is updated regularly regarding the promotion and development of the tourism potential on the North Coast through the Department of Enterprise Trade and Investment and the relevant Minister.

The development and promotion of the tourism potential on the North Coast is determined by the Strategic Framework for Action and the Causeway Coast and Glens Tourism Masterplan. A key recommendation is the implementation of the Causeway Coastal Route which will promote the tourism product on the North Coast. The Causeway Coastal Route has been identified as a primary promotional message to attract visitors to Northern Ireland and has been included in all marketing initiatives for 2006 including:

international television advertising

international press advertising

public relations etc.

The Northern Ireland Tourist Board is committed to working with strategic partners and tourism providers to develop an internationally competitive and sustainable tourism product on the North Coast.

Victoria Square

David Simpson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the total tonnage of demolition and excavation waste removed from the Victoria Square development in Belfast is; and where the demolition and excavation waste was removed to. [38592]

Angela E. Smith: Businesses are not obliged to submit records to the Department of the Environment but under Duty of Care legislation must retain documents relating to the waste produced.

Contractors are also obliged under Duty of Care legislation to ensure that all waste is disposed of to an authorised facility.

As the Department does not hold this information, the collation of such could be obtained only at disproportionate costs.

Water Service

Mr. Donaldson: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland how much and what percentage of the regional rate has been made up of the costs of *(a)* water supply to (i) domestic customers and (ii) other water supply customers and *(b)* sewage treatment in each of the last five years. [38561]

Angela E. Smith: The regional rate is an un-hypothecated tax, and the amount raised in any year is not linked to, or determined by, the underlying cost of any particular service.

Work Force Statistics

Mr. Gregory Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Northern Ireland what the composition of the monitored full-time work force (11+) was in *(a)* 1994 and *(b)* 2004, broken down by religious designation; and if he will publish this information. [37884]

Angela E. Smith: The Equality Commission for Northern Ireland has provided the following information in relation to the composition of the monitored Northern Ireland full-time work force:

Table 1: Composition of the monitored Northern Ireland full-time work force by sex—1994

	Protestant		*Roman Catholic*		*Non-determined*		*Total*	
	Number	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Percentage*
Male	131,207	62.4 (65.3)	69,739	33.1 (34.7)	9,486	4.5	210,432	54.3
Female	101,460	57.2 (59.7)	68,563	38.7 (40.3)	7,312	4.1	177,335	45.7
Total	232,667	60.0 (62.7)	138,302	35.7 (37.3)	16,798	4.3	387,767	100

Note:

Includes the public and private sector full-time work forces combined.

Source:

Fair Employment Commission (1995). Monitoring Report No. 5: A profile of the Northern Ireland Workforce, 1994.

Table 2: Composition of the monitored Northern Ireland full-time work force by sex—2004

	Protestant		Roman Catholic		Non-determined		Total	
	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage	Number	Percentage
Male	125,427	57.6 (61.0)	80,171	36.8 (39.0)	12,168	5.6	217,766	52.6
Female	104,534	53.3 (56.0)	82,064	41.9 (44.0)	9,445	4.8	196,043	47.4
Total	229,961	55.6 (58.6)	162,235	39.2 (41.4)	21,613	5.2	413,809	100.0

Note:
Includes the public and private sector full-time work forces combined.
Source:
Equality Commission (2005). Monitoring Report No. 15: A profile of the Northern Ireland Workforce, 2004.

Notes:
1. Tables 1 and 2 are directly comparable.
2. In both years, the data refer to the combined public and private sector work forces.
3. The data include all public bodies and those private concerns with 11 or more employees.
4. Copies of both publications, from which these tables were extracted, will be placed in the Library.

DEFENCE

0870 Numbers

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 7 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 96W, on 0870 numbers, (1) what contractual arrangements his Department has for the provision of 0870 lines; [37641]

(2) what contractual arrangements his Department has for the provision of the non-profit making 0870 lines. [38746]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence has no policy on, or central contractual arrangements for, the provision of 0870 numbers. The use of 0870 numbers in MOD is determined at local level in accordance with individual business requirements and ordered directly from the supplier.

Administrative Savings

Mr. Maude: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what administrative savings have been made by his Department in each of the last eight years. [34947]

Mr. Ingram: The Ministry of Defence budget does not include a formal administrative costs control, although the Department's long-standing efficiency programme bears down on overhead costs. Performance against previous efficiency targets has been published in the Department's Performance Reports and, from 2002–03, the Annual Report and Accounts, which are available on Department's website. Further detail on MOD's Spending Review 2004 efficiency programme is described in its efficiency technical note, which is also published on the website.

Afghanistan (Narcotics)

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence which NATO armed forces will be responsible for the counter-narcotic operations in Helmand Province in Afghanistan after May 2006. [38258]

Mr. Ingram: Counter-narcotics (CN) operations are the responsibility of the Government of Afghanistan. NATO forces belonging to the International Security Assistance Force (ISAF) have a supporting role in CN operations, as set out in NATO's operational plan for the ISAF mission in Afghanistan.

Broadcasting (Illegal Jamming)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence whether *(a)* any defence communications systems were obstructed and *(b)* the operational effectiveness of such systems was (i) diminished and (ii) impaired as a consequence of the jamming from within Libya of the Telstar 12 and Hotbird communication satellites at any time over the last 12 months; and if he will make a statement. [34918]

Mr. Ingram: No.

Canberra PR9

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many RAF squadrons are equipped with the Canberra PR9 aircraft; how many serviceable aircraft of this type the RAF has in its inventory; when the RAF last deployed the PR9 to Afghanistan; for what purpose; and when the next deployment is scheduled to commence. [38226]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 19 December 2005]:* The RAF has one squadron equipped with the Canberra PR9 aircraft: No 39 (1PRU) Squadron. There are three Canberra PR9 aircraft in RAF service. The Canberra PR9 reconnaissance aircraft will continue to provide a niche capability within our overall Intelligence, Surveillance, Target Acquisition and Reconnaissance capability until it retires from service. It is not normal practice to comment publicly on deployments of this asset.

Co-operative Engagement Capability

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence when the main gate approval for cooperative

engagement capability was originally scheduled; what the current timetable is; and if he will make a statement. [38181]

Mr. Ingram: Main gate approval for the cooperative engagement capability programme was originally planned for 2005. We are currently reviewing the United Kingdom's capability requirement and acquisition strategy with the aim of re-focusing the programme in a joint, rather than solely maritime, context. Main gate will be re-scheduled but the revised timing and other details of the re-worked strategy have not yet been finalised.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what was the original planned capability of *(a)* combat systems risks provision, *(b)* whole life support and *(c)* incremental acquisitions programme for the Type-45 destroyers; what the current proposals are; and if he will make a statement. [38182]

Mr. Ingram: As is usual on large and complex projects, changes have been made to internal budgetary assumptions during the life of the Type 45 project to achieve the optimum balance between cost and capability. The planned reductions made in funding for the risk provision associated with the ship's combat system and funding for setting up initial support arrangements, which were listed in the 2005 major projects report, do not materially change the ship's capability. The reduction in funding of the incremental acquisition plan listed in the 2004 and 2005 major projects reports means that a number of capabilities over and above those originally planned for the first of class ship are not currently expected to be fitted to the class. These included enhanced electronic warfare capabilities. However, the Type-45 has been designed to enable its capability to be upgraded through life, and these capabilities may be added at a later stage.

Defence Export Service Organisation

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 12 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1680W, on the Defence Export Service Organisation (DESO), whether the DESO has kept a record of the requests it has received for lists of agents. [38950]

Mr. Ingram: No central record of such requests is kept.

Defence Industrial Strategy

Robert Key: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the Defence Industrial Strategy. [36837]

John Reid: I refer the hon. Member to the statement I made to the House on 15 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1462–78.

Departmental Properties

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much was paid by his Department in 2004–05 in rent for properties in *(a)* total, *(b)* each (i) region and (ii) nation of the UK and *(c)* London. [35890]

Mr. Touhig: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 2 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 819W, to the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green (Lynne Featherstone).

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much was paid by his Department in rates to each local authority in the UK in 2004–05; and how much was paid in *(a)* each (i) nation and (ii) region of the UK and *(b)* London. [35997]

Mr. Touhig: The table detailing amounts paid for non-domestic rates to each billing authority listed alphabetically by local authority for England, Scotland and Wales has been placed in the Library of the House.

Those for Northern Ireland have been collated by district. (It would require disproportionate cost and effort to break down the list to the level of detail requested.)

Deployment Times

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what the average time between tours was for *(a)* Infantry Regiment and *(b)* the Royal Marines in the last two years; [37252]

(2) what the average deployment time in the Gulf has been since 2003 for *(a)* Territorial Army and *(b)* regular personnel. [37264]

Mr. Ingram: The average periods between operational tours for certain elements of the Army, including the Royal Armoured Corps, Royal Artillery and Infantry, are calculated as tour intervals. The average tour interval for Infantry Battalions over the past two years has been 21 months. Other force elements, including the Royal Marines and combat support services of the Army do not calculate periods between operational tours in the same way.

As the hon. Member will be aware, since operations commenced in Iraq in 2003, the Army's deployments have been divided into discreet roulement periods shown in the following table. The average deployment period in Iraq for both the Regular and TA is 5.3 months.

		Months	
Operation	*Deployment period*	*Regular*	*TA*
Telic 1	February to July 2003	3.5 to 5	4
Telic 2	July to November 2003	4.5	4
Telic 3	November 2003 to May 2004	6	6
Telic 4	May to November 2004	6	6
Telic 5	November 2004 to May 2005	6	6
Telic 6	May to November 2005	6	6

Firing Ranges (Bristol Channel)

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what guidance he has issued on the area of the exclusion zones for building rear firing ranges in the Bristol channel. [37246]

Mr. Touhig: The Ministry of Defence operates three offshore firing areas in the Bristol channel east of Ilfracombe at Bridgwater Bay, Rogiet Moor and at St. Thomas' Head. At present, the Ministry of Defence

does not maintain any statutory safeguarding zones at these firing ranges that would affect property not owned by the Department. As such the Ministry of Defence does not issue any guidance relating to building works on properties located near these firing ranges.

Fleet Tankers

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what armament is to be provided on the Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability fleet tankers. [38187]

Mr. Ingram: No decisions have yet been taken on the armament that will be provided on the Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability fleet tankers.

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the original operating capability was of the Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability fleet tanker when first planned; and what the current capability envisaged is. [38202]

Mr. Ingram: The operating capability of the Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability fleet tanker is being defined as part of the programme's current assessment phase.

Helicopters

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the total spending on battlefield helicopters was in each of the last five years. [33406]

Mr. Ingram: The approximate total costs for the delivery and maintenance of Battlefield Helicopters in the financial years 2000–01 to 2004–05 are contained in the following table:

Total battlefield helicopter costs

£ million

	Support costs	*Capital costs*	*Total*
2000–01	490	860	1,350
2001–02	570	620	1,190
2002–03	680	400	1,080
2003–04	760	240	1,000
2004–05	820	120	940

The high capital costs in the first half of the period shown reflect the procurement of new Apache Attack and Merlin helicopters.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many *(a)* Sea King and *(b)* Wessex helicopters are operated by his Department; and what stock of spares is available for each. [36784]

Mr. Ingram: The departmental fleet size of Sea King helicopters which are either available for use, or under going maintenance or upgrade, is 98. The stock of spares held that are specific to Sea King is valued at £389 million. In addition there is a pool of available spares which are common to Sea King and a number of other aircraft types. Information on these is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

The last Wessex helicopter was taken out of service in 2003 and the Department is nearing the end of disposal action on spares. The value of the remaining stock of spares is £28.5 million. This includes parts held pending a decision on the role of the helicopter within the Historic Flight.

MARS Project

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how much has been allocated to the integrator assessment phase of the Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability project. [36158]

Mr. Ingram: Costs allocated for the integrator assessment element of the Military Afloat Reach and Sustainability (MARS) project Assessment Phase will not be determined until the full scope of the work involved has been finalised. These costs will, however, form part of the overall MARS Assessment Phase budget of £44 million.

Meteorological Office

Dr. McCrea: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence for how long services were off-line as a result of the fire at the Exeter headquarters of the Meteorological Office on 26 October 2005; and whether during this period Meteorological Office services at Exeter were supplemented by other UK regional offices. [28441]

Mr. Touhig: The loss of power to one computer hall at the Exeter Headquarters of the Met Office on 26 October 2005 lasted from 10.30 to 17.00, full recovery of affected computer systems was completed and all computer services returned to their normal configuration by 22:00 on 26 October 2005. During the period of the incident many services continued un-interrupted from the second computer hall. In the case of those services where there was, or might have been, an impact, the Met Office business continuity plans were invoked. Some services were delivered from the computer hall which continued to operate; other services were moved from Exeter to the Met Office civil centres and the UK Defence Network. Other work was moved between the civil centres to maintain an acceptable level of service.

Microwave Weaponry

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what research he has commissioned on microwave weaponry. [35766]

Mr. Ingram: As part of a portfolio of research into innovative technologies, Ministry of Defence has commissioned studies into high power microwave radiation to meet defence needs and to understand the potential threat to United Kingdom forces. The aim of such work is to assess the effects on electronic systems. This research has been on-going over a number of years.

Munitions

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence pursuant to the answer of 10 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1242W, on munitions, if he will make a statement on the mortar that was stolen in 1999. [37837]

Mr. Ingram: I will write to the hon. Member and place a copy of my letter in the Library of the House.

Non-commissioned Officers (Special Forces)

Mark Simmonds: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what estimate he has made of the number of non-commissioned officers who have left the special forces to join private security companies in each of the last 10 years. [29754]

Mr. Ingram: None. Only statistical records are kept on the employment found by those leaving the armed forces, and they do not allow individuals from a particular unit to be tracked to a specific job.

Overseas Recruits

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many overseas recruits there are in *(a)* each regiment of the Army, *(b)* the Royal Air Force, *(c)* the Royal Navy and *(d)* the Royal Marines, broken down by country of origin. [36785]

Mr. Touhig: For Naval Service and RAF data I refer my hon. Friend to the answer given on 17 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1410W to the hon. Member for Carmarthen, East and Dinefwr (Adam Price).

Naval Service data are not centrally held and therefore a breakdown of Royal Navy and Royal Marines data is not available.

Strength of overseas personnel in the UK Regular Army at 1 October 2005 by country and armed corps is shown in a table which has been placed in the Library.

Porton Down

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence (1) what investigation there has been as to what manuals, documents, other materials and information Dr. Wouter Basson of South Africa was given during and subsequent to his visit to Porton Down in 1985; and if he will make a statement; [31245]

(2) who authorised the visit of Dr. Wouter Basson of South Africa to Porton Down in 1985; for what purposes; and if he will make a statement. [31256]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 23 November 2005]:* The Ministry of Defence holds no record of any visit by Dr. Wouter Basson to Porton Down at any time in 1985.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what records his Department has retained relating to pre-1975 visits to South Africa by employees of Porton Down. [31255]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 23 November 2005]:* Records from before 1975, relating to overseas visits by employees of the Ministry of Defence Porton Down, have been destroyed in accordance with routine file management.

Prisoners of War/Civilian Internees

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many residents of Kettering constituency have *(a)* claimed and *(b)* been awarded ex-gratia payments under the scheme for former Far East prisoners of war and civilian internees. [38113]

Mr. Touhig: An examination of the Veterans Agency database on 15 December 2005 showed 23 claimants in the Kettering constituency. 22 of these have been awarded ex-gratia payment under the scheme for former Far East prisoners of war and civilian internees.

Royal Tournament

James Brokenshire: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions since 2000 the Royal Tournament has been replaced by a military tattoo at Horse Guards Parade in London. [38485]

Mr. Touhig *[holding answer 19 December 2005]:* Following the last Royal Tournament in 1999 it has been replaced once by a military tattoo at Horse Guards Parade. The Department continues, however, to participate in a wide variety of smaller events such as Open Days, ships visits, County Shows and showcase events such as the Edinburgh Military Tattoo and the Fairford Royal International Air Tattoo (RIAT).

Shipyards (Construction Tenders)

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what criteria are used to determine the eligibility of shipyards to be invited to tender for construction of *(a)* all and *(b)* part of naval ships; and if he will make a statement. [38203]

Mr. Ingram: Any competent supplier may be invited to bid for such work. An objective evaluation of suitability to be invited to tender is made on a number of factors including, but not limited to, financial capability, quality assurance standards, supplier capability, organisation and management, supply chain management. Assessment of suitability is often facilitated through completion of a pre-qualification questionnaire. There is no absolute requirement to build all warships and Royal Fleet Auxiliary vessels onshore, and the evaluation will also need to take into account the need to retain the ability to build, integrate and support complex ships in the UK, as set out in the recently published 'Defence Industrial Strategy'.

Standing Civilian Courts

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many persons have been brought before the standing civilian courts in each of the past five years, broken down by category of offence; and what the rate of conviction was in each such category. [38044]

Mr. Ingram: The number of persons brought before the standing civilian courts for the Army and RAP is shown in the following table. Information on the rate of conviction for each category is not held centrally, but the overall rate of conviction is provided.

The Royal Navy has no powers to convene standing civilian courts.

				Convictions	
	Army	*RAF*	*Category of Offence*	*Number*	*Percentage*
2001	9	4	Violence: 3 Drunk: 3 Damage: 2 Theft: 3 Deception: 1 Driving: 1	10	77
2002	20	1	Violence: 11 Theft: 3 Driving: 5 Indecency: 1 Drugs: 1	12	57
2003	20	2	Violence: 10 Driving: 5 Drugs: 6 Contravention of Orders: 1	15	68
2004	20	0	Violence: 8 Theft: 2 Drink Driving: 4 Damage: 2 Minor Motoring: 3 Standing Orders: 1	19	95
2005	28	0	Violence: 12 Disobedience to SO: 4 Drugs: 4 Sexual: 1 Drink Driving: 1 Criminal Damage: 2 Breech of CSO: 1 Theft: 2 Failing to Provide a Specimen: 1	22	79

Notes:

1. CSO—Community Service Order.
2. Percentage figures are rounded up to nearest whole percentage.
3. Figures for 2005 represent the number of people brought before the standing civilian courts to date.

Mrs. Humble: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what information is recorded on the *(a)* nature of charges brought, *(b)* rate of conviction and *(c)* sentencing outcomes of proceedings of the standing civilian courts. [38045]

Mr. Ingram: For the Army, with regard to standing civilian courts, information on the number of charges brought, the nature and details of the offence, whether there is a conviction or acquittal, and what the sentence is, is all recorded in a central database.

For the Royal Air Force, records of cases are kept by each Command alongside Service personnel disciplinary case records, but the information is not held centrally.

Information is not held relating to the rate of conviction.

The Royal Navy has no powers to convene standing civilian courts.

Stingray Programme

Mr. Hancock: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many weapons were to have been produced under the Stingray programme when first planned; and what the current number envisaged is. [38185]

Mr. Ingram: The number of Stingray weapons originally procured, and the number of these to be upgraded, is classified as they could assist a potential enemy by giving an indication of our weapon reserves.

Territorial Army

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence what the *(a)* establishment and *(b)* actual strength is of the Territorial Army, broken down by regiment. [38108]

Mr. Touhig: The total establishment of the Territorial Army (TA) is currently 41,610. Establishment figures are currently not available broken down by regiment. As at 1 November 2005, the overall strength of the TA was some 36,940 (this figure includes mobilized TA personnel, the officer training corps but excludes full-time reserve service and non-regular permanent staff). I refer my hon. Friend to the reply I gave to the right hon. Member for Devizes (Mr. Ancram) on 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 918W, which offers the most recent strengths by individual regiments and corps.

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence if he will make a statement on the future role of the Territorial Army in Lancashire. [38265]

Mr. Touhig: Further to the answer I gave on 13 June 2005, *Official Report*, column 18W, to the hon. Member for Lancaster and Wyre (Mr. Wallace), I can confirm that no final decisions have been taken on the rebalancing of the Territorial Army. However, they are expected shortly and an announcement will follow in the new year.

Ann Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence how many Territorial Army recruits completed their basic training in each year from 2002–03. [29536]

Mr. Touhig: Territorial Army (TA) basic training is defined as Phase 1 training. The number of TA personnel who have completed Phase 1 training is not held centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

US-registered Aircraft

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Defence on how many occasions since 1 January 2001 US-registered aircraft tail number *(a)* N44982, formerly N8068V and N379P, and *(b)* N313P were provided with military air traffic control services. [34633]

Mr. Ingram *[holding answer 12 December 2005]*: These records are not held centrally and could be provided only at a disproportionate cost.

CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Freedom of Information Act

Mr. Garnier: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs how many requests for information have been received by her Department since the Freedom of Information Act 2000

came into force; how many requests have had their deadline extended beyond 20 working days to allow consideration of where the public interest lies; and how many requests have been refused on public interest grounds. [37644]

Ms Harman: The DCA publishes quarterly bulletins on the performance of central Government under the FOIA. The third of these reports, covering the period of 1 July to 30 September, was published on 15 December 2005, *Official Report*, 161WS, and has been placed in the Libraries of both Houses and on the DCA's website.

From 1 January to 30 September DCA has received 495 FOI requests. 61 of these requests have had the deadline extended beyond the statutory deadline of 20 working days to allow consideration of where the public interest lies. However, this figure includes 15 requests where the decision to extend on public interest grounds was taken after the 20 day statutory deadline had passed. This accounts for the inconsistency with the cumulative figure published in DCA's quarterly bulletins. A total of 83 requests have been refused on public interest grounds.

Juries

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what steps she has taken to address the issues raised by Lord Justice Auld in his 2001 review on the ethnic composition of juries; whether she intends to implement Lord Justice Auld's recommendation that where the court considers that race is likely to be relevant in a case, a jury could be selected which includes up to three people from any ethnic minority group; and if she will make a statement. [37749]

Ms Harman: The Government considered Sir Robin Auld's recommendation that the trial judge should have power to arrange for a multi-ethnic jury to hear cases where race is a significant issue. It concluded, after consultation, that it would be wrong to interfere with the composition of the jury in this way, as to do so would potentially: undermine the fundamental principle of random selection; place undue weight on the views of the specially selected jurors, lead them to feel that they were expected to represent the interests of the minority ethnic defendant or victim, and give rise to tensions and divisions in the jury room as a result.

Legal Aid

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what assessment she has made of the availability of civil legal aid to people living in Kettering constituency. [38112]

Bridget Prentice: The Legal Services Commission contracts with service providers throughout England and Wales to provide a range of legal and advice services across different categories of law.

There are currently five service providers with a contract to undertake civil legal aid work in the Kettering constituency. Service providers in Kettering may help people who live outside the area, and people who live in Kettering may visit a service provider in a different area.

Any person residing in England or Wales can access free quality legal advice and information through Community Legal Service Direct. This service is available direct to the public through a telephone line, website and information leaflets.

Susan Kramer: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs (1) if she will list the contracted suppliers of legal aid funded services in the boroughs of *(a)* Richmond-upon-Thames and *(b)* Kingston-upon-Thames in relation to (i) housing, (ii) social welfare, (iii) mental health, (iv) employment, (v) family issues, (vi) criminal defence and (vii) immigration; [38135]

(2) pursuant to the answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 129–30W, on legal aid, how many of the suppliers in each category are solicitors' firms; and how many solicitors' firms in each borough undertake legal aid work in immigration. [38178]

Bridget Prentice: The Legal Services Commission (LSC) contracts with suppliers throughout England and Wales to provide a range of legal and advice services across different categories of law. The LSC contracts with solicitors' firms and not for profit organisations.

The contracted suppliers in the listed categories in Richmond-upon-Thames and Kingston-upon-Thames are as follows:

Housing

Antell and Co.
Conninghams
Edward Fail Neale and Co.
Gillman-Smith Lee
Merrony Wall
Anthony Stokoe
Chivers Easton Brown
Malcolm Johnson and Co.
Russell-Cooke
Sheridan and Co.
Sherwood Wheatley
Kingston and Richmond Law Centre

Social Welfare[1]

Antell and Co.
Conninghams
Edward Fail Neale and Co.
Gillman-Smith Lee
Merrony Wall
Anthony Stokoe
Chivers Easton Brown
Malcolm Johnson and Co.
Russell-Cooke
Sheridan and Co.
Sherwood Wheatley
Kingston Citizens Advice Bureaux (debt and welfare benefits)

Mental Health

Antell and Co.
Conninghams
Edward Fail Neale and Co.
Gillman-Smith Lee
Merrony Wall
Anthony Stokoe

Chivers Easton Brown
Malcolm Johnson and Co.
Russell-Cooke
Sheridan and Co.
Sherwood Wheatley

Employment

Antell and Co.
Conninghams
Edward Fail Neale and Co.
Gillman-Smith Lee
Merrony Wall
Anthony Stokoe
Chivers Easton Brown
Malcolm Johnson and Co.
Russell-Cooke
Sheridan and Co.
Sherwood Wheatley
Kingston and Richmond Law Centre

Family

Merrony Wall
Chivers Easton Brown
Russell-Cooke
Sherwood Wheatley

Criminal defence

Conninghams
Edward Fail Neale and Co.
Keppe Shaw and Partners
Anthony Stokoe
Maclaverty Cooper Atkins
Sherwood Wheatley

Immigration[2]

None
None

The contracted suppliers in Richmond and Kingston which are solicitors firms are as follows:

	Richmond-upon-Thames	*Kingston-upon-Thames*
Housing	5	6
Social Welfare[1]	5	6
Mental Health	5	6
Employment	5	6
Family	1	3
Criminal defence	3	3
Immigration[2]	0	0

[1] "Social Welfare" includes the LSC's contract categories "debt", "welfare benefits" and "community care".
[2] The LSC assesses immigration need for London as a whole rather than by borough.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs what cases qualify for legal aid; and if she will make a statement. [38165]

Bridget Prentice: Legal aid for civil cases is available to anyone who qualifies, provided it is not outside the scope of the scheme and cases out of scope are defamation, boundary disputes, conveyancing, making wills, trust law, damage to property, cases arising out of company or partnership law or the carrying on of business and personal injury (except clinical negligence and through the Lord Chancellor's direction, claims against public authorities alleging serious wrong doing). Each application is considered on an individual basis and is subject to the statutory tests of the applicant's means and the merits of the case.

To qualify for legal aid representation in criminal cases, the applicant needs to demonstrate that he or she meets the "Interests of Justice" test. A number of factors are considered in assessing the "Interests of Justice" in relation to any one individual. This includes whether the applicant, if convicted, is likely to suffer a loss of liberty or livelihood. Under the Criminal Defence Service Bill currently before Parliament, the Government are seeking to ensure that applicants for criminal legal aid representation will in future also be subject to a means test.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list the contracted suppliers of legal aid funded services in the London borough of Haringey in relation to *(a)* housing, *(b)* social welfare, *(c)* mental health, *(d)* employment, *(e)* family issues, *(f)* criminal defence and *(g)* immigration; and if she will make a statement. [39194]

Bridget Prentice: The Legal Services Commission (LSC) contracts with suppliers throughout England and Wales to provide a range of legal and advice services across different categories of law.

The contracted suppliers in the listed categories in the London borough of Haringey are as follows:

Housing

Fahri Jacob
Fletcher Dervish and Co
Mang and Co
Rahman and Co
Tayo Arowojolu Solicitors
Tyrer Roxburgh and Co
Waran and Company
Haringey Law Centre

Social Welfare[1]

Fahri Jacob (debt only)
Tyrer Roxburgh and Co
Haringey Citizens Advice Bureau
Haringey Law Centre

Mental Health

Dozie and Co
Needham Poulier and Partners
Stuart Miller and Co

Employment

Tayo Arowojolu Solicitors

Family

Copitch
Fahri Jacob
Fairbairn Smith and Co
Fletcher Dervish and Co
Joan Vis
Makanda Bart and Co
Miller Law Practice
Porters

Tyrer Roxburgh and Co
Vahib and Co
Wilson and Co
Windsor and Co

Criminal defence

A Patrick Keogh
Attridge Law
Barant and Co
Christian Gottfried and Co Solicitors
Christmas and Sheehan
Crescent and Co Solicitors
Dozie and Co
Elliott P Stern
Fletcher Dervish and Co
Hickman and Rose
Joseph Hill and Co
Levenes
Makanda Bart and Co
Mang and Co
Michael Carroll and Co
Needham Poulier and Partners
Porters
Rock Solicitors
Sheikh and Co
Stuart Miller and Co
Taylor Nichol
The Day Partnership
Toper Hassan and Co
Vahib and Co
Wilson and Co

Immigration

Antons Solicitors
Christian Gottfried and Co Solicitors
Dozie and Co
Edmunds Solicitors
Fletcher Dervish and Co
Howe and Co
Kothala and Co Solicitors
Luqmani Thompson and Partners
Mang and Co
Rahman and Co
S C Pelentrides and Co
Sam and Co Solicitors
Tayo Arowojolu Solicitors
Vahib and Co
Waran and Company
Wilson and Co

Haringey Citizens Advice Bureau

[1] "Social Welfare" includes the LSC's contract categories "Debt", "Welfare Benefits" and "Community Care".

Service providers in Haringey may help people who live outside the area, and people who live in Haringey may visit a service provider in a different area.

Any person residing in England or Wales can access free quality legal advice and information through Community Legal Service Direct. This service is available direct to the public through a telephone line, website and information leaflets.

Magistrates Court Staff

Keith Vaz: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will make a statement on negotiations with the Public and Commercial Services Union on the pay and conditions of magistrates court staff. [39252]

Bridget Prentice: The Department has been engaged in discussions throughout 2005 with the unions representing staff subject to former magistrates courts service (MCS) terms and conditions of service. Formal negotiations began on 5 April 2005 once former MCS staff transferred into DCA.

The Department has made an offer to the unions which officials believe is fair given the current economic circumstances, public sector pay awards generally and what the Department can afford. It is therefore regrettable that PCS and Prospect have called on their members to take industrial action. Officials remain prepared to discuss any constructive proposals that the unions wish to put forward to resolve the dispute, recognising the constraints within which the Department has to operate.

Public Appointments

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Minister of State, Department for Constitutional Affairs if she will list the former hon. Members who left Parliament in 2005 who have since been appointed to public bodies by her Department, broken down by party; and who was responsible for making each appointment. [36681]

Ms Harman: No former hon. Members who left Parliament in 2005 have been appointed to public bodies in this Department.

TRADE AND INDUSTRY

Bain Report

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which Members of the Government Sir George Bain has met in the process of compiling his report on the Royal Mail; and if he will publish minutes of these meetings. [28570]

Barry Gardiner: Sir George Bain is acting as advisor to the Secretary of State on Royal Mail issues. There is no expectation that his work will be pulled together into any single report. In his role he has had various discussions with the Secretary of State and myself. Minutes from those meetings are not available on the grounds that advice to Ministers is protected. In addition, the meetings covered commercially confidential information.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the most recent timetable is for the completion of Sir George Bain's review into the issues facing the Royal Mail; what steps his Department will take following the review; and if he will make a statement. [28686]

Barry Gardiner: Sir George Bain is advising the Secretary of State on Royal Mail matters. He is providing ongoing advice and there is no expectation

that his work will be pulled together in a single report. As I said to the House in July our ambition is to have a publicly owned Royal Mail fully restored to good health, providing customers with an excellent service and its staff with rewarding employment. Postcomm's price control settlement expected soon will be significant in this context. There is no set timetable for Sir George's work or for follow up by my Department.

British Nuclear Fuels

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether British Nuclear Fuels Ltd will be permitted to sell its Westinghouse subsidiary before the energy review has reported. [36407]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 19 December 2005]:* The energy review will be examining a wide range of options for helping the UK meet our medium and long-term energy goals, including the potential role of a number of generating technologies such as civil nuclear power. The energy review will be bringing forward proposals next year—no decisions have been taken at this time and it is important the Government does not pre-empt the outcome of the review. Decisions on the sale of Westinghouse have no relevance to the energy review and are being taken independently according to its own timetable.

Buncefield Oil Depot

Adam Price: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the likely effect of the fire at Buncefield oil depot on the price of domestic heating oil. [38469]

Malcolm Wicks: Buncefield is a distribution terminal not a refinery; hence there is no change to UK fuel output as a result of the fire. The Government and oil industry have been working closely to ensure petroleum products are supplied to market via one of the other 50 major UK oil storage terminals, thereby reducing the potential impact on the price of heating oil and other petroleum products.

Business Links/Gloucestershire First

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what financial support his Department provides to *(a)* Business Links in Gloucestershire and *(b)* Gloucestershire First; and what proportion of the total funding of each organisation his Department's funding represents. [39243]

Alun Michael: In 2005–06, the DTI, through the South West RDA will provide a total budget of £1,827,865. Business Link Gloucestershire total estimated income for 2005–06 will be £5,748,156. Business Link Gloucestershire also expects to receive a further £1,105,415 through the RDA Single Pot mechanism to fund region-specific projects. Some of these may have a DTI origin, but will also include funding from other Government Departments.

Gloucestershire First receives no direct DTI funding, however it has been supported through the RDA Single Pot. In 2005–06 it is expected to receive £98,000 against total projected funding of £330,000.

Civil Servants

Mr. Chaytor: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry which civil servants from his Department are working on the energy review; which *(a)* civil servants and *(b)* employees of non-governmental organisations have been seconded to work on the review; which private sector consultants have been engaged to participate in the review; and what the reason is for the involvement of each. [36406]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 19 December 2005]:* I lead the energy review, which will be taken forward by a cross-departmental team.

(a) The review team is still being formed. It will be based in DTI, with secondees from DEFRA, Department for Transport, HM Treasury and the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit. In addition there will be input from ODPM and FCO.

The devolved administrations and territorial departments are already involved and will continue to be involved throughout the course of the review.

(b) The review team will draw on expert support and analysis both within and outside Government. This will include expert advice from academia, the private sector and non-governmental organisations.

Electricity

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much electricity in kilowatt hours was exported from sources in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* Wales, *(c)* each of the English regions and *(d)* Northern Ireland in 2004–05; and what percentage was from (i) fossil fuel sources broken down by (A) oil, (B) coal, (C) gas and (D) other, (ii) hydroelectric sources, (iii) nuclear electricity sources, (iv) other types of renewable sources excluding hydro and (v) other electricity sources production. [39202]

Malcolm Wicks: The total amount of electricity exported by the UK in 2004 was 2,294,000,000 kWh (2,294 GWh). In the first half of 2005 electricity exports totalled 1,490 GWh.

Disaggregated data are not available in the form requested.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the electricity *(a)* production and *(b)* consumption expressed in annual electricity generated in kilowatt hours was for (i) Scotland, (ii) Wales, (iii) each of the English regions and (iv) Northern Ireland in 2004–05; and what percentage was (A) fossil fuel electricity production, broken down by (1) oil, (2) coal, (3) gas and (4) other, (B) hydro electricity production, (C) nuclear electricity production, (D) other types of renewable production excluding hydro and (E) other electricity sources production. [39223]

Malcolm Wicks: Electricity production by English region is not available, because data are collected on an aggregated basis by company, who may have power stations in more than one region. However, data on generation of electricity by fuel for all generators in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland and England are as follows.

2004

GWh

Fuel source	*Scotland*	*Wales*	*England*[1]	*Total UK*
Coal	13,054	7,234	111,723	132,011
Oil	2,262	50	2,603	4,915
Gas	11,003	17,100	128,000	156,103
Nuclear	18,013	7,388	54,598	79,999
Hydro	4,546	305	79	4,930
Other renewables	1,308	792	7,717	9,817
Other	786	2,366	4,701	7,853
Total	50,972	35,235	309,421	395,628

[1] Includes Northern Ireland as data cannot be given separately as they disclose commercially confidential information.

Electricity consumption statistics, for 2004, are as follows:

	GWh[1]
East of England	28,150
East Midlands	24,461
Greater London	40,367
North East	12,708
North West	34,230
South East	41,057
South West	26,707
West Midlands	27,393
Yorkshire and Humber	25,602
Scotland	30,117
Wales	21,738
Northern Ireland	7,558
Unallocated[2]	3,623
UK electricity sales	323,711

[1] To convert to kWh multiply by 1,000,000.

[2] This is consumption for which there is insufficient information for it to be ascribed to a region.

The nature of the electricity grid means that you cannot divide consumption of electricity in the English regions according to the fuel used to generate the electricity.

Employment Agencies

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of inspections of employment agencies under the Employment Agencies Act 1973; how many employment agencies have been inspected under the Act in each year since 1975; and if he will make a statement. [38239]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The total number of complaints and inspections undertaken by the Employment Agency Standards Inspectorate since 1996 are as follows:

Complaints/inspections

	Number
1997–98	1,325
1998–99	1,360
1999–2000	1,319
2000–01	1,124
2001–02	854
2002–03	950
2003–04	1,531
2004–05	1,504

Data for earlier years are not readily available without excessive cost. Data broken down by sector of the private recruitment industry are not available for the years before 2004.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the average period has been between inspections of employment agencies under the Employment Agencies Act 1973 in each year since 1975. [38268]

Mr. Sutcliffe: It is not possible to assess the average period between inspections. Inspections either follow notification of a complaint to the Employment Agency Standards (EAS) Inspectorate (when a follow up inspection may be carried relatively soon after the initial visit, if breaches of the legislation were identified), or as part of a targeted programme of inspections on the basis of risk.

Thus, as inspections are not carried out on a routine basis, no meaningful figure is available. The interval between inspections is in fact a factor of complaints received and perceived risk based on the sector(s) and area in which the agency is operating.

Employment Tribunals Service

Mr. Sanders: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the national targets are for the Employment Tribunals Service; and what the performance of its offices in South Devon has been in relation to those targets. [36890]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Employment Tribunals Service has four key performance targets, related to the Employment Tribunals, which have been agreed with Ministers. The Exeter Employment Tribunal office handles claims for the South Devon area.

Percentage

	Target	*Achievement 2004–05*	*Exeter*
Percentage of single Employment Tribunal cases to a first hearing within 26 weeks of receipt	75	82	89
Minimum to be achieved by all offices in relation to above target	65	67	89
Percentage of Employment Tribunal decisions issued within four weeks of the final hearing	85	87	96
Percentage of Employment Tribunal users satisfied with the service offered by ETS	85	95	95.7

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many meetings of the EU *(a)* Advisory Committee on the development and reconversion of regions, *(b)* Advisory Committee on restrictive practices and dominant positions and *(c)* Advisory Committee on concentrations between undertakings have taken place during the UK Presidency of the EU; who presided over each meeting; what other UK representatives were present; what provision was made for representation of the devolved governments; and if he will make a statement. [38774]

Ian Pearson: The Committee on the Development and Conversion of Regions has met three times during the current UK presidency. The committee is chaired by a Commission representative and its membership is at official level. Each member state has two seats. The DTI, which has co-ordinating responsibility for the structural funds in the UK, always attends and reports on the meetings to all structural funds departments and to the devolved Administrations. An official from ODPM attended two of the meetings. Officials from the devolved Administrations are also invited.

There were eight meetings of the Advisory Committee on restrictive practices and dominant positions during the UK presidency where the UK was represented by the Office of Fair Trading, and the Commission chaired. No provisions were made for representation of the devolved governments as this is not a devolved issue.

The Advisory Committee on concentrations between undertakings is chaired by the European Commission. It met twice during the UK presidency and officials from the Office of Fair Trading represented the UK. No provisions were made for representation of the devolved governments as this is not a devolved issue.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many meetings of the EU *(a)* Committee on the specific programme for research, technological development and demonstration on promotion of innovation and participation of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), *(b)* Advisory Committee for co-operation in the field of tourism and *(c)* Committee on conformity assessment and surveillance of the telecommunications market have taken place during the UK presidency of the EU; who was presiding over each meeting; what other UK representatives were present; what provisions were made for representation of the devolved Governments; and if he will make a statement. [38789]

Alun Michael: The information requested is as follows:

(a) The Horizontal Configuration of the Programme Committee of the FP6 Specific Programme, "Integrating and Strengthening the European Research Area", which considers SME issues, has met three times during the UK's presidency of the EU. Officials from DG Research in the European Commission chaired each meeting. Officials from the Office of Science and Technology represented the United Kingdom. No representatives from devolved administrations attended.

(b) The Advisory Committee for co-operation in the field of tourism met once during the UK presidency. The Commission chaired and the meeting was attended by an official from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport. DCMS always consults the devolved administrations on the agenda and papers for meetings of the Tourism Advisory Committee well in advance of the meeting and makes representations on behalf of the devolved administrations when required.

(c) A meeting of the Telecommunications Conformity Assessment and Market Surveillance Committee took place in July 2005. The Committee was chaired by a representative of the European Commission. Two officials from the Department and one from the Office of Communications attended. No provisions were made for representation of the devolved Governments, as this is not a devolved issue.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many meetings of the EU *(a)* Committee on common rules for imports of textile products from certain third countries (autonomous regime), *(b)* Advisory Committee for implementation of the Community market-access strategy and *(c)* Committee on the implementation of projects promoting co-operation and commercial relations between the European Union and the industrialised countries of North America, the Far East and Australasia have taken place during the UK presidency of the EU; who was presiding over each meeting; what other UK representatives were present; what provisions were made for representation of the devolved governments; and if he will make a statement. [38790]

Ian Pearson: The Committee on common rules for imports of textile products from certain third countries (autonomous regime) is commonly known as the 'Textiles Management Committee'. It met four times during the UK presidency under the chairmanship of the European Commission, and an official from DTI represented the UK. No provisions were made for representation of the devolved governments, as this is not a devolved issue.

The Advisory Committee for implementation of the Community market-access strategy met once during the UK Presidency of the EU. The meeting was chaired by the European Commission, and one DTI official attended. No provisions were made for representation of the devolved governments, as this is not a devolved issue.

The Advisory Committee on the implementation of projects promoting cooperation and commercial relations between the European Union and the industrialised countries of North America, the Far East and Australasia did not meet during the UK presidency of the EU in 2005.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many meetings of the EU *(a)* Committee for the management of generalised preferences, *(b)* Committee for the harmonisation of credit insurance provisions for transactions with medium and long-term cover and *(c)* Co-ordinating Group for the Community regime for the control of exports of dual-use goods have taken place during the UK presidency of the EU; who was presiding over each meeting; what other UK representatives were present; what provisions were made for representation of the devolved governments; and if he will make a statement. [38791]

Ian Pearson: The Generalised System of Preferences (GSP) Committee met in Brussels once during the UK presidency on 28 November 2005. The Committee is chaired by the Commission and the UK was represented by the UK Permanent Representation to the EU. No provisions were made for representation of the devolved governments, as this is not a devolved issue.

The Committee for the harmonisation of credit insurance provisions for transactions with medium- and long-term cover did not meet during the UK presidency.

During the UK presidency, the European Council Working Group on Export Credits met five times in Brussels. Officials from Export Credits Guarantee Department and HM Treasury were present. No provisions were made for representation of the devolved governments, as this is not a devolved issue.

The Co-ordinating Group for the Community regime for the control of exports of dual-use goods is a Commission chaired Group. The UK is represented by DTI officials. During the UK presidency there were four meetings of the Co-ordination Group, these were held on the following dates: 13 July 2005; 7 September 2005; 3 October 2005; and 9 November 2005. Export control is not a devolved matter therefore devolved governments were not involved in the meetings.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many meetings of the *(a)* Advisory Committee on standardisation in the field of information technology (Sogits), *(b)* Advisory Committee on telecommunications procurement (ACTP) and *(c)* Committee on security of information systems (SO-GIS) have taken place during the UK presidency of the EU; who presided over each meeting; which other UK representatives were present; what provision was made for representation of the devolved governments; and if he will make a statement. [38999]

Ian Pearson: I can confirm that none of the committees listed has met during the UK presidency of the EU.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many meetings of the *(a)* Committee for the adaptation to technical progress of directives on the removal of technical barriers to trade in the sector of colouring matters which may be added to medicinal products, *(b)* Committee for the adaptation to technical progress of directives on the removal of technical barriers to trade in the sector of cosmetics and *(c)* Advisory Committee on protection against dumped imports have taken place during the UK presidency of the EU; who presided over each meeting; which other UK representatives were present; what provision was made for representation of the devolved governments; and if he will make a statement. [39008]

Ian Pearson: The Committee for the adaptation to technical progress of directives on the removal of technical barriers met twice during the UK presidency. This Committee is chaired by the Commission and an official of the Department of Trade and Industry represented the UK. No provision was made for representation of the devolved administrations.

The Advisory Committee on protection against dumped imports is not recognised under the title given. Matters relating to dumped imports are discussed in the Anti-dumping and Anti-subsidy Committee which met six times during the UK presidency. This Committee is chaired by the Commission and an official of the Department of Trade and Industry represented the UK. Representatives of the Scottish Executive attended the Committee when measures concerning imports of farmed salmon from Norway were discussed.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many meetings of the *(a)* Advisory Committee on protection against subsidised imports, *(b)* Advisory Committee on common rules for exports of products and *(c)* Quota Administration Committee have taken place during the UK presidency of the EU; who presided over each meeting; which other UK representatives were present; what provisions were made for representation of the devolved governments; and if he will make a statement. [39038]

Ian Pearson: The Advisory Committee on protection against subsidised imports is not recognised under the title given. Matters relating to subsidised imports are discussed in the "Anti-dumping and Anti-subsidy Committee" which met six times during the UK presidency. This Committee is chaired by the Commission and an official of the Department of Trade and Industry represented the UK. Representatives of the Scottish Executive attended the Committee when measures concerning imports of farmed salmon from Norway were discussed.

(b) The Advisory Committee on common rules for exports of products did not meet during the UK presidency.

(c) The Quota Administration Committee is not recognised under the title given.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many meetings of the *(a)* Advisory Committee on common rules for imports of products from third countries, *(b)* Advisory Committee on common rules for imports from certain third world countries and *(c)* Committee on defence against obstacles to trade which affect the market of the Community or a non-member country have taken place during the UK presidency of the EU; who presided over each meeting; which other UK representatives were present; what provisions were made for representation of the devolved Governments; and if he will make a statement. [39039]

Ian Pearson: The Advisory Committees on common rules for imports of products from third countries, and on certain third world countries are not recognised under the titles given.

The Committee on defence against obstacles to trade which affect the market of the Community or non-member country met once during the UK presidency. This Committee is chaired by the Commission and an official of the Department of Trade and Industry represented the UK. No provision was made for representation of the devolved administrations.

EU Domain

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will take steps to ensure British businesses have equal access to the new.eu domain name. [38003]

Alun Michael: All organisations with an address in the EU can register a domain name under the new.eu top-level domain. Registrations are made on a first come, first served basis, usual practice for domain name registries. There is a dispute resolution procedure in place.

Under the current "sunrise period", which opened on 7 December, organisations can apply for domain names where they can claim some rights (for example, a registered trade mark).

The registry responsible for operating the .eu top-level domain (EURID) and the European Commission have ensured reasonable awareness of the introduction of .eu internet addresses. Registrars—the organisations selling domain names have also advertised availability.

The domain name market is highly competitive, and it would be inappropriate for the UK Government to promote a particular top-level domain.

It is for organisations and individuals themselves to decide whether to apply for a .eu domain name.

Export Credits Guarantee Department

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what discussions the Export Credits Guarantee Department has held with law enforcement agencies on *(a)* the impact of its anti-corruption procedures on law enforcement efforts to detect, investigate and prosecute overseas corruption offences and *(b)* the potential impact of its audit clause on future law enforcement investigations into overseas corruption. [38220]

Ian Pearson: ECGD has informed other Government Departments, including the Home Office, and certain law enforcement agencies of its anti-bribery and corruption procedures. ECGD has provided them with the opportunity to comment on proposed revisions to its procedures resulting from the current public consultation and will continue to do so.

Fur Import Ban

Mrs. Iris Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what representations he has made within the EU on banning the import of cat and dog fur from China into the EU. [34605]

Ian Pearson: Within the EU this issue was discussed most recently at the 30 May 2005 Agriculture Council and at a meeting of chief veterinary officers on 6 July. At these meetings, the UK supported the position that the European Commission should explore concerns about the possible import of domestic cat and dog fur to the European Union as well as possible policy responses, including the possibility of a ban.

Glass Industry

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what steps he is taking to control the price of gas for the glass industry; and if he will make a statement. [38493]

Malcolm Wicks: Government policy is not to intervene in the energy market except in extreme circumstances, such as a threat to safety. We take the issue of security of energy supplies, and rising energy prices, very seriously, and are leaving no stone unturned in finding ways to mitigate the impact on customers.

The Department has been working with the Energy Intensive Users Group, of which British Glass is a member, and Ofgem through the Gas Prices Working Group (GPWG) to develop ideas for improving the operation of the wholesale gas market and ways to mitigate the effects of high wholesale prices. The GPWG has agreed an Action List of short to medium term measures, including maximising UK gas supplies, encouraging demand side response and pursuing energy market liberalisation in the EU.

In particular, the Department has worked hard to smooth the regulatory path for the construction of major new pipelines from Norway and the Netherlands, as well as two further gas import terminals in Pembrokeshire, all of which will ease the supply situation. Ofgem's Demand Side Working Group is working closely with industry to ensure that any necessary demand-side response is delivered in an efficient, flexible and responsive way. Also, the Government has put a lot of effort into pressing for full liberalisation within the EU, including at the successful Energy Council on 1 December, which I chaired, and this remains one of our key energy objectives. More recently, I have held meetings with the operators of North Sea gas fields, companies using the Bacton-Zeebrugge interconnector and the Isle of Grain gas import terminal to impress on them personally the importance I attach to the facilities operating effectively this winter.

Information and Communication Technology

Chris Huhne: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry when he will publish the 2005 International Benchmarking Study on the business use of information and communication technology. [32534]

Alun Michael: The Department has been reviewing the International Benchmarking Study (IBS) which was sponsored by the DTI until 2004 as a means of monitoring previous targets and has been considering the metrics needed to report against our new National Standard of 'Maintaining the UK's standing as one of the best places in the world for online business'.

This review has included an analysis of the cost of International Benchmarking Study research and a look at alternative reports/surveys of data such as Eurostat, ONS, Economist Intelligence Unit report and the Network Readiness Index as well as other public/private sources which were not available at the time the International Benchmarking Study was first commissioned. It has been concluded that there are now better ways of monitoring performance and that an International Benchmarking Study (IBS) covering the period 2005 would not offer value for money, and we will give a decision on the data to be produced shortly.

Internet Service Providers

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the number of internet service providers based in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* Wales, *(c)* each of the English regions and *(d)* Northern Ireland. [39203]

Alun Michael: Such information is not collected.

Israel

Kate Hoey: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what mechanisms exist *(a)* to

monitor whether British firms violate (i) UK and (ii) international law on accepting contracts with Israel which include work in the Occupied Territories and *(b)* to enforce subsequent penalties. [35624]

Ian Pearson: British firms accepting contracts with Israel, which include work in the occupied territories, are not in violation of UK or international law provided they comply with UK export controls.

Mobile Telephones

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what estimate he has made of the number of mobile telephones in use in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* Wales, *(c)* each of the English regions and *(d)* Northern Ireland. [39200]

Alun Michael: Ofcom, the independent regulator for the UK communication industries, estimates in its recent report "The Communications Market 2005" that there are around 61 million mobile telephones in use in the UK today. The same report details a breakdown of household penetration of mobile telephony across the UK but does not include specific details across the nations for SME's or large corporates. According to the report levels of household usage across each of the nations are: England 77 per cent., Northern Ireland 71 per cent., Scotland 68 per cent., and Wales 72 per cent.

Car/Motorcycle Manufacturing Industry

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) how many people were employed in the motorcycle manufacturing industry in each year since 1997; [38650]

(2) how many people were employed in the car manufacturing industry in each year since 1997; [38651]

(3) what the total value was of sales of *(a)* new and *(b)* second hand cars sold in the UK in each financial year since 1997. [38817]

Alun Michael: The following table sets out answers to these questions to the extent that data is available.

For the UK auto industry, employment data is not separately available for car manufacturing, as the total for vehicles also includes commercial vehicles and engines. For completeness, the table also includes employment at component suppliers, although this understates the true size of the UK auto industry as many suppliers to the industry are classified in the statistics according to what they make (e.g. steel, glass). The ONS Annual Business Inquiry does not have employment data for 1997.

From this data, it can be deduced that UK auto industry productivity is improving, both in terms of cars made per worker per annum, and GVA per employee. These are important measures that indicate continuing improvements in UK's auto manufacturing competitiveness on the global stage.

As regards registrations data, new registrations are in the public domain and are quoted here. Used vehicle transaction data is normally a chargeable service from DVLA, but SMMT provides used car sales data on request, and this is quoted here.

Data on the value of vehicle sales, new or used, is commercially sensitive within the industry and not published. However, data is available from ONS on the value added generated by the motor trade and this is quoted here. Again, the value added generated per employee is on a rising trend, indicating continually improving efficiency and competitiveness.

	Source	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*
Employment: vehicle manufacturing	ONS	n/a	123,000	116,000	106,000
Employment: auto component manufacture	ONS	n/a	170,000	158,000	157,000
Value added: vehicle, engine and component mfr (£ million)	ONS	10,811	10,694	9,355	8,089
Cars manufactured (thousand)	SMMT	1,712	1,761	1,786	1,641
Commercial vehicles manufactured (thousand)	SMMT	224	215	190	172
Employment: motorcycle manufacturing	ONS	n/a	1,000	1,000	1,000
Value added: motorcycle and manufacture (£ million)	ONS	22	26	26	39
Motorcycles manufactured (thousand)	MCI	15	17	21	26
Employment: vehicle sales	ONS	n/a	294	294	289
Employment: other motor trade	ONS	n/a	253	261	264
Value added: vehicle sales and motor trade (£ million)	ONS	16,421	16,224	17,512	16,807
Registrations: cars (thousand)	DETR	2,170	2,247	2,197	2,221
Registrations: CVs (thousand)	DETR	274	295	288	298
Registrations: motorcycles (thousand)	DETR	122	144	168	183
Car changes of ownership (thousand)	SMMT	5,300	5,800	n/a	n/a

	Source	*2001*	*20025*	*2003*	*2004*
Employment: vehicle manufacturing	ONS	94,000	95,000	91,000	89,000
Employment: auto component manufacture	ONS	152,000	148,000	143,000	132,000
Value added: vehicle, engine and component mfr (£ million)	ONS	9,138	9,126	8,925	9,855
Cars manufactured (thousand)	SMMT	1,493	1,630	1,658	1,647
Commercial vehicles manufactured (thousand)	SMMT	193	191	189	209

	Source	2001	20025	2003	2004
Employment: motorcycle manufacturing	ONS	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Value added: motorcycle and manufacture (£ million)	ONS	54	92	101	38
Motorcycles manufactured (thousand)	MCI	30	15	32	26
Employment: vehicle sales	ONS	277	280	277	276
Employment: other motor trade	ONS	275	264	281	276
Value added: vehicle sales and motor trade (£ million)	ONS	18,911	20,313	21,876	22,296
Registrations: cars (thousand)	DETR	2,459	2,563	2,579	2,567
Registrations: CVs (thousand)	DETR	313	322	364	390
Registrations: motorcycles (thousand)	DETR	177	162	157	134
Car changes of ownership (thousand)	SMMT	6,700	7,100	7,500	7,700

Nuclear Power

Greg Clark: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what pricing arrangements pertain to electricity produced from nuclear power stations, with particular reference to arrangements made under the non-fossil fuel obligation. [38169]

Malcolm Wicks: There are currently no special pricing arrangements pertaining to electricity produced from nuclear power stations—they sell their output to the wholesale electricity market in the same way as other generators. The nuclear industry in England and Wales ceased to benefit from guaranteed subsidies provided under the non-fossil fuel obligation in 1998 following the privatisation of British Energy.

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the export of material for corrosion resistant cladding of uranium oxide fuel in nuclear reactors is subject to export controls; and if he will make a statement. [38447]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 19 December 2005]:* The raw material normally used for this purpose is zirconium alloy containing an especially low amount of hafnium. Low-hafnium zirconium, alloys containing more than 50 per cent. zirconium and zirconium compounds are subject to control for exports to destinations that are not member states of the EU under entry 1C234 of Annex I to Council Regulation (EC) 1334/2000 ("the EC Regulation"), as amended. Tubes manufactured from low-hafnium zirconium or zirconium alloy, specially designed for cladding uranium oxide fuel, are controlled to all destinations under entry 0A001f of Annexes I and IV to the EC Regulation, as amended.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the total amount of carbon dioxide released from the production of nuclear fuel was in each year for which figures are available. [37115]

Malcolm Wicks: Information on UK emissions of carbon dioxide is contained in the UK Greenhouse Gas Inventory, which is compiled and maintained by the National Environmental Technology Centre. From the inventory it is not possible to separately identify carbon dioxide emissions from the production of nuclear fuel. No carbon dioxide is emitted from the generation of electricity from nuclear fuel.

Operating and Financial Reviews

Norman Lamb: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on Operating and Financial Reviews. [39227]

Alun Michael: I refer the hon. Member to the statement I made on 15 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 177WS.

Petroleum Supplies

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what assessment he has made of the implications for the security of supply of the proposed India, Pakistan and Iran petroleum pipeline. [38872]

Malcolm Wicks: The Iran-Pakistan-India pipeline was one of three gas pipeline importation projects approved by the Indian Cabinet in February.

The pipeline, construction of which is due to commence by mid-2007 with the first gas delivered by the end of 2010, will have to overcome significant security and operational challenges if it is to be successful. These include its proposed length and route, which will take it through the troubled Pakistani province of Balochistan. Discussions, including on how best to secure the pipeline, are under way between the interested parties and I understand that senior Indian and Pakistani petroleum officials announced in New Delhi on 17 December that experts from their countries and Iran will hold their first tripartite meeting in Tehran in early February 2006.

Pipelines

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what the length in kilometers is of pipelines for *(a)* crude oil, *(b)* petroleum products, *(c)* natural gas, *(d)* liquefied petroleum gas products, *(e)* refined products and petrochemicals and *(f)* other oils, gases or chemical products in (i) Scotland, (ii) Wales, (iii) each of the English regions, (iv) Northern Ireland and (v) the offshore UK sectors subject to (A) Scots law, (B) Northern Irish law and (C) the law of England and Wales. [39201]

Malcolm Wicks: The information requested is not held centrally and to compile it would exceed the disproportionate cost threshold. However, the Department does provide information on major UK offshore oil and gas pipelines with details of length, diameter and the material conveyed which can be found

on http://www.og.dti.gov.uk/information/bb_updates/appendices/Appendix14.htm The total length of the offshore pipelines listed is 12,396.09 km.

The most detailed source of information on the main UK onshore gas pipelines should be available from national grid—operator of the National Gas Transmission System.

Regional Development Agencies

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how much each regional development agency in England has budgeted for in 2005–06 *(a)* in total, *(b)* for administration and *(c)* for staffing. [31826]

Alun Michael: The 2005–06 figures for budget, administration and staffing for the nine regional development agencies are set out in the table:

£ million

	Total budget	*Non-pay admin expenditure*	*Staffing expenditure*	*Total admin expenditure*
Advantage West Midlands	272	5.920	14.080	20.000
East of England development agency	129	2.400	8.800	11.200
East Midlands development agency	156	6.000	9.000	15.000
London development agency	373	10.200	19.300	29.500
North West development agency	382	19.717	19.075	38.792
One North East	240	3.150	19.350	22.500
South East England development agency	157	5.850	12.150	18.000
South West regional development agency	153	7.130	12.643	19.773
Yorkshire Forward	295	5.888	13.622	19.510
Totals	2,157	66.255	128.020	194.275

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry whether the *(a)* in principle and *(b)* committed funding decisions of the regional development agencies are published. [34138]

Alun Michael: The spending plans of England's Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) are set out in their corporate plans for the period 2005 to 2008. The RDAs consulted widely with all interested parties about the development of their corporate plans and have published the plans on their websites. There is no requirement on RDAs to publish decisions in relation to individual projects.

Regulation, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals Directive

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry (1) what estimate the European Commission's impact study made of the cost of compliance with the Regulation, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals Directive for an average paper mill; [38301]

(2) what the estimated cost impact on paper mills is of complying with the Regulation, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals Directive; [38302]

(3) whether recycled paper made from waste materials would be subject to the Regulation, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals requirements as set out in the UK compromise text; [38303]

(4) whether, under the proposals in the latest UK presidency compromise text on the Regulation, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals Directive, waste paper recyclers would be required to test every batch of waste paper collected; [38304]

(5) what assessment he has made of the impact of the UK compromise text on the Regulation, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals Directive on the recycled paper market in the UK; [38310]

(6) what assessment he has made of the likely impact on the UK's compliance with the landfill directive if the UK compromise text on the Regulation, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals Directive is adopted. [38313]

Mr. Morley: I have been asked to reply.

The European Commission's impact assessment estimated the cost of compliance for an average paper mill to be €7 million per year. This however was based on the Commission's original proposal and the scenario of a notification of a substance in magazine paper as an "article".

The compromise text agreed under the UK presidency at Competitiveness Council on 13 December 2005 amended the notification requirements to only those that contain substances of high concern in quantities of over 1 tonne per year and where they are present over a concentration of 0.1 per cent. weight by weight. This will greatly reduce the burden on the paper industry and avoid having to test every batch of waste paper collected.

The agreed compromise text also makes it clear that waste—as defined in Council Directive 75/4222/EEC—is exempt from the REACH regulations. This will minimise any impact on recycling and compliance with the landfill directive.

Research and Development

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry how many and what value of *(a)* research and development grants and *(b)* SMART awards were made in the City of Newcastle upon Tyne in each year since 1998–99. [38323]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 19 December 2005]:* The number and value of SMART and grant for research and development offers in Newcastle upon Tyne since 1998–99 is shown in the following table. The legacy SMART scheme closed to new applications in 2003.

	Grant for research and development		SMART	
	Number	Value (£)	Number	Value (£)
1998–99	—	—	11	469,774
1999–2000	—	—	11	1,074,083
2000–01	—	—	4	211,650
2001–02	—	—	6	1,166,694
2002–03	—	—	8	325,000
2003–04	—	—	6	335,454
2004–05	4	348,651	—	—

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 8 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1484W, on research and development, what the total value was of the grants in each region set out in the tables. [38324]

Alun Michael *[holding answer 19 December 2005]:* The total value of grant for research and development awards since the product's introduction in June 2003 is shown in the following tables:

Value of grant for research and development offers 2004–05

£

Region	Micro	Research	Development	Exceptional
East	198,926	1,777,014	3,309,986	500,000
East Midlands	20,000	712,592	964,615	
London	53,869	1,976,920	1,826,819	841,100
North East	81,598	391,673	2,026,783	
North West	100,000	1,098,120	3,468,606	746,930
South East	208,221	751,946	1,906,406	591,286
South West	114,434	242,638	966,481	
West Midlands	77,822	594,287	1,749,070	
Yorks and Humber	255,348	1,356,361	1,491,602	

Value of grant for research and development offers 2003–04

£

Region	Micro	Research	Development	Exceptional
East	221,379	2,006,965	1,447,837	2,768,860
East Midlands	248,310	408,190	1,374,605	
London	255,426	1,606,297	2,277,796	
North East	47,375	75,000	586,899	
North West	532,877	1,138,611	1,700,813	246,614
South East	245,671	1,374,582	3,293,215	354,420
South West	226,736	263,849	1,070,319	664,750
West Midlands	130,311	179,736	1,863,070	
Yorks and Humber	261,840	906,365	1,952,836	433,890

Information for the legacy Smart scheme is shown in the following tables:

Value of Smart offers 2004–05

£

Region	Micro	Feasibility	Development	Exceptional
East				
East Midlands				
London		45,000		
North East		77,063		
North West		45,000	90,349	
South East				
South West				
West Midlands				
Yorks and Humber				

Value of Smart offers 2003–04

£

Region	Micro	Feasibility	Development	Exceptional
East	60,425	3,506,083	1,716,201	626,971
East Midlands	39,425	884,865	874,886	
London	15,500	1,844,415	1,347,355	350,000
North East	27,455	834,488	712,854	
North West	39,686	2,581,296	1,606,636	404,573
South East	173,528	3,732,705	2,977,328	764,123
South West	65,095	360,000	62,894	
West Midlands	15,408	335,540	219,353	
Yorks and Humber	44,714	1,557,676	1,480,946	

Value of Smart offers 2002–03

£

Region	Micro	Feasibility	Development	Exceptional
East	118,193	4,566,175	4,698,391	788,690
East Midlands	64,855	1,386,516	2,820,361	661,000
London	177,421	2,106,426	1,534,220	105,000
North East	78,542	1,057,084	382,494	
North West	252,419	3,273,547	3,275,242	87,853
South East	220,782	3,168,398	5,159,998	1,336,837
South West	189,068	1,290,119	919,083	
West Midlands	5,550	1,083,382	1,302,820	
Yorks and Humber	268,488	1,608,495	2,610,216	300,000

Value of Smart offers 2001–02

£

Region	Micro	Feasibility	Development	Exceptional
East	44,652	2,076,248	2,732,858	
East Midlands	170,171	967,559	802,149	
London	65,900	1,112,499	573,429	
North East	10,000	613,473	103,080	435,267
North West	135,879	3,119,975	2,568,000	
South East	107,438	3,037,073	1,826,697	1,260,924
South West	247,658	852,142	2,027,623	450,000
West Midlands	122,719	1,404,636	1,263,214	300,000
Yorks and Humber	128,223	1,967,778	2,886,899	

Value of Smart offers 2000–01

Region	Micro	Feasibility	Development	Exceptional
East		1,665,938	1,878,378	450,000
East Midlands		1,083,564	841,345	
London		305,007	547,319	
North East		313,584	228,246	
North West		1,623,187	2,179,788	
South East		2,006,380	2,801,279	777,945
South West		657,716	966,222	
West Midlands		1,457,471	1,028,180	
Yorks and Humber		1,138,482	2,158,852	
Centrally administered[1]	1,016,651			3,214,000

Value of Smart offers 1999–2000

£

Region	Feasibility	Development	Exceptional
East	1,899,994	1,481,016	
East Midlands	758,301	1,355,508	
London	453,154	176,374	
North East	833,060	847,690	
North West	632,374	597,661	
South East	1,010,587	1,592,949	
South West	939,265	821,632	
West Midlands	1,331,092	466,068	
Yorks and Humber	1,402,824	1,733,433	
Centrally administered[1]	—	—	1,034,000

Value of Smart offers 1998–99

£

Region	Feasibility	Development	Exceptional
East	1,210,635	1,643,736	—
East Midlands	1,114,713	1,473,796	—
London	538,575	835,044	—
North East	697,562	509,519	—
North West	709,192	1,447,840	—
South East	1,498,416	1,689,782	—
South West	1,053,572	1,476,502	—
West Midlands	1,385,675	1,146,625	—
Yorks and Humber	1,639,249	1,766,283	—
Centrally administered[1]	—	—	1,132,399

[1] Prior to August 2000. Exceptional projects were administered centrally by SBS.

Shopping Fraud

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what awareness campaigns his Department is running about internet shopping fraud during the Christmas shopping period; and if he will make a statement. [36211]

Mr. Sutcliffe: There is already information available from Consumer Direct Online about how to shop online safely and how to avoid being a victim of fraud. Their website address is www.consumerdirect.gov.uk/general/internet.

The Consumer Protection (Distance Selling) Regulations 2000 protect consumers against payment card fraud including credit cards. The regulations apply to contracts made at a distance including online ones. The card issuer is required to reimburse consumers the full amount in the event of fraudulent use of the consumer's card.

The Government have been involved in the development of Get Safe Online at www.getsafeonline.org. This project is an alliance of public and private sector, which brings together a number of UK Government Departments and law enforcement organisations with a number of high-profile private sector companies to provide a free, public service. This campaign, launched on 27 October, is targeted at micro business and consumers and is primarily aimed at educating internet users in safer and more secure use of computers and the internet.

The Home Office also created, and maintains the 'e-tailing mini site', which forms part of the crime reduction website. The mini site www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/fraud/preventationadvice provides information to help both businesses and consumers protect themselves specifically when using the internet.

Unscrupulous Lending

Ed Balls: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry what action is being taken to protect vulnerable groups in *(a)* West Yorkshire, *(b)* Wakefield district and *(c)* Normanton from unscrupulous and unfair lenders. [37850]

Mr. Sutcliffe: The Consumer Credit Bill will improve the regulation and monitoring of consumer credit businesses and extend protections, rights and means of redress for consumers against unscrupulous lenders across the UK.

The DTI has also commissioned research into the scope and extent of illegal money lending in the UK and is considering how to build on the lessons learnt from the pilot scheme on enforcement against illegal money lenders.

A £36 million development fund is also being set aside for third sector lenders as an alternative source of credit for those most at risk. This will help credit unions grow so that they can offer a more widely available alternative to unscrupulous lenders.

Finally, the Financial Inclusion Fund includes £45 million to increase face-face debt advice capacity, with particular regard to the needs of financially excluded consumers.

WTO Ministerial Meeting

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry if he will make a statement on the European Commission's negotiations on *(a)* the World Trade Organisation's agreement on trade in services and *(b)* non-agricultural market access prior to the forthcoming WTO Ministerial meeting in Hong Kong. [37499]

Ian Pearson: I refer the hon. Member to the statement to the House made by my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry today.

Zirconium Silicate (Iran)

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Trade and Industry pursuant to the answer of 12 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1677W, on zirconium silicate (Iran), what the process is by which potential exports of zirconium silicate are identified for the case-by-case consideration referred to; and who is responsible for identifying whether the material in question is to be used in connection with a weapons of mass destruction programme. [38446]

Malcolm Wicks *[holding answer 19 December 2005]:* The Export Control Organisation (ECO) in DTI determines whether the goods are on the Control Lists and if not, whether an export licence may still be required under the WMD end-use control (depending on the end-user). ECO is ultimately responsible for this judgment, but will usually seek advice from relevant other Government Departments. If the goods are assessed as licensable, a judgment will then be made about whether a licence should be granted.

TREASURY

Asset Register

Anne Main: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what guidance his Department has given to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister on the production of a publicly available asset register. [38129]

John Healey: Section 23.3 of "Government Accounting 2000" www.government-accounting.gov.uk provides Departments, including the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, with guidance for maintaining asset registers. Government Accounting 2000 does not mention

whether Departments should make asset registers publicly available, and it is for each Department to decide.

Anne Main: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what guidance his Department has given to other Government Departments on acceptable time limits for the production of asset registers at the end of each financial year; and if he will make a statement. [38130]

John Healey: Section 23.3 of "Government Accounting 2000" www.government-accounting.gov.uk provides Departments with guidance for maintaining asset registers. Departments are expected to maintain and update asset registers continuously. Government Accounting 2000 does not set any specific time limit for the production of asset registers at the end of each financial year.

Cancer/Heart Disease Deaths

Mr. Jenkins: To ask Mr Chancellor of the Exchequer what the death rate was for *(a)* cancer and *(b)* heart disease in (i) the West Midlands, (ii) Staffordshire, and (iii) Tamworth constituency in the last period for which figures are available. [37824]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Jil Matheson, dated 20 December 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent question asking what the death rate was for *(a)* cancer and *(b)* heart disease in (i) the West Midlands, (ii) Staffordshire, and (iii) Tamworth constituency in the last period for which figures are available. I am replying in her absence. (37824)

The latest year for which figures are available is 2004 and these are given in the table below. As population estimates are not available for parliamentary constituencies, figures are provided for the two local authorities, Tamworth and Lichfield, which constitute the constituency requested.

Death rates[1] from cancer and coronary heart disease[2] for West Midlands Government Office Region, the county of Staffordshire[3] and the local authorities of Tamworth and Lichfield[4]—2004[5]

Death rates per 100,000 population

	Cancer	*Coronary heart disease*
West Midlands	180	111
Staffordshire	182	111
Tamworth	192	115
Lichfield	194	100

[1] Rates per 100,000 population standardised to the European Standard Population.
[2] The cause of death was defined using the International Classification of Diseases, Tenth Revision (ICD-10).
The codes used are listed:
Cancer (malignant neoplasms)—ICD-10 C00-C97
Coronary heart disease—ICD-10 120–125
Deaths were selected using the original underlying cause.
[3] The current county of Staffordshire. This excludes Stoke-on-Trent which became a unitary authority in 1997.
[4] Usual residents of these areas.
[5] Deaths registered in 2004.

Common Agricultural Policy Document

Mr. Jack: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer when the Department began production of the document 'Vision for a Changed CAP'; which sections of his Department were involved in this work; what the names of the lead officials who contributed to its production are; and from whom outside Government views were sought. [38760]

John Healey: The paper 'A Vision for the Common Agricultural Policy' was a joint publication by HM Treasury and the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs. CAP reform has been under continual consideration by the Government for many years, with documents published and views from a wide range of stakeholders considered at many stages; the paper draws on that work. The paper presents for debate a vision for what a sustainable model of European agriculture might look like in the future and the Government looks forward to engaging in a wide and constructive discussion.

The teams in HM Treasury which were principally involved in this work were the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs Team in the Public Services Directorate and the EU Policy Team and the International Poverty Reduction Team in the Macroeconomic Policy and International Finance Directorate. The Civil Service yearbook contains details of lead officials.

Compensation Settlements

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether compensation settlements made with companies working for his Department are tax deductible. [37145]

Dawn Primarolo: A compensation payment made by a company for the purposes of its trade which is not for infraction of law or by way of a penalty will generally be tax deductible provided that it is not capital in nature.

Departmental Consultants

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many secondees there have been to his Department from consultancy firms, including the Big Four accountancy firms, in each of the last three years; and what areas of the Department they have worked in. [37356]

John Healey: The number of secondees to HM Treasury from consultancy firms in each of the last three years is as follows:

	Secondees
2003	4
2004	5
2005	5

Seven have been employed in the Finance, Regulation and Industry Directorate; six in the Budget and Public Finance Directorate; and one in the Government financial Management Directorate.

Departmental Expenditure

Mr. Weir: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much was spent on external consultants and advisers by *(a)* his Department, *(b)* each (i) non-departmental public body and (ii) executive agency for which his Department is responsible and *(c)* each

independent statutory body, organisation and body financially sponsored by his Department in each year since May 1997. [39080]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given to the hon. Member for Hemel Hempstead (Mike Penning) and Cheltenham (Martin Horwood) on 21 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1571W. The equivalent information in relation to each of the other bodies could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much was spent on advertising by *(a)* his Department, *(b)* each (i) non-departmental public body and (ii) executive agency for which his Department is responsible and *(c)* each independent statutory body, organisation and body financially sponsored by his Department in each year since May 1997. [39082]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given to the hon. Member for Sutton and Cheam (Mr. Burstow) and the hon. Member for Monmouth (David T.C. Davies) on 6 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 433W. The equivalent information in relation to each of the other bodies could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Norman Lamb: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many widescreen televisions have been purchased by his Department for use in London headquarters in each of the last five years; and what the cost was in each year. [39141]

John Healey: None.

Departmental Staff (Chronic Back Pain)

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what initiatives are being taken in his Department to help civil servants with chronic back pain. [34979]

John Healey: The Treasury follows the recommendations of the Health and Safety Executive on seating and back problems.

Staff are encouraged to seek medical advice from their general practitioner and those with persistent problems are advised by our occupational health provider.

The Treasury also encourages staff to adopt a healthy work/life balance through the promotion of on site exercise.

Employment Rates

Chris Ruane: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the percentage employment rate for the working age population was in *(a)* June to August 1999 and *(b)* June to August 2004 in each local authority area, listed in descending order according to the difference between the two figures. [38270]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Jil Matheson, dated 20 December 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about employment. I am replying in his absence.(38270)

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) compiles statistics of employment from the Labour Force Survey following International Labour Organisation definitions. I am placing a table in the House of Commons Library showing employment rates for people of working age for all local authorities in Great Britain, for the 12 month periods ending February 2000 and December 2004, listed in descending order of the difference between the two rates.

These estimates, as with any from sample surveys, are subject to a margin of uncertainty. Changes in the estimates from year to year should be treated with particular caution.

EU Budget

Mr. McFall: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the UK's contribution to the EU budget will be in each year from 2007 to 2013 under the recently agreed budget. [39618]

Mr. Gordon Brown: The estimated extra costs will be £500 million (0.09 per cent. of public spending) in 2007–08, zero (0 per cent.) in 2008–09, £1.0 billion (0.16 per cent. in 2009–10, and between £1.6 billion and £1.9 billion (0.23 per cent. and 0.26 per cent.) each year between 2010–11 and 2012–13.

The fiscal forecast will be updated as usual at the Budget.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many meetings of the EU *(a)* Contact Committee on combating money laundering and *(b)* Insurance Committee have taken place during the UK Presidency of the EU; who presided over each meeting; what other UK representatives were present; what provision was made for representation of the devolved governments; and if he will make a statement. [38778]

John Healey: The Money Laundering Contact Committee met three times during the UK Presidency of the EU. The European Commission is the chair of the committee. At the first two meetings (on 5 July 2005 and 27 September 2005) UK Government officials from HM Treasury represented and led for the UK. For the final meeting of the year on 23 November 2005 officials from both HM Treasury and the Financial Services Authority attended for the UK.

The European Commission has established a new organisational structure for financial services committees. As a result the Insurance Committee has been replaced by the European Insurance and Occupational Pensions Committee (EIOPC). The committee is chaired by the European Commission.

Treasury officials usually represent the UK at EIOPC meetings although HM Treasury may ask the Financial Services Authority to attend alongside its officials to provide technical assistance. There has been one EIOPC meeting during the UK Presidency of the EU, on 2 December 2005. On this occasion, one official from HM Treasury and one official from the Financial Services Authority attended the meeting.

In preparation for the meetings of these European committees, the Government consults as necessary with all interested parties. Devolved Administrations are also consulted before the UK agrees to any major European policy decisions.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many meetings of the EU *(a)* Advisory Committee on state aid for the application of Articles 92 and 93 of the EC treaty to certain categories of horizontal state aid (exemption), *(b)* Advisory Committee on state aid on the arrangements for applying Article 93 of the EC treaty (procedure) and *(c)* Banking Advisory Committee have taken place during the UK presidency of the EU; who presided over each meeting; what other UK representatives were present; what provision was made for representation of the devolved Governments; and if he will make a statement. [38811]

Ian Pearson: I have been asked to reply.

There have been three European Commission convened multilateral meetings on state aid with member states over the course of the UK presidency: to discuss the draft regional aid guidelines 2007–13; to discuss the Commission's innovation and state aid communication; and the follow up to the council conclusions on state aid.

These were chaired by the Commission, and the UK delegation was led by DTI, and in the case of the latter multilateral, HMT also attended as part of the UK delegation. Representatives of OFT attended the meeting as guests of the Commission (they presented at the meeting) but were not part of the official UK delegation.

While the Commission has exclusive competence in the area of state aid, and it is a reserved matter for the UK Government, we do consult extensively with colleagues in the devolved administrations, and for these meetings the UK line was agreed prior to the meetings, the outcomes of which were reported back to the devolved administrations.

With respect to the third part of the question, the Commission has established a new organisational structure for financial services committees. As a result the Banking Advisory Committee has now become a Lamfalussy Committee. It has been renamed as the European Banking Committee (EEC). EBC is chaired by a senior official from the Commission.

There have been two EEC's during the period of the UK presidency of the EU. The UK was represented by two officials from HM Treasury.

Financial services is a reserved matter for the UK Government and Treasury officials represent the UK at EBC meetings. HM Treasury has regular contacts with significant financial services centres throughout the UK to inform the position of the UK at these meetings.

European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

Mr. Hurd: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether all benefits paid to UK nationals since 1991 from the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development's pension schemes have been subject to UK income tax. [39231]

John Healey: A payment made by the bank from the bank's funds to enable a retiring employee to purchase a pension is, as an emolument of his employment, exempted from UK income tax by paragraph 14 of Statutory Instrument 1991 No. 757 (The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development (Immunities and Privileges) Order 1991). Retirement income arising from the investment of the payment is liable to income tax in the normal way.

External Contractors

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the research commissioned externally by *(a)* his Department and *(b)* its agencies in the last year for which information is available; which external contractor was commissioned in each case; what the cost was of each research project; how long it took to complete each project; and if he will make a statement. [38344]

John Healey: The information requested is not available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Fuel Duty

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much has been raised in fuel duty in each year since 1997, broken down by *(a)* diesel and *(b)* petrol. [38827]

John Healey: Historic duty revenue for diesel and petrol can be found on page three of the HM Revenue and Customs Hydrocarbon Oils Bulletin, a copy of which can be found on a HMRC website at: http://www.uktradeinfo.com/index.cfm?task=bullhydro

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what were the rates of duty for each year since 1997 for *(a)* low sulphur diesel and *(b)* rebated diesel fuel. [38882]

John Healey: Historic rates of duty for low sulphur diesel and rebated diesel fuel can be found on page 4 of the HM Revenue and Customs Hydrocarbon Oils Bulletin, a copy of which is available on the HMRC website at: http://www.uktradeinfo.com/index.cfm?task=bullhydro.

The effective rate of duty on rebated diesel fuel has been increased by 1.22 pence per litre from midnight on pre-Budget report, 5 December 2005.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what assessment he has made of the illegal trade in rebated diesel fuel *(a)* in each year since 1997 and *(b)* in each of the next five years; and if he will make a statement; [38883]

(2) what assessment he has made of the impact of the UK oils fraud strategy; whether he will publish his findings; what measures he uses to determine the impact of the strategy; how often he reviews the impact of the strategy; and; if he will make a statement. [38924]

John Healey: The UK Oils Strategy is assessed annually and estimates of the illicit market share, revenue loss and methodology are published in "Measuring Indirect Tax Losses", which is published alongside the PER.

When the UK Oils Strategy was introduced in 2001 the illicit market was estimated at 6 per cent. (the majority of which is attributed to the illegal trade in rebated diesel fuel) and without the strategic measures the problem would increase by 1 per cent. year on year.

The latest estimates indicate that in 2004 illicit market share was 4 per cent. and that HMRC is on track to meet the PSA target of 2 per cent. by 2006.

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the duty payable on *(a)* gas oil and *(b)* fuel oil in each year since 1997. [38929]

John Healey: Historic duty receipts for gas oil and fuel oil can be found on page 3 of the HM Revenue and Customs Hydrocarbon Oils Bulletin, a copy of which is available on the HMRC website at: http://www.uktradeinfo.com/index.cfm7task-bullhydro

Home Information Packs

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the introduction of home information packs on *(a)* the housing market and *(b)* the UK economy. [36825]

Yvette Cooper: I have been asked to reply.

There is no reason to believe that the introduction of home information packs will have an adverse effect on the housing market. These reforms are designed to improve the home buying process by making it more transparent and reducing the current high rate of transaction failure. A more efficient system will have clear benefits for the housing market and the UK economy. The information in the pack will help achieve the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's goal of sustainable home ownership, by ensuring that buyers are not faced with unexpected repairs and other commitments they cannot afford. A more efficient housing market will also facilitate greater flexibility and labour mobility. The partial regulatory impact assessment on home information packs shows that the cost of the new system will be broadly neutral and a copy of this has been deposited in the Library of the House. The only new cost being imposed on the system overall is the cost of a home condition report in a proportion of transactions. Any new and additional costs will be offset by savings from a reduction in wasted costs that are currently running at over £1 million per day.

Infant Mortality

Sandra Gidley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the infant mortality rate has been since 2002 in each primary care trust in England. [38320]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician, who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Jil Matheson, dated 20 December 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking for the infant mortality rate in each Primary Care Organisation in England since 2002. I am replying in her absence. (38320)

The most recent year for which figures are available is 2004. Figures requested for the years 2002–2004 are given in the attached table which I am also placing in the House of Commons Library.

Media Monitoring

Philip Davies: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, how much the Department has spent on media monitoring activities in each of the last eight financial years. [35628]

John Healey: The Treasury's spending on media monitoring since 2002–03 is as follows:

£000

	Amount
2002–03	351
2003–04	391
2004–05	345

Because of a change in the Treasury's accounting system in 2002–03, information in relation to the earlier years could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

National Minimum Wage

Mr. Devine: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many companies in Livingston were reported via the National Minimum Wage Helpline for failing to comply with national minimum wage legislation in 2004. [38433]

Dawn Primarolo: National Minimum Wage statistical data is not disaggregated to constituency level.

North Sea Gas

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what assessment his Department has made of the effects of an increase in the supplementary North sea charge to 20 per cent. on future exploration in the North sea continental shelf; [38486]

(2) what assessment his Department has made of the effects of an increase in the supplementary North sea charge to 20 per cent. on the volume of gas extracted from the North sea continental shelf in the *(a)* short, *(b)* medium and *(c)* longer term. [38487]

John Healey: The changes announced in the pre-Budget report were subject to detailed analysis to ensure that the North sea tax regime delivers the Government's objectives of striking the right balance between oil producers and consumers, by promoting investment and ensuring fairness for taxpayers.

Office for National Statistics

Adam Afriyie: To ask Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) whether a racial impact assessment was carried out before the Office for National Statistics (ONS) changed the mid-year population methodology in 2002; and what consultation was undertaken by ONS before making this change; [38552]

(2) whether he has plans to change the methodology used to determine *(a)* inward and *(b)* international net migration for use in mid-year population estimate. [38558]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 20 December 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Questions asking *(a)* whether a racial impact assessment was carried out before making changes to the mid-year population estimates methodology in 2002; and what consultation was undertaken before making these changes and *(b)* whether any changes are planned to the methodology used to determine migration for use in the mid-year population estimates. I am replying in her absence. (38552 & 38558)

No significant changes were made to the methodology used to calculate mid-year population estimates in 2002. The estimates published in 2002 were the mid-2001 population estimates and these were the first mid-year population estimates to use the 2001 Census results. The standard 'cohort component' methodology was used, in that Census data were updated to reflect births, deaths, migration, and ageing of the population between the date of the Census and the mid-year point (approximately 9 weeks). In a Census year the mid-year estimates are rebased on the most recent Census before the method is applied.

The most recent significant change to the way that the mid-year population estimates are compiled was made in 2000, and applies to the mid-1999 and subsequent estimates. This was in respect of the internal-migration component of the population estimates. This change was widely consulted on before introduction. It was extensively peer-reviewed both within the Office for National Statistics (ONS) and by external academic and local authority experts. The then Liaison Group on Population Statistics (now the Central Local information Partnership (CLIP) Population Subgroup) was also fully consulted on the change. This change, in simplified terms, introduced the use of patient records to allocate migration within (former) health authorities instead of electoral roll information. This was widely thought to be a more reliable method for calculating internal migration. This change was documented in Population Trends 101. No specific racial impact assessment was carried out as part of this methodological change. However, consultation confirmed the recommendation that the methodology should be implemented to improve the quality of population estimates.

A detailed description of the current methodology used to estimate population and the methodology used in a 'Census year' is published in "Making a Population Estimate in England and Wales". This document also describes the principal changes that have been made to the methodology over time. The document is published here:

http://www.statistics.gov.uk/StatBase/Product.asp?vlnk=575

ONS is currently undertaking a major project to research improvements to migration and population statistics (IMPS). Some of the major strands included in this project are the estimation of international migration at the national level, the sub-national distribution of international migration, and the estimation of internal migration. Currently ONS has no plans to implement significant changes to the methodology used in the calculation of mid-2005 population estimates as research and evaluation is ongoing. (Mid-2005 population estimates are due to be published in August 2006.) However, this current position is subject to possible change. Before any changes are implemented, they will be carefully researched, evaluated and where possible assessed for impact. Any changes will be introduced in a planned manner and they will be announced in advance, in accordance with the National Statistics Code of Practice.

In response to the Race Relations Act 2000, ONS has published a Race Equality Scheme which is published on the National Statistics Website at:

www.statistics.gov.uk/CCI/SearchRes.asp?term=race+equality&x=10&y=9.

Palestinian Economy

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer pursuant to his speech at the Treasury and World Bank conference to promote the economy in Palestinian territories, how much new money his Department is making available for this initiative; and what assistance he plans to provide to the private sector firms. [39271]

John Healey: HM Treasury does not provide direct financial support to the Palestinian territories. UK overseas aid is provided via the Department for International Development and through the EU. In 2005–06 total UK contributions will be $108 million.

As well as co-hosting a conference on 13 December 2005 with the World Bank which focused on Palestinian economic growth through the private sector, the Chancellor has built support under the UK's presidency of the EU for an international loan guarantee scheme to improve access to finance for small firms.

Pay Supplements

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer, what the value is of *(a)* pay supplements, *(b)* bonuses and *(c)* other incentive packages that are payable in his Department on the basis of geographic location; how many people are in receipt of each payment; and what the total cost to his Department of each payment was in 2004–05. [35928]

John Healey: HM Treasury is based in Central London and paid £2,000 p.a. London allowance to 81 staff in SCS Payband 1 during 2004–05. The total cost to the Department was £208,539 (0.4 per cent.) of the pay bill.

PAYE

Mark Durkan: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many pay-as-you earn accounts have been transferred out of Foyle House Tax Office in the last three years; to what other offices the accounts were transferred; and if he will make a statement. [39269]

John Healey: Londonderry is one of eight offices forming the Northern Ireland Counties Area. Areas do not keep statistics on the number of individual Pay As You Earn records transferred or where those records are transferred to.

Personal Debt

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average personal *(a)* unsecured debt and *(b)* total debt was as a percentage of income in each year since 1997. [38474]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 20 December 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question on the average personal *(a)* unsecured debt and, *(b)* total debt as a percentage of income in each year since 1997. I am replying in her absence. (38474)

The information requested is shown in the table below. The data for debt and households' gross disposable income used in the calculations are for the combined household and non-profit institutions serving households (NPISH) sectors. The information for the household sector is not available separately. The denominator in the calculations is the population aged 16+

	Average personal unsecured debt (end-year) (£)	Average total debt (end-year) (£)	Average household disposable income (£)	Unsecured debt as a percentage of income (end-year)	Total debt as a percentage of income (end-year)
1997	3,439	12,863	12,311	27.9	104
1998	3,692	13,654	12,696	29.1	107
1999	3,966	14,679	13,255	29.9	111
2000	4,309	15,868	13,960	30.9	114
2001	4,730	17,395	14,774	32.0	118
2002	5,412	19,694	15,151	35.7	130
2003	5,818	22,198	15,777	36.9	141
2004	6,726	25,132	16,198	41.5	155

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what the average total personal debt servicing level as a percentage of income was for each year since 1998; and if he will make a statement. [38750]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Colin Mowl, dated 20 December 2005:

The National Statistician has been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question asking what the average total personal debt servicing level as a percentage of income was for each year since 1998. I am replying in her absence. (38750)

The table below shows payments of interest on loans. Capital repayments are not available. The data for income and interest on loans are for the combined household and non-profit institutions serving households (NPISH) sectors. Information for the household sector is not available separately.

	Interest on loans (£ million)	Household disposable income (£ million)	Interest on loans as a percentage of income
1998	51219	581138	8.8
1999	47434	609734	7.8
2000	52875	646059	8.2
2001	52141	688255	7.6
2002	51513	710144	7.3
2003	53578	744395	7.2
2004	63585	770231	8.3

Police Force Funding

Pete Wishart: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how much extra funding in *(a)* cash, *(b)* real and *(c)* percentage terms was made available by his Department to (i) the Metropolitan police and (ii) other police forces in England and Wales to fund the policing of international summits, conferences and state visits hosted by Her Majesty's Government since 1997, broken down by event. [38498]

Mr. Des Browne: The Home Office manage policing for England and Wales and costs for events of this nature are managed within departmental spending allocations. The Treasury has made no direct transfers to forces. However, the Treasury did provide specific funding of £20 million to the Scottish Executive to assist with the policing costs of the 2005 G8 summit in Scotland.

Pre-Budget Report

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what assessment he has made of the impact on the UK economy of taxation changes announced in the pre-Budget report. [38601]

John Healey: When developing taxation policy, the Government takes account of a wide range of factors, including economic effects. The Government's approach to taxation balances the need to finance better quality public services, deliver fairness and promote sustainable development and economic activity while at the same time ensuring that the UK benefits from the advantages of being a relatively lightly taxed economy.

Public Relations Companies

Mr. Weir: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will list the public relations companies that have had contracts with *(a)* his Department, *(b)* each (i) non-departmental public body and (ii) executive agency for which his Department is responsible and *(c)* independent statutory bodies, organisations and bodies financially sponsored by his Department and other such organisations since May 1997. [39081]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Gentleman to the answer given by the Economic Secretary (Mr. Lewis) to the hon. Members for Hemel Hempstead (Mr. Penning) and Cheltenham (Martin Norwood) on 2 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 803W. Further analysis could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Public-Private Partnerships

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether it is the Government's policy to fund additional costs arising out of the seven and a half year break clause in public/private partnership contracts. [36759]

John Healey: Variation mechanisms in PPP/PFI contracts are specific to each contract. Changes in costs from variations to PPP/PFI contracts would be for the account of the procuring authority that has entered into the contract.

Rebated Diesel Fuel

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what the timetable is for the re-negotiation of the EU derogation on rebated diesel fuel; and if he will make a statement; [38912]

(2) what recent discussions he has had with *(a)* ministerial colleagues and *(b)* EU transport Ministers about the re-negotiation of the EU derogation on rebated diesel fuel; and if he will make a statement; [38913]

(3) what the Government's policy is on the EU derogation on rebated diesel fuel; and if he will make a statement. [38918]

John Healey: The UK does not require a derogation to charge a reduced rate of duty on rebated gas oil. The Energy Products Directive (EPD), however, prohibits the use of rebated gas oil in leisure boats for private use, and the UK enjoys a derogation from this provision. This derogation expires at 31 December 2006 and can be renewed only with the unanimous agreement of the Council.

Officials from HM Treasury and HM Revenue and Customs are in regular contact with officials at the European Commission about this matter.

We have already announced in the pre-Budget report that we are minded to apply for an extension of this derogation. We will issue an initial regulatory impact assessment on the effects of ending the derogation early next year and this document will be the basis for further information gathering and discussions.

Road Haulage Industry

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people were employed in the road haulage industry in each year since 1997. [38648]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 20 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about the number of people employed in road haulage. (38648)

The attached table provides information showing the number of jobs in the road haulage industry for each year from 1997 to 2004; the latest year for which information is available.

These estimates are from the Annual Business Inquiry and the Annual Employment Survey and, as with any sample survey, are subject to a margin of uncertainty.

Number of employee jobs in the road haulage[1] industry: United Kingdom; 1997 to 2004.

December	*Employee jobs (Thousand)*
1997	270
1998	282
1999	277
2000	274
2001	278
2002	260
2003	269
2004	263

[1] SIC code 60.24: freight transport by road.

Source:
ABI (1998–2004) and rescaled AES (1997)

Tax Credits

Mr. Laws: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer whether a case where a tax credit recipient had been told by HM Revenue and Customs staff on the helpline that the award was correct even though the recipient believed there to be an error would pass the Revenue's test of reasonableness for the writing off of overpayments. [25253]

Dawn Primarolo: Where a claimant disputes a tax credits overpayment on the grounds of mis-advice, HM Revenue and Customs can review the call records. In reviewing the call record HMRC would decide whether the claimant had provided the full information to the Helpline advisor at the time of the call that enabled the advisor to provide accurate advice to the claimant. If it is found that a claimant was mis-advised by a Helpline advisor, that overpayment would be written off.

Dr. Cable: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what estimate he has made of the administration costs of research and development tax credits in the last year for which information is available; and if he will make a statement; [38345]

(2) what estimate he has made of the administration costs of vaccines research relief in the last year for which information is available; and if he will make a statement. [38346]

John Healey: I refer the hon. Member to the reply I gave him to his previous question on 1 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 991W.

Tax Returns

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many individuals used the HM Revenue and Customs online service to complete an online self-assessment in each year between 2002 and 2004. [36281]

Dawn Primarolo: The number of returns received electronically was:

Year of receipt	*Self-assessment returns received electronically*
2001–02	419,236
2002–03	705,690
2003–04	1,107,004
2004–05	1,633,347

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many complaints he has received on the operation of the online self assessment tax return form since 6 April 2003; and what measures are in place to correct problems with the operation of such forms. [36296]

Dawn Primarolo: The Chancellor of the Exchequer has received 19 complaints in connection with the operation of the online self assessment tax return form since 6 April 2003.

The Online-Services Helpdesk provides support for users of the online self assessment form and takes action to deal with any problems as they arise. In addition, HMRC has a rolling programme to improve and enhance the online service for its customers.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will provide a greater range of relevant services, including increasing the use of public

and private partnerships specialising in online self-assessments, to help achieve HM Revenue and Customs target to obtain 35 per cent. of self-assessment returns electronically by 2007–08. [36300]

Dawn Primarolo: There is a delicate balance to be struck between providing a greater range of services, enhance existing services, and provide increased capacity and resilience of the online services.

The Department has worked closely with the public and private sector since the Self Assessment online service was introduced in 2000.

The HMRC Self Assessment online service was created in close consultation with the software industry and in 2003, we advertised in "Government Opportunities" and encouraged potential Self Assessment filing partners to come forward. Various initiatives have since been established with independent software vendors, payroll companies and financial organisations. Equal prominence is given to third party software products on the Inland Revenue website.

An advertisement was published in December 2005 in "The Banker" sought approaches from banks interested in developing innovative methods of enabling their customers to meet tax obligations.

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what recent steps HM Revenue and Customs has taken to encourage UK individuals to file their tax returns on-line; and what further steps are planned. [36301]

Dawn Primarolo: HMRC has encouraged take-up of its online services with an active marketing campaign over the past four years. The online services message is also the predominant message in much of the Department's other marketing activity. For example, the Self Assessment campaign now includes a stand-alone television advertisement focusing on our online services, as well as several print and radio advertising campaigns with the same message.

Additionally, all paper tax returns promote the use of online filing

We plan to continue with the specific marketing activities mentioned above. Going forward the Department's plans and activities will be shaped by Lord Carter's Review of HMRC Online Services. This report is expected to be finalised in early spring 2006.

Unemployment

Peter Bottomley: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer how many people *(a)* are unemployed and *(b)* were unemployed in March in each parliamentary constituency ranked in order of the percentage change between the two dates. [38922]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 20 December 2005:

As National Statistician, I have been asked to reply to your Parliamentary Question about unemployment.

The Office for National Statistics (ONS) compiles statistics of unemployment from the Labour Force Survey following International Labour Organisation definitions. However for small areas such as parliamentary constituencies, there is no suitable data available for a comparison between now and March 2005.

However, ONS also compiles statistics for local areas of people claiming Jobseeker's Allowance (JSA). I am placing a table in the House of Commons Library showing the numbers of JSA claimants for all constituents for March 2005 and November 2005 listed in order of percentage difference between the two figures.

Changes between the two dates will be affected by seasonal influences which affect different areas in different ways.

VAT

Mr. Spring: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer (1) what assessment he has made of the impact of Article 49 of the EC Treaty concerning the free movement of services on his Department's proposed policy changes for repayment of VAT under the 8th and 13th EC directives; [38175]

(2) whether under his Department's proposed policy changes for repayment of VAT under the 8th and 13th directives a hotel invoice made out in the name and address of the employee will be sufficient to allow UK registered VAT payers to deduct as input tax all the VAT which they incur on hotel accommodation for that employee while he is away from his principal place of work on a business trip. [38176]

Dawn Primarolo: I have written to the hon. Member about this matter.

Mr. Weir: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer if he will consider reducing the rate of VAT payable on home security measures for those who have been the victims of crime. [38624]

Dawn Primarolo *[holding answer 19 December 2005]:* A reduced VAT rate of 5 per cent. already applies to certain grant-funded installations of security goods, such as locks, bolts and smoke alarms, for people aged 60 or over and for those in receipt of certain benefits, allowances or tax credits.

All taxes are kept under review and changes are announced by the Chancellor as part of the Budget process. To date the Government has been sparing in its use of VAT reduced rates and has only applied them when we are convinced that they offer the best-targeted and most efficient support for our social objectives compared with other options.

Outside the VAT system the Government has taken a number of measures designed to reduce crime and support improvements in domestic security. For example, in 2004 we launched a crime reduction publicity campaign, communicating home security advice across a variety of media to audiences in high crime areas.

Voting Statistics

Chris Ruane: To ask the Chancellor of the Exchequer what percentage of the population is registered to vote in each ward of each constituency in Wales, listed in descending order for each constituency. [38272]

John Healey: The information requested falls within the responsibility of the National Statistician who has been asked to reply.

Letter from Karen Dunnell, dated 20 December 2005:

As National Statistician I have been asked to reply to your recent Parliamentary Question concerning what percentage of the population is registered to vote in each Ward in Wales. (38272)

I am placing a table giving the requested information in the House of Commons Library.

The closest available geography to electoral wards, for which population estimates are available, is Census Area Statistics (CAS) wards. This geography was created for outputs from the 2001 Census and is based mainly on 2003 electoral wards. It is necessary to convert electorate counts to the CAS ward geography and therefore the electorate counts are not necessarily consistent with data published elsewhere.

The latest available population data available at ward level is for mid-2002, published in April 2004. The ward electorate counts are for December 2002 parliamentary electors, including attainers. No adjustment has been made to reflect the difference between these two timepoints. There are a number of wards that are split by parliamentary constituency i.e. they fall within two or more parliamentary constituencies. These are shown by an asterisk * alongside their ward name, and appear under both constituencies (except where the split is across the English/Welsh border). Electorate and population figures for the whole ward are shown. Some wards will therefore be double counted. It is not possible to split the data for these wards.

There are a number of limitations with the data that mean that some care should be taken with interpretation of the results.

There is inevitably some double counting of the registered electorate as electoral registration officers vary in how quickly they remove people from the registers after they have moved away from an area or after they have died. In addition, people can register in more than one place.

The population data are estimates and as such are subject to a margin of confidence. This margin of confidence is proportionately larger for ward level estimates than for local authority level estimates. These estimates have been published with the status of "experimental statistics". Therefore, the estimates, and figures derived from them, should be treated with some care.

Finally, there a number of other definitional differences between electorates and population estimates. Population estimates include all those usually resident irrespective of nationality, whereas the parliamentary electorate excludes foreign nationals (but Commonwealth and Irish citizens are included). Overseas electors are included in electorate data but not population estimates. Comparable ward counts of local government electors are not readily available.

There is a relatively small number of wards (11) where the electorate counts are more than 10 per cent. greater than the population estimate. The majority of such cases are likely to be attributable to a limitation in the methodology used to convert electorate counts to a CAS ward geography, though the other limitations set out above will also have an effect.

PUBLIC ACCOUNTS COMMISSION

National Audit Office

Derek Wyatt: To ask the Chairman of the Public Accounts Commission when the National Audit Office last examined expenditure on the BBC website. [34577]

Mr. Alan Williams: The National Audit Office does not have a general statutory right to examine how the BBC spends licence fee money. However, under an arrangement agreed between the Government and the BBC in 2003, the National Audit Office is undertaking a programme of six value for money reviews, which have been commissioned by the BBC Governors' Audit Committee. The expenditure on the BBC's website is not covered by this programme of reviews.

Three of the six reviews have been published to date—on the BBC's investment in Freeview, the White City 2 development, and the performance measurement framework for public service broadcasting. The remaining reviews will cover the BBC's overhead definitions, outsourcing arrangements, and risk management.

Mr. Leigh: To ask the Chairman of the Public Accounts Commission if he will make a statement on the Commission's consideration of the NAO's future workspace requirements. [39413]

Mr. Alan Williams: At its meeting on 13 December the Public Accounts Commission considered a memorandum from the National Audit Office setting out its proposals for securing its future workspace requirements. These had been drawn up taking into account the views expressed during informal discussions between the NAO and myself, as Chairman of the Commission, and the hon. Member for Gainsborough, in his capacity as Chairman of the Public Accounts Committee.

The NAO acquired its existing headquarters building in Buckingham Palace Road, London SW1 in 1984 for £11 million, based on a 127 year lease at a peppercorn rent. Its interest in the building is now thought to be worth about £22 million.

The NAO's case for a significant upgrading of its headquarters accommodation rests on two main factors:

- the partial refurbishment of the NAO's current building in Buckingham Palace Road, carried out prior to their taking occupancy in 1986, will shortly reach the end of its 20-year life expectancy
- a full condition survey of the building in 2003 concluded that the NAO "needed to invest significant expenditure in terms of the necessary, and in some cases urgent, renewal of existing elements of the building fabric and services, including the heating and cooling systems, windows, much of the roof covering and other features of a health and safety concern"; these remedial works would need to be carried out within the constraints imposed by the listed status of the central core of the building.

Faced with these conclusions, the NAO has reviewed the options available to it to meet its future accommodation needs, including:

- a programme of restoration and repair of the building in its existing configuration
- a full refurbishment of the building designed to produce "a more modern, flexible and efficient workspace", based on open plan principles conducive to flexible team-working
- the sale of the NAO's interest in the current building, and relocation to another site.

Taking all these options into consideration, the NAO has concluded that a phased programme of refurbishment will provide the best value for money solution, and has approached the Commission both for approval in principle for such a course and for authority to incur expenditure on preparing a detailed design and firm costings.

The cost of the refurbishment is provisionally estimated at £150 million over 30 years, as against relocation options ranging from £155 to £250 million. The NAO points out, however, that these figures would need to be offset against current annual expenditure on maintaining and operating the existing BPR building of some £4.4 million, which, discounted over 30 years, would equate to about £81 million. So the net cost of all the options should be reduced by that amount.

Expressed in terms of additional net resource requirements (and thus the direct impact on the NAO's Estimate) the NAO's preferred option of refurbishment of the BPR building produces the following estimated figures for years 1 to 3 (although the breakdown between capital and revenue may well change following detailed planning):

£ million

	Year 1 (2007–08)	*Year 2 (2008–09)*	*Year 3 (2009–10)*	*Total for years*
Capital	30	15.25	15.25	60.50
Revenue	9.05	7.07	8.78	24.90
Total	39.05	22.32	24.03	85.40

By contrast, the relocation options would involve an initial negative capital expenditure, as the cost of any necessary works would be more than offset by the proceeds of the NAO's interest in the current building. Thereafter, however, the stream of annual costs arising from relocation would be significantly greater than those for refurbishment reflecting mainly the difference between the current peppercorn and future commercial rents.

In preparation for the Commission's meeting on 13 December, both the hon. Member for Gainsborough and myself visited the Buckingham Palace Road site. We saw not only the current cramped layout and run-down condition of the building, but also the results of a trial refurbishment and conversion to open plan operation of part of the sixth floor. This reorganisation of the workspace represents a stark contrast with the rest of the building and we understand it has already shown tentative results in terms of improved staff morale and efficiency.

We reported these findings to the Commission. Having taken oral evidence from the Comptroller and Auditor General and the Assistant Auditor General responsible for the building project, the Commission accepted the NAO's case for a substantial upgrade of its workspace. Specifically, the Commission agreed:

(i) to approve in principle the NAO's plans to refurbish its Buckingham Palace Road headquarters, subject to project costs being confirmed

within a reasonable range of the estimates and projections contained in the NAO's memorandum to the Commission;

in time for submission to the Commission for consideration as part of the NAO's next Corporate Plan, for 2007–08 to 2009–10;

(ii) to authorise the NAO

to incur expenditure of approximately £500,000 on the preparation of detailed costings for the refurbishment project

to include provision in its Estimate for 2006–07 for any of the relevant expenditure falling in that year.

In order to ensure that the NAO's business case is as robust as possible against other options, the Commission has asked it to carry out a cost/benefit analysis of the option of relocating the headquarters building to a north of England location. We have also asked for a detailed explanation of the NAO's reasons for rejecting the option of relocating to a building of similar age on the Civil Estate in London SW1.

The NAO's memorandum setting out its case for the refurbishment option, and the transcript of the evidence given by the Comptroller and Auditor General at the meeting on 13 December are available on the Commission website, at www.parliament.uk

DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER

Affordable Homes

Mr. Evans: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many affordable homes were provided by housing associations in *(a)* Lancashire and *(b)* Ribble Valley in each year since 1997. [35730]

Yvette Cooper: The number of affordable homes provided by housing associations in Lancashire and Ribble Valley in each year since 1997, as reported by the Housing Corporation are in the following table. Figures show the number of dwellings provided through the Approved Development Programme, this includes new dwellings built, as well as acquisitions.

	Ribble Valley	*Lancashire*
1997–98	19	549
1998–99	16	499
1999–2000	15	508
2000–01	34	555
2001–02	16	350
2002–03	0	104
2003–04	0	278
2004–05	8	198

Arm's Length Management

Jim Cousins: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he expects to publish the report of the Arm's Length Management Organisation Review Group. [37430]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of The Deputy Prime Minister expects to make the findings from this review group public in the new year.

Buildings (Energy Performance)

Peter Law: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what progress has been made with training arrangements for building professionals to ensure proper support for monitoring and measuring in buildings required by the EU Energy Performance in Buildings Directive (2002/91/EC); whether he expects sufficient skilled building inspectors to be in place when the directive enters into force in January 2006; and if he will make a statement. [35782]

Yvette Cooper: There is a three year derogation period within the directive to apply fully the requirements for energy performance certificates and plant inspection. In

the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's Press Notice of 13 September, the Government signalled that it proposed to use this derogation as there will not be sufficient numbers of suitably qualified inspectors in place by January 2006.

We are therefore working with stakeholders to muster a cadre of inspectors to support a phased programme of implementation. The introduction of the home inspection pack in June 2007 and associated training of home inspectors will cover requirements of the directive for the marketed sales of dwellings. We expect to make a further statement on the implementation of the directive in the new year.

Correspondence

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 197W, on correspondence, how many letters he wrote in the same time period in *(a)* 2004 and *(b)* 2003. [37815]

Jim Fitzpatrick: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister has written over 800 letters from May to November in both 2003 and 2004.

Departmental Assets

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many assets were removed from his Department's asset register between 2003–04 and 2004–05. [38123]

Jim Fitzpatrick: This information comes from our accounting system, and it will take time to convert this into a suitable user-friendly format. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister expects this to be completed in January.

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister why his Department did not produce a public copy of its asset register for financial years ending *(a)* 2003, *(b)* 2004 and *(c)* 2005. [38128]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Departmental Asset Registers were published for the first time in 1997, and again in 2001 as part of the National Asset Register exercise led by HM Treasury. There is no central requirement for Departments to publish an asset register, and given until recently our relatively small asset base, no business reason for us to do so.

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to the answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 581W, on the asset register, when he expects his Department's asset register for *(a)* 2003, *(b)* 2004 and *(c)* 2005 to be placed in the Library. [38174]

Jim Fitzpatrick: I expect the Register to be made available in the Library of the House before Christmas.

Departmental Policy

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the Department's policy on the use of *(a)* broadcast, *(b)* print and *(c)* internet media analysis. [37776]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), like other Government Departments, analyses coverage in the press and broadcast media as part of their day-to-day operations. This is an important part of best practice in communications (in both public and private sectors) as it enables us to measure the impact of our communication activities and so helps us manage future activity more effectively.

Our use of media evaluation is covered by the Government Communication Network central guidance on media evaluation (published at http://www.comms.gov.uk/guidance/media/evaluation.htm). ODPM does not commission formal analysis from external contractors but uses in-house resources to produce summaries of media coverage of issues of concern to the Department.

Departmental Reports

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will place in the Library copies of *(a)* print, *(b)* broadcast and *(c)* internet media reports undertaken for his Department since 2002. [37775]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), like other Government Departments, analyses coverage in the press and broadcast media as part of their day-to-day operations. This is an important part of best practice in communications (in both public and private sectors) as it enables us to measure the impact of our communication activities and so helps us manage future activity more effectively.

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Media reports produced by ODPM are internal documents and not in a form which could be published.

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the cost to his Department was of *(a)* broadcast, *(b)* print and *(c)* internet media analysis in the latest year for which figures are available. [37777]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) does not commission formal analysis from external contractors but uses in-house resources to produce summaries of media coverage of issues of concern to the Department. The cost for this activity is covered by the running costs for the directorate and can not be disaggregated. ODPM does commission national and local press cuttings from the Cabinet Office and from a private supplier and the costs of these are as follows:

Costs (£000—exclusive of VAT)

	2004–05	*2005–06*[1]
National press cuttings	204.9	110.1
Regional press cuttings	74.6	39.4
Media Monitoring Unit (subscription to Cabinet Office)	49.0	26.5

[1] 1 April to 30 September

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether his Department has undertaken research into reporting in the *(a)* broadcast, *(b)* print and *(c)* internet media of the hon. Member for Brent, East since 5 May. [37849]

Jim Fitzpatrick: No such research has been undertaken.

Departmental Travel

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much has been spent by his Department on taxi travel in the 2005–06 financial year; and what proportion of such travel was undertaken in each nation and region of the United Kingdom, including London. [37468]

Jim Fitzpatrick: From the start of the financial year 2005–06 to 15 December 2005 the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister spent £71,735 on taxi travel. Details of location visited are not recorded.

Disability

Danny Alexander: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether a Minister in his Department is planned to be nominated to take responsibility for liaison with the Office for Disability Issues; and if he will make a statement. [37067]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Anne McGuire, the Minister for Disabled People, has overall responsibility for the Office for Disability Issues (ODI). The Minister for Disabled People chairs a cross-government steering group which includes ministerial representatives from the Department of Health, Department for Education and Skills, Department for Transport, Department of Trade and Industry and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. The Minister in the ODPM nominated to take responsibility for liaison with the ODI will be myself, as the ODPM Minister with responsibility for equality and diversity issues.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the initial activity undertaken by his Department in response to those recommendations in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit Report Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People where lead responsibility was assigned to all Government Departments. [37068]

Jim Fitzpatrick: The Office for Disability Issues (ODI) will report annually to the Prime Minister on cross-government progress in implementing the Strategy Unit report, "Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People". The first report is due to be published by summer 2006. It will contain an assessment of the initial activity undertaken by the ODI to fulfil its specific responsibilities, which require the active involvement of other Government Departments. It will also include an assessment of the initial activity undertaken by Government Departments to fulfil the responsibilities they have outside of the ODI remit.

e-Enablement

Sarah Teather: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much has been spent on e-enablement of local government services, broken down by local authority. [31558]

Mr. Woolas: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given on 24 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 2232–33W.

Empty Properties

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what estimate he has made of the number of empty public sector *(a)* residential properties and *(b)* commercial and industrial properties in each Government office region of England. [26921]

Yvette Cooper: The number of empty public sector and RSL residential properties by Government office region is shown in the following table. Additionally this is shown as a percentage of all dwellings in the area. Information on the number of empty public sector commercial and industrial properties is not held centrally. These include short term vacancies.

Number of empty residential public sector and RSL properties by Government office region, as at 1 April 2005

	Residential				
	LA	*RSL*	*Other public*	*Total public*	*Percentage of public sector stock*
North East	5,200	3,600	400	9,200	3.2
North West	7,700	9,500	900	18,100	3.0
Yorkshire and the Humber	7,300	4,200	300	11,800	2.7
East Midlands	5,000	1,500	1,200	7,700	2.4
West Midlands	5,000	5,100	100	10,300	2.2
East of England	3,400	1,500	1,000	6,000	1.5
London	9,600	5,100	1,000	15,700	2.0
South East	3,200	2,900	900	7,000	1.4
South West	2,000	1,500	500	4,000	1.3
England	48,600	35,00	6,300	89,900	2.2

Notes:

1. Totals may not equal the sum of components because of rounding.
2. RSL stock figures from live table 115 includes about 100,000 bedspaces. This figure can not be converted to units without assumptions due to form changes.

Source:

Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix return for LA and other public sector, and the Housing Corporation's Regulatory Statistical Return (RSR) for RSLs.

Energy Efficiency/Performance

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what progress on energy efficiency has been made in relation to *(a)* building and *(b)* planning in each year since 1997. [38848]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has raised Building Regulations energy efficiency standards in 2002 and 2005 and will do so again in 2006. From next April standards will be improved by around 20 per cent. for new dwellings and up to 27 per cent. for other new buildings to levels that are up to 40 per cent. higher than those in place in 1997. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is also working with the construction industry, including building control bodies, to facilitate compliance.

We published in September 2004 a broad ranging Better Practice advisory document, the "Planning Response to Climate Change". This supports the core policy in Planning Policy Statement (PPS)1, "Delivering Sustainable Development", published in February 2005, which sets out how Regional Planning Bodies and local planning authorities should ensure that development plans contribute to global sustainability by addressing the causes and potential impacts of climate change.

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the 2003 EU directive on energy performance will be implemented. [37578]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 13 December 2005]:* In the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's (ODPM) Press Notice of 13 September 2005, changes were announced to the Building Regulations and the implementation of the technical provisions of the EU Energy Performance of Buildings Directive. These measures come into effect in April 2006.

There is a three-year derogation period within the Directive to apply fully the administrative provisions requiring the provision of information. The Press Notice, signalled that Government proposed to use this derogation and work with stakeholders to muster a cadre of inspectors to support a phased programme of implementation.

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the Government's compliance with the 2003 EU directive on energy performance in buildings; and what level of energy efficiency will have been achieved by 4 January 2006. [38732]

Yvette Cooper: I would draw my honourable friend's attention to the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's press notice of 13 September in which it was announced changes to the Building Regulations and the implementation of the technical provisions of the EU energy performance of buildings directive. These measures come into effect in April 2006 and will make a major contribution to the UK's commitment to combat climate change delivering increased energy standards of up to 27 per cent. for new buildings. This is on top of significant improvements in energy efficiency in the 2002 changes to building regulations. There is a three-year derogation period within the directive to apply fully the administrative provisions requiring the provision of information.

We expect to make a further statement on the implementation of the directive in the new year.

EU Flag

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what planning rules apply to flying the EU flag; and what plans there are to change them. [34100]

Yvette Cooper: Under the Town and Country Planning (Control of Advertisements) Regulations 1992, the express consent of the local planning authority is presently required to fly the EU flag.

As previously announced the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister will shortly be consulting on new draft control of advertisements regulations which will include a provision which will allow the EU flag to be flown without having to apply to the local authority for express consent. National flags already benefit from this exemption.

Flood Plains (Building)

Mr. Liddell-Grainger: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what guidelines have been issued on the building of *(a)* houses and *(b)* individual premises on flood plains. [36305]

Yvette Cooper: Planning policy guidance on development and flood risk is contained in PPG25, published in 2001. It aims to ensure that flood risk is taken into account at all stages in the planning process to avoid inappropriate development in areas at risk of flooding and to direct development away from areas at highest risk. On 5 December the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister issued for consultation proposals for a new PPS25 which will strengthen and clarify the policy, and a flooding direction which will provide greater scrutiny for major developments proposed in flood risk areas.

Free Bus Travel Scheme

Mr. Clelland: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many local authorities have a forecast shortfall in excess of £1 million in relation to allocated funding for the free bus travel scheme following announcement of the local government revenue support grants. [38564]

Mr. Woolas: Expenditure on concessionary fares is funded via the formula grant settlement. Formula grant is an unhypothecated block grant. This means that councils are able to spend the money on any services. It is not therefore possible to calculate how much funding has been allocated to each authority with respect to concessionary fares. Budget estimates and decisions are for councils themselves to make.

Freedom of Information Act

Anne Main: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 his Department has received regarding its asset register. [38127]

Jim Fitzpatrick: There have been no requests under the Freedom of Information Act 2000 regarding the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's asset register.

Green Belt

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much land within 1997-designated green belt in each region changed to developed use in each year since 1997. [15238]

Yvette Cooper: The available estimates are from Land Use Change Statistics, shown in the following tables. The numbers and table titles are unchanged but the units for the tables headed "New dwellings within 1997 designated green belt", given previously as "hectares", are corrected to "dwellings". The order of the tables has also been changed to follow the order of the questions. The estimates for 2003 are provisional and are subject to revision. Figures are not shown for 1999 as the data received for that year were incomplete. Figures for 1997 to 2000 reflect planning policies and decisions made before this Government took office.

Land changing to residential use within 1997 designated green belt

Hectares

	1994	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
(a) All on designated green belt									
North East	3	3	1	2	7	1	0	2	3
North West	51	46	39	60	59	64	43	49	53
Yorkshire and the Humber	25	27	21	40	42	28	41	50	46
East Midlands	9	10	13	10	7	20	17	6	9
West Midlands	24	27	29	33	31	38	31	56	35
East of England	40	50	41	37	49	58	68	36	46
London	4	5	6	9	17	16	10	23	15
South East	62	52	49	67	54	75	64	52	55
South West	9	14	8	10	16	14	13	9	9
England	226	234	207	267	281	313	288	283	272
Proportion of all green belt (percentage)	0.014	0.014	0.013	0.016	0.017	0.019	0.017	0.017	0.016
(b) On greenfield land (not previously developed)									
North East	2	2	1	2	7	1	0	1	2
North West	26	17	27	36	29	23	17	20	25
Yorkshire and the Humber	18	17	15	24	25	21	20	25	22
East Midlands	6	6	4	4	4	6	12	3	6
West Midlands	15	15	19	14	17	22	17	24	14
East of England	11	14	12	10	10	22	13	13	20
London	1	2	0	0	7	6	3	8	4
South East	18	10	12	28	19	28	14	17	13
South West	3	9	4	6	10	7	4	5	2
England	101	93	94	123	127	135	99	115	109
Proportion of all green belt (percentage)	0.006	0.006	0.006	0.007	0.008	0.008	0.006	0.007	0.007

Land changing to developed use within 1997 designated green belt

Hectares

	1994	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
(a) All on designated green belt									
North East	43	20	11	143	18	47	13	21	18
North West	331	329	367	488	401	223	367	142	222
Yorkshire and the Humber	253	283	182	481	437	164	131	286	285
East Midlands	65	132	197	97	93	92	102	28	128
West Midlands	173	210	286	130	125	328	155	129	335
East of England	172	183	159	196	238	273	319	169	339
London	19	28	44	95	64	37	125	36	64
South East	228	244	482	395	218	554	309	143	151
South West	48	145	207	58	85	132	75	35	29
England	1,332	1,573	1,935	2,084	1,678	1,850	1,596	988	1,570
Proportion of all green belt (percentage)	0.08	0.10	0.12	0.13	0.10	0.11	0.10	0.06	0.10
(b) On greenfield land (not previously developed)									
North East	14	15	7	109	8	45	6	16	10
North West	197	150	243	315	262	101	237	53	59
Yorkshire and the Humber	152	102	75	274	282	60	52	124	133
East Midlands	46	60	160	61	74	70	58	13	60
West Midlands	101	76	143	69	62	67	35	52	266
East of England	83	84	87	150	71	65	90	100	120
London	12	14	19	48	25	14	42	10	31
South East	112	103	104	204	69	389	90	40	57
South West	28	92	160	42	53	91	45	14	8
England	746	696	999	1,273	904	902	656	421	744
Proportion of all green belt (percentage)	0.05	0.04	0.06	0.08	0.05	0.05	0.04	0.03	0.05

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New dwellings within 1997 designated green belt

Dwellings

	1994	*1995*	*1996*	*1997*	*1998*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*
(a) All on designated green belt									
North East	52	23	22	50	140	19	11	27	70
North West	879	771	730	1,284	1,049	1,350	799	1,019	1,565
Yorkshire and the Humber	373	423	316	630	673	508	891	939	815
East Midlands	143	125	181	194	143	297	289	117	120
West Midlands	390	533	474	610	507	731	817	879	653
East of England	552	580	499	479	846	956	1,181	485	795
London	89	153	171	182	441	384	218	405	287
South East	653	733	553	868	802	1,175	950	734	1,053
South West	124	211	109	159	309	271	243	199	163
England	3,255	3,552	3,055	4,456	4,910	5,691	5,399	4,804	5,521
Proportion of all new dwellings (percentage)	2	3	2	3	4	4	4	4	3
(b) On greenfield land (not previously developed)									
North East	46	20	19	34	128	17	2	19	45
North West	472	285	486	746	486	355	296	329	682
Yorkshire and the Humber	289	269	173	336	361	373	462	361	405
East Midlands	93	77	67	93	77	39	148	39	65
West Midlands	220	313	288	276	225	372	462	333	250
East of England	119	134	132	107	135	331	198	145	286
London	56	67	6	3	238	131	72	127	79
South East	172	117	147	301	218	278	134	194	322
South West	53	135	46	93	195	90	32	76	34
England	1,520	1,417	1,364	1,989	2,063	1,986	1,806	1,623	2,168
Proportion of all new dwellings (percentage)	1	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	1

Greenbelt Land

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on his planning policy for development of green belt land. [39125]

Yvette Cooper: The Government's planning policy in relation to green belt land is set out in Planning Policy Guidance note 2 (PPG2), "Green Belts". Specifically, there remains a general presumption against inappropriate development in the green belt. Such development should not be approved except in very special circumstances, where it can be shown that the harm to the green belt, and any other harm, is clearly outweighed by other considerations.

Growth Areas Directorate

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what recent discussions have taken place between officials from the Department's Growth Areas Directorate and officials from the Department for Education and Skills on the provision of a university for north Northamptonshire. [34109]

Yvette Cooper: Northamptonshire recently received a boost to its higher education provision when the University College in Northampton gained the Royal Charter and official university status. This is good news for the communities of Northamptonshire who will benefit from the university located at the heart of the county and the university is looking to expand its provision significantly over the next five years. In addition, the Tresham Institute serves the communities of North Northamptonshire, providing Post-16 education, vocational training and a wide variety of adult learning courses. Tresham is also an associate college of De Montfort university, so offers a range of professional and degree level courses. The institute plans to open a new £20 million campus in Kettering in early 2007 as part of a wider programme to renewal all of its campuses by 2010.

The Milton Keynes-South Midlands sub regional strategy identifies the need to expand higher education resources to serve the increasing education and training needs of the sub-region's population and states that it has a key part to play in the growth of the area. I understand that local growth partners in North Northamptonshire recognise that physical presence by a university is an important element in supporting a broad range of jobs, opportunities and economic development of the area and are in early discussions with education providers to explore how this could be best be strengthened. Officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister would expect to be involved in these discussions at the appropriate stage.

Homebuyers Information Pack

Mr. Walker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he plans to postpone the introduction of the Homebuyers Information Pack; and if he will make a statement. [39154]

Yvette Cooper: It was recently announced that Home Information Packs will become mandatory from 1 June 2007, and the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has no plans to postpone this date. We have listened to views from across the industry, in order to achieve a date that represents the appropriate balance between the various interests. The Government are satisfied that this date provides the time needed to ensure that home information packs can be introduced successfully throughout England and Wales.

Mr. Walker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what research he has commissioned into the likely impact of the home information pack on house prices; and if he will make a statement. [39259]

Yvette Cooper: No specific research has been commissioned on this, as there is no reason to believe that the introduction of home information packs will have a significant effect on house prices. The only new cost being imposed on the system overall is the cost of a home condition report in a proportion of transactions. Together with the rest of the information in the pack, this will help to ensure that house prices are set more realistically and buyers are not faced with unexpected repair bills and other commitments they cannot afford. The reforms are designed to improve the home buying process by making it more transparent and reducing the current high rate of transaction failure. A more efficient system will benefit the housing market and the UK economy.

Mr. Walker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the expected benefits of the Home Information Pack. [39260]

Yvette Cooper: The reforms to the home buying and selling process will benefit the home buying process by making it a better experience for the consumer and by creating a more efficient housing market. In particular, packs will:

Increase consumer satisfaction—nearly nine out of 10 consumers are dissatisfied with the present process.

Increase transparency—at present, key information about the property only becomes available after terms have been agreed.

Reduce the current high transaction failure rate—28 per cent. fail after terms have been agreed.

Reduce the huge abortive costs for consumers—over £350 million spent by consumers on failed transactions.

Speed up the transaction process—sales take twice the time of the European average; HIPs should bring us more into line with overseas experience.

Improve consumer redress—estate agents marketing homes with packs will be required, for the first time, to belong to an approved redress scheme.

Improve the position for first time buyers—they will receive pack information "free", thus reducing the cost of entry into home ownership.

Support sustainable home ownership—information in the pack, on property condition for example, will ensure that buyers are not faced with unexpected repairs and other commitments they cannot afford.

Create a more efficient housing market—thus facilitating greater flexibility and labour mobility.

Deliver the European Directive requirement for sellers to provide energy performance certificates to home buyers. The home condition report in the pack will contain an energy efficiency report and certificate. This will assist the delivery of the Government's target of a 20 per cent. reduction in residential carbon emissions by 2010. The energy efficiency report will identify cost effective ways of improving energy efficiency.

Housing

Mr. Dismore: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what the average weekly rent for a two-bed *(a)* registered social landlord and *(b)* local authority property was in each (i) London borough and (ii) English region in (A) 2001 and (B) 2005. [24267]

Yvette Cooper: The data requested are given in the following tables. On average social rents in London for two bedroom properties in 2004–05 are 44 per cent. of private sector rents.

(i) London boroughs

Table 1: Average weekly rent for a two bedroom property: London boroughs

£ a week

	Registered social landlord		*Local authority landlord*	
	2001	*2005*	*2001*	*2005*
Barking and Dagenham	66.45	72.21	54.67	63.56
Barnet	68.83	77.97	58.26	67.87
Bexley	62.55	68.27	LSVT	LSVT
Brent	63.72	76.26	70.28	75.25
Bromley	66.15	74.37	LSVT	LSVT
Camden	68.03	82.98	n/a	73.27
City of London	59.32	74.14	64.46	75.95
Croydon	70.25	78.00	n/a	71.15
Ealing	64.99	78.11	65.47	69.07
Enfield	63.85	75.25	69.25	70.14
Greenwich	62.78	73.95	57.10	65.80
Hackney	58.01	70.00	61.04	64.09
Hammersmith and Fulham	62.02	74.82	60.75	71.83
Haringey	63.69	73.38	59.87	66.60
Harrow	68.14	75.25	68.85	71.07
Havering	63.02	73.00	49.64	54.76
Hillingdon	68.96	80.50	70.45	77.78
Hounslow	66.78	76.84	57.78	67.81
Islington	60.30	72.30	65.12	71.68
Kensington and Chelsea	59.63	73.50	76.69	82.12
Kingston upon Thames	68.72	85.04	66.32	74.89
Lambeth	58.76	68.83	58.43	69.39
Lewisham	58.82	70.27	57.88	64.75
Merton	66.70	76.19	n/a	67.59
Newham	65.65	77.15	55.52	70.45
Redbridge	69.34	79.70	72.06	73.34
Richmond upon Thames	67.01	75.62	LSVT	LSVT
Southwark	60.03	72.56	58.01	65.81
Sutton	67.50	76.86	53.59	n/a
Tower Hamlets	59.03	71.56	68.68	69.50
Waltham Forest	67.29	72.71	65.73	73.95
Wandsworth	66.78	79.90	67.77	84.36
Westminster	69.04	82.10	82.72	92.61
London	63.55	74.49	61.68	69.78

n/a—not available due to no return from the local authority.
LSVT—means that most of the local authority stock has been transferred to the RSL sector.
Notes:
1. Registered social landlord data based on data collected by the Housing Corporation via the annual Regulatory and Statistical Return. Local authority data based on unaudited returns from the Second Subsidy Claim form and are provisional for 2004.
2. Data are at end March.

(ii) English regions

Table 2: Average weekly rent for a two bedroom property: English regions

£ per week

	Registered social landlord		*Local authority landlord*	
	2001	*2005*	*2001*	*2005*
North East	47.40	52.13	39.28	45.27
North West	46.47	53.69	43.73	49.50
Yorkshire and the Humber	49.20	50.90	39.87	45.97
East Midlands	50.70	56.82	41.66	48.89

Table 2: Average weekly rent for a two bedroom property: English regions

£ per week

	Registered social landlord		Local authority landlord	
	2001	2005	2001	2005
West Midlands	47.96	55.26	42.69	50.31
East Midlands	56.41	62.77	48.60	58.76
London	63.55	74.49	61.68	69.78
South East	61.89	70.39	53.43	62.06
South West	53.87	61.39	45.64	51.32
England	54.43	61.13	47.52	55.26

Notes:

1. Registered Social Landlord data based on data collected by the Housing Corporation via the annual Regulatory and Statistical Return. Local authority data based on unaudited returns from the Second Subsidy Claim form and are provisional for 2005.

2. Data are at end March.

3. Local authority regional rents are not adjusted for missing returns from local authorities.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many vacant dwellings there were in *(a)* London and *(b)* each London borough in each of the last five years (i) in total and (ii) as a proportion of all dwellings.

[30739]

Yvette Cooper: The number of empty homes in each London borough and London as a whole for each of the last five years both in actual numbers and as a proportion of all dwellings are tabled as follows. These figures include dwellings which are empty for less than six months, some of them for less than one month. Of the 91,900 empty homes in London, 44,300 have been empty for more than six months. From April local authorities will have new powers to bring empty homes back into use.

	April 2000		April 2001	
	Total empty homes	Empty as percentage of all properties	Total empty homes	Empty as percentage of all properties
Barking and Dagenham	2,172	3.2	1,328	2.0
Barnet	4,068	3.2	3,114	2.3
Bexley	1,185	1.3	1,982	2.2
Brent	6,174	6.0	5,260	5.1
Bromley	3,718	2.9	4,318	3.3
Camden	4,703	5.1	4,335	4.8
City of London	—	—	20	0.4
Croydon	4,130	3.0	4,398	3.2
Ealing	2,308	1.9	2,445	2.0
Enfield	—	—	—	—
Greenwich	4,541	4.9	3,038	3.3
Hackney	3,970	4.6	3,249	3.8
Hammersmith and Fulham	4,138	5.4	4,520	5.9
Haringey	4,417	4.7	4,815	5.1
Harrow	1,231	1.5	1,191	1.5
Havering	—	—	2,699	2.9
Hillingdon	2,468	2.5	2,290	2.3
Hounslow	1,903	2.2	1,038	1.2
Islington	2,773	3.3	3,231	3.8
Kensington and Chelsea	1,715	2.2	6,067	6.9
Kingston upon Thames	1,152	1.9	—	—
Lambeth	4,639	3.7	2,518	2.1
Lewisham	3,251	2.9	4,025	3.5
Merton	2,310	3.0	2,095	2.8
Newham	4,663	5.2	5,090	5.6
Redbridge	—	—	—	—
Richmond upon Thames	1,629	2.1	1,751	2.2
Southwark	6,917	6.1	6,364	5.6
Sutton	1,243	1.7	2,238	3.0
Tower Hamlets	5,306	6.9	5,425	6.8
Waltham Forest	3,004	3.3	2,629	2.8
Wandsworth	2,314	1.9	2,051	1.7
Westminster	3,063	2.7	2,957	2.8
London	105,016	3.4	105,181	3.4

	November 2002		November 2003		November 2004	
	Total empty homes	Empty as percentage of all properties	Total empty homes	Empty as percentage of all properties	Total empty homes	Empty as percentage of all properties
Barking and Dagenham	1,578	2.3	1,798	2.6	1,623	2.4
Barnet	5,093	3.9	3,512	2.7	3,607	2.7
Bexley	2,064	2.2	2,268	2.4	2,161	2.3
Brent	5,559	5.4	2,733	2.6	3,568	3.4
Bromley	3,960	3.1	4,207	3.2	3,825	2.9
Camden	5,093	5.4	3,389	3.6	3,049	3.2
City of London	63	1.3	141	2.6	165	2.9
Croydon	4,611	3.3	4,722	3.4	4,647	3.3
Ealing	3,196	2.7	3,308	2.7	3,416	2.8
Enfield	4,350	3.8	3,577	3.1	4,494	3.8
Greenwich	3,417	3.6	2,922	3.0	3,084	3.2
Hackney	3,783	4.2	3,220	3.5	3,407	3.7
Hammersmith and Fulham	3,015	3.9	3,526	4.6	2,946	3.8
Haringey	3,433	3.6	3,539	3.7	1,966	2.0
Harrow	2,195	2.7	2,462	3.0	1,484	1.8
Havering	2,300	2.4	2,407	2.5	2,568	2.7
Hillingdon	2,791	2.8	3,009	3.0	2,532	2.5
Hounslow	3,510	4.0	1,932	2.2	2,125	2.4
Islington	2,908	3.4	4,020	4.6	2,677	3.1
Kensington and Chelsea	4,576	5.4	3,308	3.9	3,064	3.6
Kingston upon Thames	2,169	3.5	2,333	3.8	2,394	3.8
Lambeth	4,488	3.7	5,037	4.1	3,291	2.6
Lewisham	2,832	2.6	3,084	2.8	1,586	1.4
Merton	2,529	3.3	2,593	3.4	1,362	1.8
Newham	3,280	3.5	2,535	2.7	2,645	2.7
Redbridge	2,301	2.4	2,533	2.7	1,992	2.1
Richmond upon Thames	3,497	4.5	3,086	3.9	2,166	2.7
Southwark	3,478	3.0	4,973	4.3	4,439	3.8
Sutton	2,285	3.0	2,234	2.9	2,351	3.1

	November 2002		November 2003		November 2004	
	Total empty homes	*Empty as percentage of all properties*	*Total empty homes*	*Empty as percentage of all properties*	*Total empty homes*	*Empty as percentage of all properties*
Tower Hamlets	5,072	5.9	2,669	3.0	2,047	2.3
Waltham Forest	1,984	2.1	2,144	2.3	2,078	2.2
Wandsworth	5,202	4.2	—	—	—	—
Westminster	4,804	4.2	4,544	4.0	3,974	3.4
London	111,416	3.6	102,967	3.3	91,935	2.9

Source:
Figures for 2002, 2003 and 2004 are based on ODPM's CTB1 return. For 2001 and 2002 the figures are based on a combination of two sources. ODPM's Housing Strategy Statistical return for all tenure types except RSL and the latter comes from the Housing Corporation's Regulatory Statistical Return.

Mr. Austin Mitchell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions he has had with Sefton council on its proposal to ballot its tenants on the large-scale voluntary transfer of council housing; and what investigations he has conducted into the conduct of the last ballot. [31914]

Yvette Cooper: Ministers in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister have had no discussions with Sefton council on its proposal to ballot tenants. Sefton council have discussed with officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister the circumstances surrounding their initial ballot. The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has not undertaken any investigation into the conduct of that ballot. Sefton council have informed officials of their decision to re-ballot tenants on the large scale voluntary transfer of the Council's housing stock.

Sir Peter Soulsby: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he has set targets for the total output of social rented housing for *(a)* 2005–06, *(b)* 2006–07 and *(c)* 2007–08. [39128]

Yvette Cooper: Additional funding secured through the Spending Review 2004 will, along with efficiency improvements, provide 75,000 social rented properties over the three years 2005 to 2008, that is, an additional 10,000 homes a year by 2008, a 50 per cent. increase on 2004–05.

Sir Peter Soulsby: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what level of social housing grant from the Housing Corporation was required to produce one unit of rented accommodation in the latest period for which the information is available. [39129]

Yvette Cooper: In 2004–05, the national average social housing grant allocated per unit of rented accommodation was £64,325.

The cost of a unit of social rented accommodation varies widely, dependent on location, size, or type of property, and other issues. The proportion of that cost paid through social housing grant also varies due to a range of factors.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many new houses have been built in Hereford since 1997; and what percentage of these are classified as affordable housing. [38919]

Yvette Cooper: The information on Hereford alone is not held centrally. Information on housing starts and completions for Herefordshire can be viewed on the housing statistics pages of the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website. Herefordshire council's Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report 2004–05 published in December 2005 contains information on housing completions for Hereford and on affordable housing for the county. The report is available on the council's website.

Mr. Keetch: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the impact of the level of private enterprise building in Herefordshire on the availability of affordable housing there. [38920]

Yvette Cooper: No such assessment has been made by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister. This is primarily a matter for Herefordshire council as the local housing and planning authority. Herefordshire council's Local Development Framework Annual Monitoring Report 2004–05 published in December 2005 contains information relevant to this matter and can be viewed on the council's website.

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what progress has been made in his negotiations on the housing market renewal budget for Merseyside for 2006 to 2008. [36889]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 12 December 2005]:* Merseyside Housing Market Renewal pathfinder has put forward its bid for funding for 2006 to 2008, alongside other pathfinders. All the proposals are being scrutinised and announcements will be made on the budgets for the next phase when that is concluded.

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many new residential dwellings will be built in each of the next 20 years in *(a)* Gravesham and *(b)* Kent following the Government's response to Kate Barker's review of Housing Supply. [37525]

Yvette Cooper: The Government responded to Kate Barker's review of Housing Supply on 5 December, outlining its ambition to increase housing delivery in England over the next decade to 200,000 net additions per year, from current delivery of around 150,000 net additions per year.

This policy will inform regional and local plans for housing, however the numbers set out in the response represent Government's ambition nationally. Detailed figures at a local level are determined through statutory planning processes.

Improvement and Development Agency

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the work of the Improvement and Development Agency. [33854]

Mr. Woolas: The Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) has worked very effectively since its formation in 1997 to support improved performance in local government. Full details of the work of the IDeA can be found on their website at www.idea.gov.uk.

Lifetime Homes Standards

Danny Alexander: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when he plans to review the effect of the 1999 guidance on access to dwellings; if he will assess the feasibility of introducing Lifetime Homes standards into building regulations; and if he will make a statement. [37095]

Yvette Cooper: The 1999 guidance on access to dwellings is included in the 1999 edition of Approved Document M of the Building Regulations for England and Wales. Building control for Scotland is a devolved matter. A report on the review of the effect of the guidance on dwellings in the 1999 edition of AD M, is expected to be published on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website next year.

Lifetime Homes is to be included as an element of the proposed code for Sustainable Homes, which is currently being developed for new homes in England but could also be applicable in Wales. It is very important that there is progress on increasing take-up of the Lifetime Homes standard. The Government will monitor take-up and review the need for further regulation. The consultation document on the code has now been published and can be found at:

http://www.odpm.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1162094

Local Government

Mr. Bone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether he plans to create a unitary system of local authorities for the whole of England; and if he will make a statement. [31548]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister has taken no decisions about whether there should be any reorganisation of the structure of local government. We are currently engaged in a wide ranging debate about the future role, functions and form of local government and as part of this we have now actively sought views on the present two tier structure. We plan to publish a White Paper on the future of local government in the middle of next year and will make any decisions regarding unitary local government at about the same time.

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what assessment he has made of the likely impact of the Local Government Finance Settlement for *(a)* 2006–07 and *(b)* 2007–08 on the revenues that will need to be raised through council tax by Norfolk county council in each of those years. [38856]

Mr. Woolas: Under our proposals, Norfolk county council will receive an above average increase in formula grant of £6.2 million (or 3.8 percent.) in 2006–07 and £11.9 million (7.1 percent.) in 2007–08. Grants for specific purposes, which will include the dedicated schools grant where Norfolk will receive £377 million in 2006–07 and £400 million in 2007–08, are in addition to formula grant.

It is for local authorities to set their council tax, not central Government. It has been made clear that, given we have delivered above inflation formula grant increases for local government for ten successive years up to 2007–08, we expect to see an average council tax increase in England of less than 5 percent. in each of the next two years.

Authorities which ignore this message could be leaving themselves exposed to the risk of capping action.

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what assessment he has made of the *(a)* likelihood and *(b)* extent of service reductions in (i) Norfolk and (ii) all shire counties in England following the Local Government Finance Settlement; [38857]

(2) what assessment he has made of the funding position of Norfolk county council following the Local Government Finance Settlement; and if he will make a statement. [38860]

Mr. Woolas: Consultation on the local government settlement for 2006–07 runs from 5 December 2005 to 11 January 2006. Details of the proposed financial settlement for Norfolk county council and all other authorities in England are available on the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister's website at: http://www.local.odpm.gov.uk/finance/0607/grant.htm. The provision of local services is a matter for Norfolk and all other county councils themselves, bearing in mind their statutory responsibilities.

Mr. Fraser: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) what representations he has received on the Local Government Finance Settlement relating to *(a)* Norfolk and *(b)* all shire counties in England; [38858]

(2) if he will meet the leader of Norfolk county council to discuss the Local Government Finance Settlement as it relates to Norfolk county council. [38859]

Mr. Woolas: The consultation on Government's proposals for the 2006–07 and 2007–08 Local Government Finance Settlements runs from 5 December 2005 to 11 January 2006.To date we have received no written representations on the consultation from Norfolk county council or any other shire county.

I will be meeting a delegation from Norfolk county council on 11 January 2006 to "discuss their response to the settlement consultation.

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) whether the current mid-year population estimates will be used in the Local Government Grant Settlement for 2006–07; [38554]

(2) whether mid-year population estimates were used in the calculation of Local Government Grant Allocations for 2005–06. [38562]

Mr. Woolas: Mid-2003 population estimates were used in the 2005–06 Local Government Finance Settlement issued on 27 January 2005.

The Government announced the provisional settlements for 2006–07 and 2007–08 on 5 December 2005. These have used projections of population in 2006 and 2007 as the dominant data drivers of population in

the formulae. These population projections are the 2003-based population projections for 2006 and 2007 produced by the Office for National Statistics (ONS).

Mid-2004 population estimates have been used within indicators used in the calculation of top-up formulae.

Marine Bill

Norman Baker: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on his Department's involvement with preparations for the Marine Bill. [38734]

Yvette Cooper: Preparation of a consultative draft Marine Bill is the responsibility of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) is one of a number represented on DEFRA's Management Board for this project. Officials in the ODPM will continue to contribute to the development of the policies to be reflected in the Bill when it is published.

Ministerial Travel

Bob Russell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister on how many occasions since 7 July he has used the London underground in connection with his official duties. [35018]

Jim Fitzpatrick: My right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister has used the London underground on several occasions since the 7 July, but it is not possible to provide precise numbers as no formal records are kept of the trips.

MPs (Outside Appointments)

Julia Goldsworthy: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will list the former hon. Members who left Parliament in 2005 who have since been appointed to public bodies by his Department, broken down by party; and who was responsible for making each appointment. [36683]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Information about the political activity of appointees is recorded and published in accordance with the independent Commissioner for Public Appointments' Code of Practice. This shows that the following former hon. Member who left Parliament in 2005 has since been appointed to public bodies sponsored by the Office of The Deputy Prime Minister. The information requested is as follows.

Name	*Party*	*Appointing authority*
Candy Atherton	Labour	Minister for Housing and Planning

New University (Northamptonshire)

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what discussions the Growth Areas Directorate within his Department has had with the Department for Education and Skills on the creation of a new university for North Northamptonshire. [38210]

Yvette Cooper: Northamptonshire recently received a boost to its higher education provision when the University College in Northampton gained the Royal Charter and official University status. This is good news for the communities of Northamptonshire who will benefit from the university located at the heart of the County and the university is looking to expand its provision significantly over the next five years. In addition, the Tresham Institute serves the communities of North Northamptonshire, providing Post-16 Education, Vocational Training and a wide variety of Adult Learning Courses. Tresham is also an associate college of De Montfort University, so offers a range of professional and degree level courses. The institute plans to open a new £20 million campus in Kettering in early 2007 as part of a wider programme to renewal all of its campuses by 2010.

The Milton Keynes-South Midlands Sub Regional Strategy identifies the need to expand higher education resources to serve the increasing education and training needs of the Sub-Region's population and states that it has a key part to play in the growth of the area. I understand that local growth partners in North Northamptonshire recognise that physical presence by a university is an important element in supporting a broad range of jobs, opportunities and economic development of the area and are in early discussions with education providers to explore how this could be best be strengthened. Officials in the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister would expect to be involved in these discussions at the appropriate stage.

Parish Councils

Rosie Cooper: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister when the *(a)* Lathom and *(b)* Bickerstaff area of West Lancashire constituency will receive notice as to whether it will be allowed to form a parish council. [37420]

Mr. Woolas: The Office of The Deputy Prime Minister has received a petition for a new parish of Lathom South the area of which comprises parts of Bickerstaff, Derby and Skelmersdale South district wards.

In order to create this parish council one of the steps required is for the Electoral Commission to receive information from West Lancashire district council on their consultation about the electoral arrangements in the proposed parish. When this information has been received by ODPM and subject to the satisfactory completion of other processes that need to be undertaken then it should be possible to establish a parish council.

Permitted Development Rights

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister whether the consultation phase on the Government's proposed response to the Lichfield Report on the Operation of Permitted Development Rights (2003) has commenced. [39127]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) commissioned Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners to undertake a review of permitted development rights which was published in September 2003. The ODPM has not formally commented on the report.

Planning Applications (Consultees)

Bob Russell: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make it a requirement for water and sewerage companies to be statutory consultees in respect of planning applications and development proposals; and if he will make a statement. [31636]

Yvette Cooper: Water companies are already statutory consultees on regional spatial strategies (RSSs) and local development plan documents (DPDs) since water resource issues are an important consideration in determining the pattern of development.

Under the plan-led system, planning applications are determined in accordance with the development plan (the RSS and DPDs) unless material considerations indicate otherwise.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, has no plans to make water and sewerage companies statutory consultees on individual planning applications. However, if evidence emerged that the current approach was not working further consideration would be given to the matter.

Planning Decisions

Mr. Wallace: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many and what percentage of planning decisions in *(a)* Lancaster and Wyre and *(b)* Lancashire were over-turned by his Department in each year since 1997. [36241]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not hold information centrally on the type and number of decisions made prior to April 2002. Since that date the First Secretary of State, my right hon. Friend the Deputy Prime Minister has decided 19 called-in planning applications or recovered appeals in Lancashire. Of those three were in Wyre and one in Lancaster.

	2002–03	*2002–03 over-turned*		*2003–04*	*2003–04 over-turned*	
	Number	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Number*	*Percentage*
Lancaster	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wyre	1	1	100	2	2	100
Total for Lancashire	5	2	40	6	4	66

	2004–05	*2004–05 over-turned*		*2005 to date*	*2005 to date over-turned*	
	Number	*Number*	*Percentage*	*Number*	*Number*	*Percentage*
Lancaster	0	0	0	1	0	0
Wyre	0	0	0	0	0	0
Total for Lancashire	5	3	60	3	0	0

Private Sector Investments

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what measures the Government and its agencies are taking to encourage and facilitate private sector investment in *(a)* the Thames Gateway growth area and *(b)* Kent Thameside. [36724]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of The Deputy Prime Minister's £210 million investment in the regeneration of North Kent is supporting private sector investment through land remediation and local infrastructure. We are seeing some of these private sector schemes coming on stream, such as some £400 million for The Bridge development in Dartford and some £100 million for Gravesham Town Centre's Heritage Quarter.

Government realise private sector investment in the Thames Gateway is essential if we are to deliver sustainable housing and economic growth. We work closely with developers and investors in a number of different ways including the Developers Forum and the Investors Group. Both the London and Thurrock Thames Gateway Development Corporations, as well as the sub-regional and local regeneration partnerships have representatives from the private sector on their boards. In addition we have recently set up an Invest in Thames Gateway team within the Thames Gateway Delivery Unit with a single number—02079 44 66 33—dedicated to helping investors and developers who want to work in the area.

In Kent Thameside specifically, private sector is represented on the Local Regeneration Partnership. Our individual partners, such as the local authorities, the South East of England Regional Development Agency, and English Partnerships also work closely with private sector, consulting both on local strategies and individual developments.

Dr. Stoate: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much private sector investment has been levered in through section 106 agreements in *(a)* the Thames Gateway growth area and *(b)* Kent Thameside since the publication of the Sustainable Communities Plan. [36725]

Yvette Cooper: The Office of The Deputy Prime Minister does not monitor section 106 agreements. However, we would expect the major contributions arising from section 106 agreements to be reflected in the local regeneration frameworks being drawn up by the local regeneration partnerships in the Thames Gateway area.

Public Bodies/Agencies

Mr. Weir: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many staff were employed by non-departmental public bodies and agencies for which he has responsibility in 2004–05 in *(a)* total and *(b)* each (i) nation and (ii) region of the UK and *(c)* London. [35958]

Jim Fitzpatrick: Total Executive non-departmental public bodies (NDPB) staff numbers as at 31 March 2005 for the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister is

recorded in Table 2 of Public Bodies 2005, a copy of which is available in the Libraries of the House, and online at:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/the_future_of_the_civil_service/agencies_and_public_bodies/publications/pdf/public-bodies/publicbodies2005.pdf

The number of staff in individual Executive agencies as at 1 April 2004, including a regional analysis, is available in Civil Service Statistics 2004 which was published in February 2005, a copy of which is available in the Libraries of the House. It is also available online at:

http://www.civilservice.gov.uk/management_of_the_civil_service/statistics/contents_for_civil_service_statistics_2004_report/number_of_civil_servants/index.asp

Both of the aforementioned represent the latest available information which is held centrally.

The Office of the Deputy Prime Minister does not hold data centrally for NDPB and agencies broken down by regions.

Right-to-Buy

Mr. Rooney: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what proportion of the council housing stock *(a)* houses and *(b)* flats has been sold since 1980 under the right to buy scheme. [35289]

Yvette Cooper: *[holding answer 6 December 2005]:* An estimated 30 percent. of council housing stock in England has been sold through the right to buy scheme since 1980. Information concerning the type of dwelling is not available.

An estimate of the percentage of council stock sold is based on right to buy sales as a percentage of the "notional" stock (the most recent stock figure plus all reported sales since 1 April 1979).

Support Services

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what steps his Department has taken to remove duplication in the *(a)* assessment, *(b)* commissioning and *(c)* planning in the delivery of extra care schemes. [37302]

Mr. Woolas: The Department of Health and the Housing Corporation have been working closely together on the assessment, commissioning and planning the delivery of extra care schemes for older people to ensure a co-ordinated approach whether funding for such schemes comes through the Housing Corporation's Affordable Housing programme or the Department of Health's Extra Care Housing Fund. The Housing Corporation is continuing to work closely with the Department of Health on the next round of bids from 2006 to consider further joint funding of some schemes.

Telecommunications Masts

Mr. Evennett: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will change the planning laws so that telecommunications mast applications have to go through the full planning process; and if he will make a statement. [17838]

Yvette Cooper: In 2000 the Stewart Report recommended that telecommunication developments should be subject to the normal planning process. The Stewart Report made this recommendation in order to improve local consultation. The arrangements the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister put in place following the Stewart Report provide for the same consultation arrangements on mobile phone masts up to 15m in height as is required by the full planning process which applies to masts over 15m in height.

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister pursuant to his answer of 17 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 819W, on telecommunications masts, if he will break down the number of mobile phone masts registered for business rates in England in *(a)* April 1998 and *(b)* March 2005 by local authority area. [24687]

Yvette Cooper: A break down by local authority area, of the number of non-domestic hereditaments shown in the Rating List for England, under the description of Communication Stations, for April 1998, could be delivered only at a disproportionate cost.

Dr. Pugh: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister (1) whether planning guidelines limit the proliferation of telecommunications masts on one site; [34333]

(2) which planning and policy guidance notes limit the density of the distribution of telecommunications masts in a particular area. [34334]

Yvette Cooper: Planning policy guidance does not set any limits or expectations in respect of the density of telecommunications masts in a particular area or particular site. However, it does require that authorities consider the cumulative impact upon the environment of additional antennas sharing a mast or masts sharing a site.

Mr. Hunt: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister if he will make a statement on the minimum recommended distance of phone masts from *(a)* schools, *(b)* hospitals and *(c)* town centres. [37873]

Yvette Cooper *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* Mobile phone mast and base station developments near schools, hospitals and town centres are subject to the normal planning regulations in place throughout England, unless exempted by the regulations set out in Part 24 of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 (GPDO).

The precautionary approach recommended by the Stewart report has provided the basis for Government policy. The Group's report did not recommend a ban on the construction of mobile phone masts near schools or any other site and we have no plans to introduce such a ban.

Thames Gateway

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how much capital would be raised in *(a)* the Thames Gateway area and *(b)* Gravesham by the introduction of the proposed planning-gain supplement; and what proportion of this funding would be handed back to elected local government in (i) the Thames Gateway and (ii) Gravesham. [37524]

Yvette Cooper: A consultation paper setting out the Government's proposals for a Planning-gain Supplement (PGS) was published on 5 December 2005. Chapter 6 of the consultation paper sets out the key principles for allocating revenues if PGS is implemented, and seeks the views of consultees on the mechanisms for achieving these.

The closing date for responses to the consultation is 27 February 2006.

Vacant Domestic Properties

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister how many vacant domestic properties there were in *(a)* England and *(b)* each London borough in each of the last five years, broken down by tenure. [35354]

Yvette Cooper: Five tables, one for each of the five years from 2000 to 2004, containing the total number of vacant dwellings in England and in each London borough, broken down by tenure, have been placed in the Library of the House, and provide the latest available data.

The majority of empty homes in London are in the private sector. Of the 716,800 empty homes at national level 45.6 per cent. have been empty for more than six months. London boroughs like other local authorities will have new powers from April to bring empty homes back into use.

Valuation Office Agency

Mrs. Spelman: To ask the Deputy Prime Minister what powers the Valuation Office Agency has to conduct internal inspections of property for business rates valuation purposes. [33497]

Mr. Woolas: Paragraph 7 of Schedule 9 to The Local Government Finance Act 1988 enables a valuation officer and any person authorised by him in writing to conduct internal inspections for the purpose of carrying out a valuation for non-domestic rating. The policy of the VOA is not to enter a property without the permission of the occupier.

FOREIGN AND COMMONWEALTH AFFAIRS

Afghanistan

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the press release issued by his Department on 16 November, how much money has been pledged so far to the Afghan Counter Narcotics Trust Fund; how many of those pledges have been realised; which donor nations have *(a)* pledged and *(b)* donated; what evaluation his Department has undertaken to ascertain the amount required to make the Trust Fund a viable option; and what that figure is. [38225]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer 19 December 2005]:* A total of around US $26 million has so far been pledged to the Afghan Counter Narcotics Trust Fund. So far, A$2 million (US$1.5 million) from Australia and NZ$500,000 (US$0.35 million) from New Zealand have been transferred into the Fund. The United Nations Development Programme will contribute US $300,000 towards the management of the Fund.

The European Commission has made a firm commitment to the Fund of 15 million euros ($18 million), and for 2005–06 the UK, through the Afghan Drugs Inter-Departmental Unit, has made a firm commitment of £3.5 million (US$6 million). The Department for International Development is considering a contribution of £20 million over three years, making a total initial UK contribution of around US $40 million. At least seven other donors have expressed an interest in contributing but have not yet pledged money.

The Trust Fund does not require a large minimum amount in it to make it financially viable. These pledges are already enough to make it a worthwhile funding instrument.

Airspace (Extraordinary Rendition)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he *(a)* has written and *(b)* intends to write to other EU Governments to ask whether their airspace has been used for the purpose of the extraordinary rendition of those accused of terrorist activities; and if he will make a statement. [37889]

Dr. Howells *[holding answer of 19 December 2005]:* At the request of his EU colleagues, as the EU presidency, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary wrote to the United States Secretary of State on 29 November about media reports of US rendition operations and detention camps in Europe. The US Secretary of State replied on 6 December, enclosing a copy of her public statement of 5 December, available at:

www.state.gov./secretary/rm/2005/57602.htm, by way of response. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary forwarded the US Secretary of State's reply to his EU colleagues on 7 December.

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will carry out an investigation similar to the one proposed by the Polish Government into the use by US aircraft of UK airports and airspace. [38717]

Dr. Howells: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given by my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary to the right hon. and learned Member for North- East Fife (Sir Menzies Campbell) on 12 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 1652–53W.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether *(a)* he, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* members and representatives of the UK Government have sought from the US Administration clarification concerning (i) the application of the stated prohibition on the use of cruel and inhumane and degrading treatment as specified by Condoleeza Rice in her statement of 5 December 2005 and (ii) whether the prohibition applies to all US civilian and military personnel regardless of agency affiliation; what assurances he has (A) sought and (B) received concerning exceptions to this prohibition; and if he will make a statement. [38771]

Dr. Howells: The United States Secretary of State's statement on 7 December, available at http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/57723.htm, was clear: as a matter of US policy, the US's obligations under the United Nations Convention Against Torture, which prohibits cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment, extend to US personnel wherever they are.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 12 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1653W, to the right hon. and learned Member for North-East Fife (Sir Menzies Campbell), on terrorist suspects (rendition), whether his officials checked *(a)* Ministry of Defence records of civil registered flights using military airfields and *(b)* national air traffic services data; and what discussions were held with BAA on this matter. [38962]

Dr. Howells: Neither the records and data to which the hon. Member refers, nor BAA records, would demonstrate whether or not terrorist suspects have been rendited through UK territory or airspace.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assurances the Government has sought from the United States Administration on its purpose in rendering detainees for questioning to *(a)* Egypt, *(b)* Syria and *(c)* other countries; and if he will make a statement. [38964]

Dr. Howells: In the United States (US) Secretary of State's statement on 5 December, available at http://www.state.gov/secretary/rm/2005/57602.htm, following my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary's letter to her of 29 November, Condoleeza Rice explained that for decades the US and other countries have used renditions to transport terrorist suspects to their home country or other countries where they can be questioned, held or brought to justice. She also made clear that:

> The United States has respected—and will continue to respect—the sovereignty of other countries.
>
> The United States does not transport, and has not transported, detainees from one country to another for the purpose of interrogation using torture.
>
> The United States does not use the airspace or the airports of any country for the purpose of transporting a detainee to a country where he or she will be tortured.
>
> The United States has not transported anyone in, and will not transport anyone to, a country when it believes he or she will be tortured. Where appropriate, the United States seeks assurances that transferred persons will not be tortured.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment the Government has made of the effect of the Chicago Convention in relation to suspected rendition flights on *(a)* the application of domestic criminal law and *(b)* other international conventions incorporated into UK law. [38965]

Dr. Howells: The Government does not consider that the Chicago Convention inhibits the application of United Kingdom domestic law or the implementation of our international obligations.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether any detainees originally held by UK *(a)* armed forces and *(b)* other agencies and subsequently transferred to United States responsibility has been rendered to (i) Egypt, (ii) Syria and (iii) other countries. [38966]

Dr. Howells: We are unaware of any individuals originally detained by UK authorities and subsequently rendited by the USA to any country.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the implications of the United States *(a)* reservations and *(b)* derogations from the UN Convention Against Torture for UK policy on the rendition of detainees to third countries. [38967]

Dr. Howells: The UK policy on rendition of detainees to third countries is very clear. Where we are requested to assist another State and our assistance would be lawful, we will decide whether or not to assist taking into account all the circumstances. We would not assist in any case if to do so would put us in breach of UK law or our international obligations, including the UN Convention Against Torture. In particular, we would not facilitate the transfer of an individual from or through the UK to another State where there were grounds to believe that the person would face a real risk of torture. This is not affected by the position of other States on the Convention.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what measures are in place to ensure that the UK's interpretation of the UN Convention Against Torture is applied in decisions on the rendition of detainees to other countries via UK territory or airspace. [38968]

Dr. Howells: The term "rendition" is currently being used to describe informal transfers of individuals in a wide range of circumstances. Whether any particular "rendition" is lawful depends on the facts of each individual case. Where we are requested to assist another State and our assistance would be lawful, we will decide whether or not to assist taking into account all the circumstances. We would not assist in any case if to do so would put us in breach of UK law or our international obligations, including under the United Nations (UN) Convention Against Torture. In particular, consistent with our obligations under the UN Convention Against Torture, we would not facilitate or permit the transfer of an individual from or through the UK to another State where there were substantial grounds to believe that the person would face a real risk of torture.

Mr. Tyrie: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what are the criteria by which the Government makes the decision on whether to accept or reject an application from overseas for access to UK *(a)* facilities and *(b)* airspace for the purpose of rendition of a detainee to a third country. [38969]

Dr. Howells: The term "rendition" is currently being used to describe informal transfers of individuals in a wide range of circumstances. Whether any particular "rendition" is lawful depends on the facts of each individual case. Where we are requested to assist another State and our assistance would be lawful, we will decide whether or not to assist taking into account all the circumstances. We would not assist in any case if to do so would put us in breach of UK law or our

international obligations, including under the United Nations Convention Against Torture. In particular, we would not facilitate or permit the transfer of an individual from or through the UK to another State where there were grounds to believe that the person would face a real risk of torture.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 5 December 2005, *Official Report,* column 1023W, on airspace (extraordinary rendition), whether carriers are legally obliged to provide passenger lists when *(a)* refuelling on, *(b)* overflying and *(c)* landing on UK overseas territories. [36813]

Ms Buck: I have been asked to reply.

There is no legal obligation for carriers to provide passenger lists when refuelling, overflying or landing at UK Overseas Territories. The Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation applies equally to UK Overseas Territories as it does to the UK. Article 5 provides that airlines are not required to seek prior permission for non-stop flights across the territory of another state or to make a non-traffic stop in another state. Refuelling is a non-traffic stop (i.e. where no passengers or cargo are taken on board or dropped off).

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 5 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1023W, on airspace (extraordinary rendition), if he will define the term 'non-scheduled, non-commercial civil aircraft'; and if he will make a statement. [36814]

Ms Buck: I have been asked to reply.

"Non-scheduled, non-commercial civil aircraft" refers to foreign civil aircraft that are not engaged in scheduled international air services and have not been engaged in the carriage of passengers, cargo, or mail for remuneration or hire. Such flights do not require prior permission to land from the Secretary of State for Transport. Article 5 is the relevant article in the Chicago Convention.

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 5 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1043W, on airspace (extraordinary rendition), what plans there are to review the agreement between the US and the United Kingdom regarding the provisions of the Chicago Convention; and if he will make a statement. [36815]

Ms Buck: I have been asked to reply.

The Chicago Convention is the founding instrument of the International Civil Aviation Organisation and any proposals to review it are considered by ICAO's contracting States within its established structure. The EU is negotiating an air services agreement with the US that, if agreed, will replace existing agreements between member states and the US.

Antarctic Research

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much Government funding has been allocated in each of the last five years to the Antarctic Research stations of *(a)* Halley, *(b)* Bird Island, *(c)* Signy Island and *(d)* Rothera. [36076]

Alan Johnson: I have been asked to reply.

The Natural Environment Research Council's funding (through the British Antarctic Survey) of these Antarctic stations in the last five years is detailed in the following table:

£000

	Bird Island	*Signy Island*	*Rothera*	*Halley*	*Total bases*
2000–01	971	976	10,293	5,825	18,066
2001–02	854	856	8,478	5,227	15,415
2002–03	936	1,001	8,883	5,687	16,507
2003–04	910	964	8,811	5,361	16,047
2004–05	2,048	1,037	9,254	5,580	17,919

China

Mr. Scott: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he has made to the Chinese Government following the action by paramilitary police against villagers protesting over the seizure of land for a power plant in Dongzhou, Guangdong province. [38667]

Ian Pearson: The Government are aware of reports of action by Chinese police against villagers in Dongzhou, Guangdong province. We have not made representations to the Chinese about this particular incident. We understand that the Chinese authorities have taken action against a police commander held responsible for the incident. We are continuing to monitor the situation.

The Government remain concerned about the human rights situation in China in general. Through regular dialogue with the Chinese authorities we encourage China to engage constructively with the international community on social issues and human rights.

Departmental Assets

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the works of art and antiques owned by his Department with a value over £20,000 each together with the *(a)* value and *(b)* location. [38547]

Mr. Straw: A list of art and antiques owned by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office will be placed in the Library of the House. This list excludes all items owned by the Government Art Collection but out on loan. Please note that not all the art and antique items at

Lancaster House have been given a specific value but are included in an overall valuation undertaken by Sotheby's.

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the art and antiques with a value of over £10,000 *(a)* sold and *(b)* purchased by his Department since 1997. [38548]

Mr. Straw: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office does not hold information about purchases and sales of art and antiques in previous financial years in a format that enables us to identify individual items. Such a list could only be produced from a detailed examination of financial records in the UK and at posts. This examination could be carried out only at a disproportionate cost.

Detention Centres (US Flights)

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 12 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1647W, on detention centres (US flights), whether *(a)* he and *(b)* his officials have (i) received and (ii) sought from the US Secretary of State following her statement of 5 December 2005 (A) the US Administration's working definition of torture and (B) details of the questioning techniques used when interviewing terrorist suspects in countries other than the United States. [38315]

Dr. Howells: We discuss security and human rights issues with the United States (US) Government on a regular basis. My hon. Friend will be aware of the recent understanding reached between President Bush and Senator McCain on legislation confirming that cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment of detainees in US custody is forbidden, and that this prohibition will apply to all US personnel. As the US Secretary of State made clear in her statement of 7 December 2005, US obligations under the United Nations Convention Against Torture already extend to US personnel wherever they are. We understand that the US Government will shortly issue guidelines confirming the way that the legislation and policy should be implemented.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many meetings of the EU *(a)* Joint Committee (EEC-Argentina), *(b)* Joint Committee (EEC-Brazil), *(c)* Joint Committee (EEC-Chile) and *(d)* Joint Committee (EEC-Andean Pact) have taken place during the UK presidency of the EU; who was presiding over each meeting; what other UK representatives were present; what provisions were made for representation of the devolved governments; and if he will make a statement. [38793]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: There have been no meetings of the European Commission Joint Committees on Argentina, Brazil, Chile or the Andean Pact during the UK presidency.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many meetings of the EU *(a)* EC-Georgia Cooperation Committee, *(b)* EC-San Marino Cooperation Committee, *(c)* EEC-Ukraine Cooperation Committee and *(d)* EC-Tunisia Association Committee have taken place during the UK presidency of the EU; who was presiding over each meeting; what other UK representatives were present; what provision was made for representation of the devolved governments; and if he will make a statement. [38796]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: During the UK presidency there were no meetings of the Co-operation Committees with Georgia and San Marino, or the Association Committee with Tunisia.

A Co-operation Committee with Ukraine took place on 19 October in Kiev. Mr Hugues Mingarelli, European Commission, led the EU delegation. Mr Arseniy Yatseniuk, Minister of Economy, led the Ukrainian delegation. For the presidency, the Ambassador and Deputy Head of Mission from the British Embassy, Kiev attended. No provision was made for representation of the devolved Governments at this meeting.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many meetings of the EU *(a)* EC-Morocco Association Committee, *(b)* Joint Committee (EC-Palestinian Authority), *(c)* EC-Egypt Association Committee and *(d)* EEC-Israel Association Committee have taken place during the UK presidency of the EU; who was presiding over each meeting; what other UK representatives were present; what provision was made for representation of the devolved Governments; and if he will make a statement. [38797]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: There have been no meetings of the EC-Morocco Association Committee, the EC-Palestinian Authority Joint Committee, the EC-Egypt Association Committee or the EEC-Israel Association Committee during the UK presidency of the EU.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many meetings of the *(a)* Joint Committee (EEC-Andora), *(b)* EC-Armenia Co-operation Committee and *(c)* Joint Committee (EEC-Estonia) have taken place during the UK presidency of the EU; who was presiding over each meeting; what other UK representatives were present; what provisions were made for representation of the devolved governments; and if he will make a statement. [39036]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: There are no Joint Committees as such, but there are EU-Association Committees for both Bulgaria and Romania. One meeting of the EU-Romania Association Committee has taken place under the UK presidency, on 15 July in Bucharest. This was chaired by the European Commission. A representative of the UK presidency was present as an observer. The EU-Bulgaria Association Committee has not met under our presidency. No provision was made for representation of the devolved Governments at these meetings.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many meetings of the *(a)* EC-Moldova Cooperation Committee, *(b)* Joint Committee (EC-Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia) and *(c)* EEC-Russia Cooperation Committee have taken place during the UK presidency of the EU; who presided over each meeting; which other

UK representatives were present; what provisions were made for representation of the devolved Governments; and if he will make a statement. [39041]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: A Co-operation Committee with Moldova took place on 29 November in Chisinau. Ms Hilde Hardeman, European Commission, led the EU delegation. Mr Valeriu Ostalep, Deputy Foreign Minister, led the Moldovan delegation. For the presidency, the British Ambassador to Moldova attended.

The EU-Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia Stabilisation and Association Council took place in Brussels on 18 July. I represented the presidency with supporting officials from the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Office of the United Kingdom Permanent Representative to the European Union.

No provision was made for representation of the devolved administrations at these meetings.

There were no meetings of the Co-operation Committee with Russia during the UK presidency.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many meetings of the *(a)* Committee for protection against the effects of the extra-territorial application of legislation adopted by a third country, and actions based thereon or resulting therefrom (anti-boycott), *(b)* Committee on aid for Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia and *(c)* Committee on implementation of the programme of assistance to promote the transition to a market economy and to strengthen democracy and the rule of law in the partner State of Eastern Europe and Central Asia have taken place during the UK presidency of the EU; who presided over each meeting; what other UK representatives were present; what provisions were made for representation of the devolved governments; and if he will make a statement. [39047]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: There have been no meetings of the 'Committee for protection against the effects of the extra-territorial application of legislation adopted by a third country, and actions based thereon or resulting therefrom (anti-boycott)' during the UK presidency of the European Union.

During the UK presidency the Community Assistance for Reconstruction, Development and Stabilisation (CARDS) Management Committee met twice, on 15 September and 18 November. The CARDS Management Committee oversees the implementation of council regulation (EC) No 2666/2000. The Committee is convened and constituted for member states to assist the Commission with the implementation of the CARDS programme of assistance to Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Croatia, the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia and the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. It is chaired by the Commission. The meetings were attended by officials from the Department for International Development (DFID).

During the UK presidency the Technical Assistance to the Commonwealth of Independent States (TACIS) Management Committee met four times: 8 July, 23 September, 24 October and 25 November. The TACIS Management Committee oversees the implementation of council regulation (EC, Euratom) No 99/2000. The Committee is convened and constituted for member states to assist the Commission with the implementation of the TACIS programme. It operates independently of the presidency and is chaired by the Commission. The meetings were attended by officials from DFID and the Office of the United Kingdom Permanent Representative to the European Union. On one occasion a Foreign and Commonwealth Office official also attended.

No provision was made for representation of the devolved administrations at these meetings.

EU Presidency

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the products associated with the EU presidency logo developed by his Department; how many of each were produced; and what the cost was of the production of each. [37344]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: Member states holding the presidency normally commission a range of promotional goods bearing the presidency logo. The UK did the same. The items were pin-chased by Government Departments and overseas posts for public diplomacy use in connection with a wide range of Government events and activities.

The overall quantities commissioned were determined in response to demand from across Government. No extra money was made available to posts to cover this expenditure and it was met by reallocating existing resources. The largest item in terms of expenditure was stationery.

The following details reflect the estimated total quantities of goods commissioned for the whole of the presidency on a Government-wide basis:

	Cost (£)
Stationery for use at presidency meetings and events	539,000
Small gifts for use at presidency events (mugs, umbrellas, bags etc)	251,000
Clothing (ties, scarves, lapel pins etc)	243,000
Materials for dressing venues for presidency events (logo stands etc)	32,000

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the impact of the UK presidency of the EU. [37727]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary set out the work programme for the UK presidency in detail in the White Paper "Prospects for the EU in 2005" (Cmnd 6611) presented to the House on 30 June 2005. A new White Paper will follow in the new year. We have made progress in a number of areas, including the historic decision to open accession negotiations with Turkey and Croatia on 3 October 2005. Last month we achieved significant reform of the EU sugar regime. And we continue to work on a range of issues from the fight against terrorism to the future financing of the EU.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many meetings of the EC-United States of America Joint Committee have taken place during the UK presidency of the EU; who presided over each meeting; what other UK representatives were present; what provision was made for representation of the devolved governments; and if he will make a statement. [38780]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: There are no Joint Committee meetings between the European Commission and United States of America.

Falkland Islands

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions the Government has had with the Government of Argentina about *(a)* the lifting of economic sanctions against the Falkland Islands and *(b)* permitting charter flights to the Falkland Islands; and if he will make a statement. [38305]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We regularly discuss issues of mutual interest in the South Atlantic with Argentina and have expressed our concern about recent Argentine actions on a number of occasions.

We would like to see an agreement on further flights between the Falklands and mainland South America but this must be on terms acceptable to all sides. So far, we have not reached an agreed basis for starting discussion. The UK has made it clear to Argentina that we are prepared to enter into discussions, on the understanding that any future arrangements must be acceptable to the Falkland Islanders and that any such discussions would need to take place against the backdrop of charter flight authorisations proceeding normally.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the effect of recent economic development measures on the Falkland Islands; what steps have been taken to improve the economic viability of the Falkland Islands; and if he will make a statement. [38306]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The management of the economy of the Falkland Islands is the responsibility of the Falkland Island Government. With the exception of Defence costs, the Islands are fully economically self-sufficient. The Foreign and Commonwealth Office contribution is limited to small grants for individual projects from the economic diversification programme budget.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the prospect of regular charter flights to the Falkland Islands from Chile. [38307]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: We would like to see an agreement on further flights between the Falklands and mainland South America but this must be on terms acceptable to all sides. So far, we have not reached an agreed basis for starting discussion.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions his Department has had with the Ministry of Defence about establishing a commercial element to the military air-bridge to the Falkland Islands; and if he will make a statement. [38308]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office regularly discuss a full range of Falkland Islands issues with the Ministry of Defence. The military air-bridge forms part of these discussions, but so far the establishment of a commercial element has not been discussed.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether it is his Department's policy to bring about the commercialisation of the Ministry of Defence air-bridge to the Falkland Islands. [39169]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The military air-bridge has been part of discussions between the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and Ministry of Defence, but so far the establishment of a commercial element has not been part of these discussions. No policy decisions have been made on the subject.

Sir Nicholas Winterton: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent discussions he has had with the Falkland Islands Government about establishing a commercial northbound air link to the Falkland Islands avoiding Latin America in conjunction with the Ministry of Defence. [39170]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: No recent discussions have taken place with the Falkland Islands Government on the subject of commercialisation of the military air-bridge. The Falkland Islands have recently submitted a paper on this on which we plan to hold discussions with them and other stakeholders in the new year.

Gibraltar

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how much money was allocated to Gibraltar from the Overseas Development Fund in each of the last five years; and what proportion of this money was used to pay the pensions of Spanish citizens affected by the closure of the border with Gibraltar. [37745]

Mr. Douglas Alexander: The Department for International Development's (DFID) development budget expenditure for Gibraltar over the last five years was as follows:

	£
2000–01	27,000
2001–02	23,000
2002–03	6,000
2003–04	5,000
2004–05	1,000

None of this money was spent on pension payments to Spanish citizens who were contributors to the former Gibraltar Social Insurance Fund.

Payments to these pensioners over the last five years were:

	£
2000–01	7,720,000
2001–02	5,390,000
2002–03	7,780,000
2003–04	6,990,000
2004–05	6,210,000

Although administered by DFID these payments are not part of DFID's development aid budget.

Guantanamo Bay

Ms Barlow: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs how many people who were UK residents at the time of their seizure are detained in Guantanamo Bay. [38300]

Dr. Howells: We are aware of five detainees at Guantanamo Bay who have British resident status, but who are not British nationals.

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on his Department's policy on the detention camp at Guantanamo Bay. [39237]

Dr. Howells: The Government have made clear that it regards the circumstances under which detainees continue to be held in Guantanamo as unacceptable. The United States (US) Government knows our views. Since the release of the last British nationals from Guantanamo in January 2005, we have continued to raise Guantanamo Bay with the US authorities. We will continue to raise our concerns at Ministerial and official level and to work with the US authorities to resolve the issues of concern to us.

It is important to remember, however, the circumstances which led to Guantanamo Bay. Nearly 3,000 people were killed during the terrorist attacks on 11 September 2001. Valuable information has been gained from detainees at Guantanamo Bay which has helped the international community in the fight against terrorism.

Human Rights, Democracy and Good Governance Programme

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the projects being supported under the Human Rights, Democracy and Good Governance programme for the promotion of democracy in *(a)* China, *(b)* the Balkans region, *(c)* Kenya, *(d)* Uganda, *(e)* Eritrea, *(f)* Russia, *(g)* Pakistan and *(h)* Burma; and what the (i) nature of support and (ii) level of funding is for each project. [35620]

Ian Pearson: I refer my right hon. Friend to the answer I gave him on 19 December 2005 (UIN 35619) in which I set out the criteria for supporting projects that promote democracy. The latest details of relevant projects are set out in the Global Opportunities Fund (GOF) Annual Report 2004–05 published as Command Paper 6665 in October 2005 which is also available on the FCO website at http://www.fco.gov.uk/Files/KFile/GOFAnnualReport200405.pdf. Details of GOF projects supported in 2005–06 will be published in the next annual report.

Although the report refers to the inclusion of funding the Westminster Foundation for Democracy (WFD) within the GOF programme it did not provide details of individual projects. However, during this period WFD undertook projects in the Balkans region, Kenya, Uganda and Russia in line with agreed priorities in Eastern Europe and Africa. A copy of the list of these projects will be placed in the Library of the House.

Insurance Costs

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 17 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1482W to the hon. Member for Hemel Hempstead (Mike Penning) what the cost of insurance for *(a)* the silver set in Washington, *(b)* the two chandeliers in Istanbul, *(c)* the rug in Havana and *(d)* the Jaguar XJ 4.2s in (i) New Delhi, (ii) Islamabad and (iii) Cairo was in 2004–05. [38546]

Mr. Straw: The three vehicles are insured as part of the Foreign and Commonwealth Office's Global third party insurance with Axa Insurance. It is not therefore possible to identify the costs of insuring individual vehicles under this policy. The cost of mandatory local third party insurance for the vehicles was:

	£
Islamabad	8.64
New Delhi	10.00
Cairo	16.00

The silver set, the chandeliers and the rug are not individually insured.

International Meetings/State Visits

Pete Wishart: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will list the international summits, conferences and state visits hosted by the Government in each year since 1997; and on what date each was held. [38502]

Mr. Straw: The following are details of the state visits hosted by the Government since 1997:

8–10 November 2005: China
15–17 March 2005: Italy
1–3 December 2004: Korea
5–7 May 2004: Poland
18–21 November 2003: US A
24–27 June 2003: Russia
(No State Visits in 2002, the jubilee year)
6–9 November 2001: Jordan
12–15 June 2001: South Africa
16–18 February 2000: Denmark
19–22 October 1999: China
22–25 June 1999: Jordan
1–4 December 1998: Germany
26–29 May 1998: Japan
2–5 December 1997: Brazil

25–28 February 1997: Israel.

A further state visit from Brazil is planned from 8–9 March 2006.

Details of international summits and conferences hosted are not held centrally within the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and can only be collated at disproportionate cost.

Interrogation

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether *(a)* he, *(b)* his Department and *(c)* members and representatives of the UK Government have received reports of incidents of the technique known as waterboarding being used as an interrogation technique; and if he will make a statement. [38819]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, his Department and other members and representatives are aware of public reports that the technique known as waterboarding has been used as an interrogation technique. But they have received no information to corroborate those reports.

Iran

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what discussions he has had with *(a)* the president of Iran, *(b)* his US counterpart and *(c)* counterparts in the European Union on the Iranian president's recent comments about Israel. [37952]

Dr. Howells: On 8 December, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary, acting on behalf of the UK presidency of the European Union, condemned unreservedly the comments in which President Ahmadinejad denied that the holocaust had taken place and called for Israel to be moved to Europe. The European Council repeated this condemnation on 16 December. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has not discussed these remarks with the President of Iran. My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has very regular discussions with his US counterpart on Iranian issues but it would be inappropriate to go into the detail of those conversations.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make a statement on the political situation in Iran. [38230]

Dr. Howells: We have serious concerns about Iranian policies in a number of areas, including its nuclear programme; approach towards terrorism; human rights record; and attitude towards the Middle East peace process. President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad's recent comments denying the existence of the Holocaust and calling for Israel to be 'wiped from the map' have been widely condemned by the international community, including the European Union and the United Nations Security Council.

Mr. Scott: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what representations he will make to the Iranian Government following the statement by President Mahmoud Admadinejad dismissing the Nazi holocaust as a myth. [38664]

Dr. Howells: I refer the hon. Member to the answer my noble Friend the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, gave the noble Lord Dykes today [HL 2960].

Iraq

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 5 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1072W, on Iraq, for what reasons the intelligence available to Lord Butler was not available to the Intelligence and Security Committee at the time of its 2003 inquiry. [38424]

Mr. Straw: The Butler Review and the inquiry conducted by the Intelligence and Security Committee had different terms of reference. Both had extensive access to intelligence material.

Israel

Lynne Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs pursuant to the answer of 12 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1648W, on Israel, whether it is Government policy to apologise routinely when people from any country are arrested or threatened with arrest following private prosecutions. [38311]

Dr. Howells: It is not Government policy to apologise routinely when people from any country are arrested or threatened with arrest following private prosecutions.

Kenny Richey

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent representations he has made of the US authorities regarding Kenny Richey who is under a death sentence in Ohio; what representations he has received from *(a)* campaign groups and *(b)* other organisations in relation to the case; and what assistance has been given to Kenny Richey's family to visit him in the US. [39197]

Dr. Howells: The Foreign and Commonwealth Office(FCO) filed an amicus curiae brief in the United States (US) 6th Circuit Court of Appeal in September 2004 on behalf of Kenny Richey. Since then, the US Supreme Court has overturned that Court's decision that Mr Richey's conviction was unsafe, effectively reinstating the conviction. The FCO receives regular representations from various organisations and individuals who are concerned about Mr Richey's plight. We take all such representations seriously, and are in close and regular contact with Mr Richey's lawyers both in the US and the UK. Any representations made by the FCO on his behalf are made in consultation with Mr Richey and his legal team. We cannot provide assistance for Kenny Richey's family to travel to the United States, although FCO officials are offering them all appropriate consular support.

Maldives

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will place in the Library public statements made by Ministers on the Gayoom regime in the Maldives. [38350]

Dr. Howells: With the exception of responses to parliamentary questions appearing in Hansard, I am not aware that there have been any recent ministerial statements about the current Government of the Maldives.

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether the high commissioner in the Maldives has met Ms Jennifer Latheef. [38352]

Dr. Howells: The British high commissioner at Colombo, who is accredited to the Maldives, met Jennifer Latheef as well as other representatives of the Maldivian Democratic Party in Male on 22 September.

Mr. MacShane: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will visit the Maldives to press for the restoration of democracy in the islands. [38353]

Dr. Howells: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary has no current plans to visit the Maldives. However, together with EU partners, we remain seriously concerned about the need for political reform there. We raised those concerns most recently on 12 December when the British high commissioner led an EU troika of Colombo-based heads of mission, also accredited to the Maldives, to call on President Gayoom. We will continue closely monitoring developments in the Maldives.

Morocco

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what assessment he has made of the recent arrest of Saharawi human rights activists by the government of Morocco; and if he will make a statement. [38628]

Dr. Howells: The Government are aware that several Saharawi human rights activists have recently been tried in Laayoune. Officials at our Embassy in Rabat are monitoring the situation.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will make representations to the Government of Morocco on its decision to block the Association for a Referendum in Sahara Occidental website; and if he will take steps to make websites available for political activity in other countries. [38629]

Dr. Howells: In EU discussions with Morocco, the UK, as presidency of the EU, has emphasised the importance of respecting freedom of expression and freedom of the press. Morocco's record in this area is generally positive. We have not raised the specific case of the Association for a Referendum in Sahara Occidental. However, officials in our embassy in Rabat are monitoring the situation.

The Government has no plans to make websites available for political activity in other countries.

Mudawi Ibrahim Adam

Chris Ruane: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs if he will raise the case of Dr. Mudawi Ibrahim Adam, a political prisoner in Sudan, with the Sudanese Government at the earliest possible date; and if he will make a statement. [38253]

Dr. Howells: Dr. Mudawi Ibrahim Adam, chairperson of the Sudan Social Development Organisation and a prominent Sudanese human rights activist, has been detained by Sudanese authorities on several occasions, most recently in Khartoum on 8 May 2005. Our embassy in Khartoum raised this case with the acting Foreign Minister on 10 May and on 14 May. We also supported representations made by the local EU presidency on this matter. Dr. Mudawi was released unharmed on 17 May 2005 and has continued his work on human rights. Our embassy in Khartoum is in regular contact with Dr. Mudawi and last spoke to him on 14 December 2005.

Osama Bin Laden

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether he has received evidence to suggest that Osama Bin Laden is still alive; and whether the UK Government have been *(a)* involved with and *(b)* informed of the drawing up of trial plans in the event that he is captured alive. [37736]

Dr. Howells: We have not currently seen evidence confirming that Osama Bin Laden is still alive, nor have we received information suggesting that he has died. It is premature to consider the possibilities for trial should he be captured alive: these would depend on, among other things, the circumstances and location of his capture.

Pakistan

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what recent assessment he has made of the situation pertaining to the Sangha Hill trial in Pakistan and the threats being made against Yousaf Marik; and if he will make a statement. [38627]

Dr. Howells: We deplore the unprovoked attacks against Christians in Sangla Hills on 12 November 2005. We have made representations to the Government of Pakistan on this issue and welcome the public condemnations of the violence from President Musharraf and Prime Minister Shaukat Aziz.

We are not aware that any trial is yet underway following the attacks. We understand that Yousaf Masih remains in police custody. The Imam of the local lamia mosque allegedly called for Yousaf Masih to be hanged without trial. Our High Commissioner in Islamabad has written to Pakistan's Minister for Religious Affairs to urge him to investigate this matter immediately and take strong action against those concerned.

Uganda

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reservations *(a)* he and *(b)* his officials expressed as a result of recent events in Uganda during the recent Commonwealth Heads of

Government meeting in Malta concerning the offer by the President of Uganda that Kampala host the 2007 Heads of Government meeting. [38227]

Ian Pearson [holding answer 19 December 2005]: The UK remains concerned about the progress of political change in Uganda. On 18 November, the UK issued a statement, on behalf of the EU:

http://www.eu2005.gov.uk/servlet/Front?pagename=OpenMarket/xcelerate/ShowPage&c=Page&cid=1115146994806&a=KArticle&aid=1131976425734&date=2005-11-18, outlining our concerns regarding the arrest of Dr. Kiiza Besigye on charges including treason. We continue to press for a free and transparent civilian trial. My right hon. Friends the Prime Minister and the Secretary of State for International Development, and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office Minister for Africa, Lord Triesman of Tottenham, all made this clear to President Museveni at the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting in Valletta.

The Commonwealth will keep the situation in Uganda under review in the coming months. It will be for the Commonwealth Secretary-General, Don McKinnon, in consultation with member states, to make a final decision on whether the 2007 Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting should be held in Kampala.

United States

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs whether *(a)* he, *(b)* members of his Department and *(c)* members and representatives of the UK Government have (i) sought and (ii) received from the US Administration clarification concerning the application of the prohibition on the use of cruel and inhumane and degrading treatment as specified by Condoleeza Rice in her statement of 7 December 2005 to (A) non-US citizens, (B) terrorist suspects, (C) enemy combatants and (D) high-ranking members of al-Qaeda; and if he will make a statement. [38772]

Dr. Howells: The United States (US) Secretary of State's statement of 7 December 2005, available at http://www.state.gov/secretary/nn/2005/57723.htm, was clear: the US's obligations under the United Nations Convention Against Torture, which prohibits cruel, inhumane, and degrading treatment, extend to US personnel wherever they are. There is no suggestion that this policy is qualified according to category of detainee.

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs what reports he has received from the UK embassy in Washington DC of *(a)* the effect of Senate Amendment 1977 to the Defense Appropriations Bill for the financial year 2006, *(b)* the US position with regard to the amendment and *(c)* the compatability of the proposed amendment and the US Administration's stated prohibition on the use of cruel and inhumane and degrading treatment as specified by Condoleeza Rice's statement of 7 December; and if he will make a statement. [38818]

Dr. Howells: The British Embassy in Washington reports on Congressional matters on a regular basis, including the recent understanding reached between President Bush and Senator McCain on language to prohibit the use of cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment of detainees in United States custody.

Zimbabwe

Mr. Ancram: To ask the Secretary of State for Foreign and Commonwealth Affairs when he last discussed the humanitarian and political situation in Zimbabwe with *(a)* the US Secretary of State, *(b)* the Foreign Ministers of the member states of the EU, *(c)* the Foreign Minister of the Republic of South Africa and *(d)* the Secretary-General of the UN. [38257]

Ian Pearson: My right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary most recently discussed the situation in Zimbabwe with the South African Minister of Foreign Affairs, Dr. Zuma, at the EU South Africa Co-operation Council on 7 November, and with the United Nations Secretary General on 30 October. European Union Ministers met at the General Affairs and External Relations Council on 18 July, where Zimbabwe was also discussed. Additionally, my right hon. Friend the Foreign Secretary regularly converses with the US Secretary of State, Dr. Rice, including, when appropriate, on Zimbabwe.

WORK AND PENSIONS

Benefit Payments

Mr. Hoyle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what measures he is taking to ensure that carers claim the benefits to which they are entitled; [35506]

(2) what plans he has to increase carer's allowance. [35508]

Mrs. McGuire: Carers may be entitled to the full range of social security benefits depending on their individual circumstances. Information and advice about entitlement to carer's allowance and other benefits are available from a range of outlets including social security offices, Jobcentre Plus offices, DWP and other helplines, DWP and other internet sites, local authorities, Citizens Advice and welfare benefit offices, public libraries, health clinics, doctors' surgeries and health visitors. Officials from the Department's Disability and Carers Service also discuss carer's allowance at outreach events up and down the country.

In addition, the extensive pension credit take-up campaign, mounted by the Pension Service, has helped many older carers to benefit from the Government's abolition of the upper age limit on claims to carer's allowance and provided advice on other benefits. As at 31 May 2005, some 437,000 carers were receiving carer's allowance, around 210,000 were receiving the carer premium in income support or income-based Jobseeker's Allowance, and about 164,000 were receiving the carer's additional amount in pension credit.

The carer's allowance claim pack is kept under review and improvements are introduced on an ongoing basis. Claims can be made in writing, by phone and on-line, and can be accepted by organisations such as Age Concern and Citizens Advice as well as DWP offices.

The weekly rate of carer's allowance is increased annually in line with the Retail Prices Index. As announced on 6 December, it will go up to £46.96 in April 2006.

Bereavement Allowance

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on bereavement allowance. [38538]

Mr. Timms: Bereavement benefits, which were introduced in 2001, are payable to both men and women who satisfy the qualifying conditions.

The bereavement allowance is a contributory benefit payable for a maximum period of 52 weeks from the date of bereavement. It is a weekly benefit payable to qualifying widows and widowers who are aged between 45 and state pension age.

Child Support Agency

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 28 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 72–3W, on the Child Support Agency, in which of the last eight years the Agency's accounts have been qualified by the National Audit Office. [37944]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive, Mr. Stephen Geraghty. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty, dated 20 December 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions pursuant to the answer of 28th November 2005 Official Report columns 72–73W on the Child Support Agency in which of the last eight years have the Agency's accounts been qualified by the National Audit Office.

The Agency's Client Fund accounts have been qualified by the National Audit Office every year since the Agency's inception. The Agency's administrative accounts have never been qualified.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what training staff who work for the Child Support Agency receive in understanding the law in relation to child support; and if he will make a statement. [30028]

Mr. Timms: I refer the hon. Member to the answer given to the hon. Member on 11 January 2005, *Official Report*, column 459W.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the internal target for full maintenance calculations under the new scheme was for 2004–05. [30032]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty, dated 20 December 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the internal target for full maintenance calculations under the new scheme was for 2004–05.

In 2004/05 the Agency had an internal target 'to ensure that 60% of all new applications cleared resulted in full maintenance calculations', with the remainder being closed.

In 2005/6, this target was dropped as it was recognised that Agency staff had no control over whether or not a parent with care chose to close their case prior to it reaching a calculation, or whether a case is subject to a reduced benefit decision or claiming good cause.

At September 2005, 44% (scheme to date) of all new applications cleared resulted in a full maintenance calculation.

However the Agency definition of 'cleared' has recently changed following improvements and availability of management information. Where as previously a 'clearance' only included a case which had been closed or had received a calculation, it now includes cases subject to a reduced benefit decision, claiming good cause or identified as being a change of circumstances on an existing case (as opposed to a new application). As a result, the volume of recorded clearances rose, making the proportion of clearances resulting in a maintenance calculation lower than the 60% originally envisaged in 2004/5.

I hope you find this response helpful.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on the work involved in transferring old Child Support Agency cases to the new scheme. [30044]

Mr. Plaskitt: Before moving cases to the new scheme from the old scheme, each case needs to go through a data cleansing process. It is then migrated from the old computer system to the new system.

Before we can convert the bulk of cases we also need to introduce a commencement order to make the new scheme rules apply to these cases.

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people were paid compensation payments by the Child Support Agency in each year since 2001. [31585]

Mr. Timms *[holding answer 24 November 2005]:* The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty, dated 20 December 2005:

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, how many people were paid compensation payments by the Child Support Agency in each year since 2001. We are unable to state how many people received payments from the Child Support Agency in accordance with the Departmental Guide to Financial Redress. This is because the Agency records the number of payments made and an individual may have received more than one payment.

The Agency does not hold sufficiently robust information prior to 1 December 2001 to give you the data over the entire period requested. I apologise for this but can give you information on payments, made since 1 December 2001 up until 10 November 2005.

The table below contains the available information:

Period	Number of payments made
1 December 2001 to 31 March 2002	2,758
1 April 2002 to 31 March 2003	9,522
1 April 2003 to 31 March 2004	6,883
1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005	10,144
1 April 2005 to 10 November 2005	6,251

I hope you find this useful.

David Taylor: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what proportion of the Child Support Agency's cases *(a)* pre-dating 3 March 2003 and *(b)* awaiting calculation of child maintenance under the new scheme involve a non-resident parent; [36948]

(2) what proportion of Child Support Agency cases pre-dating 3 March 2003, and awaiting recalculation for child maintenance under the new scheme, involve a *(a)* non-resident and *(b)* resident parent in receipt of a state benefit or benefits; [36958]

(3) How many Child Support Agency cases pre-dating 3 March 2003 await recalculation under the new methods of assessing the level of child maintenance payments. [36956]

Mr. Timms: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty, dated 20 December 2005.

In reply to your recent parliamentary question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions;

What proportion of the Child Support Agency's cases *(a)* pre-dating 3 March 2003 and *(b)* awaiting calculation of child maintenance under the new scheme involve a non-resident parent.

You also asked how many Child Support Agency cases pre dating 3 March 2003 await recalculation under the new methods of assessing the level of child maintenance payments.

You also asked what proportion of Child Support Agency cases pre-dating 3 March 2003 and awaiting recalculation for child maintenance under the new scheme involve a *(a)* non-resident and *(b)* resident parent in receipt of a state benefit or benefits.

All Child support Agency cases by definition involve a non-resident parent.

In respect of those old scheme cases pre-dating 3 March 2003 remaining to be transferred from the old to the new child support schemes, the old scheme caseload stood at 938,000 (of which 286,000 were operating on the new computer system) as at the end of September 2005.

Of those old scheme non-resident parents on the old computer system at the end of September 2005, 29 per cent,. of those with a full maintenance assessment were recorded as being in receipt of Jobseekers Allowance, Income Support, Incapacity Benefit or other disability benefits at the time of their last assessment by the Agency. Information relating to the receipt of other state benefits is not recorded on the old scheme old computer system.

Of those old scheme non resident parents on the new computer system at the end of September 2005, 28 per cent. of those with a full maintenance assessment were recorded as being in receipt of Income Based Jobseekers Allowance, or Income Support. Information relating to the receipt of disability benefits is not currently available due to limitations with management information systems, and information relating to the receipt of other state benefits is not recorded.

At the end of May 2005, 32 per cent. of old scheme parents with care were in receipt of Income Support Or Income Related Job Seekers Allowance. This is the latest period for which such data is available. Information for other state benefits is not held on the Child Support system, as they are not relevant to the parent with care's child support claim.

I hope you find this information helpful

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total of unpaid maintenance owed by the Child Support Agency to parents with care has been in each quarter since 1997–98; how much has been written off each year as uncollectable maintenance; and if he will make a statement. [21438]

Mr. Plaskitt: The administration of the Child Support Agency is a matter for the chief executive. He will write to the hon. Member with the information requested.

Letter from Stephen Geraghty dated 20 December 2005:

In reply to your recent Parliamentary Question about the Child Support Agency the Secretary of State promised a substantive reply from the Chief Executive.

You asked the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions, what the total of unpaid maintenance owed by the Child Support Agency to parents with care has been in each quarter since 1997; how much has been written off each year as uncollectable maintenance; and if he will make a statement.

The Child Support Agency does not owe child maintenance to parents with care; child maintenance is owed by non-resident parents.

The Child Support Agency has no legislative power to write off debt, and current debt is now the cumulative total of 12 years. For accounting purposes the Agency accepts that in some cases some debt is "probably un-collectable" (for example, where the non-resident parent is long-term unemployed, has gone abroad, or has died). The accounts have been adjusted accordingly: however the full amount owed remains due from the non-resident parent.

The table below summarises the cumulative total of the Child Support Agency's "collectable" and "probably un-collectable" debt on an annual basis since 1996/97. It is extracted from the annual debt analysis and is as reported in the Annual Report and Accounts. Information is not held on a quarterly basis:

£ million

	Amount classed as collectable[1]	Amount classed as probably un-collectable
2004–05	1,268.378	1,984.400
2003–04	975.894	2,004.847
2002–03	790.070	1,965.340
2001–02	611.209	1,915.312
2000–01	618.020	1,692.380
1999–2000	653.705	1,410.853
1998–99	690.235	1,069.680
1997–98	597.165	829.237
1996–97[2]	397.447	748.040

[1] Collectable debt includes that classified as "probably collectable" and "deferred" in the agency's annual report and accounts.

[2] 1996–97 re-stated in 1997–98 accounts for change in accounting policy.

Note:

These amounts include maintenance owed either to the parent with care, or the Secretary of State (where the parent with care is in receipt of benefit). It is not possible to apportion money not yet collected to the parent with care or Secretary of State.

I hope you find this information helpful.

Christmas

Mr. Beith: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions whether staff in his Department and its executive agencies have been required to remove from their offices *(a)* charity collection boxes and *(b)* charity appeal literature referring to Christmas and the birth of Jesus; and if he will make a statement. [27022]

Mrs. McGuire: The Department for Work and Pensions standards of behaviour policy allows for charitable collections to be made at the approval of local managers.

In exercising this discretion we expect managers to take into account local knowledge, operational needs and the personal responsibilities all managers have for implementing diversity principles in their day to day dealings with customers, with DWP staff and with partner organisations. This includes respecting cultural and religious differences.

The Department has not issued any instructions centrally relating to charity boxes or appeal literature referring to Christmas.

Debt Manager Software

John McDonnell: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total implementation costs of the new Debt Manager software package has been to his Department. [38386]

Mr. Plaskitt: The introduction of the new IT system is part of the programme to modernise the recovery of overpaid benefits; in particular to bring about improvements in accounting controls to ensure that accounting irregularities, which have contributed to the qualification of DWP accounts by the C&AG in previous years, are removed from the system.

The total cost of introducing the new DWP Debt Manager system is £21.509 million: this includes all supplier costs (including hardware and software), the costs of project staff and the debt management operational staff costs relating exclusively to the implementation of the new system.

Community Care Grants

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many community care grants were awarded in the *(a)* Staffordshire county council area and *(b)* Tamworth borough council area in each year since 2001. [35677]

Mr. Timms: Data is not available by county council area or borough council area but only by Jobcentre Plus district (and previously by social fund district). The available information is in the following tables.

Community care grants for the Staffordshire social fund district

	Initial awards
2001–02	3,108
2002–03 (to October)	1,859

Community care grants for the area covered by the Staffordshire Jobcentre Plus district

	Initial awards
2002–03 (from November)	1,433
2003–04	3,572
2004–05	3,567
2005–06 (to November)	2,701

Community care grants for the Derwent and Trent social fund district

	Initial awards
2001–02	2,157
2002–03(to October)	1,278

Notes:

1. Staffordshire county council area was not included in a single social fund district, but used to be part of the area covered by Staffordshire and Derwent and Trent social fund districts. It is now part of Staffordshire Jobcentre Plus district. The latter was formed in November 2002 by combining Burton-on-Trent (from Derwent and Trent social fund district) with Staffordshire social fund district. Tamworth borough council area used to be part of Staffordshire social fund district and is now part of Staffordshire Jobcentre Plus district. The three areas for which data is given above are thus different, so the data is not comparable.

2. Initial awards do not include awards made after review.

Source:

DWP Social Fund Policy, Budget and Management Information System

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many community care grants were awarded for each year in the period 2001 to 2005 in the Leeds metropolitan district area. [35127]

Mr. Timms: The available information is in the table.

Community care grants in the Leeds metropolitan district area

	Initial awards
2001–02	2,475
2002–03	2,989
2003–04	3,217
2004–05	2,998
2005–06 (to November)	2,303

Notes:

1. Initial awards do not include awards made after review.

2. Data is held by Jobcentre Plus District, not by local authority. However, Leeds metropolitan district coincides with Leeds Jobcentre Plus District.

Source:

DWP Social Fund Policy, Budget and Management Information System.

Contributory Benefits

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total expenditure on contributory benefits was in each of the last three years, broken down by benefit category. [34096]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information is in the tables.

Great Britain: Contributory benefits, nominal terms

£ million

	Outturn		
	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*[1]
Basic state pension	38,469	39,819	41,318
State earnings related pension/state second pension	5,869	6,647	7,440
Incapacity benefit	6,758	6,641	6,679
Widow's / bereavement benefits	1,087	1,004	912
Statutory maternity pay	724	1,005	1,202
Jobseeker's allowance	519	506	438
Christmas bonus	120	123	124
Statutory sick pay	70	72	77
Maternity allowance	69	128	148
Guardian's allowance ad child's special allowance	2	0	0
Total contributory benefits expenditure	53,687	55,946	58,339

[1] Estimated.

Great Britain: Contributory benefits, real terms, 2005–06 prices

£ million

	Outturn		
	2002–03	*2003–04*	*2004–05*[1]
Basic state pension	41,345	41,623	42,351
State earnings related pension / state second pension	6,308	6,948	7,626
Incapacity benefit	7,263	6,942	6,846
Widow's / bereavement benefits	1,169	1,049	935
Statutory maternity pay	778	1,051	1,232
Jobseeker's allowance	557	529	449
Christmas bonus	129	129	127
Statutory sick pay	75	75	79
Maternity allowance	74	133	152
Guardian's allowance and child's special allowance	2	0	0
Total contributory benefits expenditure	57,699	58,480	59,797

[1] Estimated.

Notes:

1. Figures are for Great Britain.
2. Figures have been rounded to the nearest million pounds.
3. When the parent benefit is paid out of the National Insurance Fund (NIF), Christmas bonus is paid from the NIF too, otherwise Christmas bonus is paid out of the Consolidated Fund. The Christmas bonus expenditure in the table is that paid from the NIF.
4. From April 2003 responsibility for guardian's allowance and child special allowance has been transferred to the Inland Revenue.
5. All benefit expenditure figures are consistent with Budget 2005 and with expenditure information which is published on the Department's internet website at the following address: http://www.dwp.gov.uk/asd/asd4/expenditure.asp. These tables will be updated following the publication of the 2005 pre-Budget report.

Source:

Expenditure figures have been taken from the DWP Expenditure Tables (Table 3).

Data Protection

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many complaints about his Department have been made to the Information Commissioner in connection with the Data Protection Act 1998 since it came into force. [20341]

Mrs. McGuire: Since the Data Protection Act came into force on 1 March 2000, 214 letters have been received from the Information Commissioner following complaints.

Departmental Expenditure

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the total departmental expenditure was on the administration of *(a)* the Employment Service, *(b)* the Benefits Agency and *(c)* Jobcentre Plus in each of the last five years; and what the projected expenditure is in each organisation for the next three years. [34386]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 20 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning: what the total departmental spend was on the administration of *(a)* the Employment Service, *(b)* the Benefits Agency and *(c)* Jobcentre Plus in each of the last five years; and what the projected spends are in each organisation for the next three years. This is something that falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

The Employment Service (an Executive Agency of the former Department for Education and Employment) and the Benefits Agency (part of the former Department of Social Security) ceased to exist on 31 March 2002. From 1 April 2002, the Benefits Agency's functions were split between The Pensions Service and Jobcentre Plus, both Executive Agencies of the newly formed Department for Work and Pensions. The Employment Service then became part of Jobcentre Plus. The table below shows the approximate net administration costs of the part of the Benefits Agency that transferred to Jobcentre Plus added to the administration costs of the Employment Service for 2000–01 and 2001–02.

£ million

	Net administration costs
2000–01	3,043
2001–02	3,001

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The administration costs of Jobcentre Plus for the three years from 1 April 2002 to 31 March 2005 are contained in the Agency's Annual Report and Accounts, copies of which can be found in the House of Commons Library. However, to assist you I have reproduced the figures below.

£ million

	Net administration costs
2002–03	2,951
2003–04	3,042
2004–05	3,148

The projected net administration costs for the subsequent three years are as follows:

£ million

	Net administration costs
2005–06	3,301
2006–07	3,323
2007–08	3,146

I hope this is helpful.

Disability Living Allowance

Mr. David Hamilton: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Midlothian are in receipt of *(a)* incapacity benefit, *(b)* disability living allowance, *(c)* attendance allowance, *(d)* reduced earnings allowance, *(e)* retirement allowance and *(f)* industrial injuries benefit. [37559]

Mrs. McGuire: The most recent available information for each benefit is in the following tables.

Claimants in the Midlothian parliamentary constituency, as at May 2005

	Number
Incapacity benefit and severe disablement allowance	4,400
Disability living allowance	5,000
Attendance allowance	2,000

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100.
2. Parliamentary constituency of claimant (Westminster). For the May 2005 General Election, the constituencies in Scotland changed. The above figures refer to the post May 2005 Westminster boundaries.
3. Incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disability allowance (SDA) 'claimant' figures include all IB and SDA (including IB credits only cases).
4. Attendance allowance and disability living allowance 'claimant' figures exclude people with entitlement where the payment has been suspended, for example if they are in hospital.
Source:
DWP Information Directorate: Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study

Industrial injuries disablement benefit claimants in the Midlothian parliamentary constituency, by benefit component; as at March 2005

	Number
Industrial injuries disablement benefit (IIDB) only	400
Reduced earnings allowance (REA) only	400
Retirement allowance (RA) only	100
Both IIDB and REA	300
Both IIDB and RA	200

Notes:
1. Figures are rounded to the nearest 100.
2. Parliamentary constituency of claimant (Westminster). For the May 2005 General Election, the constituencies in Scotland changed. The above figures refer to the pre May 2005 Westminster boundaries.
Source:
100 per cent. sample from the Industrial Injuries Computer System (IICS)

Employment Zone (Tower Hamlets)

Mr. Galloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions (1) what the total cost is to date of implementing the *(a)* Employment Zone and *(b)* Working Neighbourhood pilots in the London borough of Tower Hamlets; [36369]

(2) if he will list the payments agreed by his Department to each private contractor for the Employment Zone in the London borough of Tower Hamlets; [36371]

(3) what targets have been set for the *(a)* Employment Zone and *(b)* Working Neighbourhood pilots in the London borough of Tower Hamlets; and what the performance has been against each one. [36368]

Margaret Hodge: The specific information requested is not available.

Health and Safety Report

Mr. Bellingham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when the Government plans to respond to the EU report on Health and Safety in the Workplace; and if he will make a statement. [33797]

Mrs. McGuire: I am unsure to which report the hon. Member refers. However, the European Commission has recently published its second consultation paper on a simplification proposal to rationalise the reporting arrangements on the practical implementation of occupational safety and health directives.

At this stage of the process, only employers and workers organisations are involved in the consultation. Therefore the UK Government will not respond to this paper. Once the social partner consultation process has been completed, the European Commission may propose a directive. The UK will support any proposal that seeks to simplify the current reporting system. We expect to see a proposal towards the end of the UK presidency or early in 2006.

Housing Allowances

Mr. Paul Goodman: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what estimate he has made of the cost of extending local housing allowances to the whole of the UK; how much he estimates the administration cost will be; and what the cost of administering housing benefit under the previous arrangements are estimated to be in the next three years. [31586]

Mr. Plaskitt: The costs of any possible local housing allowance scheme extended across Great Britain would depend on the exact design. This would be determined by the experience of the current local housing allowance pathfinder pilot areas, for which the evaluation is still ongoing.

The Department does not collect management information relating to the cost to local authorities of administering housing benefit under the existing

national scheme. The Department has commissioned a research project looking into the overall administration costs of housing benefit and council tax benefit. This project is near completion and will help us obtain a better indication of these costs in the future.

Human Resource Management Strategy

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will make a statement on his Department's human resource management strategy. [24669]

Mrs. McGuire: The Department's staff are integral to the achievement of its objectives. In order to support the delivery of its work agenda and realise the benefits of modernisation, the Department's human resource strategy is for a smaller work force that is more highly skilled, more productive, better motivated and rewarded, delivering an improved level of customer service.

A key element of the Department's human resource strategy, set out in the 2004 Spending Review, is the managed reduction in staff numbers of 30,000 posts by March 2008 taking place alongside significant investment in information systems. Against this target, as at the end of September 2005 the Department had reduced staff numbers by 14,215.

Incapacity Benefit

Mr. Holloway: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many incapacity benefit claimants in the Gravesham constituency have been receiving the benefit for five years or more. [33608]

Mrs. McGuire: As at May 2005 there were 3,500 people claiming incapacity benefit or severe disability allowance in the Gravesham parliamentary constituency. Of these 1,700 had been claiming the benefit for five years or more.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions on how many occasions incapacity benefit sanctions have been applied at the discretion of personal advisers in each of the last five years in each region. [34284]

Mrs. McGuire: The information requested is not collected routinely and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what proportion of people in each *(a)* parliamentary constituency in England and *(b)* English local authority area are in receipt of incapacity benefit. [34669]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is not available in the format requested, because population estimates are not available by parliamentary constituency. The available information has been placed in the Library.

Jon Trickett: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people living in *(a)* the Wakefield area and *(b)* Hemsworth constituency were in receipt of incapacity benefit in each of the last 10 years. [34670]

Mrs. McGuire: The information is in the table.

Incapacity benefit (IB) and severe disablement allowance (SDA) claimants in the Hemsworth parliamentary constituency and the Wakefield metropolitan district council area

	Wakefield MDC	*Hemsworth*
May		
1996	22,600	7,800
1997	21,900	7,400
1998	21,900	7,200
1999	21,000	6,800
2000	21,500	7,400
2001	21,800	7,500
2002	22,000	7,600
2003	21,700	7,400
2004	21,700	7,400
2005	20,900	7,000

Notes:

1. Figures for the years 1996 to 1999 have been produced using 5 per cent. data and have been rated up in accordance with the Great Britain WPLS 100 per cent. IB/SDA totals.
2. Figures are shown in thousands and rounded to the nearest hundred. Totals may not sum due to rounding.
3. 'Claimant' figures include all IB and SDA (including IB credits only cases).

Source:

DWP Information Directorate, 5 per cent. Samples from 1996 to 1999 and Work and Pensions Longitudinal Study (WPLS) 100 per cent. data thereafter.

Jobcentre Plus

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of telephone calls were *(a)* offered, *(b)* answered, *(c)* engaged and *(d)* given up in each Jobcentre Plus contact centre in each month from January to November; and if he will make a statement. [34170]

Margaret Hodge: The administration of Jobcentre Plus is a matter for the chief executive of Jobcentre Plus, Lesley Strathie. She will write to the hon. Member.

Letter from Lesley Strathie, dated 20 December 2005:

The Secretary of State has asked me to reply to your question concerning how many and what percentage of telephone calls were offered, answered, engaged, and given up in each Jobcentre Plus contact centre in each month from January 2005 and November 2005. This is something, which falls within the responsibilities delegated to me as Chief Executive of Jobcentre Plus.

I have arranged to place in the House of Commons Library details of calls offered and answered at each Contact Centre for both Jobseeker Direct and First Contact for benefit claims. I have included abandoned calls as we assume that this is what is meant by calls 'given up'. When customers call a contact centre and there is no agent free they are placed in a queue rather than hear an engaged tone, so no callers would hear an engaged tone.

Our aim is to answer 90% of all calls. The latest figures available for November show we answered 92.4% of all calls.

Finally, in my reply to your earlier question on this subject (PQ 32512—appearing in Hansard on the 7 December) there were two slight inaccuracies in the figures provided. The information I have placed in the Library now contains the correct figures. I apologise for this oversight.

Laptops

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many laptop computers have been used by *(a)* Ministers, *(b)* special advisers and

(c) officials in his Department in each year since 1995; how many have been (i) lost and (ii) stolen in that period; what the cost was of the use of laptops in that period; and if he will make a statement. [4113]

Mrs. McGuire: The available information is provided in the tables. Figures are available from 2003 only. Prior to this, laptops were included in an overall workstation allocation and not accounted for separately.

	Number of laptops	*Number of laptops used by Ministers*	*Number of laptops used by special advisers*
December 2003	1,478	4	2
December 2004	6,951	3	4
June 2005	6,218	2	0

Laptop numbers have increased due to a major IT modernisation programme within the Department and in line with flexible working practices.

Support costs for 2003 refer to the period June to December 2003 and were £173,730. Support costs for 2004 refer to the whole year, and were £250,140. Support costs for January to June 2005 were £165,092[1].

The number of stolen laptops is as follows:

Period (April to March)	*Number stolen*
2002–03	4
2003–04	14
2004–05	5

Figures for lost laptops are not collected centrally and could be provided only at disproportionate cost.

[1] The figures provided in the table were the recorded volumes at the points in time stated. The support costs noted over the yearly and half yearly periods may reflect a higher number of laptops as volumes fluctuate with demand.

Maladministration

Mr. Laws: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many payments for maladministration have been made by *(a)* his Department, *(b)* its agencies, *(c)* its non-departmental public bodies and *(d)* other bodies for which his Department has responsibility in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [32250]

Mr. Timms: The Department for Work and Pensions operates a discretionary, non-statutory scheme providing financial redress for maladministration. The operation of the scheme is delegated to the Department's agencies.

The following figures represent the number of awards of special payments by the Department's agencies in the last five years. A single person may be awarded redress (i) for financial losses incurred; and/or (ii) for delay; and/or (iii) for the inconvenience, worry and distress caused. Since one person can receive more than one award for their case, the number of awards is significantly higher than the number of people receiving redress.

	Benefits Agency	*Child Support Agency*[1]	*Disability and Carers Service*	*ITS/Appeals Service*	*Jobcentre Plus*	*The Pension Service*	*War Pensions Agency*
2000–01	82,730	12,599	—	125	—	—	95
2001–02	44,951	15,569	—	127	—	—	—
2002–03	—	15,033	1,634	66	10,142	4,230	—
2003–04	—	11,267	2,266	64	11,174	3,828	—
2004–05	—	17,852	3,736	60	6,800	11,058	—

[1] The Child Support Agency (CSA) does not regard the information prior to 1 December 2001 as robust.

The Independent Living Fund (ILF) has made five payments.

The Disability Rights Commission has made one payment.

No payments for maladministration have been reported for the years in question by any of the other non-departmental public bodies or other bodies for which the Department is responsible.

Notes:

1. The former Benefits Agency of DSS and Employment Services of DFES were replaced in 2002–03 by new agencies: (Disability and Carers Service (DCS), Jobcentre Plus (JCP) and The Pension Service (TPS).

2. Responsibility for the War Pensions Agency moved to MoD in April 2001. It is now referred to as the Veterans Agency.

3. Departmental figures for 2000–01 and 2001–02 include additional payments awarded in recognition of the then difficulties with the NIRS2 computer system.

4. The Pension Service figures for 2004–05 include payments awarded as a result of a special exercise to award a carer premium to some pension credit customers.

5. The figures shown in the tables represent payments authorised rather than payments made within each financial year and as such may differ from the total figures shown in the Department's Resource Account.

6. The term 'maladministration' is not defined in legislation but is considered to include a variety of failings including delays and errors by officials.

Ministerial Meetings

Peter Law: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what recent meetings he has had with the First Minister of the Welsh Assembly Government; what was discussed; and what decisions were taken. [35837]

Mr. Plaskitt: The Secretary of State has contact with colleagues across the devolved Administrations and discusses a variety of issues with them.

Parliamentary Questions

Mr. Frank Field: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions when he will provide a substantive

answer to the question from the hon. Member for Birkenhead tabled on 1 November reference 25136 on Pathways to Work pilots. [35813]

Margaret Hodge *[holding answer 8 December 2005]:* An answer was given on 12 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1764W.

Pathways to Work

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the target is for the proportion of participants moving into employment in each Pathways to Work pilot area. [38247]

Margaret Hodge: The Pathways to Work districts are piloting new measures and innovative approaches to helping people with long term illnesses or a disability to return to work. As pilot schemes, they are a chance to assess what approaches may be more effective than the existing measures.

There are no targets specifically for the Pathways to Work pilots. However, the Pathways districts have the same range of job entry targets that all Jobcentre Plus districts have. We are essentially measuring the impact of the additional help offered through Pathways by comparing performance before and after the roll-out of the pilots and by comparison with national performance.

Early results show off-flows from incapacity benefit at six months of around 48 per cent. in the pilot areas compared with around 40 per cent. nationally, an improvement of eight percentage points.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the *(a)* total cost and *(b)* cost per participant moved into employment is of each Pathways to Work pilot area. [38251]

Margaret Hodge: By 2007–08, Pathways to Work will cover one-third of new incapacity benefit cases and support will be available to around 900,000 claimants. The total budget allocation for Pathways to Work for 2004–05 was £45 million, rising to £85 million in 2005–06.

Information on the cost per participant that moved into employment in each of the Pathways to Work pilot areas is not available.

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the breakeven proportion of participants in pathways to work moved into employment is for each pilot area *(a)* overall and *(b)* for participants who have been receiving incapacity benefit for (i) less than a year and (ii) more than a year. [38494]

Margaret Hodge: Information in the form requested is not available. The Pathways to Work districts are piloting new measures and innovative approaches to helping people with long term illnesses or a disability to return to work. As pilot schemes, they are designed to test whether alternative approaches may be more effective than existing measures.

Early results show off-flows from incapacity benefit at six months of around 48 per cent. in the pilot areas compared with around 40 per cent. nationally, an improvement of 8 percentage points, resulting in a reduction in the incapacity benefit caseload which more than pays for the additional costs of the pilots.

Pension Credit

Jenny Willott: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many and what percentage of pensioners in *(a)* the UK, *(b)* England, *(c)* Wales and *(d)* Scotland have levels of income which are above the level of entitlement to pension credit by (i) £5, (ii) £10 and (iii) £20; and if he will make a statement. [34739]

Mr. Timms: No such estimate has been made.

Entitlement estimates for pensions credit will not be available until National Statistics take-up estimates for the first six months of pension credit are published early in 2006. Following publication of these estimates, we will be able to provide estimates of the proportion of pensioners who are in various bands of entitlement, Great Britain.

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the level of take-up of pension credit has been in each quarter since its launch. [38528]

Mr. Timms: The information requested is not available.

Latest estimates of the number of pensioners entitled to but not receiving the main income related benefits relate to financial year 2002–03 and predate the introduction of pension credit. Estimates for minimum income guarantee—the predecessor to pension credit—can be found in the DWP report entitled "Income Related Benefits Estimates of Take-Up in 2002–03". Copies of the publication are available in the Library.

Estimates of pension credit will be published in early 2006; this publication will include the first six months of pension credit. Estimates for the full year 2004–05 are expected to be published in May 2006.

Rent Service

Stewart Hosie: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what the basis was for the allocation of funding attributable to Scotland for administration of the rent service in the public sector statistical analysis; and which functions of the rent service relate to Scotland. [36017]

Mr. Timms: The allocation of DEL related expenditure over country and region, which includes the rent service, is based on DWP staff numbers in those areas.

The rent service is an executive agency of the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). It operates across England only, but there are separate organisations for rent officer functions linked into both the Scottish Executive and the Welsh Assembly.

Revised Jobseekers Agreement (Staffordshire)

Joan Walley: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what evaluation has been carried out of the revised jobseeker's agreement piloted in North Staffordshire. [37723]

Mr. Timms: The jobseeker's allowance (JSA) pilots were trialled in 13 districts covering 138 offices. The pilots were primarily designed to test different ways of delivering the JSA regime.

The research report "The Qualitative Evaluation of the JSA Intervention Regime Pilots" was published on 8 December this year, and contains an assessment of the revised jobseeker's agreement. The results were anonymised to avoid identification of information sources from individual offices. The report, therefore, does not single out North Staffordshire. The report is available in the Library.

Social Fund Loans

John Battle: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many people in Leeds applied for a social fund loan in each year since 2001. [37990]

Mr. Plaskitt: The information requested is in the table.

Loan applications in Leeds Social Fund District/Leeds Jobcentre Plus District

	Budgeting loans	*Crisis loans*
2001–02	24,434	11,608
2002–03	25,309	12,524
2003–04	25,837	13,117
2004–05	23,757	12,216
2005–06 (to end of November)	16,335	12,187

Note:
Leeds Jobcentre Plus District was previously known as Leeds Social Fund District.
Source:
DWP Social Fund Policy, Budget and Management Information System.

Volunteers

Mr. Gibb: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions how many volunteering positions his Department has offered in each of the last five years. [17886]

Mrs. McGuire: The information requested is not held centrally and could only be obtained at disproportionate cost.

Winter Fuel Payment

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions if he will take steps to ensure that single pensioners living in a property that shares a postcode with a care home receives the correct amount of winter fuel payment. [36627]

Mr. Timms: In these cases the decision is based on whether the accommodation the customer lives in constitutes a separate household. It takes into account factors such as whether the accommodation has its own postal address. If the lower amount is issued and further inquiries reveal that a £200 payment was due, a top up payment is issued.

If the hon. Member is aware of any instance in which a pensioner has received a smaller winter fuel payment than he or she was entitled to because of an error of this nature, the chief executive of the Pension Service would be grateful to be informed.

Women's Pensions

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions what discussions he has had with the Minister for Women on the future of women's pensions. [34635]

Mr. Timms: My right hon. Friend the Minister for Women spoke at the launch of the Department's report 'Women and Pensions: the Evidence' in Manchester on 7 November. Women's ability to build up pension entitlement is influenced by multiple factors such as education, employment, earnings and caring responsibilities that impact during their lifetime. We are continuing to work closely with the Minister for Women, the Deputy Minister for Women and Equality and colleagues in the Department of Trade and Industry on the issues surrounding women's working lives including labour market participation and the gender pay gap and their subsequent impact on pension accruals and entitlements.

HOME DEPARTMENT

Alcohol-related Crime

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research he has commissioned into the role of alcohol in rising levels of violent crime. [34159]

Paul Goggins: The British Crime Survey is considered the most reliable source of data on violent crime and the data published in July 2005 in a report called Crime in England and Wales 2004/05 indicates that the number of violent incidents fell by 11 per cent. based on comparison between 2003–04 and 2004–05 interview. Violent crime has fallen by 43 per cent. since a peak in 1995, an estimated 1.8 million fewer incidents. Although the Home Office has not commissioned any specific research into the role of alcohol and its impact on levels of violent crime it does monitor, via social surveys, levels of alcohol-related crime including violent crime. Data from the British crime survey on the percentage of violent incidents in England and Wales in which the victim believed one or more offenders was 'under the influence of drink' are published on a regular basis. The Offending crime and justice survey also contain information on the role of alcohol and violent offences and this information is also published on a regular basis.

Mr. Pelling: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many violent attacks were committed under the influence of alcohol and in connection with licensed premises in each of the last three years in *(a)* Croydon, *(b)* Sutton and *(c)* Bromley boroughs. [32277]

Paul Goggins: The requested information is not available.

Banned Drivers

Mr. Scott: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many drivers have been banned from driving for drink or drug related offences in the last 12 months; [38662]

(2) what percentage of drivers randomly tested were found to be over the legal alcohol limit in the last year for which figures are available. [38668]

Paul Goggins: 2005 data on drivers disqualified for drink or drug related offences will not be available until early 2007. 2004 data will be issued in March 2006.

Breath tests can be conducted only in accordance with the provisions of the Road Traffic Act 1988 and may not be carried out at random.

Animal Cruelty

Sarah Teather: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people were convicted of cruelty towards animals in London in each year since 1997. [5264]

Paul Goggins: The information requested is in the table. Statistics on court proceedings for 2005 will be available autumn 2006.

Number of offenders[1] found guilty for offences relating to animal cruelty in Greater London area (Metropolitan and City of London police force areas) 1997–2004

Statute	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*	*2001*	*2002*	*2003*	*2004*
Protection of Animals Act, 1911 (as amended)	57	46	46	48	48	44	46	29
Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 Sec 8	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Performing Animals (Regulation) Act 1925	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Protection of Animals Act, 1934	4	3	—	—	—	—	—	—
Docking and Nicking of Horses Act, 1949	—	—	—	1	—	—	—	—
Pet Animals Act, 1951	2	—	4	2	3	—	3	1
Cockfighting Act, 1952	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Protection of Animals (Amendment) Act, 1954	6	—	1	2	—	—	2	—
Animal Health Act, 1981, Secs 40–42, 46 and 49 and Orders made under Secs 8, 9, 37, 38, 39 and 43	8	3	11	9	13	12	5	12
Slaughterhouses Act, 1974	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Abandonment of Animals Act, 1960, Sec 1	—	4	—	1	2	—	—	—
Animal and Animal Products (Import and Export) Regulations 1988	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Animals (Cruel Poisons) Act, 1962	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Animal Boarding Establishments Act, 1963	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Riding Establishments Acts, 1964 and 1970	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Slaughter of Poultry Act, 1967	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Agriculture (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act, 1968, Secs 1, 2 and 6	1	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Protection of Badgers Act, 1992 (except Sec 13)	1	—	—	—	—	—	1	—
Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 Sec 9	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 Sec 11	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996	—	1	—	—	—	1	—	—
Breeding of Dogs Acts 1973 and 1991	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Breeding and Sale of Dogs (Welfare) Act 1999	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Diseases of Animals Act	2	7	7	2	13	8	12	16
Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Sees 1, 3, 5, 6, 7 and 17	8	1	74	2	1	1	10	22
Total	89	65	143	67	80	66	79	80

[1] Principal offence basis.

Asylum/Immigration

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many outstanding applications for leave to remain on grounds of asylum there are from applicants from each member state of the European Union; and if he will make a statement. [37577]

Mr. McNulty: Information on outstanding applications for asylum by nationality is unavailable and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost by examination of individual case records. There were 6,100 asylum applications outstanding at the end of September 2005.

James Duddridge: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his policy is on asylum seekers from Zimbabwe whose asylum applications have been rejected; and whether such asylum seekers are being sent back to their country of origin. [32698]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. Member to the statement I made on 14 December 2005, *Official Report*, columns 153–54WS.

John Bercow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps are being taken to ensure *(a)* that Iraqi failed asylum seekers are returned to their town of origin, *(b)* that their safety is guaranteed and *(c)* that they receive assistance to readjust to life in Iraq. [36308]

Mr. McNulty: All cases are taken forward on a case by case basis and we will return individuals to their home towns in those particular areas assessed as sufficiently stable.

The Home Office will enforce the return of Iraqis only if satisfied that they will not be at risk. These will be individuals whose asylum claim has been turned down on the basis that they are not at risk of persecution and do not need humanitarian protection.

As highlighted in previous announcements, in light of current circumstances in Iraq, there is a package of support in place for the enforced returnees. This includes $100 USD cash payment, access to re-skilling training and provision of transport to their home address in Iraq.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many asylum seekers accommodated in *(a)* England, *(b)* Northamptonshire and *(c)* Kettering constituency were granted asylum in each of the last 10 years; [37044]

(2) how many illegal immigrants who had been accommodated in *(a)* England, *(b)* Northamptonshire and *(c)* Kettering constituency have been deported in each of the last 10 years; [37045]

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(3) how many asylum seekers accommodated in *(a)* England, *(b)* Northamptonshire and *(c)* Kettering constituency were not granted asylum but were granted indefinite leave to remain in each of the last 10 years; [37046]

(4) how many asylum seekers accommodated in *(a)* Northamptonshire and *(b)* Kettering constituency have been granted refugee status in each of the last 10 years. [37047]

Mr. McNulty: Information on the case outcome of asylum seekers who have resided in particular areas of the UK is not available, and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost by the examination of individual case records.

The case information on illegal immigrants removed from the UK and their residences is unavailable.

Statistics on the location of asylum seekers in the UK are linked to the available information on the support that the asylum seeker receives. The numbers of asylum seekers supported by the National Asylum Support Service (MASS) are published on a quarterly and annual basis, broken down by local authority. The most recent publication covering the third quarter of 2005, and further historical publications are available on the Home Office Research Development and Statistics website at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/immigration1.html. Data on asylum seekers supported by MASS broken down by parliamentary constituency are also available from the Library of the House.

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 5 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 970W, on asylum/immigration, when information on allowed appeals is expected to become available; how many cases in which appeals have been allowed and the appellant has not yet been issued leave to remain are outstanding; and if he will make a statement. [36816]

Mr. McNulty: As previously explained information on how many outstanding cases there are in which appeals have been allowed and the appellant has yet to be issued with leave to remain is not available and can only be produced at disproportionate cost upon examination of individual cases.

Cannabis

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what estimate he has made of the levels of cannabis arriving in the UK from Afghanistan in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [33188]

Paul Goggins: The available information relates to seizures. In the last four financial years Her Majesty's Customs and Excise (HMCE) made seven seizures of cannabis (with a total weight of 300 kilograms) known to have originated in Afghanistan out of a total of 13,878 seizures (with a total weight of 240,000 kilograms).

Mr. Evans: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when the Government will publish the findings of the review of the reclassification of cannabis. [38140]

Paul Goggins: At the request of the Home Secretary, the Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (ACMD) has undertaken a review of the recent evidence about the effects of cannabis use on mental health and the alleged increase into the potency of cannabis products. The ACMD intends to publish its Report in early 2006.

Chemical/Biological Agents

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the research funded by his Department and conducted by the Food Standards Agency into the survivability of chemical and biological agents in bottled water and packaged food will be published; and if he will make a statement. [37899]

Mr. Charles Clarke: Information contained in this research could prove of value to individuals potentially wishing to tamper with food or drink products in order to pose a threat to the public for terrorist or other criminal purposes. Accordingly, it is not the intention of the Department to publish this research.

Christmas

David T.C. Davies: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what measures his Department is taking to celebrate and promote Christmas in 2005. [37286]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office is participating in a range of activities for its staff both to promote and celebrate Christmas.

Home Office staff have been invited to attend the Whitehall-wide Carol Service to be held on 15 December, organised and funded by the Whitehall Network of Christian Fellowships. Carol concerts are also being held in the main Home Office buildings in Croydon.

The Home Office has produced a corporate Christmas card to send to its external stakeholders, partners and contacts. The Home Secretary and permanent secretary will also send a seasonal message to staff. There will be Christmas trees and decorations in offices and reception areas in Home Office buildings. Staff restaurants in 2 Marsham Street and other buildings in the Home Office estate are providing a traditional Christmas lunchtime menu and individual prisons will organise a special Christmas dinner and other activities.

The Home Office is also participating in the Westminster Christmas Challenge organised by the Volunteering Centre Westminster to provide a range of practical assistance over the Christmas period to a number of local charities. Other individual areas of the Home Office are also organising fundraising and voluntary Christmas activities for a range of different charities.

Civic Pioneers Learning Network

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which local authorities *(a)* participate in and *(b)* used to participate in the Civic Pioneers Learning Network; and if he will make a statement. [33597]

Paul Goggins: There are 22 local authorities participating in the Civic Pioneer Network, shown in the list.

The Civic Pioneers initiative was developed by the Home Office's Civil Renewal Unit in discussion with the Local Government Association and the Society for Local Authority Chief Executives. A Civic Pioneer is a local authority committed to the ethos of community engagement, and is willing to share its experience in empowering local people in shaping public policies and services. Local authorities were invited to put themselves forward in working with the Home Office to develop and promote effective practices in support of this agenda. The scheme is voluntary and there is no funding attached to membership.

Birmingham City Council
Bradford Metropolitan District Council
London Borough of Camden
London Borough of Croydon
London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham
Harlow District Council
High Peak Borough and Derbyshire Dales District Councils (Joint)
Ipswich Borough Council
Leeds City Council
Liverpool City Council
Manchester City Council
Middlesbrough Borough Council
Newcastle City Council
London Borough of Newham
Plymouth City Council
Portsmouth City Council
Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
Sheffield City Council
Slough Borough Council
South Somerset District Council
London Borough of Southwark
Wolverhampton City Council
With 3 attached as associates:
Salford City Council
South Tyneside Council
Wiltshire County Council

Corporate Fraud

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps the Government are taking to encourage firms to report incidents of corporate fraud to the police; and if he will make a statement. [38236]

Paul Goggins: Criminal offences, including incidents of fraud, should be reported to the police.

A large amount of fraud can be prevented if organisations have proper fraud prevention measures in place and individuals take simple precautions to protect themselves. Government therefore works closely with the finance and retail sectors as well as with the police to combat fraud and takes an active role in improving public awareness of fraud and how to avoid becoming a victim.

For firms which are regulated by the Financial Services Authority (FSA), the Financial Services and Markets Act gives the FSA a role in preventing financial crime, including fraud. The FSA handbook includes a requirement that firms take reasonable care to establish and maintain effective systems and controls for countering the risk that they might be used to further financial crime and there is also an explicit requirement to report significant fraud. The combined code on corporate governance similarly requires all listed companies to maintain sound systems of internal control so as to safeguard company assets against relevant business risks, including the risk of fraud.

Terms of reference for a wide-ranging cross Government review of fraud were announced by the Attorney-General on 27 October 2005. The review will look at the scale of the problem, the appropriate role for Government in dealing with fraud and how resources could best be spent to maximise value for money across the system.

Correspondence

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will reply to the letters from the hon. Member for Hornsey and Wood Green of 5 July, 19 July and 5 October regarding a constituent, Mr. Rastgouy; what the average response time to hon. Members' inquiries to the immigration and nationality directorate is; and if he will make a statement. [32003]

Mr. McNulty: I refer the hon. Member to my reply of 12 December.

Credit Card Crime

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) how many stolen credit cards have been reported in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement; [38312]

(2) how much has been reported as stolen through fraudulent use of credit cards in each of the last five years; and if he will make a statement. [38316]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office does not keep statistics on the number of stolen credit cards or how much money has been stolen through fraudulent use of credit cards.

Industry figures produced by the Association for Payment Clearing Services (APACS) show that UK plastic card fraud losses in the last five years have been:

	£ million
2004	504.8
2003	420.4
2002	424.6
2001	411.5
2000	317.0

The most recent APACS figures issued in November show that total card fraud losses in the six months to the end of June 2005 decreased by 13 percent. (from £252.6 million to £219.4 million) compared with the same period in 2004.

Crime Rates

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the change in *(a)* recorded crime rates and *(b)* crime detection rates was between 2003–04 and 2004–05 in each basic command unit in the Northumbria police area. [34390]

Hazel Blears: The requested information has been published in the online statistical bulletin 11/05 'Crime in England and Wales 2004/05', and can be accessed via the following links:

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs05/bcu1.xls-offences recorded

http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/pdfs05/bcu2.xls-offences detected

From April 1999 to March 2004, Northumbria police force had fifteen basic command units (BCUs) within its area. With effect from April 2004, they were condensed to six BCUs by the force.

As a result of this action, Northumbria BCU figures for 2003–04 and 2004–05 are not directly comparable.

Criminal Assets

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the Home Office Annual Report, what percentage of the £84 million of criminal assets recovered in 2004–05 has been assigned to *(a)* front-line capacity and *(b)* local community objectives; and if he will make a statement. [32802]

Paul Goggins: Of the £84 million of criminal assets recovered in 2004–05, 34 per cent. (£28.5 million) was assigned to frontline capacity and 8.3 per cent. (£7 million) to local community projects.

Cycling (Blue Flashing Lights)

Mr. Lancaster: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the extent of the use of blue flashing lights by cyclists; and what guidance *(a)* he and *(b)* the Association of Chief Police Officers has issued regarding the implications for their use of the 1989 Road Vehicle Lighting Regulations. [38256]

Paul Goggins: No such assessment has been made and no such guidance has been issued.

Chief officers of police are best placed to assess the nature and cause of cycling offences locally and to decide the most appropriate response.

Under the 1989 road vehicles lighting regulations (as amended) blue flashing lights on pedal cycles are prohibited, unless the pedal cycle is being used for police, fire brigade or ambulance purposes. Flashing lights are now permitted on pedal cycles generally but must be white to the front and red to the rear.

Damages

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the 10 largest amounts of damages paid out by his Department in the last year for which figures are available, indicating in each case the nature of the claim. [27727]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office Legal Advisors Branch, Treasury Solicitors Finance and Home Office Finance are unable to produce this information without disproportionate cost being incurred.

Departmental Estate

Dr. Cable: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department which buildings and sites used by his Department and related agencies *(a)* have ceased to be used in the last year and *(b)* will be closed under plans for relocation. [31742]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The following buildings and sites formerly occupied by my Department and its agencies have ceased to be used under plans for relocation during the 12 month period to 30 November 2005:

Table 1

	Address
Basingstoke	Baring Centre, 35 Sarum Hill, RG21 1SS
Blackpool	Unit 8 Metropolitan Business Park, FY3 9LT
Bracknell	Bracknell Courthouse, Town Centre, RG12 1AE
Bradford	7 Spring Gardens, Manningham, BD1 3EJ
Brighton	Bell Tower Industrial Estate, BN2 5RU
Bristol	Brunel House, 83 Newfoundland Road, BS2 9LU
Chester	1 Stanley Place, CH1 2LU
Croydon	47c Dartnell Road, CRO 6JB
Croydon	Leon House, 233 High Street, CRO 9XT
Durham	Andill House, Catchgate, North Road, DH9 8UW
Folkestone	2 Plain Road, CT20 2QF
Gainsborough	Burbury House, 2 Morton Terrace, DN21 2RF
Gatwick	Platinum House, Gatwick Road, Crawley RH10 9RP
Gillingham	Dawes Street, Garage, ME7 5UQ
Hastings	32 Wellington Square, TN34 1PN
Hull	Dock Office Chambers, New Cross Street, HU1 3NQ
Hull	Room 231 Queens House, Paragon Street, HU1 3NQ
Hull	Rooms 234/5/6 Queens House, Paragon Street, HU1 3NQ
Hull	4X South Orbital Tr Est, Hedon Road, HU9 1NJ
Hull	Rooms 238/9 Queens House, Paragon Street, HU1 3NQ
Hull	Room 241 Queens House, Paragon Street HU1 3NQ
Hull	Clarence House, 60–62 Clarence Street, HU9 1DN
Ipswich	Foundation House, IP4 1BJ
Ipswich	Gower Street, IP2 8EX
Leeds	4th Floor, Devonshire House, 39 York Place, LS1 2ED
Little Hulton	4 Haysbrook Road, M28 6AY
Liverpool	Cotton Exchange Building, Old Hall Street, L3 9LQ
London	210 Chiswick High Road, W4 1PD
London	4th Floor, 200 Tottenham Court Road, W1 0YY
London	130 Powis Street, SE18 6NN
London	2 Burgos Grove, SE10 8LL
London	34 Greenwich High Road, SE10 8LW
London	16 High Street, Hampton Wick, KT1 4DB
London	32 Greenwich High Road, SE10 8LW
London	Grenadier House, 95–105 Horseferry Road, SW1
London	50 Queen Anne's Gate SW1
London	Waterloo Int. Terminal, Waterloo Road, SE1 7LT
London	19 Allington Towers, SW1E 5EB
Manchester	Grove House, Skerton Road, M16 OWJ
Market Drayton	10 Wilkinsons Walk, TF9 1PW
Meir	26 Sandon Road, ST3 7DL
Middlesbrough	18 Woodlands Road, TS1 3BE
Middlesbrough	2 Longlands Road, TS4 2JL
Newcastle	592/596 Welbeck Road, and Flat 5 Cowan Street, Walker, NE6 3AB
Norwich	117 Sackville Place, NR3 1JU
Nottingham	Albion House, Canal Street, NG1 7EG
Nottingham St. Anne's	38 Robin Hood Chase, NG3 4GY
Penrith	Clint Mill, Cornmarket, CA11 7HW
Portsmouth	Cumberland Business Centre, PO5 1DS
Portsmouth	Spring Gardens, PO1 2BT
Port Talbot	Emroch House, 46 Talbot Road (AP), SA13 1HU

Table 1

	Address
Port Talbot	Green Park Industrial Estate, SA12 6NU
Prescot	8 Derby Street, L34 3LG
Reading	Friar Street, RG1 1EX
Reading	1 Wood Green Close, RG30 2AW
Sheerness	Unit 10a New Road, ME12 1DE
Swansea	Unifloc Building, 11/16 Adelaide Street, SA1 1QS
Witney	41a High Street, OX28 6HP
Yeovil	9 Bartlett Mews, 20 Oxford Road, BA21 5HR

The following buildings and sites are provisionally due to be closed under plans for relocation during the 12 month period from 1 December 2005:

Table 2

	Address
Aberystwyth	23 Grays Inn Road, SY23 1QE
Barnsley	6 Victoria Road, S70 2BB
Bristol	Tower House, Fairfax Street, BS1 3BT
Bromley	Crosby House, Elmfield Road, BR1 1LT
Bromley	6 Beckenham Road, BR3 4LR
Cambridge	Westbrook Centre, Milton Road, CB4 1YG
Crewe	47 Delamere Street, CW1 2JX
Croydon	Croydon MC, Barclay Road, CR9 3NE
Croydon	Church House, Old Palace Road, CRO 1AX
Croydon	51 Wandle Road, CRO 1DF
Croydon	Sunley House, Bedford Park, CRO 2AP
Derby	Willow House, Willow Row, DE1 3NZ
Derby	Sitwell House, Babington Lane, DE1 2JT
Durham	84 Claypath, DH1 1RG
Lambeth	Harpenden House, Norwood Road, SE27 9AZ
Leicester	39 Millstone Lane, LE5 1JN
Liverpool	1b and 1c Derby Lane, L13 6QA
Liverpool	Curtis House, 1d Derby Lane, Old Swan, L13 6QA
Liverpool	Albion House, 30 James Street, L2 7PS
Liverpool	137/139 Breckwith Road North, Kirkby, L5 4QY
Llandudno	18 Augusta Street, LL30 2AD
London	85 Buckingham Gate, SW1E 6PD
London	401 St. John Street, EC1V 4RW
London	71 Lordship Lane, Haringey N17 6RS
London	53 Holloway Road, Islington N7 8 JD
London	Telfer House, Church Road, N6 4QJ
Newport	19/20 Gold Tops, NP9 4UG
Northampton	37/34 Regent Street, NN1 2LA
Norwich	Bishopsgate, NR1 6RS
Norwich	22/24 Colgate, NR3 1BQ
Norwich	Palace Street, NR3 1RT
Nottingham	6 The Ropewalk, NG1 5DT
Oldbury	16 Church Square, B69 4DX
Port Talbot	Unit 48 Endeavour Close, Purcell Avenue, SA13 7PT
Reading	Castle Street, RG1 7SP
Reading	Crown House, Crown Street, RG1 2SE
Scarborough	10/12 Falsgrave Road, YO12 5AT
Scarborough	1 Roscoe Street, YO12 7BX
Scarborough	1st and 2nd Floors 57a Westborough, YO11 1TU
Shutton	10/12 Salisbury Street, CH5 1DR
Southwark	123 Grove Park, SE5 8LD
Swindon	1/2 Commercial Road, SN1 5NF
Swindon	15 Milton Road, SN1 5NF
West Bromwich	27 High Street, B70 8ND
York	The Hawkhills, Easingwold, YO61 3EG

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what *(a)* building and *(b)* refurbishment projects are planned by his Department in (i) 2005–06 and (ii) 2006–07; and what the expected costs are of each project. [37383]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The information for projects, other than those related to national security and those costing less than £1 million, is set out in the following table. Details of projects that cost less than £1 million are not held centrally and can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Building projects planned for 2005–06

Agency/area	*Project details*	*Value (£ million)*
NOMS	Hmp Aklington—New Kitchen	4.5
NOMS	HMP Cardiff—Health Care Centre	8.1
NOMS	Chelmsford—New Houseblock and Ancillaries	23.8
NOMS	HMP Durham—New health care unit	4.9
NOMS	Everthorpe—Ancillary works	9.9
NOMS	HMP Frankland—New kitchen	4.5
NOMS	HMP Gartree—Houseblock Ancillaries	8.3
NOMS	YJB—Substance misuse unit	1.3
NOMS	HMP Low Newton—Perimeter and New roofing	3
NOMS	HMP Newhall—Juvenile Unit	4.3
NOMS	HMP Norwich—Health care Unit	2.9
NOMS	STC Hassockfield—Young womens unit	4.5

Departmental Research

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what research projects commissioned by his Department are being undertaken; and what the publication arrangements are in each case. [32997]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office commissions a variety of social and scientific research in order to improve policy making, decision taking and to provide the public and Parliament with information necessary for informed debate and for future use. All high quality social research outputs will either be published by the Home Office, or permission granted for such outputs to be published elsewhere.

The majority of social research is published as online reports, freely available on the Home Office website. Some works are still published in paper form, such as the Home Office research studies, and the summary publication: Findings. The Home Office Scientific Development Branch (HOSDB) Business Plan 2005–06 outlines the wide range of work carried out by HOSDB to deliver on the (recently published) HO Science and Innovation Strategy, increasing the effective use of physical sciences in Home Office business. The HOSDB Business Plan is available on the Home Office website. HOSDB is carrying out in excess of 100 science and technology projects to increase the capabilities of its stakeholders. As has been the case for many years, publications arising from the (non-classified) work will be made available in hard copy and (more recently) on the Home Office website.

Other (classified) publications will be given a limited circulation and issued to key stakeholders in their preferred format as appropriate. The Forensic Science Service carries out projects funded by the Home Office Hard Science research and development fund. The results of these projects are published when appropriate in peer-reviewed journals.

There are a number of other areas of the Department that also undertake research to inform policy development. The available information providing details of the research projects currently being undertaken across the Department and its agencies has been summarised in tables which will be placed in the Library, together with copies of the business plan for RDS NOMS.

Immigration Research and Statistics Service—research programme

Project title	*Description of objective of work*	*Publication arrangements*
Longitudinal research with refugees		
Resettlement policy and practice	Literature review of resettlement policy and practice in other developed countries and detailed policy analysis in four resettlement countries (USA, Canada, Netherlands and Sweden). The aim of this work is to identify the mechanisms through which other resettlement schemes operate, and effective practice	Publication date to be decided
Predeparture orientation	Scoping study and systematic literature review about effective ways of preparing resettled refugees before they leave current location	Publication date to be decided
Longitudinal and cross-cultural methodological development: workshop	Workshop with international experts on longitudinal and cross-cultural research methods to enable team to develop methods and tools that are acceptable	Planned for early 2006
Research with refugees arriving under the Gateway protection resettlement programme	Longitudinal study to examine the integration and resettlement experiences of those arriving in the UK under the Quota Resettlement Programme	Publication date to be decided
Longitudinal survey of refugees (renamed from longitudinal survey of refugees and other migrants)	Longitudinal study to examine the integration experiences of refugees	Publication date to be decided
Data linking	Investigate the potential for linking DWP and HO databases and develop a method for accessing administrative data to support other longitudinal data collection	No plans to publish

Notes:
1 = Strategic statistics
2 = Strategic research
3 = Evaluation/OR
4 = Performance analysis/policy support

Project title	*Description of objective of work*	*Publication arrangements*
Managed and irregular migration		
Employer study	Qualitative interviews with employers to establish the practices of recruitment and employment and attitudes towards migrants as a labour source	Planned for mid 2006
Worker Registration Scheme—employees experience	Analysis of date sets held by WP(UK) to answer the question raised by Ministers on whether people on the WRS are returning home or remaining in the UK	No plans to publish
Increases in entry age for spouses—evaluation of impacts on forced marriage	Understand the impact that increasing the entry age for spouses has had on the incidence of forced marriages involving British citizens	Publication date to be decided
Illegally resident third country nationals in the EU member states: state approaches towards them, their profile and social situation	Part of the work programme for the European Migration Network as agreed by the European Commission and member states. It is intended to collate data on approaches to illegal residence in different EU countries	Publication date to be decided

Project title	*Description of objective of work*	*Publication arrangements*
Asylum processes, reception and returns		
Comparative European research on accommodation and reception processes and impacts	Detailed comparative research on the use and impacts of accommodation centres in the Netherlands, Germany, Sweden and Denmark	Planned for early 2006
Data linking	Investigate the potential for linking DWP and HO databases and develop a method for accessing administrative data to support other longitudinal data collection	No plans to publish
Success factors in NASS dispersal	To establish what factors contribute to successful dispersal (in terms of community relations) and how NASS can develop its practice and policies accordingly	Planned for December 2005
Section 9 implementation	Assisting operational colleagues in producing a final evaluation that conforms to requisite standards. Undertaking inferential data analysis and assisting in development of qualitative code frames	Publication date to be decided
Developing Iraqi-focused voluntary return programmes	A qualitative research project with Iraqi nationals, community leaders and relevant stakeholders	Publication date to be decided
Evaluation of Voluntary Assisted Return	To evaluate the programme on voluntary return, to assess effectiveness	Publication date to be decided

Project title	Description of objective of work	Publication arrangements
and Reintegration Programmes (VARRP)—2004	and make recommendations for future development	
Return of unaccompanied asylum seeker children	To be determined	Publication date to be decided

Project title	Description of objective of work	Publication arrangements
Community relations and refugee integration		
Review of the evidence on good practice and what works in integration of new migrants	To review the evidence base regarding "what works" in the integration of refugees and other recent migrants, to inform a presentation at the 2004 UK National Integration Conference and, in the longer term, IRSS's research strategy	Planned for early 2006
Informing ethnic monitoring of passengers arriving at UK airports	Request from Race Monitor to develop methodology to monitor passengers subjected to more rigorous examination	Planned for mid 2006
Data linking	Investigate the potential for linking DWP and HO databases and develop a method for accessing administrative data to support other longitudinal data collection	No plans to publish
Evaluation of CF and ERF	To evaluate the fund and identify cost effective interventions; to provide technical support to facilitate self-evaluation and development of interventions: reception, return, integration. Funded by ERF and CF. Three sub-projects (Evaluation 2003–04, Impact 2003–04, Evaluation 2004–05)	Publication date to be decided
Evaluation of SUNRISE	Evaluate implementation of first stage roll-out; provide data on outputs from SUNRISE	Publication date to be decided

Disability

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the initial activity undertaken by his Department in response to those recommendations in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit Report Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People where lead responsibility was assigned to all Government Departments. [37090]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office has welcomed the Strategy Unit Report Improving Life Chances for Disabled People. The package of recommendations put forward should deliver improved outcomes for disabled people, their families and society as a whole. Although the Home Office does not hold sole responsibility for the recommendations put forward, the department has responded positively by taking forward the joint recommendations as part of the work on public sector duties under the Disability Discrimination Act 2005. The department, working closely with the new Office of Disability Issues and the Disability Rights Commission is reviewing its policies and services to identify the action needed to deliver equality for disabled people.

Departmental Staff

Mike Penning: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many staff in his Department were *(a)* civil servants, *(b)* contractors and *(c)* other staff in each year since 1997. [27446]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The number of staff who were *(a)* civil servants, *(b)* contractors, *(c)* other staff in each year since 1997 is as in the following table:

	Home Office			Prison Service	
	Civil servant	*Contractors*	*Others*	*Civil servant*	*Contractors*
1997	9,309	—	—	40,208	—
1998	8,029	—	—	42,101	—
1999	7,675	—	—	43,108	—
2000	9,230	—	—	43,931	—
2001	12,980	—	—	44,163	—
2002	13,573	—	—	45,586	—
2003	19,589	—	—	47,247	—
	-19,233	—	—	—	—
2004	19,729	—	—	48,620	466.1
	-19,267	—	—	—	—
2005	19,630	153	2,503	48,501	394.9
	-19,317	—	—	—	—

	FSC		FSS		UKPS
	Civil servant	Contractors and others	Civil servant	Contractors and others	Staff at end of year
1997	177	n/a	1,157	104	2,125
1998	213	n/a	1,209	159	2,199
1999	148	n/a	1,481	228	1,970
2000	140	n/a	1,760	175	2,326
2001	150	n/a	2,042	265	2,757(76)
2002	[1]	[1]	2,413	267	3,128(303)
2003	[1]	[1]	2,521	208	2,656
2004	[1]	[1]	2,579	118	3,100
2005	[1]	[1]	2,531	111	3,190

[1] Moved outside HO Department

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many civilian staff employed by his Department have been made redundant in each year since 1995; and if he will make a statement. [34329]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The number of civilian staff employed by the Home Office Department who have been made redundant in each year since 1995 are as follows:

	Home Office	Prison Service	United Kingdom Passport Service	Forensic Science Service	Fire Service College
1995	22	Not available	0	0	8
1996	26	Not available	0	8	0
1997	12	Not available	0	47	0
1998	3	12	0	0	0
1999	2	16	0	1	0
2000	2	14		0	0
2001	2	8		0	1
2002	6	14	10	0	
2003	3	5		84	Ceases to be HO agency
2004	0	3		52	
2005	0	4		4	

Direct Mail Contracts

Norman Baker: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many contracts for direct mail were signed by his Department in *(a)* 2005–06 to date and *(b)* 2004–05; and what the value was in each case. [27783]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Department has awarded one contract for direct mail in 2005–06. The value of the spend to date is £17,200. The Department did not award any contracts for direct mail in 2004–05.

DNA Profiles

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many people who have not been charged or cautioned for an offence have DNA profiles stored in the police national database; and if he will make a statement. [34330]

Andy Burnham: There are 139,463 people who have a DNA profile on the national DNA database (NDNAD) who have not been charged or cautioned with an offence.

This figure comprises: 124,347 people who have a DNA profile on the NDNAD who have been arrested and subsequently not been charged or cautioned with an offence. This information was provided by the Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) and obtained from the police national computer (PNC) which is linked to the NDNAD; and 15,116 volunteer sample profile records retained on the NDNAD.

A volunteer sample is a DNA sample taken from an individual in relation to the investigation of an offence for elimination purposes and not as a result of the individual having been arrested in connection with an offence. The volunteer must give written consent to provide the sample; and can also volunteer to have their DNA profile held on the database by providing separate written consent for this. Volunteer samples may be taken from, for example, the victim of a crime, a third party, a member of a population identified for an intelligence-led screen or from an individual at their request.

Grant Shapps: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many children under the age of 18 years have been added to the national DNA database in each year since 1996. [38505]

Andy Burnham: The estimated number of records of individuals aged 10–17 years added to the national DNA database in each year since 1995 is shown in the following table. The figures take account of replicate sample records on the database.

	Estimated number of 10 to 17-year-olds added to the database
1995	3,163
1996	11,719
1997	18,387
1998	32,810
1999	42,631
2000	70,627
2001	95,471
2002	96,359
2003	86,291
2004	101,503
2005 to date	126,787

Domestic Violence

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 3 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1253W, on domestic violence, what surveys on child and elder abuse have been undertaken by his Department in each of the last five years. [29559]

Hazel Blears: The Home Office has not undertaken any dedicated surveys on child and elder abuse.

Drug Testing (Drivers)

Miss McIntosh: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the *(a)* unit cost per test and *(b)* cost of the necessary equipment for testing for drugs while driving is using the latest methods of testing saliva; whether he plans to make these tests available for roadside testing; and if he will make a statement. [28590]

Paul Goggins: The Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 amends the Road Traffic Act 1988 to authorise the police to conduct compulsory roadside test for impairment and for the presence of drugs. Any equipment used to test for drugs by testing a specimen of sweat or saliva must be of a type approved by the Secretary of State. Since there is as yet no such equipment, tests cannot at present be conducted. It is therefore not possible to give the unit cost per test or the cost of the equipment necessary to conduct the test.

A detailed device specification is currently in preparation. We hope this will be available in early 2006. Manufacturers will then be able to submit to the rigorous type approval process any device they have developed which complies with the specification.

Drugs

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he will publish drug seizure and offender statistics for England and Wales for 2003; and what the reasons are for the delay in publication. [37900]

Paul Goggins: These statistics have been published within "Drug offenders in England and Wales 2003" (findings 256, 1 March 2005) and "Seizures of drugs in England and Wales, 2003" (findings 265, 25 August 2005). Both of these publications, along with respective supplementary tables, are available online at http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/rds/rfpubs1.htm.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many individuals were sentenced to immediate custody for unlawful possession of cannabis in 2004 in cases where that was the most serious offence for which the individual was sentenced. [37901]

Paul Goggins: There were 161 persons sentenced to immediate custody for possession of cannabis, out of 13,302 sentenced for this offence in 2004. These figures relate to cases where the possession offence attracted the highest penalty.

Mr. Ruffley: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* arrests, *(b)* convictions and *(c)* cautions for offences relating to (i) possession and (ii) dealing in class (A) A, (B) B and (C) C drugs there were in each police authority area in 2004. [35467]

Paul Goggins: Data from the court proceedings database held by the Office for Criminal Justice Reform on the number of cautions and convictions for possession of and dealing in drugs in 2004, broken down by class of drug, is provided in the following table.

The information requested on arrests is not collected centrally.

Number of offenders cautioned for selected drug offences, by police force area: England and Wales, 2004

Offence: Supplying or offering to supply (or being concerned in supplying or offering to supply a controlled drug)
Statute: Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 S4(3)

Police force area	*Class A drugs*	*Class B drugs*	*Class C drugs*
Avon and Somerset	—	1	1
Cheshire	2	—	—
Cumbria	1	—	—
Cambridgeshire	—	1	3
Cleveland	—	1	—
Cumbria	—	2	—
Derbyshire	—	—	1
Devon and Cornwall	1	4	7
Dorset	1	—	1
Durham	—	1	—
Essex	1	3	4
Gloucestershire	—	2	1
Greater Manchester	2	2	10
Hampshire	—	2	3
Hertfordshire	2	—	—
Humberside	1	3	1
Kent	2	3	3
Lancashire	2	1	4
Leicestershire	1	4	—

Number of offenders cautioned for selected drug offences, by police force area: England and Wales, 2004

Offence: Supplying or offering to supply (or being concerned in supplying or offering to supply a controlled drug)
Statute: Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 S4(3)

Police force area	*Class A drugs*	*Class B drugs*	*Class C drugs*
Lincolnshire	1	4	—
London	14	17	28
Merseyside	4	—	—
Norfolk	3	—	—
North Yorkshire	2	2	5
Northamptonshire	3	—	—
Northumbria	3	4	5
Nottinghamshire	2	1	—
South Yorkshire	—	1	1
Staffordshire	3	3	—
Suffolk	2	6	4
Surrey	5	1	8
Sussex	2	2	2
Thames Valley	4	4	2
Warwickshire	4	3	1
West Mercia	5	3	5
West Midlands	5	1	8
West Yorkshire	11	2	4
Dyfed-Powys	2	8	—
Gwent	—	1	2
North Wales	—	1	6
South Wales	3	2	2
England and Wales	94	96	122

Number of offenders cautioned for selected drug offences, by police force area: England and Wales, 2004

Offence: Having possession of a controlled drug
Statute: Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 S.5(2)

Police force area	*Class A drugs*	*Class B drugs*	*Class C drugs*
Avon and Somerset	233	189	188
Bedfordshire	2	26	25
Cambridgeshire	59	72	160
Cheshire	77	201	9
Cleveland	49	80	131
Cumbria	74	79	171
Derbyshire	18	44	70
Devon and Cornwall	84	212	39
Dorset	68	81	171
Durham	57	66	104
Essex	34	25	256
Gloucestershire	77	213	234
Greater Manchester	192	230	835
Hampshire	171	193	546
Hertfordshire	62	60	219
Humberside	56	207	126
Kent	99	292	227
Lancashire	260	406	540
Leicestershire	29	445	119
Lincolnshire	15	135	5
London	769	2,674	3,373
Merseyside	174	100	733
Norfolk	89	46	189
North Yorkshire	7	9	17
Northamptonshire	51	67	290
Northumbria	761	778	634
Nottinghamshire	43	327	1
South Yorkshire	81	63	216
Staffordshire	198	467	5
Suffolk	47	82	201
Surrey	81	90	356
Sussex	176	291	313
Thames Valley	235	150	647
Warwickshire	84	61	92
West Mercia	130	116	415
West Midlands	229	310	1,246
West Yorkshire	242	389	660
Wiltshire	27	30	167
Dyfed-Powys	90	494	15

Number of offenders cautioned for selected drug offences, by police force area: England and Wales, 2004

Offence: Having possession of a controlled drug *Statute: Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 S.5(2)* *Police force area*	*Class A drugs*	*Class B drugs*	*Class C drugs*
Gwent	7	13	172
North Wales	135	162	289
South Wales	204	139	399
England and Wales	5,576	10,114	14,605

Number of offenders cautioned for selected drug offences, by police force area: England and Wales, 2004

Offence: Having possession of a controlled drug with intent to supply *Statute: Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 S.5(3)* *Police force area*	*Class A drugs*	*Class B drugs*	*Class C drugs*
Avon and Somerset	—	5	2
Bedfordshire	—	1	2
Cambridgeshire	—	1	5
Cheshire	4	1	1
Cleveland	6	6	2
Cumbria	2	1	1
Devon and Cornwall	—	1	2
Dorset	1	1	1
Durham	—	—	1
Essex	1	—	2
Gloucestershire	6	14	—
Greater Manchester	3	4	10
Hampshire	—	1	3
Hertfordshire	3	1	7
Humberside	2	—	—
Kent	3	9	7
Lancashire	2	6	3
Leicestershire	—	1	—
Lincolnshire	—	4	—
London	30	57	108
Merseyside	1	—	2
Norfolk	4	6	—
Northamptonshire	2	—	—
Northumbria	5	10	2
Nottinghamshire	4	17	—
South Yorkshire	3	2	4
Staffordshire	3	2	1
Suffolk	5	4	5
Surrey	3	12	27
Sussex	1	4	7
Thames Valley	2	3	3
Warwickshire	1	2	1
West Mercia	1	4	4
West Midlands	7	6	23
West Yorkshire	30	16	37
Wiltshire	1	—	1
Dyfed-Powys	—	3	2
North Wales	—	—	1
South Wales	1	2	3
England and Wales	137	207	280

Notes:
1. These data are on the principal offence basis.
2. Includes City of London police force area.

Source:
RDS—Office for Criminal Justice Reform.

Drunk and Disorderly

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department in how many assaults recorded in the last five years in *(a)* London, *(b)* Havering and *(c)* Romford alcohol consumption was a contributing factor. [33918]

Paul Goggins: From the information collected on recorded crime it is not possible to identify those assaults which are alcohol-related. Such offences are not specifically defined by statute and details of the individual circumstances of offences do not feature in the data series.

Economic Crime Units

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the size is of the Economic Crime Unit of each police force in England. [37428]

Hazel Blears: This information is not held centrally. It is for the chief officer of each force to determine how to allocate the resources, including staff, at his/her disposal, taking into account local and national policing priorities.

EU Criminal Intelligence

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will make a statement on the development of an EU criminal intelligence model. [35523]

Paul Goggins: The criminal intelligence model being developed in the Council of the European Union is a cyclical intelligence process based on Europol's organised crime threat assessment. The Government are pleased that during the United Kingdom's presidency of the EU agreement has been reached that Europol will produce a first threat assessment by April 2006. This will provide a new basis for Ministers in the Council to set strategic organised crime priorities.

It will also provide operational leads that member states can pursue through initiating major cross-border investigations to disrupt significant criminal activity. The intelligence cycle will be completed with the results and intelligence generated by cross-border investigations being recycled to support the next round of the threat assessment.

European Commission (Anti-crime Measures)

Mr. Gauke: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his policy is on the European Commission's proposals to establish a specialised investigation or prosecutorial body for dealing with the investigation of cases linked with organised crime. [36321]

Paul Goggins: I refer the hon. Member to the answer I gave on 8 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1527W.

General Group Managed Migration Directorate

Mr. David Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his Department's target is for *(a)* an acknowledgement of and *(b)* a substantive response to correspondence received by the General Group Managed Migration Directorate. [36885]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) receives well over 1 million pieces of correspondence each year. The IND's policy is to acknowledge the receipt of all immigration, asylum, asylum support and citizenship applications either by sending a letter or issuing a form. We aim to acknowledge all new applications within one week of receipt. If there is a problem with the payment in connection with an application, the applicant will receive a reply rather than an acknowledgement. Other casework-related correspondence is not at present routinely acknowledged. General Group deals with casework correspondence as part of substantive consideration of applications. Service standards for decisions depend upon the type of application made and are published on the IND website.

Influenza Pandemic

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 5 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1061W, on the influenza pandemic, if he will *(a)* publish the assessment and *(b)* place a copy in the Library when it is put to Ministers. [38008]

Paul Goggins: I anticipate that draft guidance will be circulated to stakeholders early next year: a copy of the draft guidance will be placed in the House Library.

Licensing Act

Adam Afriyie: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what extra resources he is providing to *(a)* police authorities and *(b)* other bodies to implement the Licensing Act 2003. [34163]

Hazel Blears: On 5 December 2005 I announced the provisional funding settlement for Police Authorities in England and Wales for 2006–07 and 2007–08. Government grant and central spending on services for the police will have increased by 56 per cent. or almost £4 billion between 2000–01 and 2007–08. Allocation of resources between activities is an operational matter for the Chief Constable, in the context of local police authority plans.

Streamlining administrative licensing processes by the police under the Licensing Act 2003 should lead to a saving of up to £15million annually. The Act gives the police further powers to tackle alcohol related disorder, for example, by allowing temporary or permanent reductions in trading hours. Through the Violent Crime Reduction Bill we are also introducing further powers for the police to help them tackle the problems of alcohol related crime or disorder.

We have also recently announced funding of £2.5 million to boost a range of operations to crack down on alcohol-related disorder; the sale of alcohol to under-18s and drunks; and the closure of problem premises.

Mobile Speed Cameras

Mr. Martyn Jones: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the accuracy of the mobile speed camera LTI 2020; and if he will make a statement. [33008]

Paul Goggins: The version of the LTI 20.20 speed meter that is type-approved for use by the police underwent very rigorous field and laboratory testing prior to the grant of type approval. It is self-calibrating and has an internal fault reporting system. All speed cameras are also subject to an annual check to ensure their continuing reliability.

I am satisfied that the device operates to a high degree of accuracy when used in accordance with the code of practice issued by the Association of Chief Police Officers.

Motor Vehicles (Safety Equipment)

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* males and *(b)* females have been (i) charged with and (ii) convicted

of offences under section (A) 1 and (B) 2 of the Motor Vehicles (Safety Equipment for Children) Act 1991 in each of the last 10 years for which figures are available; and if he will make a statement on the operation of the Act. [29299]

Paul Goggins: Statistics on the number of persons charged with a crime are not centrally collected.

There are no offences under The Motor Vehicles (Safety Equipment for Children) Act 1991.

The Motor Vehicles (Safety Equipment for Children) Act 1991 enables regulations to be made about the type of restraints (e.g. car child seats) to be used by children in motor vehicles. It also covers the information to be provided on the installation and use of such restraints.

No such regulations have been made. Instead, provisions for child restraints are included in the Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts) Regulations 1993 (SI 1993 No 176) and the Motor Vehicles (Wearing of Seat Belts by Children in Front Seats) Regulations 1993 (SI 1993 No 31) made under sections 14 and 15 (as amended) of the Road Traffic Act 1988.

Those Regulations refer to the Road Vehicles (Construction and Use) Regulations 1986 (SI 1986 No 1078) which demand that child restraints satisfy the requirements of the British Standards Institute or the international requirements of EC Directive 77/541/EEC or Regulation 44 of the United Nations Economic Commission for Europe. In addition to performance standards, these include requirements for installation instructions to be provided with new restraints.

National Firearms Register/National Identity Card Project

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the budget is for *(a)* the National Firearms Register and *(b)* the National Identity Card project for each year from 2002–03; and how many staff from his Department are working on each. [33241]

Hazel Blears: The Police Information Technology Organisation's (PITO) budget for the National Firearms Licensing Management System for 2002–03 was £997,000 (8), 2003–04 was £1,625,000 (5) and for 2004–05 it was £1,400,000 (5).

The Project Manager and Project Support Officer are the only people employed on this project full time. All other areas of PITO contribute time as and when needed. The figure in brackets represents the number of full time equivalents for each year.

The Identity Cards Programme expenditure for 2002–03 was £280,801.94, for 2003–04 it was £1,035,717.55 and for 2004–05 it was £12,376,637.77.

A total of 49 Home Office staff are employed on the Identity Cards Programme. Within the Immigration and Nationality Directorate (IND) there are 6.9 people (full time equivalent) working on the ID cards project. A number of people at United Kingdom Passport Service (UKPS) work on the ID cards project, although none exclusively, in terms of full-time equivalent there were 3.2 UKPS staff working on the ID cards project.

Passports

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what proportion of passport photographs were rejected for not meeting the required standards in the last year for which figures are available. [35391]

Andy Burnham: The United Kingdom Passport Service (UKPS) have not retained detailed data on the reasons for rejection of applications in the past. As such, it is not possible to answer this question for the full year as requested. UKPS have manually kept photo rejection data from 12 September 2005. For the period of 18 September 2005 to 4 December 2005, UKPS rejected 12.5 per cent. of applications due to passport photograph standards.

Prior to the implementation of the new photographic standards, data is not available.

People Trafficking

David Mundell: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department why the Government have not yet ratified the Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. [33412]

Paul Goggins: The Government have not yet taken a final decision on whether to sign the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings. Whilst we support the aims of the Convention, there are provisions which present concerns for the UK and which remain under active consideration.

The Government have in place a multi-faceted strategy to tackle trafficking in human beings. We are determined that the measures we take both protect the victims of trafficking and bring the criminals responsible for this serious organised crime to justice.

Police

Simon Hughes: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what sanctions exist for misuse of confidential information relating to activities of the police by *(a)* elected local representatives and *(b)* police authority members, their advisers or employees. [26107]

Hazel Blears: Local authorities and police authorities are required to adopt a Code of Conduct that sets out rules governing the behaviour of their members, including the disclosure of confidential information. The Standards Board for England can consider any written allegations it receives that claim a member has breached that Code. Police authority employees or advisors are not covered by this Code. Police authority employees have an employment contract that sets out the action that may be taken for misuse of confidential information. Inappropriate use of information by police authority advisers is deemed to be a 'breach of trust' by the police authority. Authorities have a range of processes for dealing with inappropriate use of information, but no central established procedures.

Mr. Blunt: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list the occasions *(a)* before and *(b)* after 26 October on which (i) the chief constable and (ii) other senior police officers of the Surrey constabulary contacted hon. Members representing constituencies in Surrey about the Terrorism Bill; and what form that contact took. [34201]

Mr. Charles Clarke: This is a matter for the chief constable of Surrey.

Bob Spink: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department when he expects the pilot scheme on hand-held computers for police officers on the beat to be completed; and if he will make a statement. [34495]

Hazel Blears: The Police Information Technology Organisation is currently working with a small number of forces on trialling the use of hand-held computers. The trials are expected to be completed by mid 2006 and the results will be circulated to all forces.

Mrs. Villiers: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers have been allocated to the London borough of Barnet in each year since 1997. [36470]

Hazel Blears: The information for Barnet borough Operational Command Unit is set out in the following table. Data on strength at Basic Command Unit (BCU) level has only been collected since 2002. Deployment of police resources to Barnet is an operational matter for the Commissioner of Police of the Metropolis.

Barnet borough operational command unit police officer numbers, 2002 to 2005

As at 31 March	*Number of officers*[1]
2002[2]	514
2003[3]	522
2004	541
2005	561

[1] Full-time equivalent numbers.
[2] Data collected by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary.
[3] From 2003 collected by Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate.

Helen Southworth: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) which police authorities have agreed joint protocols with local authorities in their areas for management of cases of children reported missing from home or care; [36473]

(2) which police authorities use *(a)* computerised and *(b)* paper-based recording and case management systems for reports of children missing from home or care; [36474]

(3) what information is centrally recorded on the number of children and young people reported missing to the police; for how long such information is held; and for what purposes it is used; [36476]

(4) which police authorities meet the missing person case management recording and investigation standards published by the Association of Chief Police Officers in 2005. [36477]

Hazel Blears: Information on protocols with local authorities and police forces meeting the relevant Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) standards is not centrally held. A Centrex implementation team is assisting police forces to achieve compliance with the ACPO standards with a target date of April 2006. Police forces with IT systems for handling missing persons reports are set out in the following list.

Information on missing persons reported to the police is held centrally on the police national computer (PNC)—name, date of birth, sex, description, date when person went missing, date reported to the police, circumstances of the disappearance and force reference number—and in the Police National Missing Persons Bureau (PNMPB)—full descriptive information relating to missing person and circumstances of disappearance, investigative considerations, person making the report and next of kin. All unresolved cases are held indefinitely.

Reporting to the PNC permits forces in the UK to identify a person reported missing and to respond appropriately. PNMPB records permit comparison of missing person reports and notification to police forces or Interpol. The PNMPB also prepares quarterly statistics including missing males/females under fourteen years of age, between fourteen and seventeen and aged eighteen and over.

The best information to hand at the present time relating to IT systems in forces shows that the following have such systems:-

Avon and Somerset
Derbyshire
Gloucestershire
Greater Manchester police
Hampshire—in development
Hertfordshire
Lancashire
Leicestershire
Lincolnshire—in development
Metropolitan police
Norfolk
North Wales
Northamptonshire—in development
Nottinghamshire
Staffordshire
South Yorkshire
Suffolk
Surrey
Thames Valley
West Mercia
West Midlands

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers in *(a)* Southend, *(b)* Essex, *(c)* Hertfordshire, *(d)* Greater London and *(e)* England and Wales use bicycles while patrolling; and what the figures were in (i) 1992, (ii) 1996, (iii) 1997, (iv) 1998, (v) 2001 and (vi) 2004. [37540]

Hazel Blears: This information is not collected.

Mr. Jenkin: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police officers are serving in *(a)* Essex and *(b)* England and Wales; what these figures represent per head of the population in each case; and how many police officers were serving in (i) Essex and (ii) England and Wales in 1997. [35451]

Hazel Blears: The number of police officers serving in Essex as at 31 March 2005, was 3,230 full-time equivalent (FTE), this constitutes 198 officers per 100,000 population. The number of police officers serving in England and Wales as at 31 March 2005 was 142,795 (FTE), this constitutes 270 officers per 100,000 population.

As at 31 March 1997, there were 2,961 (FTE) police officers serving in Essex, this constitutes 196 officers per 100,000 population. The number of police officers serving in England and Wales as at 31 March 1997 was 127,158 (FTE), this constitutes 244 officers per 100,000 population.

Following boundary changes with the Metropolitan police on 1 April 2000, parts of the Met area and resources were transferred to Essex, Hertfordshire and Surrey.

Police Basic Command Units

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police basic command units there were in England and Wales in each year since 1997. [36146]

Hazel Blears: The available information is shown in the following table. Data on the number of Basic Command Units (BCUs) has only been collected since March 2002. The number of BCUs in each force is an operational matter for the chief constable.

Number of basic command units in England and Wales 2002 to 2005

	Number
2002[1]	284
2003[2]	274
2004	272
2005	254

[1] Data collected by HM Inspectorate of Constabulary.
[2] From 2003 collected by Home Office Research, Development and Statistics Directorate.

Police Force Mergers

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what assessment he has made of the costs associated with merging police forces. [30421]

Hazel Blears: I am aware that there will be initial upfront costs associated with developing strategic police forces. I have requested that as part of developing their proposals forces and authorities undertake a cost benefit analysis of the options that have been identified as suitable for progression. This will included estimates surrounding 'set up' costs. We will be in a better position to assess up front costs once final options have been submitted in December.

Her Majesty's inspectorate of constabulary (HMIC) report has shown that although there will be upfront costs associated with developing strategic forces, there will be greater savings made through economies of scale resulting from restructuring.

Predictive Diallers

John Hemming: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many calls were made from call centres in his Department in 2004–05 using predictive diallers; how many such calls resulted in contact being made with the recipient without a Government agent available to talk to them; and what assessment he has made of the likely impact of Ofcom's policy on silent calls on the use of predictive diallers in departmental call centres. [28173]

Mr. Charles Clarke: None; the Department does not utilise predictive diallers in its call centres.

Private Members' Bills

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will list those Private Members' Bills introduced *(a)* under Standing Order No 14(6), *(b)* Standing Order No 23 and *(c)* Standing Order No 57 which were (i) supported and (ii) opposed by his Department in each Session since 1997–98. [36216]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The information requested in not collected by the Department and providing it would incur disproportionate costs.

Proceeds of Crime Act

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the basis of apportionment was in 2004–05 for the incentivisation fund for recoveries under the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002. [37679]

Paul Goggins: As agreed with the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), under the police incentivisation scheme the police service would receive one-third of the total assets recovered over and above £40 million in 2004–05, increasing to one half in 2005–06. The Government are spending more than the first £40 million to support existing spending commitments in the asset recovery field. It was also agreed with ACPO that incentive payments would be based on the performance of each force in 2004–05 in the recovery of criminal assets. The amount allocated to each force was determined by its percentage contribution to the total value of cash forfeitures and confiscation orders obtained by the police service in 2004–05.

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* searches were carried out and *(b)* cash seizures were made in each of the last three years by (i) police officers and (ii) Customs officers exercising their powers under Part 5, chapter 3 of the Proceeds of Crime Act 2002; and how much cash was seized in each case. [37755]

Paul Goggins: Information on the number of searches carried out by police and Customs officers is not held centrally. Information on the total number and value of cash seizures by (i) police officers and (ii) Customs officers in each of the last three years is set out in the following table.

Cash detention orders

	HMR and C		Police	
	Volume	Value (£)	Volume	Value (£)
2003–04	403	19,351,537.19	128	5,259,997.52
2004–05	664	20,221,726.93	521	14,257,952.36
2005–06	256	13,731,475.77	458	14,065,604.45

Rape Units

Geraldine Smith: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many police forces in England and Wales have specialist rape units. [37341]

Paul Goggins: In the stock take of implementation of the Rape Action Plan 2002 carried out in September 2005, four police forces reported that they had specialist rape units staffed by Sexual Offence Liaison Officers.

Regulatory Impact Assessments

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many regulatory impact assessments have been published in relation to legislation sponsored by his Department in each year since 1995; and if he will make a statement. [34321]

Mr. Charles Clarke: I refer the hon. Member to my answer of 5 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 998W, which gives details of regulatory impact assessments (RIAs) from August 2001 to June 2005. The number of RIAs published before August 2001 was as follows:

RIA Table

	Number of RIAs
1997 (July to December)	[1]6
1998	11
1999	13
2000	16
2001 (January to July)	4
Total	50

[1] Compliance cost assessments

Road Safety

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department pursuant to the answer of 11 November, *Official Report*, column 852–3W, on road safety, why figures on numbers of road traffic police officers are unavailable for years before 2003. [31352]

Paul Goggins: Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) held data prior to 2002–03 on their Matrix database. However, following a software upgrade, this data was corrupted. It was unclear how long it would be before it was restored, so we provided the information that was currently available in order to meet the PQ deadline. This information is now available from 1999–2000 and is given in the following table.

Police officers whose main function is Traffic[1], total for England and Wales, 2000–02

As at 31 March each year	*Full-time equivalent[2]*
2000	7,525
2001	7,238
2002	7,005

[1] Staff with multiple responsibilities(or designations) are recorded under their primary role or function.

[2] Full-time equivalent includes those on career breaks or maternity/paternity leave.

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department if he will take steps to allow persons guilty of an offence under section 14(3) of the Road Traffic Act 1988, in lieu of a fine, to attend a driving safety course paid for by the offender that includes instruction on the benefits of wearing seat belts; and if he will make a statement. [38032]

Paul Goggins: The Government are keen to use education as part of a penalty where it is appropriate. Rehabilitation courses for persons convicted of drink driving have been available nationally since 2000 and have proved successful. On this basis, we propose through the Road Safety Bill, currently under consideration in another place, to provide the courts with powers to refer people convicted of speeding and careless driving offences to retraining courses with the incentive of a reduction in disqualification or penalty points. There are no plans to extend the scope to non-endorsable offences including seat belt offences.

Roads (Policing Costs)

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what the cost was of policing roads in England and Wales in each year since 1997. [38450]

Paul Goggins: This available information is set out in the table.

Traffic and road safety expenditure in England and Wales

	£000
2000–01	391,251
2001–02	410,868
2002–03	446,534
2003–04	460,219
2004–05	489,533

Source:
Chartered Institute for Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) police statistics—actuals 2000–01 to 2003–04 and estimates 2004–05

Skills for Security

David Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what his Department's role was in the establishment of Skills for Security as a sector skills body for the security industry; and if he will make a statement. [36373]

Paul Goggins: The Home Office has not been involved in the establishment of the new Skills for Security organisation. Traditionally, SITO (Security Industry Training Organisation—a subsidiary company of the British Security Industry Association) had been the national occupation standards setting body for the industry. That work was carried out co-operatively between the BSIA, SITO and the Security Industry Authority. It was considered crucial for the future good of the industry that the experience and knowledge within the SITO organisation should not be lost.

Tackling Drugs, Changing Lives

Paul Flynn: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what events are planned as part of 'Tackling Drugs, Changing Lives'; and when they will be held. [38098]

Paul Goggins: A key challenge faced by the Government are communicating the positive impact and tangible difference to communities that is being delivered by the Drug Strategy. To address this, a series of events have been organised that will engage communities directly.

Nine public-facing regional events are taking place; one in each Government Office region. The events are designed to provide local communities with the opportunity to speak directly to Ministers and senior officials and hear what the Government are doing to tackle drugs. Events have taken place in the North West and the South West. The next event is due to take place in Hull, covering the Yorkshire and Humberside region, on 31 January 2006. Due to ministerial diary pressures, it is not yet possible to confirm the dates of the remaining regional events.

Terrorism

Mr. Oaten: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department what steps he is taking to *(a)* develop the capacity of UK law enforcement agencies to detect and disrupt hostile reconnaissance of potential targets by terrorists and *(b)* to ensure that this work brings maximum benefit to (i) the public and (ii) commercial organisations; and if he will make a statement. [37898]

Mr. Charles Clarke: The Home Office works closely with police forces and the intelligence agencies to develop the strategy in tackling terrorism. It is the operational responsibility of the police to develop tactics to address local terrorist activity. Forces across the country have operations in place to gather and analyse information on hostile reconnaissance of potentially targeted sites. The Metropolitan, City of London and other forces have projects to share information and skills with business.

UN Convention against Corruption

Malcolm Bruce: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department whether the timetable to introduce the Orders in Council which will enable the United Kingdom to meet its remaining obligations under the UN Convention Against Corruption will allow the UK to ratify the Convention before the end of 2005. [33506]

Paul Goggins: The formalities of ratification of the Convention are completed by the Foreign and Commonwealth Office when they deposit the instrument of ratification with the body acting as depositary (in this case, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime based in Vienna). UK policy on ratifying treaties is that we move to formal ratification only when UK law is in compliance. The enabling legislation to achieve compliance requires four Orders in Council, two of which are the responsibility of the Home Office. Both of the Home Office Orders, which extend to England and Wales, were laid in Parliament on 25 November. The remaining two Orders are the responsibility of the Northern Ireland Office and the Scottish Parliament. All of the Orders are timetabled to come into force at the turn of the year.

Under-age Drinking (Penalty Notices)

Lynne Featherstone: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many fixed penalty notices have been issued for *(a)* selling alcohol to under-18s, *(b)* under-18s drinking alcohol, *(c)* attempting to buy alcohol when under age and *(d)* selling alcohol to a person who is drunk; and if he will make a statement. [32793]

Paul Goggins: The Penalty Notice for Disorder (PND) scheme was brought into effect in England and Wales during 2003–04 to provide the police with a quick and effective means of dealing with minor offences. Under the scheme an offender is issued with a fixed penalty notice and has 21 days in which to pay the penalty or request a court hearing.

The numbers of penalty notices issued for offences related to selling and buying alcohol are provided in the table.

Number of Penalty Notices for Disorder for certain offences relating to alcohol, England and Wales, 2004 and 2005[1]

Offence description	*2004*	*2005*
Selling alcohol to person under 18	113	385
Consumption of alcohol by under 18 in licensed premises	7	33
Buying/attempting to buy alcohol by under 18	—	5
Selling alcohol to drunken person	—	9

[1] Provisional data January-July 2005

Mr. Jenkins: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department how many *(a)* businesses and *(b)* individuals were prosecuted for supplying alcohol to youths under the age of 18 years in (i) England, (ii) Staffordshire and (iii) Tamworth constituency in each of the past five years. [27486]

Paul Goggins: The number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts in England and Staffordshire police force area for "Selling etc., intoxicating liquor to persons under 18 for consumption on the premises" (including "wholesaler selling intoxicating liquor to a person under 18") 2000 to 2004 is contained in the following table. It is not possible to identify those prosecuted in Tamworth, as the data is not collected at this level of detail.

The penalty notice for disorder scheme provides for persons who commit specified penalty offences to be issued with a fixed penalty notice instead of being prosecuted. The offence of selling alcohol to persons aged under 18 was added to the Penalty Notice for Disorder (PND) scheme on one November 2004 for use on bar or off license staff. License holders will be prosecuted. The court has powers to declare a justices' licence forfeit on a second or subsequent conviction. The Licensing Act 2003 allows the court on conviction to suspend a personal licence for up to six months or to declare it forfeit for first conviction.

In England, 112 penalty notices were issued for this offence in 2004 and provisional data for 2005 shows that 377 were issued to the end of July. In Staffordshire, no penalty notices were issued in 2004 or 2005 for this offence.

Number of defendants proceeded against at magistrates courts for supplying alcohol to persons under 18 in Staffordshire police force area and England, 2004[1]

Offence: Selling etc intoxicating liquor to person under 18 for consumption on the premises
Statute: Licensing Act 1964 SS.169A and 169B as added by Licensing (Young Persons) Act 2000 S.1: Licensing (Occasional Permissions) Act 1983 S.3 [Schedule Para.4(1)]

	Area	Proceeded against Business	Persons
2000	Staffordshire[2]	n/a	n/a
	England	1	115
2001	Staffordshire	—	—
	England	—	146
2002	Staffordshire	—	1
	England	2	147
2003	Staffordshire	—	8
	England	28	533
2004	Staffordshire	—	4
	England	21	733

Offence: Wholesaler selling intoxicating liquor to a person under 18
Statute: Licensing Act 1964 S.181A(1) as added by Licensing Act 1988 S.17 proceeded against

	Area	Proceeded against Business	Persons
2000	Staffordshire[2]	n/a	n/a
	England	—	2
2001	Staffordshire	—	—
	England	—	3
2002	Staffordshire	—	—
	England	—	2
2003	Staffordshire	—	—
	England	—	12
2004	Staffordshire	—	1
	England	—	5

n/a = Not available
[1] These data are provided on the principal offence basis.
[2] Staffordshire police force were only able to submit sample data for persons proceeded against and convicted in the magistrates' courts for the year 2000. Although sufficient to estimate higher orders of data, these data are not robust enough at a detailed level and have been excluded from the table.

Weapons Amnesty

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for the Home Department (1) which local police forces in England have offered a weapons amnesty in each year since 1997; [36988]

(2) whether he plans to encourage local police forces to offer permanent weapon amnesties. [36989]

Hazel Blears: The information requested is not collected centrally. It is a matter for police forces in conjunction with the local Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to decide whether to hold an amnesty or hand-in scheme in respect of particular types of weapons. We are, however, developing plans for a knife amnesty in England and Wales in the new year.

TRANSPORT

A21 Upgrade

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received about further public consultations for the proposed A21 upgrade. [39254]

Dr. Ladyman: A meeting was held on 7 December 2005, chaired by the Hurst Green Parish Council Chairman, where the Highways Agency discussed the plans to upgrade the A21 between Flimwell and Hurst Green with representatives of Goudhurst Parish Council, Hurst Green Parish Council, Hurst Green And Flimwell Chamber of Commerce, A21 Sussex Action Group, Cedar and Ringden Farms and councillors from Rother district council and East Sussex county council.

The details of the meeting will be reported back to me shortly and I will write to my hon. Friend with further information.

Air Bags (Motor Vehicles)

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has commissioned independent research on the efficiency of air bags in motor vehicles. [38729]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department completed research into the effectiveness of airbags in motor vehicles in 2003. The principal findings were presented at the International Research Council on the Biomechanics of Impact International Conference 2002. This project focused on obtaining an improved understanding of the overall benefits and risks involved with both front and side airbag deployments for a range of vehicle occupants. The project determined that in general frontal airbags offer extra protection to vehicle occupants, with significant overall benefits for head injuries. The benefits for thoracic injuries are less clear, and airbags are less effective at reducing injuries in certain types of accidents (such as angled impacts, pole impacts and high intrusion impacts). There is insufficient data available at present to draw any firm conclusions on the risks and benefits of deploying side airbags.

Aircraft Flight Plans

Andrew Mackinlay: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many aircraft flight plans have been filed to the Integrated Flight Plans System for or on behalf of *(a)* the Central Intelligence Agency and *(b)* other departments or agencies of the United States Administration since the beginning of 2003; and if he will make a statement. [38944]

Ms Buck: UK law on civil air operations is governed by the UK's obligations under the Chicago Convention on International Civil Aviation 1944.

Under the Rules of the Air established in Annex 2 to the Convention, the commander of an aircraft must file a flight plan for all flights that will cross international borders, and for most other flights that are engaged in commercial operations. For flights operating in European controlled airspace, flight plans are filed with the Central Flow Management Unit (CFMU) at Eurocontrol, the European Organisation for the Safety of Air Navigation.

On receipt of the flight plan, the CFMU perform a number of checks before distributing the information to the relevant air traffic control units along the projected route of the aircraft. Each of the air traffic units, for example National Air Traffic Services (NATS) in the UK, then utilises the information in order to provide air traffic services for the flight.

The flight plan provides information on the aircraft's identity (whether it is civil or state) and equipment, the point and time of departure, the route and altitude to be flown, the destination and estimated time of arrival, and the alternate airport to be used should landing be impossible. The flight plan also specifies whether the flight will be carried out under visual or instrument flight rules.

Consequently, the Department does not hold the requested information.

Aircraft N829MG

Sir Menzies Campbell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on how many occasions since September 2001 an aircraft with registration number N829MG has transited a United Kingdom airport carrying a passenger who was not of US nationality. [38630]

Ms Buck: The Department for Transport has no records of an aircraft with registration N829MG having been granted a permit under article 138 of the Air Navigation Order 2005. Permission from the Secretary of State for Transport is only required by foreign aircraft operating civil flights into the UK where they land and take on board or discharge passengers or cargo, and where payment is given or promised in respect of that carriage.

Airports

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* paved and *(b)* unpaved airport runways there are in (i) Scotland, (ii) Wales, (iii) each of the English regions and (iv) Northern Ireland of (A) under 914 metres, (B) 914 to 1,523 metres, (C) 1,524 to 2,437 metres, (D) 2,438 to 3,047 metres and (E) over 3, 047 metres in length. [39210]

Ms Buck: The full information requested is not readily available and could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Arriva Buses

Dr. Kumar: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much bus service operators grant has been claimed by Arriva buses in *(a)* England, *(b)* the North East Government Office Region and *(c)* the boroughs of the Tees Valley sub-region since 1995. [32811]

Ms Buck: We are unable to provide commercially confidential information.

Arriva Trains Wales

Dr. Tony Wright: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many trains on the Arriva Trains Wales service between Birmingham and Aberystwyth did not *(a)* depart from and *(b)* arrive at Birmingham in the most recent period that figures are available; and what percentage of journeys on the line these figures represent. [35446]

Derek Twigg: Between 16 October and 12 November 2005 (Period 8), 112 services between Aberystwyth and Birmingham either terminated short of Birmingham or commenced outside Birmingham. This accounts for 24 per cent. of the scheduled services between Aberystwyth and Birmingham. This is due to a combination of speed restrictions and delays caused by other train services. It is for Network Rail to determine the location and duration of temporary speed restrictions.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much subsidy Arriva Trains Wales has received from his Department in each year since 2004; how much the company has paid in penalties in each year; and if he will make a statement. [38241]

Derek Twigg: Arriva Trains Wales received a total cash subsidy of £46.4 million for the period from franchise commencement on 8 December 2003 to 31 March 2004. It received a total cash subsidy of £97.8 million for the period 1 April 2004 to 31 March 2005. No penalty payments were made by Arriva Trains Wales during either of these periods.

Bicycle Use (Environmental Effects)

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what lifecycle analysis he has *(a)* conducted and *(b)* evaluated on the carbon dioxide emissions of bicycle use. [39339]

Dr. Ladyman: We are not aware of any detailed research in this area. Any carbon dioxide emissions resulting from the manufacture and distribution of bicycles are likely to be more than outweighed by the carbon savings associated with the use of the bicycle as a substitute for motorised transport over its lifetime.

British Transport Police

Patrick Mercer: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what additional manpower he plans to allocate to the British Transport police for security duties on the London underground. [37177]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 13 December 2005]:* The London underground area of the British Transport police is funded by London Underground and Transport for London. Since 2003–04, TfL/LU has funded an additional 200 police officers bringing the total for LU to 677.

C2C Line/One Rail

Mr. Amess: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many trains on *(a)* the C2C line and *(b)* One Rail were cancelled in the last year; and what the reason was for each cancellation. [34256]

Derek Twigg: The most recent performance summary indicates that the total train cancellations for year to date on C2C stands at 1,451 and 'One' Railway 6,815.

In the last 12 months, punctuality figures for One and C2C were 93.7 per cent. Public Performance Measure (PPM) and 88.1 per cent. PPM respectively. PPM is the industry standard for measuring the proportion of trains arriving on time.

Cancellations causation is grouped as follows:

Causation	*Summary*	*'ONE' cancellations*	*C2C cancellations*
Depot-related	Shunting incident, train preparation failure	—	3
Operation	Planning error, service recovery plan	—	14
Train crew	Lack of driver	—	225
Fleet	Technical fault, EMU availability failure	—	291
Station	Retail related	—	1
External	Weather, fatality	—	114
Toc-on-Toc	Effect of other operators	—	21
Infrastructure	Points Failures	158	—
Infrastructure	Poor Condition of Track/Broken Rail	133	—
Infrastructure	Miscellaneous	5101	—
Infrastructure	Overhead Power Supply	536	—
Infrastructure	Signal Failure	48	—
Production	Network Rail	110	—
Production	Train Planning	71	—
Engineering	Track Engineering Possessions	172	—
Operations	Fatalities	254	—
Operations	Line Side Fires	188	—
Act of God	Weather	44	—
Infrastructure	Network Rail	—	782
Total		6,815	1,451

Car Sales

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many *(a)* new and *(b)* second hand cars were sold in the UK in each financial year since 1997. [38816]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of cars newly registered in Great Britain in each financial year are as follows:

	Thousand
1997–98	2,234
1998–99	2,293
1999–2000	2,297
2000–01	2,363
2001–02	2,639
2002–03	2,669
2003–04	2,681
2004–05	2,544

Source:
Vehicles database, Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

The number of second hand cars sold is not available.

Cheap Rail Tickets (Availability)

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the availability of advance cheap rail tickets over the Christmas period. [39335]

Derek Twigg: No routine assessment is made of the availability of cheap airline, coach or train tickets. These fares are not regulated, so airlines, coach companies and train operators are free to set fares and manage availability to make the best use of their available capacity.

Cost Benefit Analyses

Steve Webb: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what financial value is placed by his Department on the saving of a human life for the purposes of undertaking cost-benefit analysis of transport projects. [34335]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* The Department estimate values for the prevention of road casualties for use in the appraisal of road schemes. These values are published in the annual Highways Economics Note No. 1 which can be found at www.dft.gov.uk.

The Department also applies these values for the prevention of fatal casualties in the appraisal of rail schemes.

Crossrail

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he will issue the consultation proposals for the funding of Crossrail. [27936]

Derek Twigg: As the Secretary of State made clear to the House on 19 July, the consultation on alternative funding mechanisms for Crossrail will take place after the conclusion of Sir Michael Lyons review of local government funding.

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects to make an announcement on the funding of Crossrail. [30579]

Derek Twigg: As the Secretary of State made clear to the House on 19 July, decisions on the balance of funding on Crossrail, including the planned consultation on the use of alternative funding mechanisms, will be made after the conclusion of Sir Michael Lyons' review of local government funding.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what the total estimated cost is for the construction of Crossrail; [31725]

(2) how the construction costs for Crossrail will be funded. [31726] [31726]

Derek Twigg: I refer the hon. Member to the parliamentary estimate of expense submitted with the Crossrail hybrid Bill. As the Secretary of State made clear to the House on 19 July, decisions on the balance of funding on Crossrail, including the planned consultation on use of alternative funding mechanisms, will be made after the conclusion of Sir Michael Lyons review of local government funding.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what proportion of the costs of the Crossrail project he expects to be met by *(a)* the Government and *(b)* the private sector. [32380]

Derek Twigg: I refer the hon. Member to the parliamentary estimate of expense submitted with the Crossrail hybrid Bill. As the Secretary of State made clear to the House on 19 July, decisions on the balance of funding on Crossrail, including the planned consultation on use of alternative funding mechanisms, will be made after the conclusion of Sir Michael Lyons review of local government funding.

Justine Greening: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the Department's latest estimate is of the projected costs of the Crossrail project, broken down by *(a)* central government funding and *(b)* London-generated funding; what assessment he has made of the local Government funding mechanisms that might be used to raise London-generated funds; and if he will make a statement. [34262]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 2 December 2005]:* I refer the hon. Member to the parliamentary estimate of expense submitted with the Crossrail Hybrid Bill.

As the Secretary of State made clear to the House on 19 July 2005, decisions on the balance of funding on Crossrail—including the planned consultation on the use of alternative funding mechanisms to collect a London contribution—will be made after the conclusion of Sir Michael Lyons review of local government funding.

Departmental Estate

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much was paid by his Department in 2004–05 in rent for properties in *(a)* total, *(b)* each (i) region and (ii) nation of the UK and *(c)* London. [35961]

Ms Buck: The requested information is as follows:

(a) £27,161,852 (and £3,375,393 VAT).

(b) A breakdown of rents paid on individual properties has been placed in the Libraries of the House. Data in respect of the Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency rent VAT payments and Highways Agency payments by property can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

(b)(i)

Region	*Rent*	*VAT*	£ *Total*
East Midlands	1,082,047	98,848	1,180,895
East of England	920,321	78,350	998,672
London	9,434,469	1,456,771	10,891,240
North East	631,644	76,498	708,141
North West	1,000,700	73,479	1,074,179
South East	4,581,120	657,037	5,238,156
South West	2,331,536	292,080	2,623,616
Yorkshire and the Humber	3,408,347	465,356	3,873,703

(b)(ii)

	Rent	*VAT*	£ *Total*
England	23,390,184	3,198,418	26,588,602
Northern Ireland	25,497	1,555	27,052
Scotland	1,611,424	137,446	1,748,870
Wales	2,134,747	37,974	2,172,721

(c) £9,434,469 (and £1,456,771 VAT).

Disability

Danny Alexander: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the initial activity undertaken by his Department in response to those recommendations in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit Report, Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People, where lead responsibility was assigned to all Government departments. [37064]

Ms Buck: The Report recommended that local authorities should be encouraged to play a strategic role to ensure that disabled people do not experience barriers at any stage of the journeys they need to make. The Department has introduced Accessibility Planning within the next Local Transport Plans, requiring local authorities to identify the accessibility problems of individuals or communities in areas of social need and to produce plans for tackling them. The Department has also encouraged authorities to identify the needs of disabled people as part of that approach.

EU Committees

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many meetings of the EU *(a)* Advisory Committee on restrictive practices and dominant positions in the transport industry, *(b)* Advisory Committee on restrictive practices and dominant positions in the shipping industry and *(c)* Advisory Committee on restrictive practices and dominant positions in air transport have taken place during the UK presidency of the EU; who presided over each meeting; what other UK representatives were present; what provision was made for representation of the devolved Governments; and if he will make a statement. [38773]

Mr. Sutcliffe: I have been asked to reply.

The only meeting to take place during this period was one meeting of the Advisory Committee on restrictive practices and dominant positions in the shipping industry. The European Commission chairs the Committee and officials from the Office of Fair Trading (OFT), Department for Transport (DfT) and DTI represented the UK. No provisions were made for the representation of the devolved Governments, as this is not a devolved issue.

Eurotunnel

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will make a statement on the cost of the civil engineering and building infrastructure maintenance strategy for the Eurotunnel concession under development by Eurotunnel; [24608]

(2) if he will make a statement on the *(a)* timetable for and *(b)* costs of the completion of Operation TAPIS 2 by Eurotunnel; [24609]

(3) whether defects resulting from the detoriation of the upper track bed at its interface with the sleeper blocks in the Channel Tunnel have been remedied. [24610]

Derek Twigg: Eurotunnel's Operation TAPIS 2, to remedy defects resulting from the deterioration of the upper track bed at its interface with the sleeper blocks in the Channel Tunnel, was completed in the course of November 2005. It is part of an ongoing programme of corrective and preventive maintenance on the permanent way in the Tunnel. The work needed has been fully discussed between Eurotunnel and the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority's safety experts.

My Department does not hold details of the cost or of the schedule for completion of the TAPIS programme, which forms part of Eurotunnel's civil engineering and building infrastructure maintenance strategy and is a matter for Eurotunnel.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of *(a)* whether the avant-projets of Eurotunnel remain relevant and *(b)* the development of alternative procedures (i) for considering modifications to Eurotunnel's existing arrangements and (ii) for determining which modifications are sufficiently significant to require the involvement and agreement of the Intergovernmental Commission and the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority. [24612]

Derek Twigg: We understand that discussions have taken place, involving Eurotunnel, on the need to continue to update avant projets when changes are made, and on alternative methods of obtaining agreement to any further major changes in procedures or physical structures. These discussions are not concluded.

It is for the Channel Tunnel Intergovernmental Commission, advised by the Channel Tunnel Safety Authority, to determine the extent to which Eurotunnel's avant projets remain relevant and the extent to which the Intergovernmental Commission needs to approve the development of alternative procedures for modifications to Eurotunnel's existing arrangements.

Agreement to the original commissioning of the tunnel operation was on the basis of agreement by the Intergovernmental Commission to "avant projets" submitted by Eurotunnel, which described proposed structures and procedures.

General Lighthouse Fund

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many former overseas lighthouse keepers receive pensions from the General Lighthouse Fund. [38419]

Dr. Ladyman: 34 former overseas lighthouse keepers receive pensions from the General Lighthouse Fund.

Internet (Environmental Effects)

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of changes in carbon dioxide emissions resulting from internet purchasing. [39338]

Dr. Ladyman: The Department has not made any estimates of the carbon impacts of internet shopping.

Light Rail Schemes

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much funding has been *(a)* allocated and *(b)* spent directly by his Department on (i) the Leeds Supertram scheme and (ii) light rail schemes in England. [37869]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* I refer the hon. Member to the answer of 5 October 2005, *Official Report*, column 2858W.

The Department does not directly fund light rail schemes in England. It is for Passenger Transport Executives/Authorities and local authorities, as promoters of light rail schemes, to do so with funding provided by the Department.

Around £39 million of public sector finance has been spent on Leeds Supertram. Of this, around £5 million has been spent on construction costs with around a further £14 million on land and property purchase.

In 2004–05 the Department provided £6 million to the promoters of Leeds Supertram for scheme development costs, including advance works.

Lights Commissioners

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much was spent on hospitality by the Lights Commissioners in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* the Isle of Man, *(c)* England and Wales, *(d)* Northern Ireland and *(e)* the Republic of Ireland in each of the last three years. [38439]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is shown in the table.

£

		2002–03	2003–04	2004–05
Northern Lighthouse Board	Scotland and the Isle of Man	16,756	18,947	20,356
Trinity House Lighthouse Service	England and Wales	35,000	37,000	50,000
Commissioners of Irish Lights	Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland	5,000	4,200	4,500

The information for the Isle of Man is included in the figures for the Northern Lighthouse Board. The figures cover funding of internal and external functions that include staff and visitors from other General Lighthouse Authorities.

Liverpool City Council

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions have taken place between officials in his Department and the chief executive and officials of Liverpool city council since June; what means of communication were used in each case; and if he will place in the Library the *(a)* minutes and *(b)* submissions relating to such communications. [35195]

Derek Twigg: There were several telephone conversations with the chief executive of Liverpool city council in connection with the assurances the council might give in relation to the Merseytram scheme. There are no minutes or specific submissions recording these communications.

A Liverpool officer recently attended the Department's street lighting PFI conference.

London Olympics

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 565W, on the London Olympics, if he will list the relevant bodies funding improvement extension schemes for the *(a)* Channel Tunnel Rail Link, *(b)* East London Line Extension and *(c)* Docklands Light Railway. [37034]

Ms Buck: The Channel Tunnel Rail Link extension is being funded by the Department for Transport. The temporary works to allow the operation of the Olympic Javelin Shuttle service in 2012 are being funded from the Olympics Budget.

The East London Line Extension is being funded by Transport for London.

Extensions to the Docklands Light Railway are being funded by Transport for London. However, a number of service enhancements and station improvements for the DLR are being funded from the Olympics budget.

Lorries/Commercial Vans

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many new *(a)* lorries and *(b)* commercial vans were bought in each year since 1997. [38815]

Dr. Ladyman: The number of lorries and commercial vans newly registered in Great Britain in each year are as follows:

Thousand

	Lorries	Commercial vans
1997	35	216
1998	41	234
1999	38	234
2000	47	249
2001	51	274
2002	45	284
2003	36	318
2004	35	341

Source:
Vehicles database, Driver and Vehicle Licensing Agency

M1 (Junction 29)

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport whether he has plans to improve egress from the northbound carriageway of the M1 motorway at junction 29 to reduce congestion; and if he will make a statement. [38441]

Dr. Ladyman: A Highways Agency scheme, designed to reduce congestion on the Northbound Exit Slip Road at Junction 29 of the M1 Motorway, is currently being prepared.

The scheme consists of the signalisation of the Northbound Exit Slip Road at its interface with the Roundabout at Junction 29. There will also be localised realignment and widening of the carriageway to bring it up to current standards, together with improved signing and white lining to this slip road and the roundabout.

The works are scheduled to commence on site in February 2006 and are expected to be complete by the end of March 2006.

Metrolink Tram Network (Manchester)

Mark Hunter: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will make a statement on the latest financial situation in relation to the Phase Three extension of the Metrolink tram network in Greater Manchester. [29592]

Derek Twigg: I refer my the hon. Member to the Statement my right hon. Friend the Secretary of State for Transport made on 16 December 2004 about committing public sector funding for Manchester's transport network.

Motorbikes

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many second hand motorbikes were purchased in each year since 1997. [38661]

Dr. Ladyman: This information is not available.

Motorised Mini-scooters

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what laws apply to the use of motorised mini-scooters on *(a)* public highways, *(b)* public land and *(c)* private land. [39333]

Dr. Ladyman: It is for the courts to provide an authoritative interpretation of the law, and two High Court judgments have confirmed miniature motor scooters to be motor vehicles within the meaning of the Road Traffic Act 1988 as amended. We believe it likely that a similar ruling could be made on other vehicles, such as miniature motorcycles, should a court case arise.

Motor vehicles on the public highway must meet relevant construction requirements and be registered, taxed, insured etc. Drivers/riders must hold an appropriate licence and where necessary wear a suitable helmet. Off-highway use is possible where landowners' permission (whether private or public landowners) is received.

Enforcement of road traffic law is a matter for individual Chief Officers of Police. In addition police forces can counter irresponsible use of miniature motor scooters and other such vehicles under the Police Reform Act 2002. This enables the police to seize vehicles being driven in a careless and inconsiderate manner or off-road without consent and in a way which causes alarm, distress or annoyance to members of the public.

I understand that the packaging on powered items such as miniature scooters or motorcycles generally includes a warning that they are not for highway use. However it may be that, once such packaging is discarded, this is overlooked or ignored. The Department has issued guidance on our website to remind purchasers and others about responsible use of these vehicles and about possible penalties for mis-use, while the Home Office has published advice on its TOGETHER website for practitioners tackling the associated mis-use. In addition, a number of local authorities and police forces are running initiatives to inform the public about these matters, and are taking action where offences are committed.

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent estimate he has made of the number of *(a)* accidents and *(b)* casualties which arose in a year from the use of motorised mini-scooters. [39334]

Dr. Ladyman: The information requested is not available.

Motorway Lighting

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will initiate a study to compare the number of night-time accidents on stretches of unlit motorway with stretches of motorway that have lighting; and if he will publish the conclusions. [38440]

Dr. Ladyman: The Highways Agency, who operate and manage the motorway network in England, have already instigated a project that is comparing night-time accidents on sections of lit and unlit roads. The aim is to review the benefit of road lighting on motorways by analysis of accident statistics. The findings will be incorporated into the revised national standard for the appraisal of road lighting provision on trunk roads and motorways, which is planned to be published towards the end of 2006.

Multi-modal Study (Tyneside)

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what action has been taken by Newcastle-upon-Tyne city council in response to his suggestion in the response to the Tyneside area multi-modal study that local authorities locate major generators of personal travel in areas best served by public transport. [38024]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* The "Newcastle Upon Tyne Unitary Development Plan" (UDP), adopted in January 1998 guides the consideration of possible locations for major travel generating development. The UDP also provides the context for decisions upon individual planning applications. In addition, Government's national planning policy documents—principally, planning policy guidance and planning policy statements—provide a context for the development of plans at the local level.

In order to update and review the UDP, in consultation with the local community, the city council is producing a "local development framework" (LDF). The LDF will contain a suite of local development plan documents prepared under the powers of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Within the council's local development scheme,, effectively the LDF project plan of action, a key priority is to produce a "core strategy" development plan document which will be the subject of public consultation in 2006. The core strategy will provide a vision, strategic objectives, spatial strategy and an implementation framework for all other more detailed and site-specific development plans that will be produced in the city. It is these development plans that will help to shape how the city develops and regenerates over the current and next decade, including how development relates to the local transport system.

Parking Offences

Paul Rowen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many times bailiffs have been used to obtain money owed as a result of non-payment of penalty charge notices following the decriminalisation of parking offences; and in how many such cases the initial penalty charge notice has subsequently been found invalid. [37977]

Ms Buck *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* Information on the number of times bailiffs have been used to obtain money owed as a result of non-payment of Penalty Charge Notices is not held centrally.

Port of Sharpness

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what security is available at the port of Sharpness; who provides the security; and how many hours per week the security is in place. [39276]

Dr. Ladyman: Sharpness Dock is permanently covered by a port facility security plan that was approved by the Department on 28 June 2004.

Responsibility for implementing and exercising the plan rests with the port facility security officer who received Government accredited training in January 2004.

Potters Bar Rail Crash

Mr. Clappison: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what representations he has received from the Coroner of Hertfordshire regarding the Potters Bar derailment. [37938]

Derek Twigg: The Department has received several communications about the timing of the decision to be taken by the Secretary of State on a public inquiry information on the costs of holding an inquest, and a paper outlining the coroner's views on the difficulties he might face in conducting the inquest into the deaths at Potters Bar. As a result of these representations, the Secretary of State has agreed, if necessary, to fund the coroner's costs for the inquest.

Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1852W, on buses, what mechanism exists to ensure that the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000 *(a)* are kept under review and *(b)* will be developed in line with technology. [39383]

Ms Buck: Regular working group meetings take place at official level with representatives of the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee. Officials also participate in international discussions, meet trade bodies, individual operators and manufacturers to ensure that standards remain appropriate and reflect developments in technology.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 22 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 1852W, on buses, who the stakeholders affected by the Public Service Vehicles Accessibility Regulations 2000 are. [39384]

Ms Buck: The stakeholders are bus passengers, groups representing disabled people such as the Disabled Persons Transport Advisory Committee, bus operators, vehicle manufacturers and those organisations with responsibility for funding bus services.

Public Transport Accessibility (Coventry)

Mr. Jim Cunningham: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what steps he is taking to improve access to public transport for disabled people in Coventry South. [39235]

Ms Buck: 50 percent. of Travel Coventry's bus fleet are already low floor, wheelchair accessible vehicles.

We are supporting, through the local transport plan, Coventry Primelines which is the first phase in Coventry's plans to introduce a city wide quality bus network expanding the bus showcase concept over a wider area. The programme of works include provision of bus boarders, dropped kerbs and tactile paving. There are also proposals to introduce CCTV where appropriate. The scheme started this year and is due to compete in 2009.

At a national level there has been significant progress in making public transport accessible to disabled people through regulations made under the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 (DDA 1995). We made the Rail Vehicle Accessibility Regulations in 2000 and many of the trains calling at the station comply with those. Disabled people in Coventry, for example, are benefiting from the RVAR compliant trains which are now serving their area.

More generally disabled people in Coventry South as elsewhere in the country will also benefit from the provisions in the Disability Discrimination Act 2005 (DDA 2005). We have already laid regulations which will, from December 2006, lift the transport exemption in Part 3 of the Act for land-based public transport, vehicle hire, breakdown services and vehicles used on leisure and tourism transport services. We will also be consulting shortly on draft regulations to set an "end date" of no later than 1 January 2020 for when all trains will have to meet the rail vehicle accessibility regulations and to apply those regulations to older trains when they are refurbished.

Railways

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions he has had with rail franchisees on linking extended franchise periods to increased investment in rolling stock. [37726]

Derek Twigg: Extensions to existing franchise periods are currently under discussion in only two cases; Silverlink and Central Trains. In both cases the extensions are for short periods and increased investment in rolling stock does not therefore form part of the discussions. No other extensions to existing franchises are currently planned.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what assessment he has made of the implications for high speed train passenger safety of passengers standing; and if he will make a statement; [30729]

(2) what recent discussions he has had with train operating companies on passenger health and safety during periods of overcrowding on trains. [30732]

Derek Twigg: The Health and Safety Executive (HSE), the safety regulator for the railways, has not been persuaded that there are significant safety concerns associated with standing passengers travelling on high speed (or other) trains.

A report by the Health and Safety Executive in 1999, entitled 'Implications of overcrowding on railways', concluded that whether a passenger on a train involved in an incident is sitting or standing makes little difference to the overall severity of any injuries sustained. A copy of this report is available in the House Library.

As part of the approval process for rolling stock, the HSE takes into account the safety of both seated and standing passengers. Train operators monitor the levels of crowding on their trains.

The Secretary of State has discussions with train operators on a wide range of topics, including how they respond to crowding.

Mr. Don Foster: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what was the average number of return journeys per week on the direct train service between Bath Spa station and London Waterloo station in each of the last 10 years; and if he will make a statement. [31194]

Derek Twigg: The information is not available in the form requested. Ticket sales figures include London as a destination but do not distinguish between different London termini. On average, there were 4700 return journeys between Bath Spa and London termini (London Paddington or London Waterloo) each week last year. The majority of these journeys would have been to London Paddington owing to the quicker journey time. Bath Spa -London Paddington takes one hour 50 minutes. Bath Spa- London Waterloo takes two hours 40 minutes.

Mr. Hayes: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the total length of rail track in the UK is; and what it was in 1997. [5222]

Derek Twigg: Network Rail advises that its network currently comprises 10,014 route miles. In 1997–98 the network was recorded as 10,350 route miles.

Network Rail has advised that this 336 route mile difference in total network length appears to reflect primarily refinements to its methodology for collecting and collating track length data, rather than physical changes to the rail network. The Office of Rail Regulation has said that it has not specifically carried out a verification exercise on the change but believes Network Rail's explanation to be credible.

Network Rail has said that the following factors might contribute towards the 336 mile total:

transfer of use of track from heavy to light rail;

closure of depots (freight, maintenance etc);

closure or transfer of ownership of freight spurs and sidings;

differences of definition e.g. whether routes no longer open to traffic are included or excluded;

use of different source documents; and

transfer of ownership of route from the national to the heritage rail network e.g. Wensleydale railway.

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on how many occasions he has met representatives of the rail franchisees; where these meetings took place; how many people where present on each occasion; and if he will place copies of the minutes of these meetings in the Library. [26516]

Derek Twigg: Ministers meet on many occasions with rail franchisees. Matters discussed at many of them are confidential for commercial or other reasons. It would not therefore be practicable or appropriate to place minutes in the Library.

Andrew George: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what total *(a)* public and *(b)* private sector monies have been spent on capital infrastructure improvements on the (i) East Coast Mainline, (ii) West Coast Mainline and (iii) Paddington to Penzance line since privatisation. [27787]

Derek Twigg: The Department does not hold detailed records on the allocation of funding for renewal and improvement of the infrastructure for individual lines. Network Rail is responsible for the maintenance of infrastructure, within the funding limits determined by the Office of Rail Regulation (ORR). I have requested that Network Rail write to the hon. Member with the spending figures requested.

Mr. Burstow: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the *(a)* morning and *(b)* afternoon or evening (i) peak number of trains, (ii) number of passengers, (iii) number of passengers in excess capacity and (iv) proportion and total number of passengers in excess capacity was for each of the last five years for each train operating company service to and from London terminals. [34725]

Derek Twigg: Passengers in Excess of Capacity (PIXC) applies to weekday commuter trains arriving in London between 07:00 and 09:59 and those departing between 16:00 and 18:59. The measure is derived from the number of passengers travelling in excess of capacity on all services divided by the total number of people travelling, expressed as a percentage. PIXC counts are carried out once a year, on a typical weekday during the autumn.

Focus is being given to improve timetabling, infrastructure maintenance, renewals and other factors that can impact on reliable delivery of train services, which in turn will impact on crowding levels. The Department will continue to review train counts and train plans to gain comfort that resources are being deployed effectively.

Mr. Hollobone: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what efficiency and performance targets will be set for the new East Midlands rail franchise; and what sanctions will be imposed if the operator fails to meet them. [36630]

Derek Twigg: The specification of the new East Midlands franchise, including performance targets is currently being developed by the Department of Transport. The franchise specification is expected to go out to public consultation in summer 2006.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the average percentage change in rail fares was in each year since 1997. [38461]

Derek Twigg: Fares increased on average by 6.3 percent. in real terms from 1995 to 2005. Regulated fares (most commuter fares plus saver returns) decreased by 4.2 percent. over the same period.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many people have been employed by *(a)* train operating companies and *(b)* railway companies in each year since 1997. [38462]

Derek Twigg: The data requested is not held by the Department and the information requested can be provided only at disproportionate cost.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many passengers the UK's railways can transport at any one time. [38464]

Derek Twigg: There are an average of 3 million passenger journeys each day within the United Kingdom.

Passenger numbers are increasing with patronage up 40 per cent. in the last 10 years. Britain has the fastest growing passenger use in Europe. Over 1 billion passengers used the UK railway in 2004.

Peter Luff: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 13 December 2005, *Official Report*, column 1857W, on First Great Western Services, by whom records on the reliability and punctuality of rail services between London and Worcestershire are kept. [38542]

Derek Twigg: Records on the reliability and punctuality of rail services at the level of detail needed to establish the level of performance between London and Worcestershire are held by Network Rail.

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the implications of his policy of promoting traffic restraint in major regional cities for the level of passenger rolling stock required for the commuter rail networks serving those cities. [38702]

Derek Twigg: It is for local transport authorities to determine the appropriate balance between transport modes in the context of their local transport plans and policies. As part of this process, they will need to take account of the capacity of their regional rail networks. The Department will continue to consult with relevant local transport authorities in developing the future specification of the railway.

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent campaigns his Department has undertaken to tackle trespass on the railways by children. [38228]

Derek Twigg: Ministers have discussed with the industry action to reduce trespass and have supported initiatives undertaken by Partners Against Railway Crime, a partnership of rail industry organisations which co-ordinates campaigns to reduce trespass on the network. Activities specifically targeting at children have been branded as part of the "track off" campaign and have included free resources for use in schools (including video material), teaching plans, community newsletters and speakers for talks in schools.

Anne Moffat: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many times he met Network Rail in 2005; and what was discussed. [28841]

Derek Twigg: Ministers meet representatives of Network Rail on many occasions and a range of subjects are discussed.

Jim Cousins: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will lift the moratorium on considering rail passenger partnership support for the Newcastle-Blyth-Ashington rail line. [38025]

Derek Twigg *[holding answer 15 December 2005]:* There are no plans to re-instate the rail passenger partnership funding programme.

Mark Lazarowicz: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will arrange for the publication of the full report and background paper produced for the Strategic Rail Authority on a north-south high speed rail line. [38179]

Derek Twigg: A summary of the Strategic Rail Authority's report on a north-south high-speed rail line is available in the House Library and from the Department for Transport's website.

The full report is confidential because it includes potential route alignments, and could lead to severe planning blight if released.

The Government has a manifesto commitment to look at the north-south high-speed link. This will be taken forward in the context of Sir Rod Eddington's study and the high-level output specification for the railways.

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 329W, on train operating companies, what the net performance bonus for each qualifying train operating company was in each year between 1997–98 and 2004–05; and what the difference between performance penalties and net performance bonuses was *(a)* for all train operating companies combined in each year between 1997–98 and 2004–05 and *(b)* for each train operating company during the period 1997–98 to 2004–05. [36906]

Derek Twigg: The performance regime the Department has in place with franchised train operators takes account of all train lateness on a train-by-train basis. When financial calculations are made every four-weeks, a single payment encompasses all the bonus and penalty elements occurring during that time period. These in turn aggregate into annual sums shown on the following table, which represent the net performance bonus to (or penalty payment from), each train operating company in each year requested. The amount shown is therefore the overall difference between performance penalties and bonuses.

In addition to my answer of 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, columns 329–30W, I regret that an error occurred when the penalty cost figures quoted in my earlier answer were being compiled. The following table gives corrected figures.

Performance regime penalties and bonuses by financial year, by passenger train operating company

£000

Train operator	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*2004–05*
Anglia Railways	303	302	288	(221)	(329)	(3,160)	—	—
Cardiff Railways	298	(1,423)	(59)	(73)	217	—	—	—
Central Trains	1,675	(1,651)	(384)	(8,804)	(9,633)	(10,910)	(6,838)	(11,348)
Chiltern Railways	(117)	(276)	(115)	(467)	(484)	(846)	(397)	(189)
Connex South Central/South Central	764	1,118	(1,020)	(9,248)	(5,978)	(6,342)	(12,828)	(12,118)
Connex South Eastern	(974)	(1,629)	(2,040)	(11,229)	(5,746)	(6,897)	(2,895)	—
South Eastern Trains	—	—	—	—	—	—	(2,998)	(2,501)
Cross Country	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—

Performance regime penalties and bonuses by financial year, by passenger train operating company

Train operator	*1997–98*	*1998–99*	*1999–2000*	*2000–01*	*2001–02*	*2002–03*	*2003–04*	*£000 2004–05*
Gatwick Express	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Great Eastern Railway	(122)	541	325	(7,744)	(5,879)	(1,525)	—	—
Great Northern Eastern Railway	—	—	—	—	—	—	(2,902)	(2,447)
Great Western	—	(2,452)	(2,175)	(1,978)	(5,408)	(2,610)	(2,020)	(1,058)
Island Line	(24)	(14)	(20)	(41)	(9)	(12)	(17)	(25)
LTS Rail (later c2c Rail)	1,391	747	34	(477)	(2,540)	(430)	371	1,844
Mersey rail Electrics	178	(114)	(346)	(796)	(641)	276	—	—
Midland Mainline	—	—	(18)	(15)	87	—	—	—
North Western Trains	2,078	238	1,982	(2,256)	(3,455)	(2,536)	(1,448)	(540)
Regional Railways North East/Northern Spirit	1,331	1,761	625	(8,337)	(7,611)	(3,729)	(1,111)	(741)
Northern	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Scotrail	6,986	6,280	5,402	(5,284)	(9,999)	(8,654)	(2,820)	(2,268)
First Scotrail	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	(178)
Silver-link	844	(199)	(254)	(2,879)	(2,854)	(447)	(90)	294
South West Trains	(1,281)	(3,933)	(3,657)	(10,648)	(12,776)	(11,471)	(10,186)	6,726
Thames Trains/First Great Western Link	(572)	(2,224)	(2,046)	(4,291)	(4,069)	(4,173)	(3,990)	(4,700)
Thameslink	(49)	(270)	(668)	(4,337)	(3,325)	(2,904)	(2,844)	(6,473)
TransPennine Express	—	—	—	—	—	—	(50)	(2,817)
Wales and West	664	(378)	1,776	(4,497)	(1,577)	—	—	—
West Anglia Great Northern	(346)	(452)	(849)	(8,833)	(8,359)	(6,380)	(2,782)	(1,767)
West Coast Trains	—	—	(67)	(15)	(12)	(88)	(478)	(80)
Wales and Borders Trains/Arriva Trains Wales	—	—	—	—	(1,329)	(2,425)	1,386	179
Wessex Trains	—	—	—	—	(1,115)	(3,354)	(2,094)	(1,398)
Total	13,027	(4,028)	(3,286)	(92,470)	(92,524)	(78,617)	(57,031)	(41,605)

Notes:
1. Brackets indicate penalty payment by the operator shown.
2. Unbracketed numbers indicate bonus payments to the operator concerned.
3. No number entry indicates that the operator did not exist in the year concerned or was not subject to a performance regime during that year.

Mr. Drew: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport if he will undertake an investigation into reliability of trains on Great Western lines; and if he will suspend the franchise process until reliability has improved. [36914]

Derek Twigg: Joint action plans are in place between Network Rail (who have overall responsibility for performance) and First Great Western and Wessex Trains to address performance trends. These are monitored monthly.

The new Great Western franchise awarded to First Group plc, announced on 13 December contains clear and improving performance targets which the operator must meet.

Andrew Rosindell: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what recent discussions he has had on imposing penalties on train operating companies for operating trains that are overcrowded; and if he will make a statement. [37964]

Derek Twigg: There are no proposals to apply penalties to train operating companies where trains are overcrowded. Train operators and Network Rail work together to make best use of available capacity to reduce overcrowding.

Focus is being given to improve timetabling, infrastructure maintenance and renewals and other factors that can impact on reliable delivery of train services, which in turn will impact on crowding levels. We will continue to review train counts and train plans to assess that resources are being deployed effectively.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many trains have been removed from service in each year since 1997. [38421]

Derek Twigg: This information is not held centrally by the Department. However following major investment in the network, a total of around 4200 new vehicles have been brought into service since 1996. This has resulted in the replacement of around 2000 Mark 1 slam door vehicles. It has also led to complete fleet replacements on the C2C, West Coast and Cross Country passenger services and replacement of some vehicles on other routes which were approaching the end of their operating life.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many people have been carried on the UK's trains in each year since 1997; and how many people he expects to be carried in each of the next five years; [38423]

(2) how many passengers used the railways in each year since 1997. [38458]

Derek Twigg: Information on the numbers of passengers that have used the railways in each year since 1997, is contained in the Office of Rail Regulation's publication, National Rail Trends, a copy of which has been placed in the House Library.

The Department for Transport's latest published projections for rail usage are set out in the paper "The Future of Transport: Modelling and Analysis" published on 21 March 2005. The central projection shows rail passenger kilometres increasing by 33 percent. between 2000 and 2010 implying growth of around 3.5 percent. a year for the rest of the decade.

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many new trains have been purchased in each year since 1997; and what the cost of each new train was. [38463]

Derek Twigg: The information is as follows:

Year of order	Manufacturer	Number of vehicles	Estimated value (£ million)
1997	Bombardier	176	131
	Bombardier	34	33
	Bombardier	120	93
	Alstom	120	92
1998	Bombardier	24	23
	Bombardier	26	26
	Bombardier	29	29
	Bombardier	21	20
	Bombardier	8	7
	Bombardier	352	407
	Bombardier	27	25
	Bombardier	18	17
	Bombardier	90	70
	Alstom	64	46
	Alstom	40	41
	Alstom	70	78
	Alstom	120	100
	CAF/Siemens	48	55
1999	Bombardier	6	7
	Bombardier	27	30
	Bombardier	10	10
	Alstom	30	33
	Alstom	477	630
2000	Bombardier	8	6
	Bombardier	9	9
	Bombardier	10	10
	Bombardier	16	18
	Bombardier	112	92
	CAF/Siemens	8	9
2001	Bombardier	10	11
	Bombardier	7	8
	Siemens	84	69
	Siemens	665	610
	CAF/Siemens	8	9
2002	Bombardier	8	8
	Bombardier	127	161
	Bombardier	700	602
	Bombardier	228	186
	Bombardier	180	153
	Bombardier	9	12
2003	Bombardier	87	103
	Bombardier	42	52
	Bombardier	6	8
	Siemens	153	200
2004	Siemens	120	125
2005	Bombardier	6	7
	Hitachi	168	235

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what models of break-glass hammers have been considered for approval for use on trains but have not been approved; and for what reasons in each case; [33691]

(2) what the assessment process is for the evaluation of break-glass hammers for trains to determine whether they are fit for purpose. [33717]

(3) what models of break-glass hammers are approved for use on trains. [33718]

Derek Twigg: The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) is the independent health and safety regulator for rail. The emergency evacuation arrangements of rail carriages are approved by the HSE under the Railways and Transport Systems (Approval of Works, Plant and Equipment) Regulations 1964 (ROTS). These regulations require the train operator companies to ensure that break-glass hammers are fit for the purpose to which they are installed. HSE do not hold on record the types of hammers considered by train operators.

The Rail Safety and Standards Board is currently undertaking research to determine the appropriate requirements for break-glass hammers as part of wider research into train evacuation.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what criteria are used for selecting models of break-glass hammers for approved use on trains. [36331]

Derek Twigg: It is the responsibility of the train operating company to ensure that the break-glass hammers they select and bring into service are fit for purpose. HSE do not themselves hold records on the types of hammers considered by train operating companies or the selection criteria used.

Martin Horwood: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport when he expects his Department's assessment of break-glass hammers for trains to be completed. [36343]

Derek Twigg: The DfT is not conducting an assessment of break-glass hammers although the Rail Safety and Standards Board are currently undertaking research into passenger emergency evacuation procedures. This will include an assessment of the effectiveness of break-glass hammers.

RSSB anticipate the assessment of break-glass hammers to be complete by Quarter 2 (April—June) 2006 with the whole report planned for completion by Quarter 3 (July—September) 2006.

Rates

Angus Robertson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much was paid by his Department in rates to each local authority in the UK in 2004–05; and how much was paid in *(a)* each (i) nation and (ii) region of the UK and *(b)* London. [35996]

Ms Buck: The information requested is as follows:

(a) The total paid in rates to each local authority in the UK in 2004–05 has been placed in the Libraries of the House.

(a) (i) The total paid in each nation is as follows:

£

Nation	Rates 2004–05
England	9,702,688
Northern Ireland	22,646
Scotland	648,252
Wales	1,156,602

(a) (ii) The total paid in each region of the UK is as follows:

£

Region	Rates 2004–05
East Midlands	471,148
East of England	449,072
London	4,320,470
North East	247,800
North West	394,397

Region	£ Rates 2004–05
South East	953,330
South West	689,831
West Midlands	640,988
Yorkshire and the Humber	804,326

Owing to operational requirements The Maritime and Coastguard Agency's activities are organised across three regional boundaries: northern, western and eastern. These regional boundaries do not correspond to the Government office regional boundaries and the information requested can be provided only at disproportionate costs. The data in the table therefore does not include Maritime and Coastguard Agency sites.

(b) The total paid in rates in London was £4,320,470.

Rebated Diesel Fuel

Mr. Greg Knight: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what assessment he has made of the demand for rebated diesel fuel *(a)* for each year since 1997 and *(b)* for each of the next five years; and if he will make a statement. [38884]

John Healey: I have been asked to reply.

Historic demand or clearances for rebated diesel fuel can be found on page 2 of the HM Revenue and Customs Hydrocarbon Oils Bulletin, a copy of which is available on the HMRC website at: http://www.uk tradeinfo.com/index.cfm?task = bullhydro.

The excise duty receipts forecast for hydrocarbon oils was published in the pre-Budget report 2005, table B14.

Road Traffic (London)

Mr. Hands: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to the answer of 30 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 569W, on Road Traffic (London), if he will break down the figures provided by London borough. [38769]

Ms Buck: Transport for London has provided the following information on traffic signal sites[1] in each London borough:

[1] A traffic signal site is defined as a separate junction or pedestrian crossing.

London borough	Installed base at 31 March 2000	Installed base at 31 March 2005
Barking and Dagenham	90	108
Barnet	147	176
Bexley	62	82
Brent	124	147
Bromley	104	118
Camden	185	210
City of London	79	81
Croydon	173	183
Ealing	147	180
Enfield	100	118
Greenwich	173	197
Hackney	128	140
Hammersmith and Fulham	86	97
Haringey	109	158
Harrow	77	84
Havering	101	121
Hillingdon	115	128
Hounslow	126	148
Islington	102	138
Kensington and Chelsea	122	132
Kingston upon Thames	93	114
Lambeth	179	222
Lewisham	129	130
Merton	130	146
Newham	119	132
Redbridge	117	142
Richmond upon Thames	108	144
Southwark	150	216
Sutton	95	119
Tower Hamlets	168	201
Waltham Forest	77	100
Wandsworth	165	199
Westminster	356	367

Road Traffic Accidents

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what has been the cost to the public purse of road traffic accidents in each year since 1997, broken down by category of severity of accident. [38453]

Dr. Ladyman: The values used to estimate the benefits of the prevention of road accidents are set out in the "Highways Economic Note No. 1: 2004 Valuation of the Benefits of Prevention of Road Accidents and Casualties" which can be found on the DfT website at:

http://www.dft.gov.uk/stellent/groups/dft_rdsafety/documents/divisionhomepage/030763.hcsp.

Rolling Stock

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 325W, on rolling stock, (1) what assessment he has made of reasons for the difference in the number of orders placed in 1998 and 2003; [36905]

(2) what assessment he has made of the reasons for the difference in the numbers of new train vehicles ordered in 1996 and 2002; and what the value of each order of rolling stock was from *(a)* Bombardier, *(b)* Siemens, *(c)* Alstom and *(d)* CAF/Siemens in each year between 1996 and 2004; [36963]

(3) what assessment he has made of the reasons why there were no orders for train vehicles assembled in the United Kingdom in 2004; and what assessment he has made of reasons for fluctuations in numbers of orders of train vehicles assembled in the United Kingdom in the period from 1996 to 2004. [36965]

Derek Twigg: Rolling Stock is ordered by train operators and rolling stock leasing companies not by the Department. The Department has not made an assessment of fluctuation in rolling stock orders.

Large numbers of orders were placed between 1996 and 2002 as part of a major programme of rolling stock renewal. The majority of the new trains have now been delivered. There were no new orders in 2004 because orders had already been placed for the trains needed.

The information requested is set out in the following tables. I regret that an error occurred when the figures for rolling stock orders quoted in my earlier answers of

29 November 2005, *Official Report*, Columns 325–26W, were being compiled. The following four tables give corrected totals:

Bombardier

Year of order	Number of vehicles
1996	12
1997	330
1998	595
1999	33
2000	155
2001	10
2002	1,116
2003	135
2004	—

Alstom

Year of order	Number of vehicles
1997	120
1998	294
1999	507

Manufacturer nationality and order by vehicles each year

	Bombardier (Canadian)—UK site.	Siemens (German)	Alstom (French)	CAF/Siemens (Spanish / German)	Hitachi (Japanese)
1996	12	—	—	—	—
1997	330	—	120	—	—
1998	595	—	294	48	—
1999	33	—	507	—	—
2000	155	—	—	8	—
2001	10	869	—	—	—
2002	1,243	—	—	8	—
2003	135	153	—	—	—
2004	—	—	—	—	—
2005	—	—	—	—	168

Number of orders by manufacturer and location of build

Year	Bombardier (Canadian)[1]	Siemens (German)[2]	Alstom (French)[3]	CAF/Siemens (Spanish / German)[4]	Hitachi (Japanese)
1996	1	—	—	—	—
1997	3	—	1	—	—
1998	9	—	4	1	—
1999	2	—	2	—	—
2000	5	—	—	1	—
2001	1	2	—	—	—
2002	5	—	—	1	—
2003	3	1	—	—	—
2004	—	—	—	—	—
2005	—	—	—	—	1

[1] Bombardier vehicles built or assembled in the UK with the exception of 127 Meridians built in Brugge.
[2] Siemens vehicles are all being built in Germany/Austria site.
[3] Alstom built all their vehicles at Washwood Heath, Birmingham.
[4] These vehicles were built in Spain.

The following tables set out, by manufacturer, the number of vehicles and the total value of rolling stock orders placed in each year between 1996 and 2004:

Bombardier

	Number of vehicles in order	Estimated value (£million)
1996	[illegible]	11
1997	[illegible]	131
	[illegible]	33
	120	93
1998	24	23
	26	26
	29	29
	21	20
	8	7
	352	407
	27	25
	18	17
	90	70
1999	6	7
	27	30
2000	8	6
	9	9
	10	10
	16	18
	112	92
2001	10	11
2002	8	8
	127	161
	700	602
	228	186
	180	153
2003	87	103
	42	52
	6	8
2004	—	—

Alstom

	Number of vehicles in order	*Estimated value (£million)*
1996	—	—
1997	120	92
1998	64	46
	40	41
	70	78
	120	100
1999	30	33
	477	630
2000	—	—
2001	—	—
2002	—	—
2003	—	—
2004	—	—

Siemens

Year	*Number of vehicles in order*	*Estimated value (£million)*
1996	—	—
1997	—	—
1998	—	—
1999	—	—
2000	—	—
2001	84	69
	665	610
2002	—	—
2003	153	200
2004	[1]120	125

[1] These vehicles were originally part of the 785 vehicle order for SWT which was later changed to 665 vehicles with the 120 vehicles being becoming part of the Silverlink franchise in 2004

CAF/Siemens

	Number of vehicles in order	*Estimated value (£million)*
1996	—	—
1997	—	—
1998	48	55
1999	—	—
2000	8	9
2001	8	9
2002	—	—
2003	—	—
2004	—	—

Hitachi

	Number of vehicles in order	*Estimated value (£million)*
2005	168	235

Mrs. Dunwoody: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport pursuant to his answer of 29 November 2005, *Official Report*, column 326W on rolling stock, whether *(a)* old and *(b)* used train sets were procured for the United Kingdom in each year between 1994 and 2004. [36966]

Derek Twigg: No old or used trains sets were procured for UK railways in any of these years.

Ships

Mr. Weir: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) how many ships of over 1,000 gross register tons with registered owners in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* Wales, *(c)* each of the English regions and *(d)* Northern Ireland are identified as (i) barge carriers, (ii) bulk carriers, (iii) cargo ships, (iv) chemical tankers, (v) colliers, (vi) combination bulk carriers, (vii) combination tankers, (viii) container ships, (ix) liquefied gas tankers, (x) livestock carriers, (xi) multi-functional large-load carriers, (xii) passenger ferries, (xiii) passenger and cargo ships, (xiv) petroleum tankers, (xv) rail car carriers, (xvi) refrigerated cargo carriers, (xvii) roll-on/roll-off ferries, (xviii) short-sea passenger ferries, (xix) specialized tankers, (xx) vehicle carriers and (xxi) others; [39206]

(2) what the *(a)* gross register tons and *(b)* deadweight ton is of ships with registered owners in (i) Scotland, (ii) Wales, (iii) each of the English regions and (iv) Northern Ireland; [39207]

(3) what estimate he has made of the number of ships registered abroad as flags of convenience with owners based in *(a)* Scotland, *(b)* Wales, *(c)* each of the English regions and *(d)* Northern Ireland. [39208]

Dr. Ladyman: The information is not held by the Department.

Sonic Passive Defence Systems

Bill Wiggin: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what frequency sonic passive defence systems on cruise ships use. [38847]

Dr. Ladyman: These devices are capable of emitting an extremely irritating noise at a frequency of around 2kHz.

St. Helens Metropolitan Borough Council

Mr. George Howarth: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions have taken place between officials in his Department and the chief executive of St. Helens metropolitan borough council since June; what means of communication was used in each case; and if he will place in the Library *(a)* minutes and *(b)* submissions relating to such communications. [35192]

Derek Twigg: There have been no such discussions.

Station Platforms (Accidents)

Mrs. James: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what discussions his Department has had with train operating companies on reducing the number of accidents on railway station platforms during periods of inclement winter weather. [38267]

Derek Twigg: This is a matter for the Health and Safety Executive's Railways Inspectorate, whose inspectors visit local stations to ensure that station managers have arrangements in place to deal with hazardous weather conditions.

Taxis

Mr. MacNeil: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much has been spent by his Department

on taxi travel in the 2005–06 financial year; and what proportion of such travel was undertaken in each nation and region of the UK, including London. [37458]

Ms Buck: In financial year 2005–06, the Department for Transport has spent £43,702.79 on taxi travel within the UK up to the end of November.

A regional breakdown of such travel within UK could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

This figure does not include the Department's agencies as they do not record taxi fares separately from other travel costs and the information could be obtained only at disproportionate cost.

Trams

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the total cost to *(a)* his Department and *(b)* the promoting authorities was of the development of the tram proposals in (i) Leeds, (ii) Merseyside and (iii) South Hampshire. [38719]

Derek Twigg: I refer the hon. Member to the answer of 6 July 2005, *Official Report*, column 479W.

Transport Infrastructure (East Sussex)

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how much money has been spent on improvements in transport infrastructure in East Sussex since 1997; and what proportion of this expenditure was spent in Battle, East Sussex. [39053]

Ms Buck: Since the introduction of Local Transport Plans in 2000, East Sussex has received around £58 million for local transport improvements and maintenance schemes. In addition the county has received almost £5 million for major local transport schemes. We do not have the data to identify a figure separately for local transport investment in Battle. Funding for trunk roads is neither allocated nor recorded on a county by county basis but we can say that around £22 million has been invested in the following schemes in East Sussex since 2000: A27 Polegate Bypass (£19.3 million); A27 Ashcombe Roundabout (£1.3 million) and A21 John's Cross Roundabout (£1.7 million). East Sussex has also benefited from the new trains and associated power supply and depot upgrades delivered as part of the Mark 1 "slam door" stock replacement programme, the total value of the investment being in the region of £2 billion.

Gregory Barker: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) what representations he has received regarding the Battle Local Area Transport Strategy; and whether he will be implementing the strategy's recommendations; [39054]

(2) what recent representations he has received regarding improvements in transport infrastructure in Battle, East Sussex. [39249]

Ms Buck: None specifically. East Sussex county council submitted their provisional Local Transport Plan to Government in July this year. It includes the intention to take forward a number of Local Area Transport Strategies, including one for Battle. It will be for East Sussex county council to submit a final plan in March 2006 and to implement the strategies set-out within that plan.

UK Airspace (Access Denial)

Mr. Peter Robinson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport on how many occasions in each of the last 10 years permission has been withheld to aircraft requesting access to UK airspace. [28866]

Ms Buck: International civil aviation is governed by the Chicago Convention. Under the convention, the International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) is responsible for establishing minimum safety standards which contracting states are required to implement. States are required to recognise the certificates issued by other contracting states unless they have reason to believe that they have not been issued in accordance with ICAO standards.

Any airline from outside the EU, Iceland, Norway or Switzerland which wishes to pick up or put down passengers or cargo in the UK requires a permit from the Secretary of State for Transport. It is a condition of the permit that the airline should be operated in accordance with international safety standards established by ICAO.

If we have doubts about whether an aircraft or airline complies with international safety standards we will arrange for the aircraft to be inspected by the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Permits may be refused, and existing permits suspended or revoked by the Secretary of State. This may occur where there is a breach of a permit condition, which would include non-compliance with international safety standards; however action can also be taken for reasons other than safety. Permit decisions will be reviewed in the light of new information or changed circumstances. An up to date list of airlines which have been refused permits is maintained on the Department's website.

UK Fishing Fleet (Light Dues)

Tom Brake: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what estimate he has made of the effect on the UK fishing fleet of applying to it the exemptions to light dues made available for the Republic of Ireland. [38438]

Dr. Ladyman: UK fishing vessels of 10 m and over registered length pay light dues and make use of the full range of aids provided by the General Lighthouse Authorities. Light dues paid by UK fishing vessels represent only a small contribution, £471,000 in 2004–05, towards the total light dues income of around £71.5 million.

Ultra-light Rail Systems

Colin Challen: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport (1) if he will remove the regulations which prevent ultra-light rail systems from benefiting from road transport assistance schemes with particular reference to the *(a)* Low Carbon Vehicle Partnership and *(b)* New Technology Development Fund; [34002]

(2) what representations his Department has received on the designation of ultra- light rail as rail transport as opposed to road transport. [34003]

Derek Twigg: The Department for Transport provides financial assistance to incentivise the development and uptake of clean, low carbon road vehicles in the form of grants. These grants, previously known as the transport

energy grants (which included the new vehicle technology fund), were suspended in March 2005 and revised, technology-neutral grants have been notified to the European Commission for State Aid clearance.

The grants aim to stimulate market transformation in the road vehicles sector and therefore focus on clean, low carbon alternatives to mainstream vehicles. The scope of the grants is not set in legislation, and is kept under review.

A National Audit Office report published in April 2004 recommended that the Department discuss with DTI the case for including light rail technologies in energy saving grants. These discussions took place and it was concluded that DTI funding and development programmes adequately addressed the recommendation

The Department has received representations on a number of occasions from two companies on the issue of ultra light rail designation.

United States-registered Aircraft

Greg Mulholland: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport how many non-commercial aircraft registered in the United States used airports in the United Kingdom in each of the last 18 months; and which airports they used. [38718]

Ms Buck: The Department for Transport does not issue operating permits to foreign aircraft operating on a non-commercial basis and consequently does not hold information of this nature. Private flights (ie. where payment for carriage is not asked for) are not required to seek the prior permission of a State to overfly, land or make non-traffic stops (eg. to refuel). Commercial flights making non-traffic stops also do not need prior permission, as set out in Article 5 of the Chicago convention.

Lorries/Commercial Vans

Mr. Paterson: To ask the Secretary of State for Transport what the total value of *(a)* new and *(b)* secondhand (i) lorries and (ii) commercial vans bought each year since 1997 was. [38764]

Alun Michael: I have been asked to reply.

The following table sets out answers to these questions to the extent that data is available.

For the UK auto industry, employment data is not separately available for car manufacturing, as the total for vehicles also includes commercial vehicles and engines. For completeness, the table also includes employment at component suppliers, although this understates the true size of the UK auto industry as many suppliers to the industry are classified in the statistics according to what they make (e.g. steel, glass). The ONS Annual Business Inquiry does not have employment data for 1997.

From this data, it can be deduced that UK auto industry productivity is improving, both in terms of cars made per worker per annum, and GVA per employee. These are important measures that indicate continuing improvements in UK's auto manufacturing competitiveness on the global stage.

As regards registrations data, new registrations are in the public domain and are quoted here. Used vehicle transaction data is normally a chargeable service from DVLA, but SMMT provides used car sales data on request, and this is quoted here.

Data on the value of vehicle sales, new or used, is commercially sensitive within the industry and not published. However, data is available from ONS on the value added generated by the motor trade and this is quoted here. Again, the value added generated per employee is on a rising trend, indicating continually improving efficiency and competitiveness.

	Source	*1997*	*1998*	*1999*	*2000*
Employment: vehicle manufacturing	ONS	n/a	123,000	116,000	106,000
Employment: auto component manufacture	ONS	n/a	170,000	158,000	157,000
Value added: vehicle, engine and component mfr (£ million)	ONS	10,811	10,694	9,355	8,089
Cars manufactured (thousand)	SMMT	1,712	1,761	1,786	1,641
Commercial vehicles manufactured (thousand)	SMMT	224	215	190	172
Employment: motorcycle manufacturing	ONS	n/a	1,000	1,000	1,000
Value added: motorcycle and manufacture (£ million)	ONS	22	26	26	39
Motorcycles manufactured (thousand)	MCI	15	17	21	26
Employment: vehicle sales	ONS	n/a	294	294	289
Employment: other motor trade	ONS	n/a	253	261	264
Value added: vehicle sales and motor trade (£ million)	ONS	16,421	16,224	17,512	16,807
Registrations: cars (thousand)	DETR	2,170	2,247	2,197	2,221
Registrations: CV's (thousand)	DETR	274	295	288	298
Registrations: motorcycles (thousand)	DETR	122	144	168	183
car changes of ownership (thousand)	SMMT	5,300	5,800	n/a	n/a

	Source	*2001*	*20025*	*2003*	*2004*
Employment: vehicle manufacturing	ONS	94,000	95,000	91,000	89,000
Employment: auto component manufacture	ONS	152,000	148,000	143,000	132,000
Value added: vehicle, engine and component mfr (£ million)	ONS	9,138	9,126	8,925	9,855
Cars manufactured (thousand)	SMMT	1,493	1,630	1,658	1,647

	Source	*2001*	*20025*	*2003*	*2004*
Commercial vehicles manufactured (thousand)	SMMT	193	191	189	209
Employment: motorcycle manufacturing	ONS	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Value added: motorcycle and manufacture (£ million)	ONS	54	92	101	38
Motorcycles manufactured (thousand)	MCI	30	15	32	26
Employment: vehicle sales	ONS	277	280	277	276
Employment: other motor trade	ONS	275	264	281	276
Value added: vehicle sales and motor trade (£ million)	ONS	18,911	20,313	21,876	22,296
Registrations: cars (thousand)	DETR	2,459	2,563	2,579	2,567
Registrations: CV's (thousand)	DETR	313	322	364	390
Registrations: motorcycles (thousand)	DETR	177	162	157	134
car changes of ownership (thousand)	SMMT	6,700	7,100	7,500	7,700